

WT4.P18 – Hometown Project Proposals  
 Rochester & Rochester Hills, Michigan

**Rochester Hills Identity**

*“Historic, Distinctive, Progressive.”*

- Agricultural Roots

- Settled in 1817 by farmers from New York, New England, and Canada.
- Organized as Avon Township in 1835.
- Convergence of Paint Creek, Stony Creek, and Clinton River allowed for water-powered mills.
- In 1850, privately owned farms were self-sufficient.
- Rochester became a village within the township in 1869.

- Modernization

- By 1900, residents began working at Detroit factories, traveling by train.
- In 1907, 25 freight and 8 passenger trains stopped in Rochester each day.
- As farmers left, land was sold for subdivisions, scientific farms, and estates for the wealthy.
- After WWII, cars, trucks, and airplanes overtook railways.
- By 1950, few Avon Township families earned their living by farming.
- The last passenger train passed through Rochester in 1964.
- In 1967, Rochester became a city.
- Through the 1970s, petitions to consolidate Rochester and the township failed.
- Avon Township became Rochester Hills in 1984.
- Currently, Rochester Hills and Rochester are home to nearly 80,000 residents.
- There is no form of public transportation.

[http://www.rochesterhills.org/city\\_services/museum/history/our\\_community\\_s\\_history.asp](http://www.rochesterhills.org/city_services/museum/history/our_community_s_history.asp)

Districts:

- City of Rochester Hills
- City of Rochester (inset)

Primary Paths:

- Street grid (square miles)
- M-59 Highway
- Two reclaimed railroad pedestrian trails

Edges:

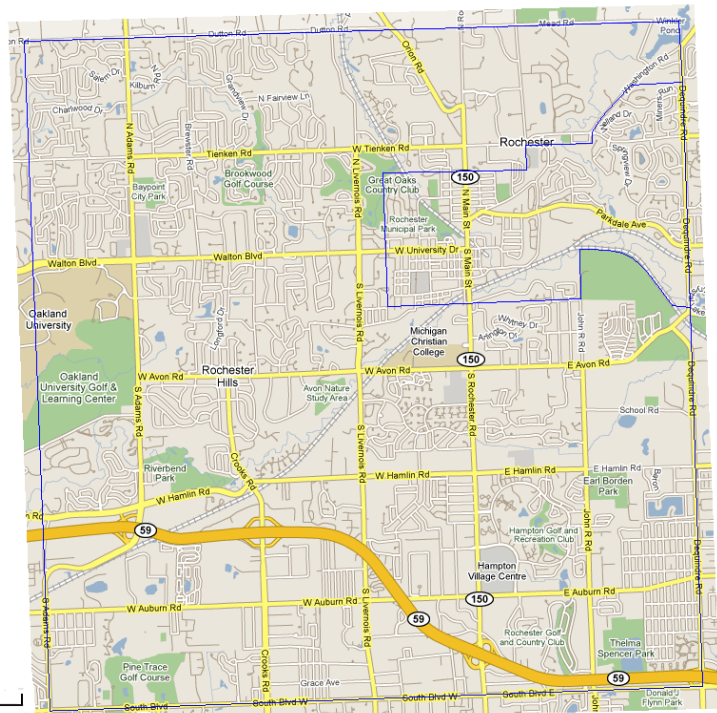
- M-59 divides southwest corner

Nodes:

- Main intersections
- Avon Rd & Livernois Rd (center)
- University Dr & Main St (downtown)

Landmarks:

- Downtown Rochester
- City Parks
- Oakland University
- Meadowbrook Hall
- Leader Dogs for the Blind



