The State of Housing in the South Wedge: Understanding our Neighborhood Today and Planning for Tomorrow

By Jennifer Posey, Executive Director, South Wedge Planning Committee

The South Wedge has long been one of Rochester's more distinctive neighborhoods. Our historic homes, tree-lined streets, apartments, walkable business district, and proximity to downtown make it an attractive place to live. But as our neighborhood changes, so do the housing needs of the people who call it home.

The South Wedge Planning Committee (SWPC) believes it is important to understand who lives here, what residents earn, what types of housing are available, and whether people can afford to remain in the neighborhood.

For this housing overview, we are using the U.S. Census Bureau Community Survey from 2024 with five-year estimates for Census Tracts 32 and 34 in Monroe County. Together, these two tracts provide a statistical picture of much of the South Wedge.

The South Wedge by the Numbers

The combined Census Tract 32 and 34 estimates show:

- **4,235 residents**
- **2,702 housing units**
- **2,503 households**
- **Median ages ranging from 32.5 to 40.1 years**



The neighborhood includes historic single-family homes, duplexes, multi-family properties, converted apartments, larger apartment buildings, and condominiums.

This variety is one of the South Wedge's greatest strengths. However, maintaining these properties and ensuring that housing remains accessible to residents at different income levels will require continued investment.

Who Lives in the South Wedge?

The demographics of our neighborhood reveal two somewhat different populations.

Census Tract 32 has approximately 1,840 residents and a median age of 40.1 years. Census Tract 34 has approximately 2,395 residents and a younger median age of 32.5 years.

Both tracts have substantial working-age populations, particularly adults in their twenties and thirties. This reflects the South Wedge's appeal to young professionals, individuals, and households who appreciate living close to employment, restaurants, entertainment, and downtown Rochester.

Older adults are also an important part of our community. As residents age, their housing needs can change. Stairs, property maintenance, accessibility, heating costs, and the ability to remain independent become increasingly important.

We need to consider whether our neighborhood has enough housing choices for people who want to remain in the South Wedge throughout their lives.



Income and Housing Affordability

One of the most interesting findings is the difference in household incomes between the two census tracts.

Census tract

Median household income

Tract 32: $24,510

Tract 34: $70,515

These differences demonstrate that the South Wedge is home to residents with very different financial circumstances.

Tract 32 also reports a poverty rate of approximately 37.2%, compared with 17.1% in Tract 34.

This income disparity is important when considering housing affordability. A household earning $40,000 annually would need to keep monthly housing expenses around $1,000 or less to

meet the commonly used 30% affordability standard.

For households earning less, even modest rent increases or unexpected utility expenses can create financial hardship.

Affordable housing must remain part of the conversation as the neighborhood continues to attract investment seekers and new residents.

Homeownership, Rental Housing, and Property Values

The combined census tracts contain approximately 2,702 housing units, with 1,297 units in Tract 32 and 1,405 in Tract 34.

The estimated median value of owner-occupied homes differs between the two areas:

Census tract

Median owner-occupied home value

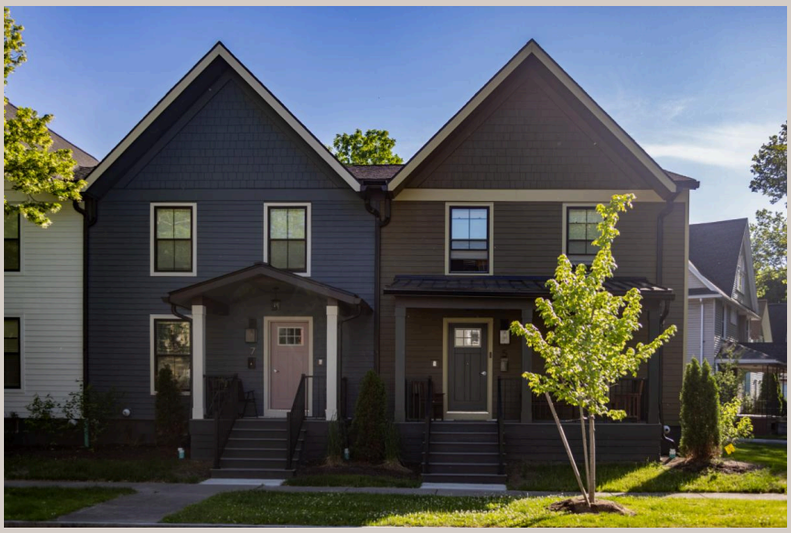
Tract 32: $141,700

Tract 34: $218,500

These differences illustrate the variety of housing markets within the neighborhood.

