

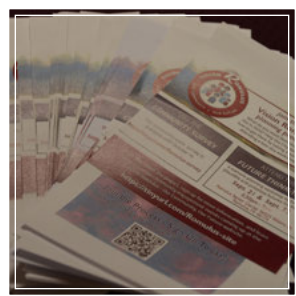


# VISION ROMULUS OUR COMMUNITY, OUR FUTURE

## THINK-TANK REPORT

CITY OF ROMULUS, MICHIGAN, USA

NOVEMBER 2022





# VISION ROMULUS – OUR COMMUNITY, OUR FUTURE

## THINK-TANK REPORT CITY OF ROMULUS, MICHIGAN, USA

This report summarizes the outcomes of the 'Vision Romulus – Our Community, Our Future' Think-Tank held on September 21 and 22, 2022. Over 60 community members participated in the Think-Tank and developed the scenarios presented in this report. This report has been produced as part of the Vision Romulus – Our Community, Our Future visioning project which aims to develop a new community vision that will guide leadership and the community looking out to 2030.

This report and the associated data analysis are available on the project portal:

<https://lab2.future-iq.com/vision-romulus/>

REPORT PREPARED BY:

**future→iQ**

Create **Future Intelligence**®

[www.future-iq.com](http://www.future-iq.com)

THINK-TANK HOSTED BY:

**Romulus**  
Home of Opportunity

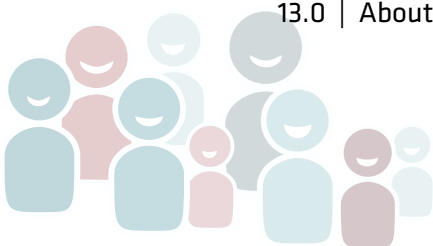






## »»»»» TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction.....	1
2.0   How to Read this Report.....	2
3.0   Community Survey Results .....	3
3.1   Importance of a Shared Vision and Shared Values.....	4
3.2   Current Direction and Speed of Change in Romulus.....	5
3.3   Satisfaction and Growth Opportunities in Romulus .....	6
3.4   What is the best thing about living and/or working in Romulus?.....	7
3.5   What would you change about living and/or working in Romulus? .....	8
3.6   The most exciting future opportunities for Romulus.....	9
4.0   Think-Tank Workshop .....	10
5.0   Forces Shaping the Future – Macro Trends .....	11
6.0   Key Drivers Identification.....	12
7.0   Identifying Scenario Shaping Clusters of Drivers.....	13
8.0   Cluster Map Development and Scenario Axis .....	14
9.0   Creating the Scenario Framework .....	15
9.1   Scenario A: Corporations Prosper, Community Suffers .....	16
9.2   Scenario B: Up, Up, and Away.....	18
9.3   Scenario C: Romulus Divided.....	20
9.4   Scenario D: Escape from Romulus – 2030 .....	22
10.0   Least Desired, Expected, and Preferred Futures .....	24
10.1   Least Desired Future – Scenario D – Escape from Romulus .....	24
10.2   Expected Future – Scenario C – Romulus Divided.....	25
10.3   Preferred Future – Scenario B – Up, Up, and Away .....	26
10.4   Next Steps – Getting to the Preferred Future .....	27
11.0   Next Steps in the Vision Romulus – Our Community Our Future Process .....	28
12.0   More Information & Acknowledgments.....	29
13.0   About Future IQ .....	30



# 1.0 | INTRODUCTION

Romulus is a western suburb of Metro Detroit and is most notable as the location of one of the ten busiest airports in the US, Detroit Metropolitan Airport (DTW). With a population of 23,544 in 2020 (Source: United States Census Bureau) Romulus is known for its rural, small-town feel and strong sense of community while being a suburb of Metro Detroit.

The City of Romulus, Michigan is embarking on a nine-month community-wide visioning and planning project throughout 2022. The Vision Romulus - Our Community, Our Future project will produce a future-orientated Community Vision plan for the City of Romulus. The process will bring the community together through extensive engagement methods in order to identify a realistic vision for the future looking out to 2030. The outcome of the visioning process will be the Community Vision plan which may inform future decisions on planning, land use and policy making in the city.

The 'Vision Romulus - Our Community, Our Future' Think-Tank was an opportunity for community members to take a 'deep dive' into community visioning through an inclusive and transparent scenario-planning process. This was just one step in the extensive visioning process.

This scenario-based Think-Tank report summarizes the Vision Romulus - Our Community, Our Future Think-Tank workshop that took place on September 21 and 22, 2022. The Think-Tank is a key step in the Vision Romulus - Our Community, Our Future process. The components of the visioning work to date has comprised of:



## BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Extensive background research was conducted prior to the Community Survey and Think-Tank. This also included one on one zoom interviews with City Staff and residents. More details of these interviews can be viewed at <https://lab2.future-iq.com/vision-romulus/>.



## VISION ROMULUS - OUR COMMUNITY, OUR FUTURE COMMUNITY SURVEY

An extensive survey was completed by almost 600 community members. The survey aimed to understand community perspectives on current trends in the city, as well as their aspirations for the future.



## SCENARIO-BASED THINK-TANK WORKSHOP

The in-person scenario-based Think-Tank workshop held on September 21 and 22, 2022, provided an important opportunity to engage over 60 Romulus community members in a critical dialogue about the future of Romulus, looking out to 2030.



## THINK-TANK PARTICIPANT HEATMAPS

Think-Tank participants completed heatmaps at the end of the Think-Tank to express their Expected, Preferred and Least Desired future scenarios, looking out to 2030. The results are examined in this report.





## 2.0 | HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

The importance of collaboration, equity, and planning for the future have been highlighted as critically important to building resiliency for our communities as we look to the grand challenges ahead.

This report lays out the findings from the Think-Tank workshop, however more details about the overall visioning process can be viewed at the Vision Romulus – Our Community, Our Future portal <https://lab2.future-iq.com/vision-romulus/>.

The Vision Romulus – Our Community, Our Future visioning process started with background exploration and analysis, through to building a range of future possible directions for Romulus. Individual interviews were important to ascertain the current situation in Romulus and why a visioning process is important. This work represents robust ‘future thinking’ where community stakeholders considered possible directions and the impacts and consequences of those directions. The process until now, and this report, then drills down deeper into what people saw as the optimal or preferred future. This understanding helps lay the groundwork for ascertaining ‘how we get there’. The final vision for Romulus will be delivered in January 2023, after a process of in-depth focus groups, community survey #2, Youth session, and a Community Presentation of the Final Report. This will culminate in the strategic pillars which will be necessary for Romulus to focus upon looking out to 2030.

### VISION ROMULUS - OUR COMMUNITY, OUR FUTURE

Steps in the process

Sections of the report

Information gathered from the Community Survey.

Introduce the Think-Tank process and the goals for the process.

Identify macro trends shaping the future of Romulus.

Identify key drivers and clusters of drivers shaping the future of Romulus.

Create plausible future scenarios for Romulus.

Identify Expected, Least Desired, and Preferred Futures for Romulus. Identification of the next steps in the visioning process.

Brief discussion on the Community Survey (Chapter 3)

Think-Tank Workshop (Chapter 4)

Forces Shaping the Future – Macro Trends (Chapter 5)

Key Drivers Identification and Identifying Scenario Shaping Clusters of Drivers; Cluster Map Development (Chapters 6 - 8)

Creating the Scenario Framework (Chapter 9)

Expected, Least Desired, and Preferred Futures (Chapter 10-11)





## 3.0 | COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Prior to the Think-Tank workshop, an extensive community survey was conducted in order to gather insight into the community's perceptions of Romulus. Approximately 600 people responded to the community survey which was promoted on the portal, the City of Romulus social media platforms and in the local press. Almost 200 of the respondents were in the under 19 age grouping category. This represented the intentional outreach to include the 'youth voice' by asking high school students to take the survey. The community survey ran August through to October 2022. The community survey was hosted on the Vision Romulus – Our Community, Our Future portal at <https://lab2.future-iq.com/vision-romulus/>.

Responses from the Community Survey were fascinating. All of the almost 600 respondents took time and energy to give their thoughts to the myriad of open-ended questions. This enabled the respondents to give their views in an unhindered manner.

Community members were asked standard profiling questions, however open-ended questions were also used to enable the community members to give their full thoughts on the future of Romulus, looking out to 2030. These open-ended questions probed the community about what the best thing was about living and/or working in Romulus, what changes should be made to improve living and/or working in Romulus and what are the most exciting future opportunities for Romulus. Further questions were asked about the importance of a shared vision and shared values to the future of Romulus as well as the current direction and speed of change in Romulus. The community survey responses can be filtered by age, whether the person is a Romulus resident, ethnicity, and how long the individual has lived or worked in Romulus.

For the purposes of this report, a selection of results will be outlined, however all interactive results can be viewed in real time on the Vision Romulus – Our Community, Our Future at <https://lab2.future-iq.com/vision-romulus/community-survey-data-visualization/>.







## 3.1 | IMPORTANCE OF A SHARED VISION AND SHARED VALUES

Survey respondents were asked how important it is to have a shared vision and shared values for the future of Romulus. They were asked the questions below, which were then combined to produce the following chart.

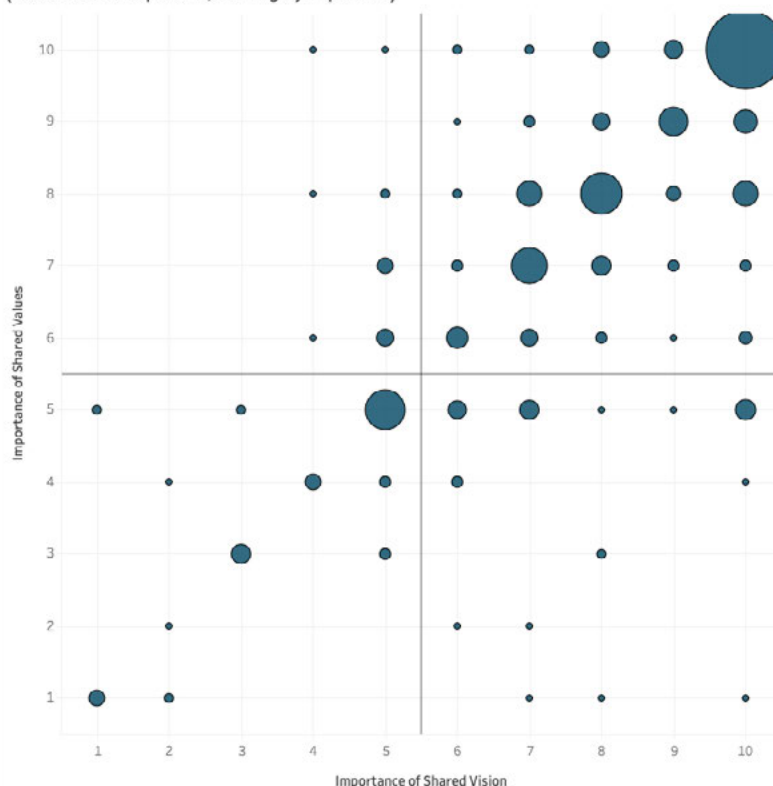
How important is it to have a SHARED VISION for the future of Romulus?