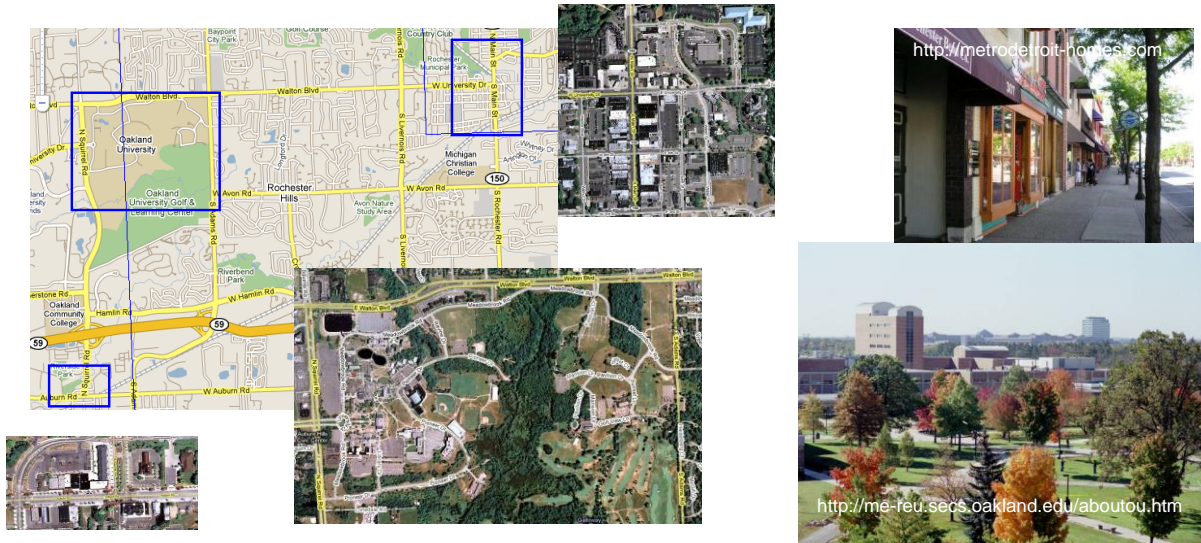
## Alternative #1: Connecting Oakland University and Downtown Rochester

**a) Project Type:** Oakland University and Downtown Rochester, the two greatest attractions in the Rochester Area, occupy opposite ends of the city. Though only three to four miles apart, there has never been significant presence of OU in Rochester, and likewise little of Rochester present in OU. Connection could be possible through a bus system specifically fashioned for college students, residents, and visitors to the area. The development will include bus stations and stops along several routes. Additionally, the development will call for, but will not be limited to, the establishment of OU centers downtown and Rochester centers on the OU campus.

**b) Project Contribution to Community:** A public transportation system will give Rochester Hills residents the ability to experience the best of the city without the need of a car. OU is currently home to the Meadowbrook Summer Music Festival, Meadowbrook Hall, and a variety of campus concerts and sporting events. By tying these attractions to historic main street's restaurants, shops, parks, and art galleries, visitors will gain a sense that Rochester and Rochester Hills are truly part of the same community. This sense of community will be especially significant as an alternative for commuter students.

**c) Project Context:** The Oakland University campus lies on the western border of my hometown, split between Rochester Hills and Auburn Hills. Any development with OU must also take the city of Auburn Hills into account, especially its own downtown (southwest). Downtown Rochester is three miles directly east of OU, along Walton Blvd (University Dr).

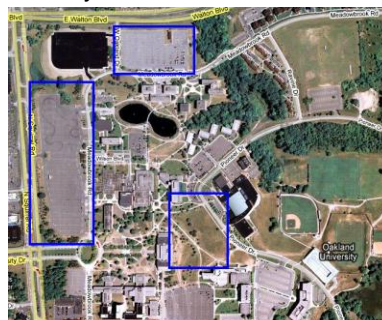
Water systems are of particular interest. Downtown Auburn Hills is located on the Clinton River. Galloway Creek flows through OU to the Clinton River. Paint Creek and Stony Creek meet the Clinton River downstream in downtown Rochester. The Clinton River Trail and Paint Creek Trail (reclaimed railways) serve as pedestrian trails along natural corridors.



**d) Project Site Description:** There are several areas in downtown Rochester and on the OU campus that could easily serve as bus stations or community transit centers.



Rochester – parking/vacant lots



OU – parking lots, vacant field space

Appropriate sites are in close proximity to main intersections, attractions, or pedestrian access.

