Main Street Rochester is an effort to address SR 12’s dual role as a regional highway and as Rochester’s Main Street. This project has developed in response to requests from Rochester area residents to address safety and mobility concerns, infrastructure needs, and improve the economic vitality of the corridor while strengthening Rochester’s identity.

This briefing book is intended to give you a general overview of the issues faced by residents, businesses, and visitors to the study area.

The desired outcome of the technical workshop is to develop a list of projects/actions Thurston County and Washington State Department of Transportation can take that address four areas:

- Transportation, safety, and mobility
- Infrastructure improvements
- Economic vitality
- Placemaking

Other actions may also be identified that are more appropriate for other organizations or members of the community to accomplish.

As part of the Main Street Rochester study, a community survey was mailed to more than 4,500 households. The survey was posted online and also translated into Spanish. More than 800 responses have been received and the project team is in the process of compiling data from these responses. Throughout this briefing book, you will find direct quotes from survey respondents on how they feel about the issues we’ll be exploring.

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Transportation, Safety, and Mobility

Traffic Volumes

US 12 is considered a highway of regional significance and has been designated a T2 freight economic corridor. The freight economic corridor designation indicates that US 12 has a high volume of truck traffic; that it can be used as an alternate freight route; and that it connects freight-intensive land uses to important truck routes. The T2 designation indicates that the route carries 4-10 million tons of freight on an annual basis.

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Unit Trucks (no separate trailer; ex: box truck, crane truck, concrete pump truck, etc.)</td>
<td>6.67% (800)</td>
<td>5.37% (750)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double Unit Trucks (semi with trailer)</td>
<td>5.5% (660)</td>
<td>4.36% (610)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triple Unit Trucks (semi with two trailers)</td>
<td>0.84% (100)</td>
<td>0.62% (90)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WSDOT Maps & Data, Traffic Data GeoPortal

As a comparison, SR 507 is not designated as a freight economic corridor. Traffic on the highway through Tenino and Rochester sees significantly less traffic – ranging between 5,500 and 9,900 AADT in 2016.
Sidewalks/Pathways and Marked Crossings

Sidewalks, pathways, and marked crossings have a limited presence in Rochester. There are sidewalks/paved pathways along US 12 in the study area, but condition, presence of curbs and gutters, and connectivity vary from block to block. Parking facilities for many businesses occur within the highway ROW, with many sidewalks on the north side of the highway right up against the building. In such situations, the sidewalk functions more as a pathway between the buildings and parking areas served by them than as a public sidewalk. Facilities in front of Rochester Middle School consist of a paved pathway separated from the highway by wheel stops/parking curbs. There are no marked crossings or sidewalks between Foster St and 183rd Ave in the study area.

“I would let my son walk to school but it's too dangerous with no sidewalks.”

“There really doesn’t seem to be a good place for bicyclists or pedestrians to walk and there is always a line of vehicles. Bicycle lanes and highly marked crosswalks would improve safety for both.”
Transit Providers

Two transit providers serve the Rochester area, offering connections to Aberdeen/Hoquiam, Centralia, and Tumwater. Both routes stop in Rochester on US 12 near Albany.

- **Grays Harbor Transit – Route 45 with service from Elma to Centralia.** Service Monday thru Friday, effective August 7, 2017 to December 31, 2017. Fares are $2 each way. Route 45 offers connections to Aberdeen/Hoquiam and Centralia.

- **Rural Tribal Transit – Route 3 with service from Chehalis Tribal Center to Tumwater Square.** Service Monday thru Friday, effective March 21, 2016 to present. Fares are $1 each way. Route 3 offers connections to Centralia and Tumwater.

Puget Sound & Pacific Railroad (PSAP)

Rail Traffic on the PSAP has increased over the last five years since Gennessee & Wyoming took over the line. PSAP travels between Centralia and Elma, where it switches to Aberdeen, Bremerton, and Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor. The route has been designated a rail freight economic corridor.
• **2012 Rail Freight Economic Corridor rating**: R2 (carries 1 million to 5 million tons of freight per year)
• **2017 Rail Freight Economic Corridor rating**: R1 (carries more than 5 million tons of freight per year)

**Traffic Accidents**

**Traffic Accidents by Injury Type 2010-2016 – Rochester Area**

**DISCLAIMER:**
Under United States Code Title 23 Section 409, this data cannot be used in discovery or evidence at trial in any action for damages against Thurston County, Thurston Regional Planning Council, or the jurisdictions involved in the data.
Traffic Accidents by Injury Type 2010-2016 – Study Area

1. Bailey’s IGA
2. School District, Boys & Girls Club
3. Rochester Middle School
4. Post Office; medical clinic

DISCLAIMER:
Under United States Code Title 23 Section 409, this data cannot be used in discovery or evidence at trial in any action for damages against Thurston County, Thurston Regional Planning Council, or the jurisdictions involved in the data.
Of the 163 traffic accidents that occurred in the study area on US 12 between 2002 and 2016, 59 resulted in a total of 84 injuries and two fatalities. Only two pedestrians and two cyclists were involved in these accidents (2008, 2011, and 2013). Although there have been no accidents in the study area with serious injuries or fatalities in the last 5 years, accidents with possible or evident injuries have steadily increased.

“Safety improvement should be the first priority, especially in the school zone. They do not have a dedicated sidewalk to provide separation between the drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians. The county is using curb stop, how sad. Thurston County should be aggressively competing for safety grant and active transportation grants. The systems is currently functioning well, but with anticipated growth in the region, a roundabout will be needed at the intersection of Highway 12 and Albany St. SW. traffic speeds are working well and don’t need revision”
Utilities

Water
Water service in Rochester is provided primarily by the Rochester Water Association. As of 2016, there were 683 connections serving a residential population of approximately 1,698 people.