The South Wedge has a substantial rental housing presence, alongside established homeowners and people looking to purchase their first home.

Maintaining safe, affordable apartments is important, as is preserving opportunities for homeownership. We want residents to have the ability to establish roots, build equity, and remain part of the community.



Preserving Our Older Housing Stock

One of the South Wedge's greatest assets is its historic housing. Many properties were built decades ago and contribute to the architectural character that makes our neighborhood special.

However, older homes require ongoing investment. Roofs, plumbing, electrical systems, heating equipment, windows, foundations, and insulation all need attention.

Older housing can also present environmental health concerns, including lead paint, mold, moisture, and poor indoor air quality.

For homeowners, maintaining an older property can become financially overwhelming. For landlords, keeping apartments safe and affordable requires balancing maintenance costs and rental income. For tenants, deferred repairs can affect health, safety, and quality of life.

Preserving our existing housing stock is just as important as creating new housing opportunities.



What Will the South Wedge Look Like in 2030 and 2035?

Although there is no official population forecast specifically for these two census tracts, current demographic information gives us important considerations for future planning. Over the next five to ten years, several housing needs deserve attention:

More housing options for older adults. As residents age, demand for accessible apartments, smaller homes, single-floor living, and home modifications will become increasingly important.

Continued demand for rental housing. The neighborhood needs a range of rental options for individuals, couples, and families at different income levels.

Preservation of affordable housing. We must find ways to maintain reasonably priced housing while encouraging property improvements and responsible investment.

Home rehabilitation and energy improvements. Older homes will need continued investment in insulation, heating systems, windows, roofs, lead safety, and other improvements.

Creative housing arrangements. Multigenerational housing, accessory dwelling units, shared housing, and housing exchanges may provide additional solutions as residents' needs change.

SWPC's Role in Planning for the Future

At the South Wedge Planning Committee, we recognize that housing needs are not the same for everyone. A young adult looking for an affordable apartment has different needs than a family purchasing its first home or an older resident hoping to remain in a house that has been home for decades.

This is why SWPC has been exploring an Aging in Place Housing Model and the Collaborative Accessibility Exchange. These initiatives look at creative ways to address changing housing needs, improve accessibility, and help residents remain connected to the neighborhood.

We also believe that housing education, homeowner assistance, tenant resources, healthy homes programming, and partnerships with housing organizations are essential to preserving our community.

As we look toward 2030 and beyond, our goal should be to maintain a neighborhood that offers safe, accessible, and affordable housing for residents at every stage of life.

Our challenge is not simply to build more housing. It is to make sure the housing we have is safe, affordable, accessible, and available to the people who make the South Wedge a community.

Upcoming Classes



Added vs. Natural Sugars Lunch & Learn

Thursday, November 12
12pm-1pm
Abundance Food Co-op
571 South Avenue

Register Here
Free Class



Holiday Card Making

Sunday, November 15
12pm-3pm
Abundance Food Co-op
571 South Avenue

Register Here
Free Class



Douglass History Lunch & Learn

Thursday, November 19
11am-12pm
Abundance Food Co-op
571 South Avenue

Register Here
Free Class



Homebuying Preparedness Workshop

Thursday, November 19th
2pm-3:30pm
Neighborworks Community Partners
130 East Avenue, Suite 200

Register Here
Free Class



Make Your Own Stamp

Tuesday, November 19th
6-8pm
Abundance Food Co-Op
571 South Avenue
Cost $30

Register Here



Plant Based Cooking: Holiday Appetizers

Saturday, November 21st
12-1pm
Abundance Food Co-Op
571 South Avenue

Register Here
Free Class

MORE CLASSES

Holiday Events



Wedge Waddle

Thursday, November 26
starting at 10am
At Abundance Food Co-Op
571 South Avenue

Register Here
Sponsor Here
Donate Here

Race Bib and T-shirt Pick Up:

On Wednesday, November 25th from 4-8pm
at Abundance Food Co-Op (571 South Avenue)
we will have a registration table with race bib and tshirt pick up. We have 300 Tshirts and they are first come first serve. We ask that you please ***register online*** beforehand. This is a free event!
We can't wait to Waddle with you!