## e) Fundamental Project 'Program' and Design Elements Expected:

### 1) Functions and Activities

- Bus stations
  - historical displays at OU and Rochester
- Bus stops
  - easy pedestrian access
- Variety of stops
  - size & location
  - punctuality & frequency

### 2) Physical Spaces

- Bus stations
  - about 6,000 sq ft
  - 1 – 1.5 stories
  - built facility surrounded by covered terrace & bus lanes
  - potential for green roof and solar power
  - build from recycled materials
- Bus stops
  - 500 – 1,000 sq ft
  - 1 story
  - built facility for shade and shelter
  - safety features (lighting, emergency phone)
  - solar power
  - build from recycled material
- Variety of stops
  - plazas
  - pocket parks
  - access to existing pedestrian trails

## f) Project's Sustainable Design Opportunities:

In a city deprived of anything but cars for 50 years, successful public transportation would be a groundbreaking step towards a community-wide sustainable lifestyle. Cars need to become the second option – public transportation should be efficient and inexpensive enough that it is the first thing on residents' minds. Specific attention to energy efficiency and resourcefulness will be key in this project.

## g) WT4 Precedents Applicable To This Project:

- Hong Kong, China



[www.flickr.com/photos/liuvincent/3622264993](http://www.flickr.com/photos/liuvincent/3622264993)

- Paris, France



<http://media-cdn.tripadvisor.com>

- London, England



<http://mic-ro.com/metro/london.html>

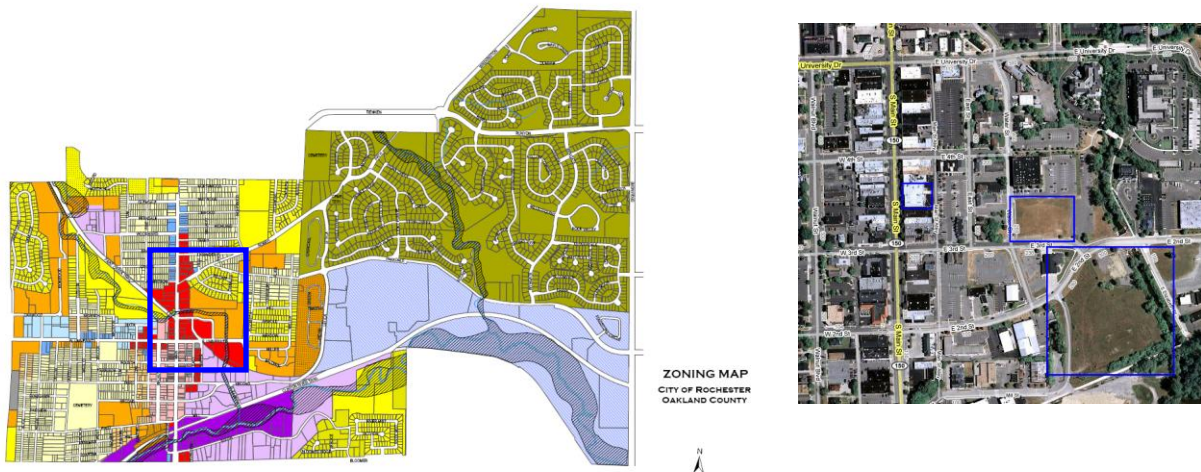
## Alternative #2: Creating a Downtown Destination for Youth

**a) Project Type:** Downtown Rochester is home to many restaurants and shops, but very few inexpensive entertainment venues. There are attractive parks close to downtown, but none that enhance public athletic opportunities. Currently, youth leave the city to see movies or concerts and must look elsewhere for better athletic parks. This proposal calls for Rochester's own theater and athletic park.

**b) Project Contribution to Community:** Rochester Hills youth need places to hang out. Youth are not attracted to expensive shops, restaurants, and bars. At any time of day or night, teenage residents need options that promote healthy social activity. A concert venue, movie theater, and athletic park in downtown Rochester would create a lively atmosphere that is also suitable for families and elderly residents. By tying these attractions to historic main street's restaurants, shops, and art galleries, visitors will gain a sense that Rochester is truly a diverse, healthy community.

**c) Project Context:** Rochester has four major districts: Residential primarily along the northern border, Industrial in the southeast along the Clinton River, and Business and Municipal around Main Street and University Drive. Downtown, Paint Creek converges with the Clinton River while, further downstream, Stony Creek does the same in the Industrial zone.

Behind nearly every shop and restaurant on Main is a parking lot. These spaces have great potential for extra needed spaces, such as theater plazas and parking structures.