Rochester Water Association Service Area. (study corridor highlighted in red)
Stormwater

Little is known at this time about stormwater facilities along US 12. However, County-maintained facilities do exist in the Rochester area, most of which consist of ditches or swales along roads.

County-Maintained Stormwater Facilities
Economic Vitality

Zoning

The study area consists primarily of two zones:

- **Residential LAMIRD—One Dwelling Unit Per Acre (RL 1/1).** The RL 1/1 zone is a limited area of more intensive rural development (LAMIRD). A LAMIRD is an area where urban development is not anticipated but has historically developed at a higher density than what you would see in a rural setting (typically no more than one dwelling unit per 5 acres). The LAMIRD designation is a state-designation and intended to contain higher densities in the rural areas where they occur.

- **Rural Commercial Center District (RCC).** The purpose of RCC zone is to allow businesses that serve the everyday needs of rural communities such as Rochester. It recognizes existing commercial centers in rural communities and encourages compatible redevelopment and infill in such centers. Residential uses are also allowed at a density of 1 dwelling unit per acre.

In the map below, the study area is highlighted in red.

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**Thurston County Zoning**

In the map below, the study area is highlighted in red.

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**Existing Businesses**

The following are the known businesses located along US 12 in the study area:

- 3 grocery stores (one large, two small)
- 1 bank
- 1 gas station
- 4 restaurants
- 1 medical clinic
- 1 gym
- 4 offices (accounting, legal, insurance, and real estate)

“Easy parking, good sidewalks, appealing merchant space. Candy Cottage is a good example of a permitting process that drove out a thriving touristic business. Until permitting allows small business to open at a reasonable cost and time frame, small business will not be able to open. Once open, these businesses could strive towards destination shopping with help from county planning towards parking, sidewalks, etc.”

“We would benefit from more small businesses, NOT denser population.”
- 6 auto-related (auto sales, auto repair, parts sales, and a gas station
- 1 Tattoo parlor
- 1 Barber shop
- 1 antique shop

**Vacant storefronts**
There are three vacant storefronts either on or in close proximity to the corridor:
- 18319 Albany St SW (near 183rd Way and Albany St). Property is in disrepair
- 10135 Hwy 12 SW (near US 12 and Bend St). Property is in disrepair
- 9929 Hwy 12 SW (near US 12 and Foster St). Property is currently for lease.

"Not a welcoming feel or attractive area. This town doesn't have to depend on the local population as it sits right smack on a main highway!! Fix the place up like Sweden!! People will STOP there!!"

"Sadly, Rochester is not known for much, except for the casino. We were attracted to the area by the higher end custom homes and rural character. We also liked what we heard about the schools. An untapped asset is the great potential for agri-tourism. It’s much more attractive than a casino or apartments."

"Please clean up empty buildings, empty bar at intersection is a homeless camp. We are often fearful for our safety. We don't want a tavern, new owners have been stopped from opening a bakery. Old Johnny's building is a huge eye sore as well. Constant, (day & night) drugs being ran from behind the Merc/thorbecks . care more about safety than sidewalks."
Placemaking

Where is Rochester?

Rochester is an unincorporated community; depending on who you speak to and in what context, Rochester’s population and boundaries change. While at the June Community Focus Group meeting and the October 19th Public Workshop, we asked people to identify where Rochester is. In the map below, the more red an area is, the more it is associated with Rochester.

Important Community Centers

- **Swede Hall.** Available for rental and community meetings.

- **Community Center.** Houses a sheriff’s office substation, Boys & Girls Club, ROOF community Services (food bank, tutoring, and other community support programs). Also the site of the community park

- **Religious Institutions.** Rochester is home to at least 5 religious institutions, two of which are located on US 12 and the remaining 3 are in close proximity. Community services offered by the organizations include child daycare facilities and a soup kitchen.
Recreation Facilities

- **Rochester Community Park.** The community park sits on land owned by the Rochester School District and is the only facility that can be used by the public free of charge.
  Amenities include:
  - Playground
  - Playfield (soccer, baseball)
  - Walking path
  - Community garden

- **School District Facilities.** The school district has playgrounds and playfields at its schools. It might be possible to use school district facilities free of charge but such facilities are used for classes and school-related activities during the school day.

- **Hoss Field (Grand Mound).** Privately owned and operated. Amenities include:
  - Playfields (soccer, baseball)
  - Concessions stand

"We need a better community identity. It would be nice to be known for an open farmers market where local farms can sell their produce and handmade crafts. Something like Puyallup’s Pavilion only smaller and more rustic. Puyallup’s Pavilion is too modern for Rochester. The Mennonite’s make some great baked goods and we have great rustic things to sell. Such a facility could be used year-round for seasonal events.”

"We love the local events and parades! They bring people out and build a better sense of place and community. I lived in Marysville and we have had the Strawberry festival. Coming from Tacoma, it was like Andy Griffith’s Mayberry. Unfortunately, the city decided to get greedy and spoiled the community’s character by growing excessively. This put pressure on the State Highway system and greatly reduced the quality of life in the area."

"I feel that Rochester needs welcome signs that actually say, "Welcome to Rochester", improvements to the community park, sidewalks are definitely needed through the city limits as well as an ordinance requiring businesses to be well kept and look as though the town has some pride in its appearance."

Education Facilities

The Rochester school district operates five schools in the area. H.E.A.R.T. High School is the district’s alternative high school and is located at the school district offices/community center. Rochester Middle School sits in the middle of the study area on US 12 and many students walk/bike from nearby neighborhoods to and from school. Total district enrollment for the 2016-2017 school year was 2,302 students with 526 attending the middle school.

![Rochester Middle School Enrollment](chart.png)