Scale: 1=Not Important; 10=Highly Important

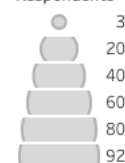
How important do you think it is to identify SHARED VALUES for the community of Romulus?

Scale: 1=Not Important; 10=Highly Important

X Axis – Importance of Shared Vision  
(SCALE: 1=Not important; 10= Highly important)  
Y Axis – Importance of Shared Values  
(SCALE: 1=Not important; 10= Highly important)



Respondents



DataInsight

- The size of the circle denotes the popularity of response. The chart shows that respondents felt that both Shared Vision and Shared Values were highly important as this was the largest circle at 10 on both axes.
- These results can be filtered on the [portal](#) according to age, whether people are Romulus residents, ethnicity, and how long the individual has lived or worked in Romulus.



## 3.2 | CURRENT DIRECTION AND SPEED OF CHANGE IN ROMULUS

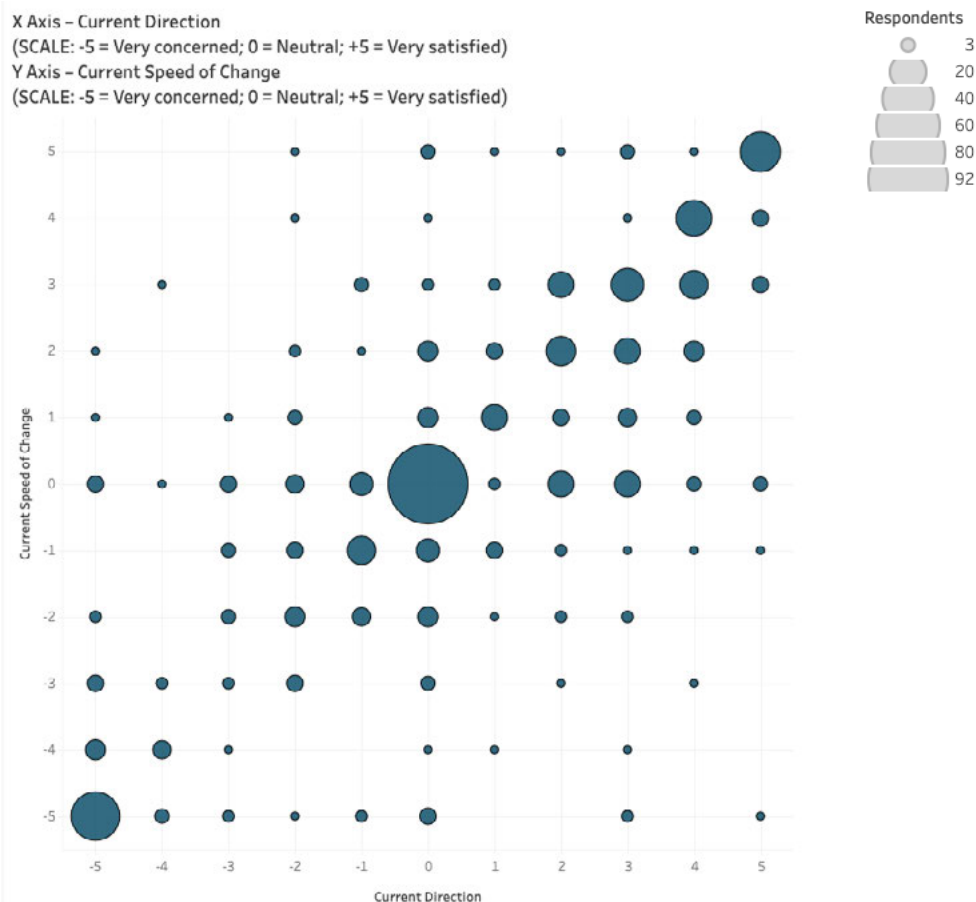
Survey respondents were asked how happy or concerned they were about the current direction and speed of change in Romulus. They were asked the questions below, which were then combined to produce the following chart.

How happy or concerned are you about the current direction of Romulus?

Scale: -5=Very Concerned; 0=Neutral; +5=Very Happy

How happy or concerned are you about the current speed of change in Romulus?

Scale: -5=Very Concerned; 0=Neutral; +5=Very Happy



DataInsight

- The size of the circle denotes the popularity of response. The chart shows a wide spread of responses from concern about the direction and speed of change in the lower left of the chart through to satisfaction in the top right of the chart. However the medium (largest circle) was at 0 – Neutral.
- These results can be filtered on the [portal](#) according to age, whether people are Romulus residents, ethnicity, and how long the individual has lived or worked in Romulus.





## 3.3 | SATISFACTION AND GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES IN ROMULUS

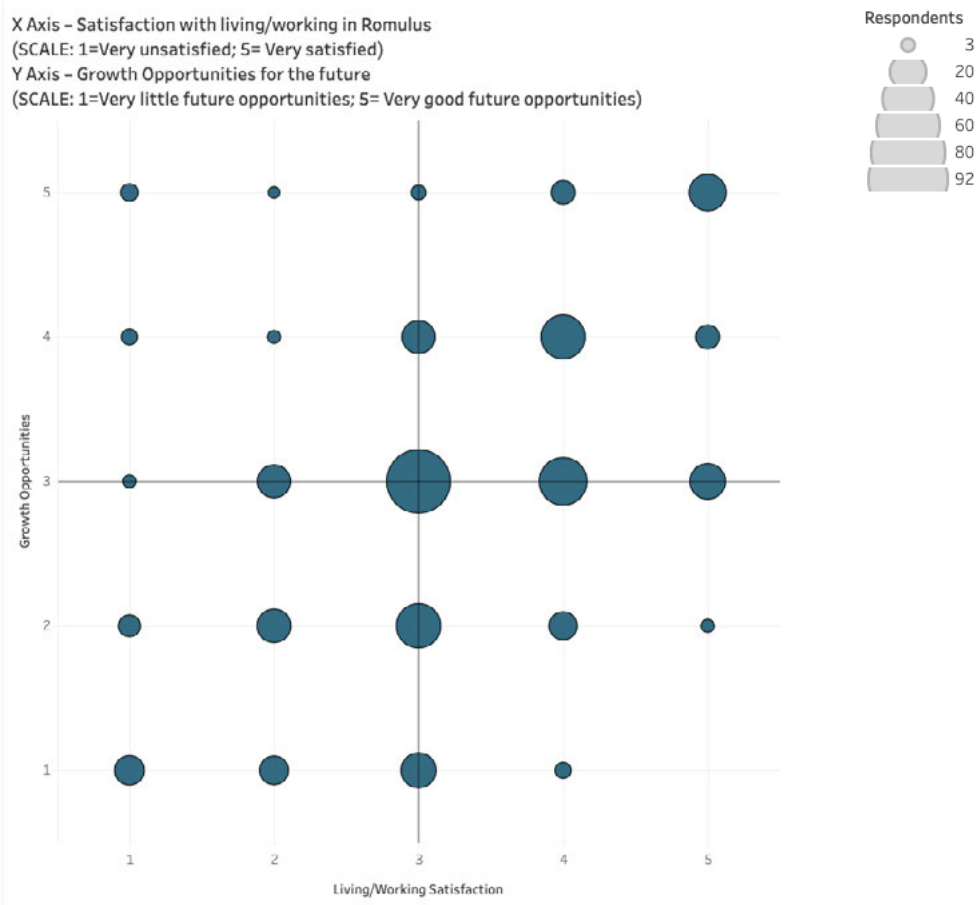
Survey respondents were asked how satisfied they were about living and working in Romulus and their thoughts on future growth opportunities in Romulus. They were asked the questions below, which were then combined to produce the following chart.

How satisfied are you about living and/or working in Romulus?

Scale: 1=Very Unsatisfied;  
3=Neutral; 5=Very Satisfied

Do you think Romulus offers you future opportunities to grow and thrive - in your personal life, in pursuit of hobbies and interests, in your career or business?

Scale: 1 = Very little future opportunity; 0=Neutral;  
10 = Very good future opportunity