**d) Project Site Description:** Two large vacant lots east of Main Street offer desirable spaces for a movie theater and an athletic park. The empty field just south of the Rochester Mills Beer Co. offers space for the new theater facility, while the parking lot footprints can be diminished by multilevel parking garages. On Main, the site of what was once the city's largest department store has potential to be redeveloped into a mid-sized concert venue.



Historic Rochester Mills Beer Co., just north of the proposed theater site.



Mitzelfeld's Department Store is now occupied by a pub and retail clothing shops.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/detroitssky/429720598>

## e) Fundamental Project 'Program' and Design Elements Expected:

### 1) Functions and Activities

- Movie theater
  - parking garage
  - outdoor plaza
- Concert venue
  - suitable for major as well as local artists
  - outdoor plaza for lines
- 24-hour athletic park
  - 2 large fields
  - 1 baseball diamond
  - 2 basketball courts

### 2) Physical Spaces

- Movie theater
  - about 50,000 sq ft
  - 2 – 4 stories
  - built facility with entrance plaza
  - 40,000 sq ft parking facility, 4 – 5 stories
  - potential for green roof and solar power
  - storm water management imperative for health of creeks and river (especially at parking garage)
- Concert venue
  - about 15,000 sq ft
  - 2 – 3 story
  - built facility with rear outdoor terrace
  - potential for green roof and solar power
  - build from recycled material
- 24-hour athletic park
  - approx. 40,000 sq ft
  - solar powered field lights
  - storm water management (close proximity to river)
  - bathroom facility
  - emergency telephone

## f) Project's Sustainable Design Opportunities:

Creating sustainable spaces is one concept of this project; however, sustaining an important part of population is the real focus. Creating easily accessible, safe facilities and outdoor spaces is the goal when creating areas for youth. A low-cost, diverse array of activities at all times of day will create reasons for people to stay – and even more reasons for people to visit. Special care for storm water management is essential for health of local water systems.

## g) WT4 Precedents Applicable To This Project:

- Budapest, Hungary



<http://www.panoramio.com/photo/4877736>

- London, England



[www.theatreguide.co.uk](http://www.theatreguide.co.uk)

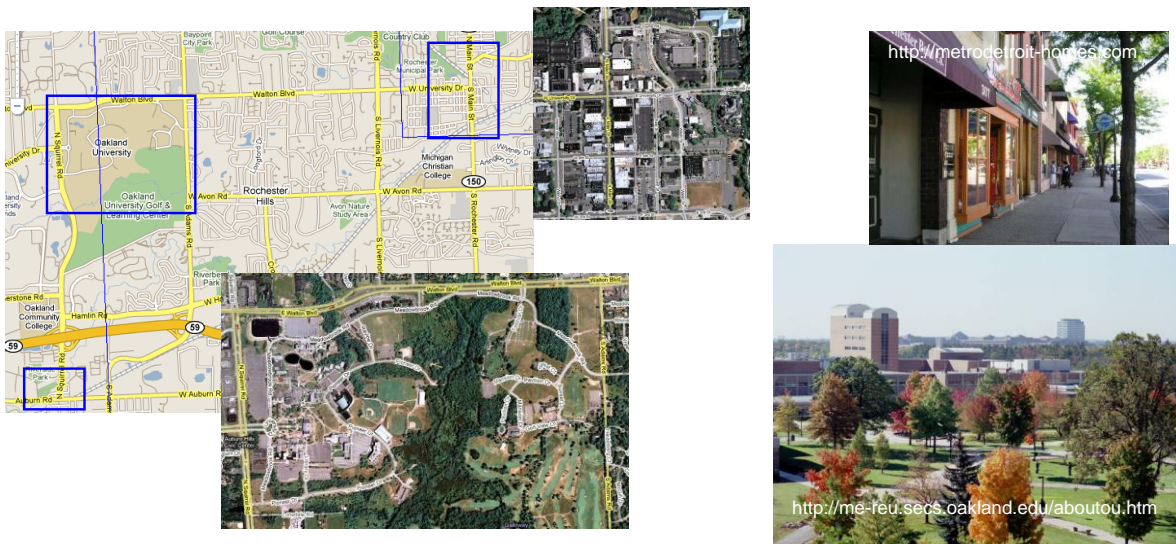
**Alternative #3: Transit Oriented Development**