Holiday Beers & Carols

December 17 from 6-8pm
at Swiftwater Brewing
378 Mt. Hope Avenue

A free event to come and get some holiday spirit as we sing and cheers with neighbors and friends!



Holiday Decorating Contest

Register Online by Dec. 12

Judging on Dec. 16

Announced at Beers & Carols Dec. 17

Register Here

Save the Date

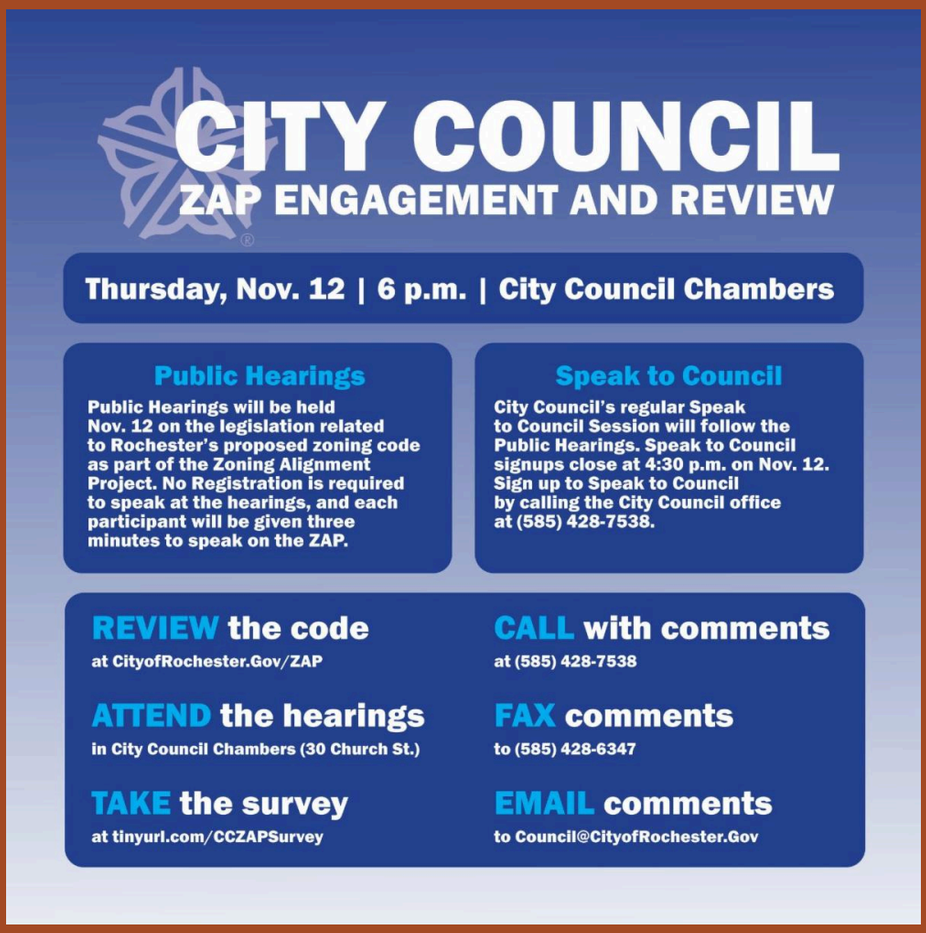





Saturday, Dec. 5th
11am-4pm
Find the perfect
locally made gift
for everone on your list
Handmade
Holiday
Nativity Preparatory Academy
15 Whalin St. Roc. NY. 14620
More info at littlebuttoncraft.com



Upcoming Community Engagement Meetings



SWPC Board Meeting

Tuesday, November 17th

9am-10am

The Board of Directors meets virtually on the third Tuesday of the month. Meetings are open to the public.

Zoom Registration

Everyone is Welcome... Community Engagement Meeting

Wednesday, November 25th
5:30-6:30pm
SWPC Office
224 Mt. Hope Avenue



PARENTAL FEEDBACK NEEDED:

The *RCSD Budget Survey* aims to find community priorities for next year's operating budget

The *Monroe County Walk and Roll Survey* seeks guardian feedback to develop their Safe Routes Child Walk and Bike Safety Education Programs

THANK YOU

to

RGE, Wegmans, Rochester Area Community Foundation, Genesee Co-0p Federal Credit Union and Highland Hospital for your sponsorship of the 2026 Wedge Waddle!

South Wedge Planning Committee | 674 South Ave | Rochester, NY 14620 US

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