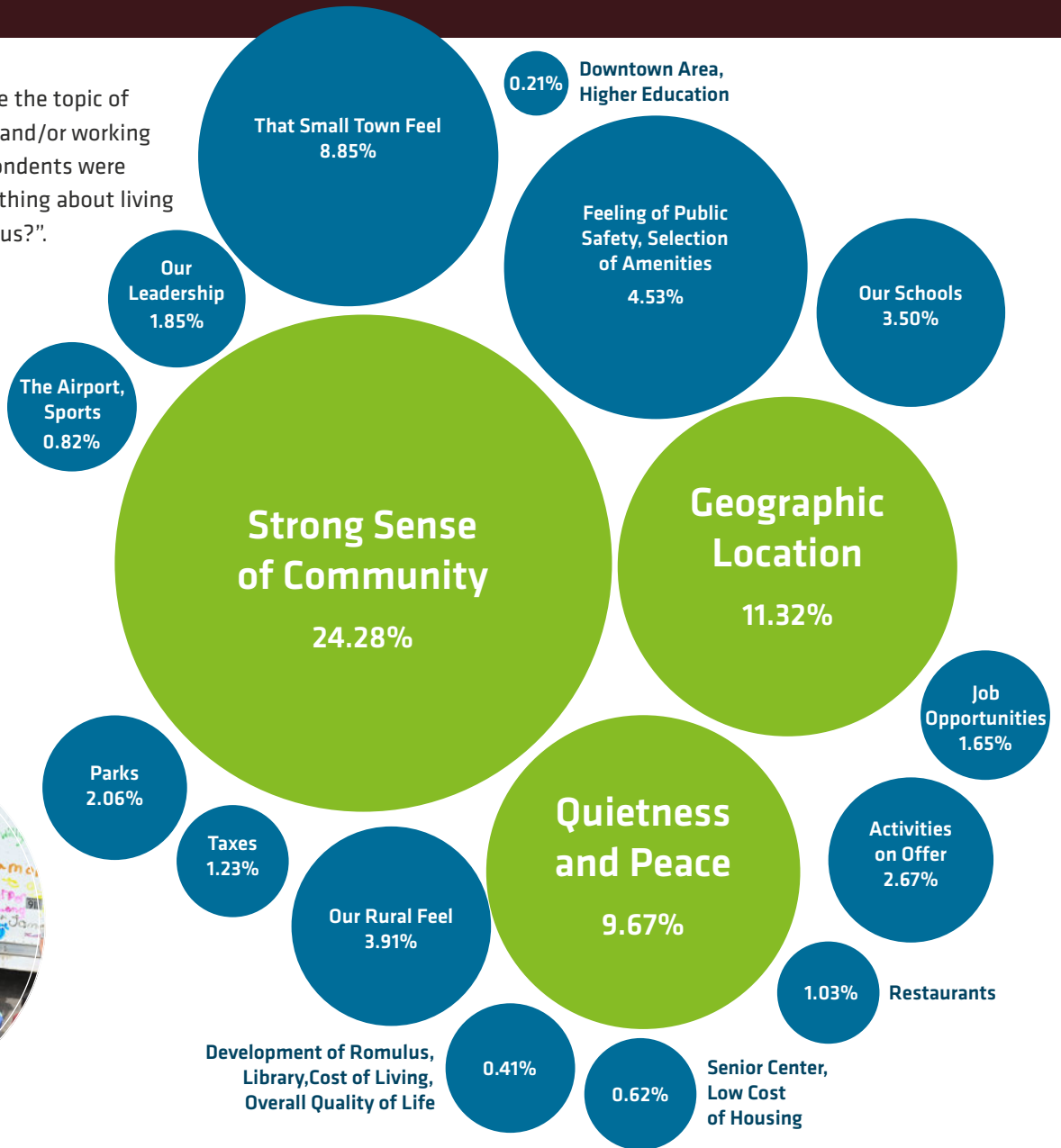
DataInsight

- The size of the circle denotes the popularity of response. The largest circle was at the midpoint on both the x axis and y axis. This shows that the majority of respondents felt neutral regarding satisfaction with living/working in Romulus and future growth opportunities in Romulus.
- These results can be filtered on the [portal](#) according to age, whether people are Romulus residents, ethnicity, and how long the individual has lived or worked in Romulus.



## 3.4 | WHAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT LIVING AND/OR WORKING IN ROMULUS?

In order to further explore the topic of satisfaction about living and/or working in Romulus, survey respondents were asked “What is the best thing about living and/or working in Romulus?”.



DataInsight

- The open ended responses were categorized to key themes. The size of the circle denotes the popularity of response.
- The Strong Sense of Community, Geographic Location and Quietness and Peace were seen as the best things about living in and/or working in Romulus.





## 3.5 | WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE ABOUT LIVING AND/OR WORKING IN ROMULUS?

In order to further explore the topic of satisfaction about living and/or working in Romulus, survey respondents were asked “What would you change, if you could, about living and/or working in Romulus?”.



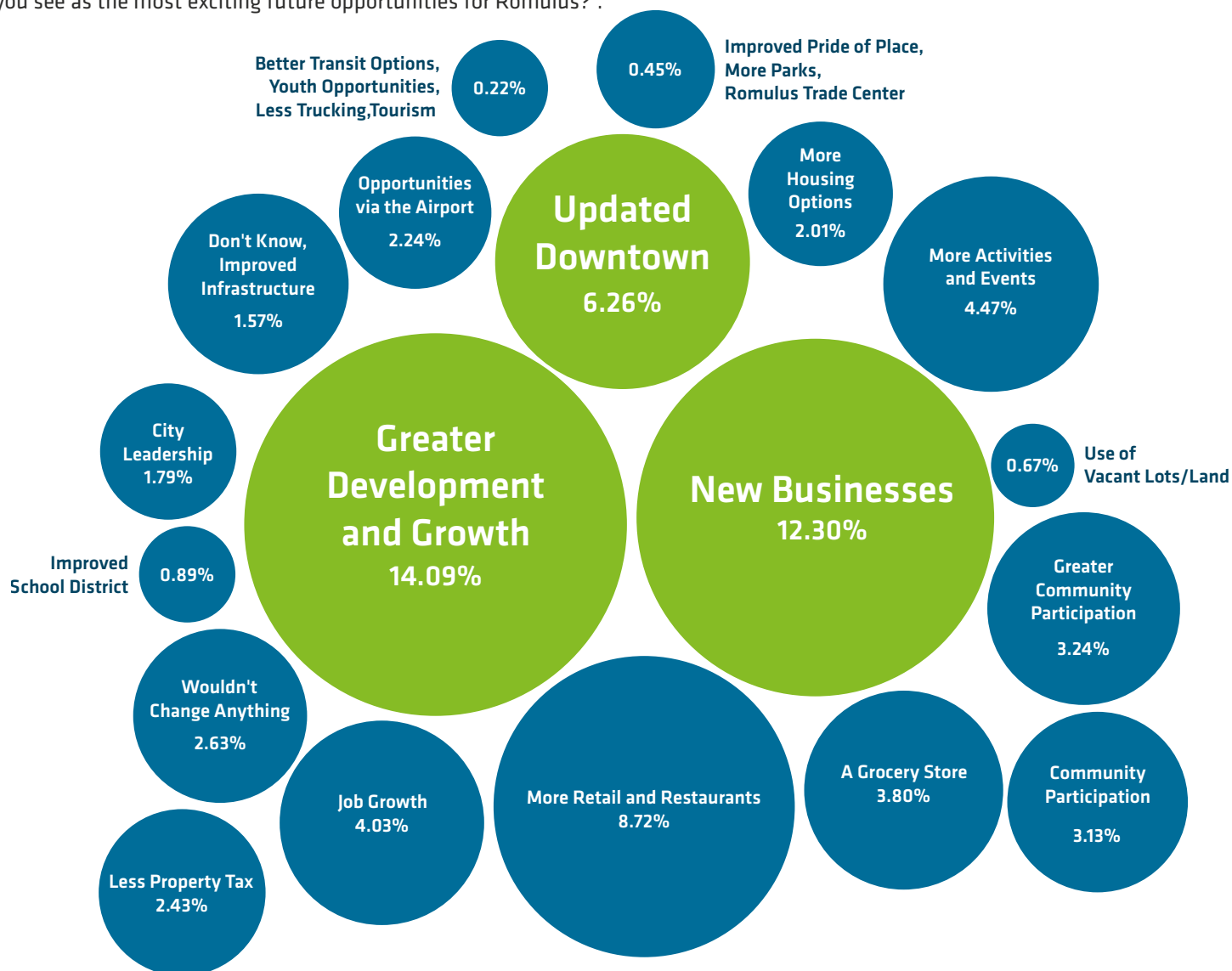
DataInsight

- The open ended responses were categorized to key themes. The size of the circle denotes the popularity of response.
- Respondents felt that Better Roads, a Grocery Store and More Retail and Stores were the things that they would like to change in Romulus.



## 3.6 | THE MOST EXCITING FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ROMULUS

In order to further explore the topic of opportunity in Romulus, survey respondents were asked an open-ended question, “What do you see as the most exciting future opportunities for Romulus?”.



DataInsight

- The open ended responses were categorized to key themes. The size of the circle denotes the popularity of response.
- Respondents felt that Greater Community Participation, New Businesses and Greater Development and Growth were the most exciting future opportunities for Romulus.





## »»»» 4.0 | THINK-TANK WORKSHOP

The Vision Romulus – Our Community, Our Future Think-Tank Workshop was held over two evenings on September 21 and 22, 2022, at the Senior Center, Romulus. The workshop explored how Romulus could change by 2030 and consisted of:

- A review of global trends and emergent issues and the connection to Romulus
- Identification of the top 20 key drivers shaping the future of Romulus
- Scoring the key drivers in terms of future impact for Romulus
- Formulation of the different plausible scenario ‘spaces’ and development of detailed narratives and descriptions of each scenario
- Identification of the Expected, Preferred, and Least Desired futures via Plausibility Mapping

**Scenario planning** provides a way to explore various plausible futures and considers the implications and consequences of different future pathways. This adds a richness and depth to the discussions about the preferred future, and a consideration of the intended and unintended consequences.

The Think-Tank began with an in-depth presentation on future trends and global conditions before moving on to conduct scenario planning for Romulus. Future iQ’s scenario planning process provides a methodology from which to explore plausible futures and takes into consideration the implications of various future scenarios. The process aimed to:

- Deepen the understanding and examination of how external events and local conditions could shape decision-making
- Identify and understand the key influences, trends, and dynamics that will shape Romulus looking out to 2030
- Create and describe four plausible long-term scenarios for Romulus
- Begin exploring alignment around a shared future vision

The scenarios developed during the Think-Tank workshop and outlined in this report are important in order to provide a framework to discuss future possible outcomes and implications for Romulus. Workshop deliberations can assist in identifying key actions for the city and how various groups might best contribute to future developments.





## 5.0 | FORCES SHAPING THE FUTURE – MACRO TRENDS

At the Think-Tank, participants explored the forces of change shaping the future of Romulus, including three key areas of emerging macro trends and forces of change. Perceptions around the nature of impact of these trends, both in terms of size and timing of impact, were examined to ascertain how important the participants consider the trends. Participants discussed the emerging trends at global, regional and local scales, and related them directly to Romulus in terms of how well prepared they considered themselves. Specifically, the key trend areas included:

- Demographics, population and mass urbanization
- Energy, food, water and climate change
- Technology and the speed of change

Of particular relevance to the discussion on trends in Romulus is the speed and scale of change occurring in demographics, population and mass urbanization as well as technology.



In the face of accelerating speed of change, the key to the long-term resiliency of Romulus is the ability to anticipate change and remain agile in response to emerging trends. This includes community input with the local government.





## 6.0 | KEY DRIVERS IDENTIFICATION

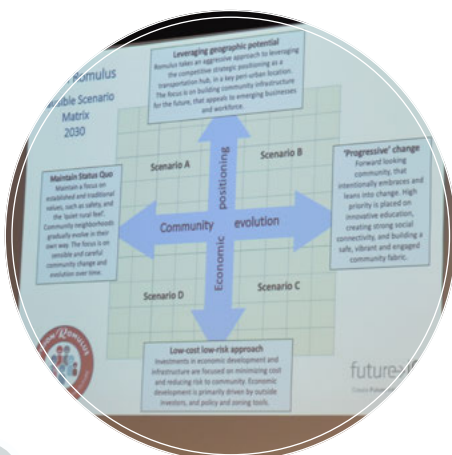
With the background of external trends, the Think-Tank participants produced drivers that they considered most likely to shape the future of Romulus. The drivers had been discussed at a group level and then at the wider workshop level. The scope of each driver was clarified, and any similar drivers were grouped, and new drivers added, until a list of twenty unique key drivers were identified.