**a) Project Type:** The majority of Rochester Area residents are dependent on cars to travel anywhere. To create a more sustainable future for the city, development should encourage not the use of the automobile, but pedestrian access to public transportation. This proposal calls for the implementation of a light rail system in Rochester and Rochester Hills that will meet the already proposed system in Troy and Birmingham. ([www.15miletransit.org](http://www.15miletransit.org))

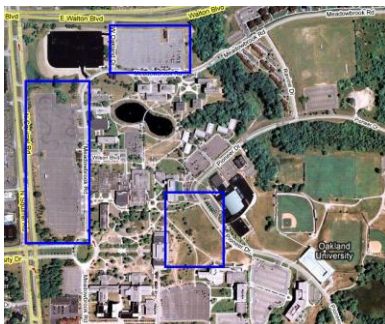
**b) Project Contribution to Community:** Rochester Hills has no public transportation system. A light rail system would allow residents to safely and efficiently travel to other cities in Metro Detroit. Easier travel can lead residents to find a wider variety of employment, entertainment, and interests. By making the Rochester/Rochester Hills station a destination, residents will grow a greater sense of pride in the community.

**c) Project Context:** Any form of public transportation must bring people to the most popular destinations within the Rochester Area. The Oakland University campus lies split between Rochester Hills and Auburn Hills. Downtown Rochester is three miles directly east of OU, along Walton Blvd (University Dr). Proximity to pedestrian trails and parks is crucial to the success of a walkable community.

Water systems are of particular interest. Downtown Auburn Hills is located on the Clinton River. Galloway Creek flows through OU to the Clinton River. Paint Creek and Stony Creek meet the Clinton River downstream in downtown Rochester. The Clinton River Trail and Paint Creek Trail (reclaimed railways) serve as pedestrian trails along natural corridors.



**d) Project Site Description:** There are several areas in downtown Rochester and on the OU campus that could easily serve as transit centers. These sites have the potential to serve more than just the Rochester area. Auburn Hills and Pontiac to the west have potential to connect to Utica and Sterling Heights to the east.



OU – parking lots, vacant field space



Rochester – parking/vacant lots

The best potential for a city train station is Downtown, near the intersection of University & Main. Shops, restaurants, and the best pedestrian access routes are nearby.

Stations and stops must be competitive with other attractions in the area, utilizing the unique entertainment values of OU and Rochester.

## **e) Fundamental Project 'Program' and Design Elements Expected:**

### 1) Functions and Activities

- Train station in Downtown Rochester
  - historical displays at OU and Rochester
  - accessibly located near attractions
- Train station at Oakland University
  - easy pedestrian access
  - located near attractions
- Connections to other cities
  - potential for expansion
- Bus routes to branch out to North & South Rochester Hills
  - size & location
  - punctuality & frequency

### 2) Physical Spaces

- Train station in Downtown Rochester
  - about 10,000 sq ft
  - 1 – 2 stories
  - built facility for tickets, café, surrounded by covered terrace, tracks, and bus lanes
  - potential for green roof and solar power
  - build from recycled materials
- Train station at Oakland University
  - about 3,000 sq ft
  - 1 story
  - built facility for shade and shelter
  - safety features (lighting, emergency phone)
  - solar power
  - build from recycled material
- Connections to other cities
  - zoned land required for additional track
- Bus routes to branch out to North & South Rochester Hills
  - stops require 500 – 1,000 sq ft
  - pocket parks
  - access to existing pedestrian trails
  - possible high school stops

## **f) Project's Sustainable Design Opportunities:**

It has been almost 50 years since the last passenger train passed through Rochester. For about half of that time, we have realized that automobiles are hardly efficient modes of transportation. Successful public transit would be a groundbreaking step towards a community-wide sustainable lifestyle. Cars need to become the second option – public transportation should be efficient and inexpensive enough that it is the first thing on residents' minds. Energy efficiency, resourcefulness, and exceptional cooperation between the cities of Metro Detroit will be required to make this proposal a reality.

## **g) WT4 Precedents Applicable To This Project:**

- Rome, Italy



- Amsterdam, Netherlands



<http://www.lightrailnow.org/facts>