### KEY DRIVERS SHAPING THE FUTURE OF ROMULUS, AS IDENTIFIED BY THINK-TANK PARTICIPANTS:

- Changing Public Land Management
- Competitive Diversified Development
- Suitability of Infrastructure
- Residential Housing Growth
- Leveraging the Airport
- Quality Education
- One Romulus
- Public Safety
- Intentional Community Engagement
- Tech Workforce Development
- Stakeholder Agency Engagement
- Ease of Doing Business in Romulus
- Logistics World Gateway
- Environmentally Conscious
- Rezoning
- Internal Transportation Connectivity
- Rebranding Romulus
- Cost of Living
- Fear of Change
- Overcoming Stigma

Drivers are events, trends, developments, catalysts, or forces that actively influence or cause change. The top 20 drivers for Romulus are seen to shape the community's future.

Please note that these drivers are not in any particular order.

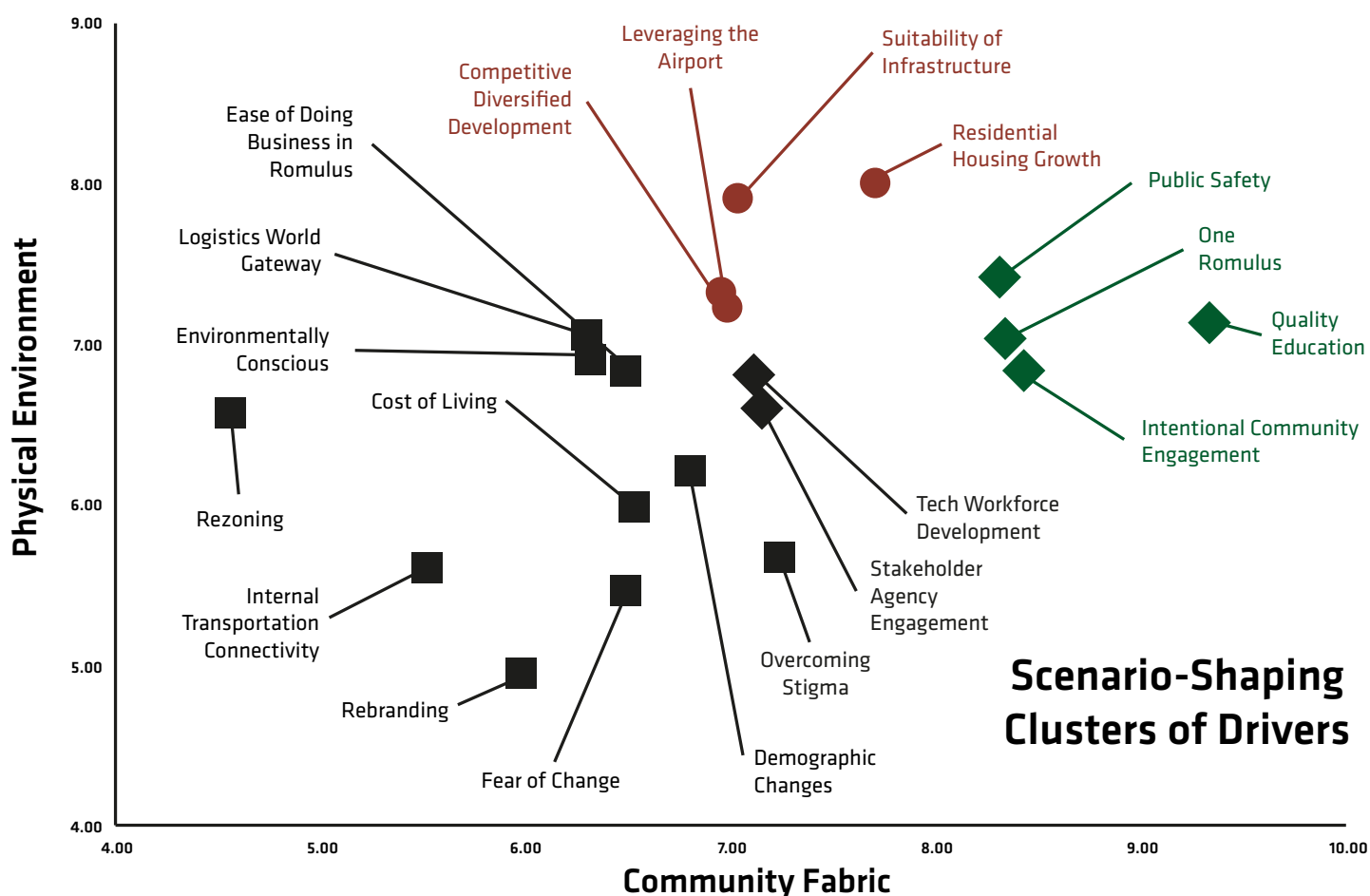


## 7.0 | IDENTIFYING SCENARIO SHAPING CLUSTERS OF DRIVERS

After agreement on the drivers, the Think-Tank participants rated each of the twenty key drivers on its size of impact on Romulus. The scale used was 1 – 10 (1 = small impact; 10 = very large impact). The size of impact refers to how significant the participant considers the driver will be in shaping the future of Romulus. The individual ratings by each participant were pooled and averaged, providing an overall rating for each driver by the entire group of participants.

Then, a scatter diagram of the drivers, based on size of impact was developed. The scatter diagram allows the identification of clusters which are relatively high in impact. This process illustrates the clusters of drivers that were seen as most critical in shaping the future – these clusters are termed ‘Scenario Shaping Clusters of Drivers.’

Please note that the following drivers were seen as being very low in impact to the future of Romulus by Think-Tank participants, and so were then disregarded from the final total of drivers. These were: Ease of doing business in Romulus, Logistics World Gateway, Environmentally Conscious, Rezoning, Internal Transportation Connectivity, Rebranding, Fear of Change and Overcoming Stigma.



DataInsight

- The identified drivers were clustered around two prominent themes: Physical Environment and Community Fabric.
- The drivers identified as having the highest impact on the Physical Environment were Suitability of Infrastructure, Residential Housing Growth and Leveraging the Airport; the drivers identified as having the highest impact on Community Fabric were Quality Education, One Romulus, Public Safety and Intentional Community Engagement.





The two axes of the scenario matrix were developed through the thematic clustering of the key drivers identified by Think-Tank participants.

## 8.0 | CLUSTER MAP DEVELOPMENT AND SCENARIO AXIS

Grouping similar drivers into two categories, clusters of drivers were identified by adding a thematic name linking the drivers in the clusters. These themes became the basis for the two axes on the scenario matrix that define the four scenario 'spaces', with quadrants either towards or away for each driver cluster. These quadrants were used to formulate four plausible scenarios. The two axes were defined as 'Economic Positioning' and 'Community Evolution.'

### CLUSTER THEMES:

#### ECONOMIC POSITIONING

- Competitive Diversified Development
- Suitability of Infrastructure
- Residential Housing Growth
- Leveraging the Airport

#### COMMUNITY EVOLUTION

- Quality Education
- One Romulus
- Public Safety
- Intentional Community Engagement

Of particular relevance to the discussion on trends in Romulus is the speed and scale of change occurring in demographics, population and mass urbanization as well as Technology.

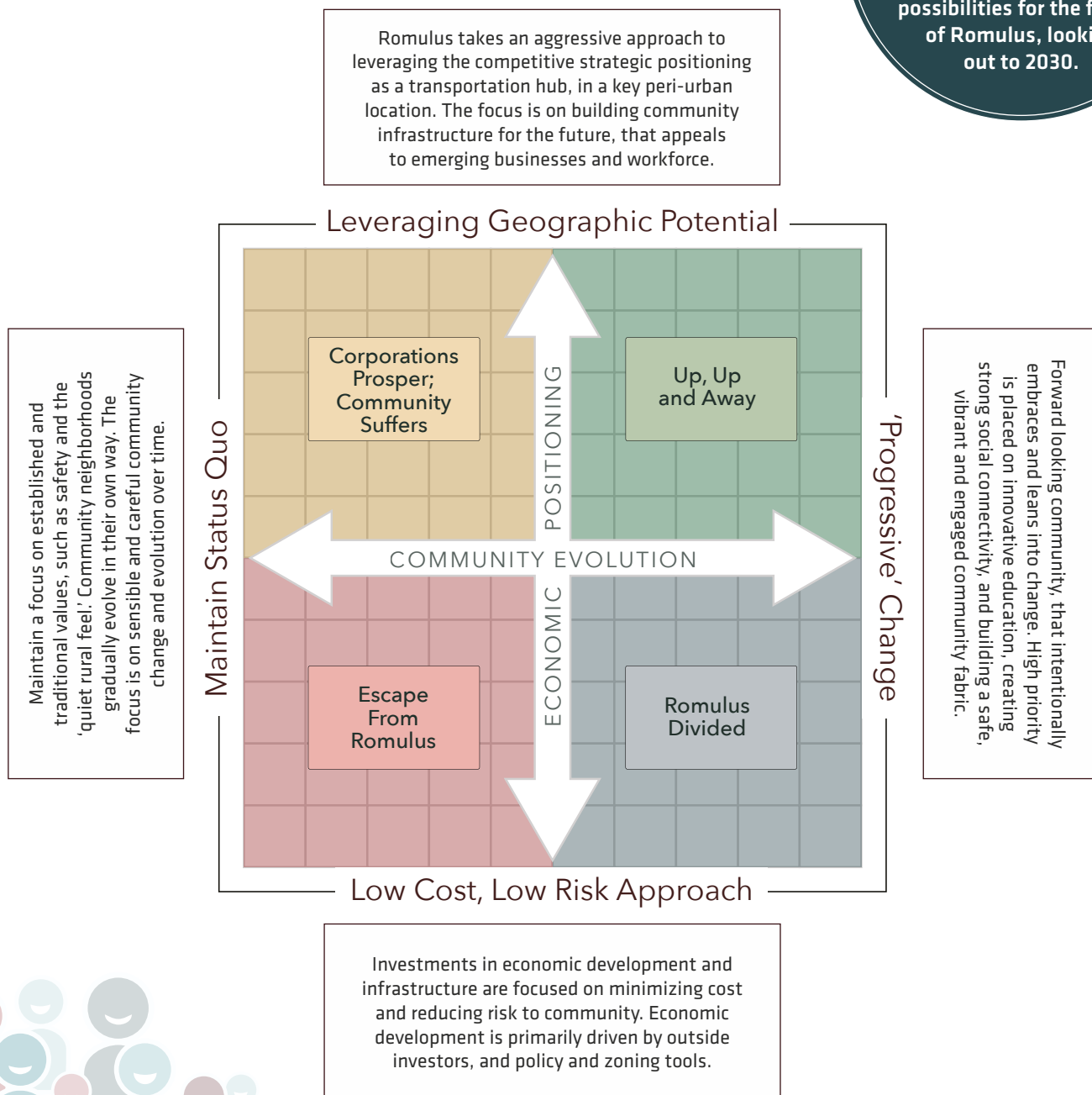


## 9.0 | CREATING THE SCENARIO FRAMEWORK

On the second day of the Think-Tank participants were presented with the scenario matrix, defined by the two major axes generated through the cluster development of the key drivers. Brief descriptions were also attached to the end points of each driver axes. Participants were divided into four groups to develop a narrative for each scenario. Each group was asked to describe the characteristics of Romulus in 2030 under the conditions of the scenario quadrant that they had been given. After the characteristics were established, Think-Tank participants were asked to devise major events or headlines of how the scenario occurred using the years 2023, 2025, and 2030, and to give their scenario a descriptive name. The name is intended to represent the description of the scenario in the form of a short title. Narratives, descriptions, and names of each scenario as developed by the workshop participants are included in the following sections.

This scenario-planning process provided a way to tease out plausible future scenarios and examine them from a speculative standpoint. They represent different possibilities for the future of Romulus, looking out to 2030.

### VISION ROMULUS: PLAUSIBLE SCENARIO MATRIX 2030



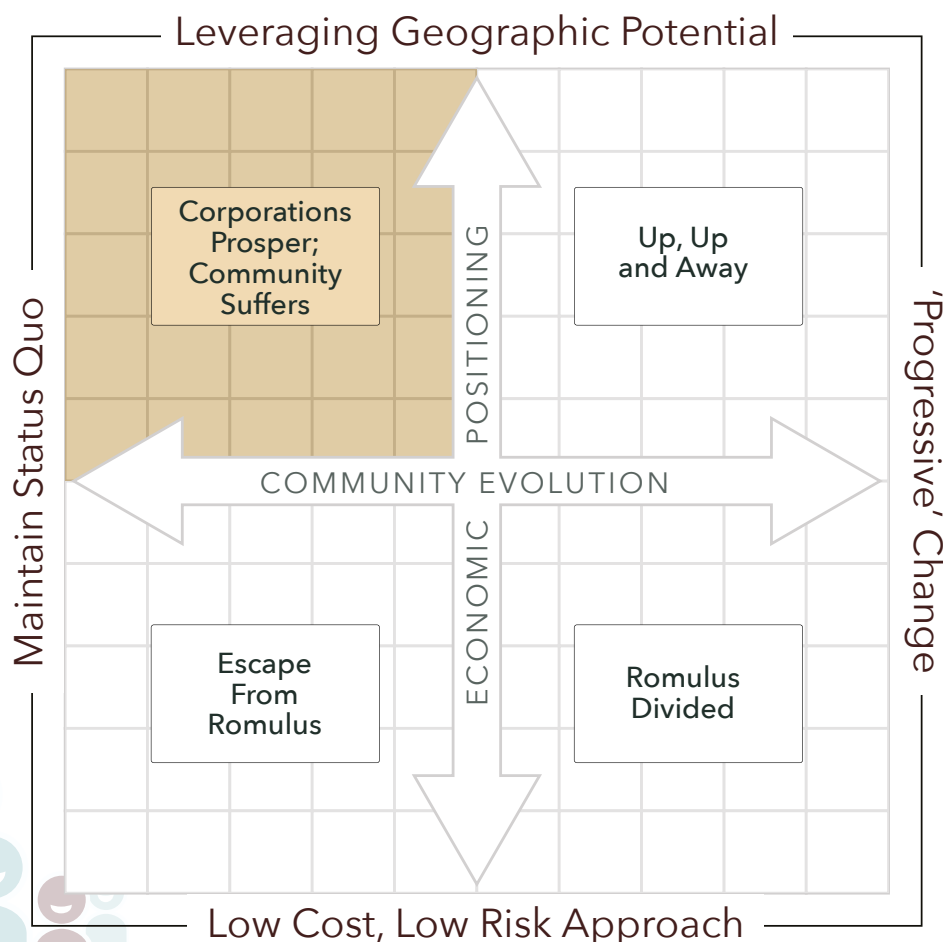




## 9.1 | SCENARIO A: CORPORATIONS PROSPER, COMMUNITY SUFFERS

The 'Corporations Prosper, Community Suffers' scenario conveys the situation when the geographic advantages of being close to DTW and other transportation routes take over the community fabric of Romulus.

This scenario forecasts a future where Romulus takes an aggressive approach to leveraging its unique and nationally competitive geographical positioning. With direct access to the airport and highways, Romulus becomes a key transportation hub in a peri-urban location. This geography appeals to large manufacturing corporations who move their operations to Romulus. As more businesses and corporations move to Romulus, the city loses the rural character that once separated it from the surrounding areas. Younger people who grew up in Romulus leave for higher education and don't return. They see the lack of amenities and activities that Romulus has to offer them and their future families as a reason to move away from Romulus. The remaining aging population recall the once wonderful sense of community that Romulus was proud of. They plan to leave their homes to their younger family members, however the family members rent out their family homes to workers from the new industrial corporations that start to define Romulus. As a result, there is a lack of community connectivity and Romulus becomes a place for workers to reside. With an emphasis on retaining the status quo, this scenario forecasts a future where the community evolves in its own way, with no real leadership or direction.



# SCENARIO A CHARACTERISTICS: CORPORATIONS PROSPER, COMMUNITY SUFFERS – 2030

The characteristics of this scenario paint a future with low local government intervention and a focus on industrial business growth. The community of Romulus starts to become mainly workforce rentals and loses its rural and small town feel.



## BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

- Downtown struggles to establish itself as a thriving part of Romulus and stagnates further. No retail/restaurants and local businesses are moving to Romulus to populate Downtown.
- Neighborhoods remain pocketed throughout Romulus. Housing remains as generally single housing but with larger and more spread out houses. This leads to a further lack of community connectivity.
- Trucking continues to increase especially throughout the North East of Romulus. As a transportation mecca, Romulus attracts more industrial and manufacturing businesses.
- In certain areas of Romulus, there is no new development as most of the growth is in the North East and North West of the city. This means that some parts of Romulus are thriving with businesses, but other areas are stagnating.



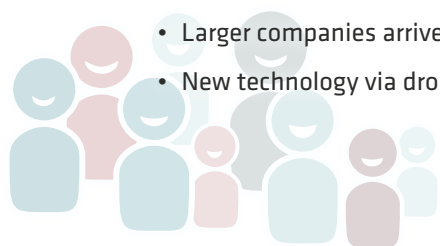
## COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL VALUES CHARACTERISTICS

- Younger people move out of Romulus due to a lack of appeal regarding quality-of-life factors such as general activities and amenities. This is due to the focus on industrial business growth.
- Romulus has an aging population who eventually leave their properties to their children who don't want to live in Romulus. These houses are unoccupied and then sold as rentals/workforce accommodation.
- The sense of community in Romulus fades away due to the aging population and the lack of a younger population remaining. Community participation falls away as Romulus becomes an industrial hub and people are not invested in the community.
- Due to the lack of young families staying in Romulus or moving to Romulus, the schools have declining numbers and are smaller. The quality of the school system is diminished.



## ENVIRONMENTAL AND LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Due to a larger rental population, there may be less focus on maintenance of properties and the overall pride of place that Romulus once enjoyed.
- Due to the rise in manufacturing and industrial businesses in Romulus, there will be more Battery Parks. The previously enjoyed rural feel of Romulus is lost.
- Larger companies arrive in Romulus and install environmentally positive solutions.
- New technology via drones is used as a transportation mecca.



In the 'Corporations Prosper, Community Suffers' scenario, industrial growth is prioritized as the geographic advantages of Romulus are realized. This results in the decline of the strong sense of community and rural feel, that Romulus once prided itself upon.

### 2023 HEADLINE NEWS:

**"Romulus Trade Center Opens First Business"**



### 2025 HEADLINE NEWS:

**"Green Initiative Leads to Strain on Evergreen Infrastructure"**



### 2030 HEADLINE NEWS:

**"The Landing Strip is Now a Library"**



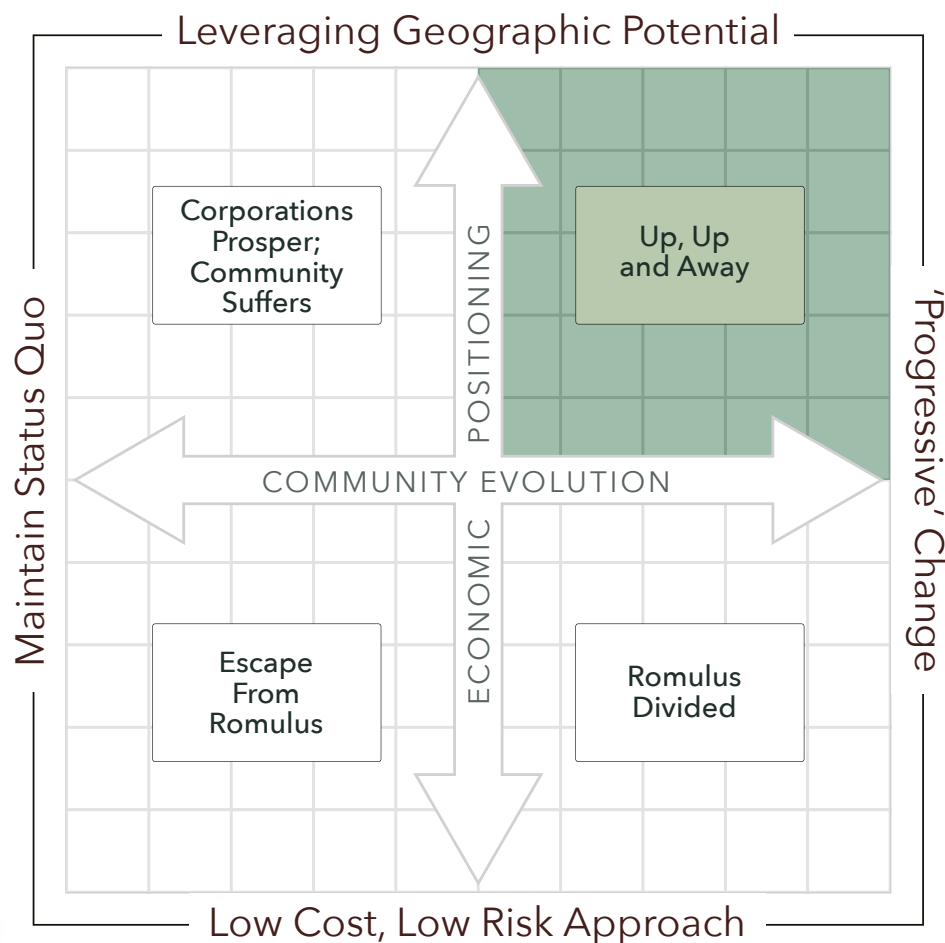




## 9.2 | SCENARIO B: UP, UP, AND AWAY

The 'Up, Up and Away' approach balances the needs of the current and future community with the future growth of Romulus

This scenario forecasts a future where there is a balance between Romulus building upon its geographic position in relation to the airport yet maintaining the community that it has consistently been proud of. The potential downfall of solely concentrating on industrial growth due to the proximity to the airport and major highways is reconciled with maintaining the Romulus that is integral to the community. While 'progressive change' initially appears threatening, this change is very beneficial to Romulus. The rejuvenation of Downtown to make it the hub or 'main street' which unifies the community becomes a huge asset to Romulus. Downtown becomes the street that enables the Romulus community to meet up at coffee shops, dine out in restaurants and do their daily shopping via the new Grocery Store. Such a community hub, often taken for granted elsewhere, becomes an attraction for new families and reinvigorates a dwindling Romulus community.



## 9.2 | SCENARIO B CHARACTERISTICS: UP, UP AND AWAY – 2030

The characteristics of this scenario convey a future where there is a strong and intentional forward focus on leveraging the competitive geographic positioning of Romulus and building both a homegrown and out of state future workforce. However, this is also accompanied by a deliberate focus on retaining the Romulus 'sense of community' which has always been so valued as well as enhancing that community evolution through encouraging innovative education, retaining and attracting youth and creating a stronger social connectivity going forward past 2030. To retain and attract youth, there is a focus on providing activities and amenities and a strong school district for people to start their families in Romulus. In order to remain competitive regarding livability, Romulus evolves with standard environmental practices (Recycling/Reusing/Composting) and is proud of a main street location (Downtown) which meets all of the community members' social and practical needs.



### BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

- Romulus welcomes a new high tech Microchip industry. Transportation options are enhanced with Qline and Trams due to the new industries and jobs. A Tech Center is also built.
- Housing options include tiny homes, condos, town homes for multi-family solutions and other solutions. This is accompanied by workforce and attainable housing.
- Retail is enhanced via boutiques, coffee shops, restaurants and an entertainment district in the Downtown area
- Sidewalks and Cycling lanes connect neighborhoods with the thriving Downtown area.

In the 'Up, Up and Away' approach, the needs of the current and future community are balanced with industrial growth.



### COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL VALUES CHARACTERISTICS

- Innovative education occurs outside of the strong mainstream schools. This includes technology, gaming, robotics and STEAM programs as well as a new community college. This enhances Romulus' reputation outside of DTW.
- The population of Romulus increases due to the intentional appeal conducted by the work from the city. Young people who moved away are coming back. Young families are drawn to the area due to increased livability reasons
- A vibrant Downtown with restaurants, coffee shops, retail outlets and a grocery store is the focal connectivity point for Romulus. It is the "Main Street" where people connect and meet their daily social and practical needs.
- As younger people remain in Romulus, the aging population is less reliant on themselves for support. There are more activities for both younger and older age cohorts, which make up the community fabric.

2025 HEADLINE NEWS:  
"Romulus Announces First Annual Tech Festival"



### ENVIRONMENTAL AND LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Infrastructure maintenance is enhanced due to a rejuvenated population. This includes paid street parking around Downtown, as people travel to meet their retail needs.
- Parks are developed and enhanced to meet the needs of the younger families who move to Romulus. Accessibility needs in outdoor spaces are met due to the aging population who are living in Romulus.
- The 'Rural Feel' of Romulus is enhanced via walkways, trails and cycling. This appeals to visitors and current residents.
- The impact of global industry moving to Romulus includes new ways of doing things – recycling, composting and a revisiting of environmentally friendly practices.

2030 HEADLINE NEWS:  
"Romulus Educational System Introduces Technology and Robotics Pathways"



2040 HEADLINE NEWS:  
"Romulus Opens First Green Space with Drone Raceway!"



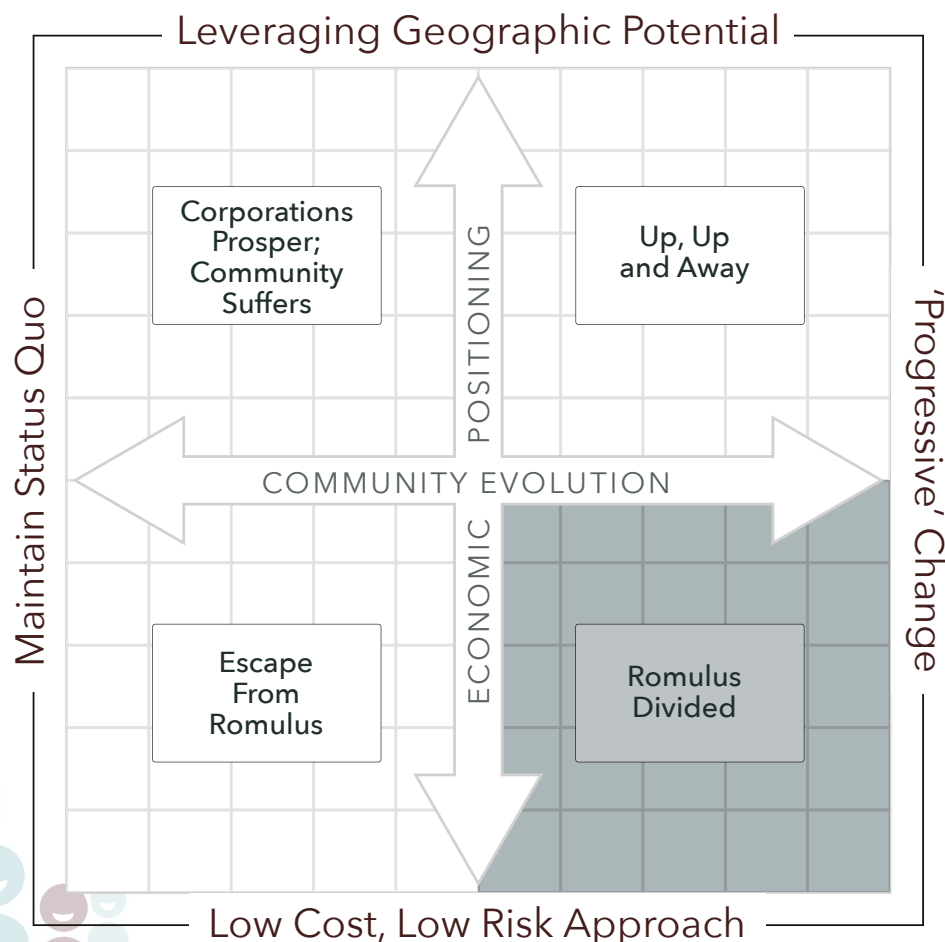




## 9.3 | SCENARIO C: ROMULUS DIVIDED

The 'Romulus Divided' scenario conveys a future tension between forward thinking 'progressive change' and a low-risk economic development approach which is driven by outside investors.

This scenario forecasts a future where there is a considerable divide in the community make-up of Romulus. The population is predominantly made up of an older age cohort who own their own homes and who then leave their homes to their children. These houses become rental properties as the children do not want to return to Romulus to live. The lack of appeal for young families is due to a declining school system and a perceived lack of activities and amenities. As Romulus embraces and leans into change, there are new opportunities for an incoming workforce who choose to move to Romulus for work rather than lifestyle. The workforce rent houses rather than buy and this creates a potential lack of pride in the upkeep of properties and a more short-term community. The community divide regarding age and home ownership creates divisions and tension as people no longer experience that strong sense of community that Romulus was well known for. People no longer know their neighbors and this creates a climate of distrust and a lack of community connectivity. The much anticipated Downtown moves to the outskirts of Romulus as it is made up of mainly healthcare facilities and the planned retail, dining and entertainment facilities fail to establish themselves due to the aging community and the temporary nature of the workforce.



# SCENARIO C CHARACTERISTICS: ROMULUS DIVIDED - 2030

The characteristics of this scenario convey a future where there is a focus on 'progressive' change whereby Romulus intentionally leans into change. However, at the same time a low cost and low risk approach means that infrastructure and economic development investments are focused on minimizing cost and reducing any risk to the community. Outside investors drive economic development and policy.



## BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

- The business environment consists of logistics and warehouses as outside investors drive economic development. The much-desired retail options haven't appeared in Romulus.
- Neighborhoods consist predominantly of retirees and senior living developments. As a result, the school system fails due to a lack of young families.
- Due to the aging population, Downtown has mainly doctors, dentists and other healthcare facilities. Downtown relocates to the outskirts of Romulus as a result.
- Housing types are mainly condos, studios, tiny homes for the aging demographic with larger rental homes for workers.

In the Romulus Divided scenario, Romulus is made up of long-term and aging Romulus residents and a more transient and short-term workforce.



## COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL VALUES CHARACTERISTICS

- The population is made up of an older age cohort and workers. Young people are leaving Romulus and young families are only moving to Romulus for temporary work opportunities.
- The community is divided and isolated. This leads to tension and lack of community engagement. This tension becomes the new reputation for Romulus.
- With a large working population, there is a desire for a better life/work balance. This creates tension with the perceived lack of amenities and activities on offer in Romulus for the workforce who has moved to the community.
- The 'One Romulus' that was promoted in previous years is not possible in this scenario.



## ENVIRONMENTAL AND LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- With a large number of people working from home, there is an increase of home gardens and local food production
- Romulus retains its agricultural characteristic, but neighborhoods become more self-reliant in relation to food production.
- There is an increase in traffic due to the large workforce population moving to Romulus and traveling to work.
- There is a focus on increased environmentally friendly practices, with the influence of workers who move to the area with new ideas.



2023 HEADLINE NEWS:  
"Gateway Town Homes  
Residents Create  
Childcare Co-Op"



2030 HEADLINE NEWS:  
"Retire, Relax and  
Recreate in Romulus"

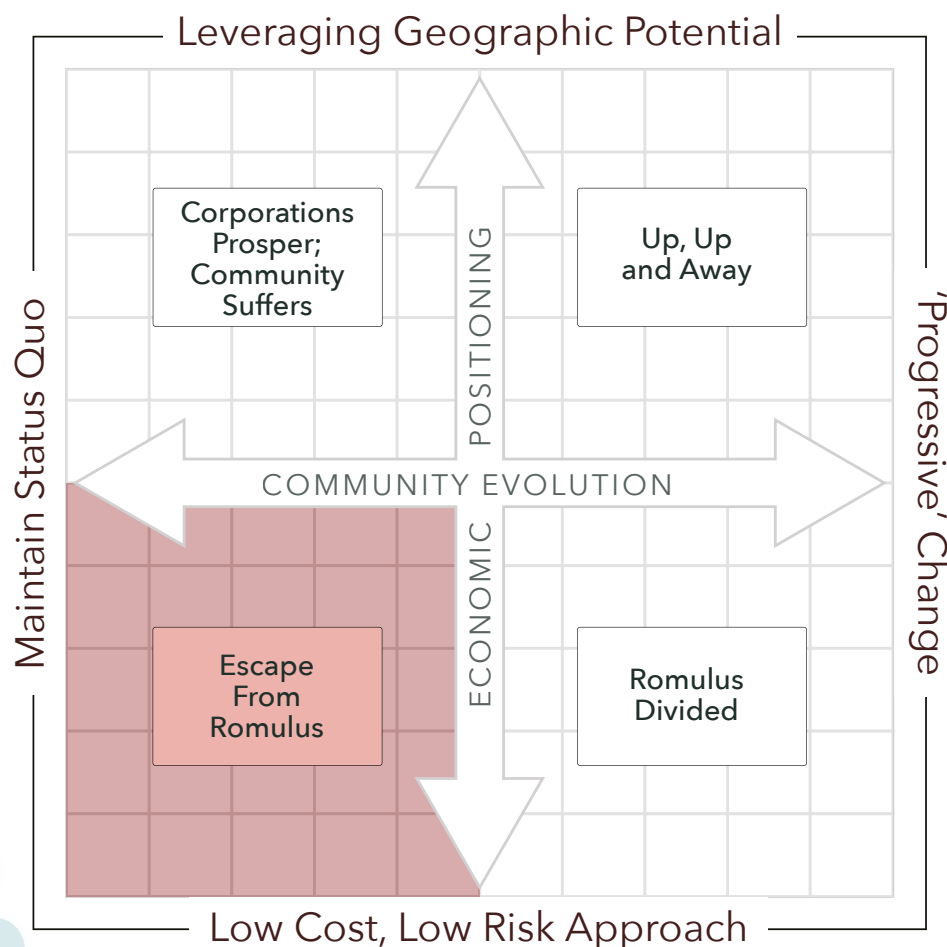




## 9.4 | SCENARIO D: ESCAPE FROM ROMULUS - 2030

This scenario forecasts a scenario where Romulus has lost its way and there is no pathway back to what Romulus once was. Pride in Romulus declines due to a mix of rental properties and an aging population who still own their own homes. Long standing residents no longer know their neighbors and with crime rates increasing, there is a climate of fear and distrust. Young people have long left the declining city and do not return as there are no opportunities to enjoy the quality of life that Romulus once prided itself on. Local government has changed from one that was hands on, invigorated and passionate to one that is self interested and corrupt. Community engagement declines to an extent that there are very few community activities or opportunities for the community to come together. The once longed for Downtown is a distant memory as investment comes from external sources and new businesses and restaurants do not establish themselves due to a lack of potential customers. Romulus has become irrelevant, unsafe, unappealing and direction-less.

The 'Escape from Romulus' scenario paints a future where community members no longer see the appeal of living in Romulus.





# SCENARIO D CHARACTERISTICS: ESCAPE FROM ROMULUS – 2030

The characteristics of this scenario portray a future which maintains the status quo of traditional values of an aging community, neighborhoods evolving in an unplanned way with a low-cost approach to economic development and infrastructure investment. This combination results in a Romulus that is declining aesthetically, economically and at a community level.



## BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

- There is a decline in the school district due to lack of new families moving to Romulus. There is a challenge in attracting new workforce talent.
- Property values drop due to the crumbling infrastructure, lack of activities and businesses and overall decline in reasons for people to move to Romulus
- The region decays and loses its #3 airport national status. Industry takes over and Romulus becomes an industrial community.
- There is a lack of governmental leadership and local leadership becomes self-serving and corrupt.



## COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL VALUES CHARACTERISTICS

- The population is declining as it is made up of a predominantly aging community. There is a mass exodus of young people who leave and don't return.
- While the community still enjoys the status quo, the community fabric and unity lack energy and engagement, so it becomes fractured.
- Public safety is an ongoing issue as crime rates increase. The aging population become suspicious and fearful of new members of the community.
- Diversity in the Romulus community declines.



## ENVIRONMENTAL AND LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- The infrastructure crumbles due to lack of leadership, City services and finance. The roads worsen with potholes and damage.
- There is an increase in pollution due to a lack of focus on environmental practices and government funding.
- The houses and neighborhoods are run down and there is a lack of pride of place. Romulus looks tired and broken down.
- No financial investments are being made and so the city is no longer attractive due to its rural feel and small town charm. It is no longer appealing.

In the “Escape from Romulus” scenario, Romulus has lost its way. Those who can escape from Romulus have left and those left behind are fearful and disappointed in what Romulus has become.

2025 HEADLINE NEWS:  
“Romulus fumbles the  
2023 NFL Draft”



2030 HEADLINE NEWS:  
“Escape from Romulus?”



2040 HEADLINE NEWS:  
“Wayne City Airport  
Expands Amazon Village”



# 10.0 | LEAST DESIRED, EXPECTED, AND PREFERRED FUTURES

## 10.1 | LEAST DESIRED FUTURE - SCENARIO D - ESCAPE FROM ROMULUS

The Least Desirable Future is defined as “the future that you think will be most undesirable (or least optimal or least desired) for the future of Romulus in 2030.” Think Tank participants most definitely considered Scenario D, ‘Escape from Romulus,’ to be the Least Desired Future for Romulus.

The least desired future is one where community members have said, ‘We don’t want that.’ This provides leadership a mandate to change the trajectory of the community to avoid this avoidable scenario.



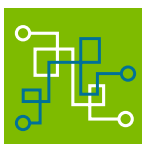
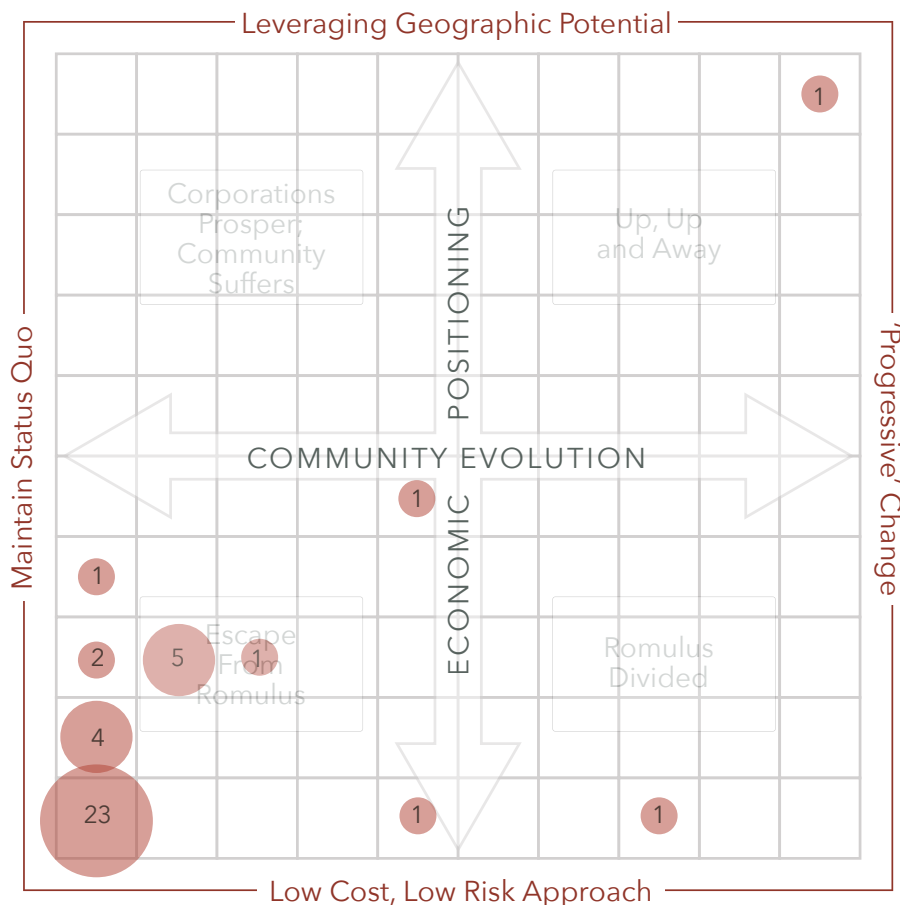
VISION ROMULUS

**Least Desirable Future 2030**

1-2

4-5

20+



FutureInsight

- The data of the least desired future shows a strong concentration along the bottom quadrant of Scenario D, ‘Escape from Romulus’ This indicates a strong desire to not remain on the same trajectory.
- This least desired future depicts the worst case scenario for Romulus, as it loses its appeal to the community and people who may potentially move to Romulus.

## 10.2 | EXPECTED FUTURE - SCENARIO C - ROMULUS DIVIDED

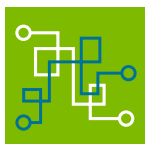
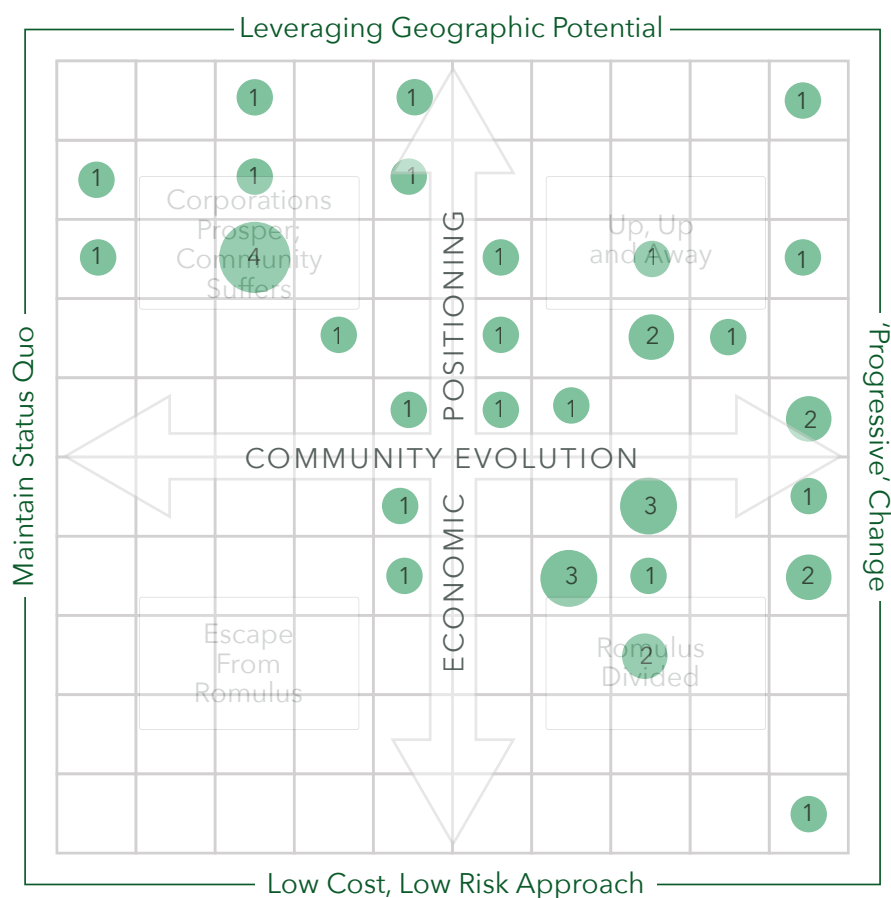
The expected future is one deemed most likely to happen if there is no change in the current trajectory of Romulus. Workshop participants generally indicated that Scenario C “Romulus Divided” is the scenario they believed most represented the expected future for Romulus, looking out to 2030. Interestingly, there was representation by some of the Think-Tank participants that the expected future could also be represented to a slightly lesser extent by Scenario A and Scenario B.

The Expected Future represents the future that is most likely to happen if the community does nothing to change direction or trajectory.



VISION ROMULUS

**Expected Future 2030**



FutureInsight

- Think-Tank participants have shown a clear desire to move away from the status quo towards more ‘progressive’ change.
- Participants also demonstrated that the Expected Future could easily be represented by Scenario A or B.



# 10.3 | PREFERRED FUTURE - SCENARIO B - UP, UP, AND AWAY

Think-Tank participants expressed an overwhelming preference for Scenario B, 'Up, Up and Away' as the Preferred Future for Romulus in 2030. This future combines a focus on leveraging the global potential through being in such a geographic advantageous position and a move towards more 'progressive change', away from a more traditional status quo approach.

There was overwhelming agreement for Scenario B representing the Preferred Future for Romulus. To get to this progressive but balanced scenario will take some work and planning.



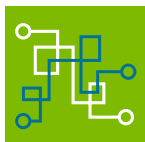
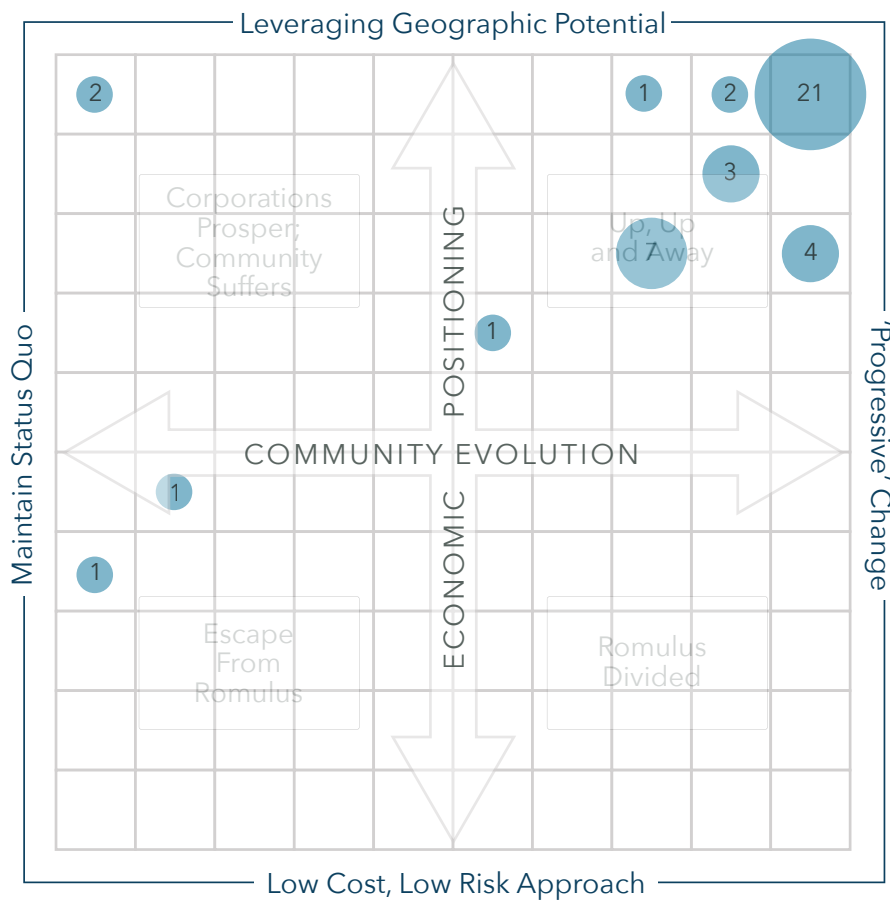
VISION ROMULUS  
**Preferred Future 2030**

1-2

3-4

5-10

20+



FutureInsight

- The concentration of color in Scenario B, 'Up, Up and Away,' indicates an overwhelming alignment of thinking among Think-Tank participants.
- The Think-Tank scenario planning is a significant step in the community's transparent process to define collectively how Romulus will strategically plan towards the preferred future.

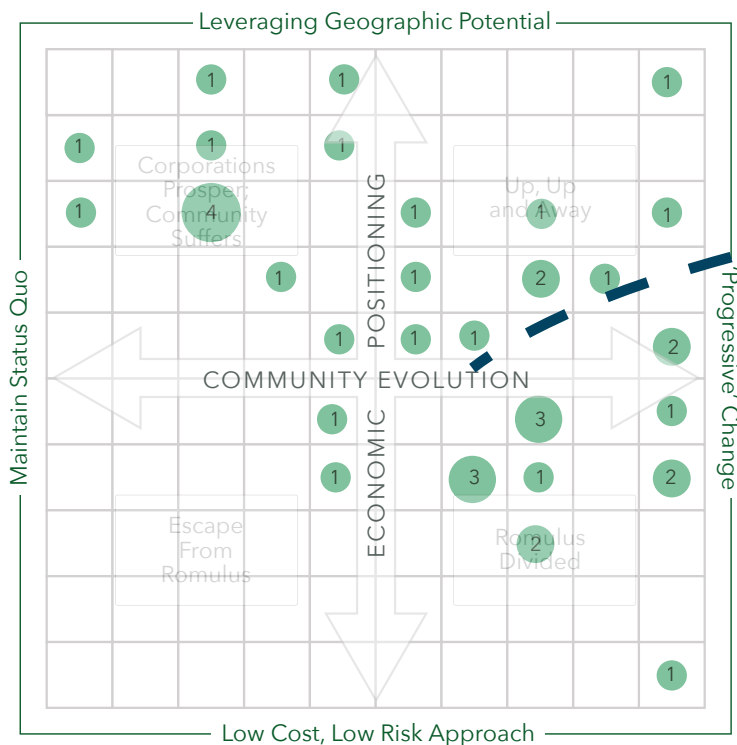
## 10.4 | NEXT STEPS - GETTING TO THE PREFERRED FUTURE

There was overwhelming alignment among participants that Scenario B, 'Up, Up and Away' represented the preferred 2030 future scenario for Romulus. Moving from where Romulus is now in 2022 towards that preferred future by 2030 will take work from local government and community input. The wishes of the Romulus community have been heard via the almost 600 responses to the community survey and the two evenings of Think-Tank participation and creative thinking by over 60 individuals. The work over the next few months in the visioning process will be focused on how to get to this preferred future.

Because of the long-term nature of the Scenario Planning methodology, stakeholders often see the 'distant future vision (2030)' as unattainable and unrealistic. However, this underestimates the progress that can be made during the next 8 years, and the cumulative positive impacts of change.

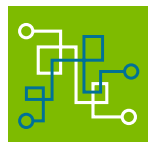
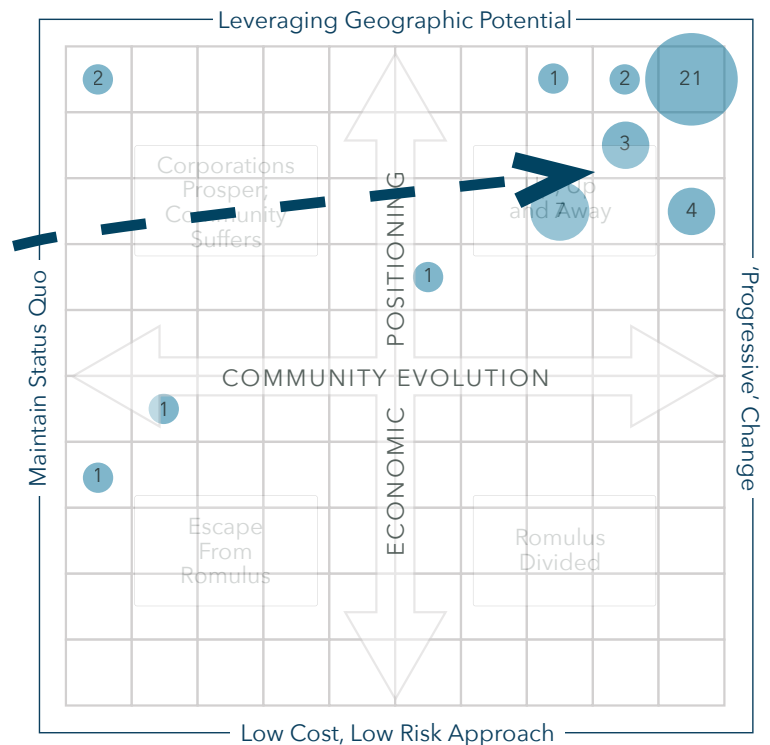
### VISION ROMULUS Expected Future 2030

1 2 3 4



### VISION ROMULUS Preferred Future 2030

1-2 3-4 5-10 20+



FutureInsight

- Arriving at a point of consensus amongst community members is very important to the visioning process as it serves to provide a sense of cohesion and balanced solutions going forward.

# 11.0 | NEXT STEPS IN THE VISION ROMULUS – OUR COMMUNITY OUR FUTURE PROCESS

The Community survey informed the Think-Tank and the results from the Community survey and Think-Tank will continue to inform the next steps in the Vision Romulus – Our Community, Our Future process.

Please stay connected to the Vision Romulus – Our Community, Our Future process at <https://lab2.future-iq.com/vision-romulus/>.

## VISION ROMULUS - OUR COMMUNITY, OUR FUTURE



- November 9 - 10, 2022 - Focus Groups sessions will be held in areas which will inform the ultimate Strategic Pillars for the final report and actions.
- November 10, 2022 – A Youth Session will be held to bring in the often forgotten youth ‘voice’ into the visioning process
- January 2023 – the final Romulus Visioning and Strategic Action Plan will be presented to the City of Romulus and to the community.







## »»»» 12.0 | MORE INFORMATION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For more information about 'Vision Romulus – Our Community, Our Future', please contact:

### JULIE A. WOJTYLKO

CPM Chief of Staff

City of Romulus; Office of the Mayor

Phone: 734-955-4501

Email: [jwojtylko@romulusgov.com](mailto:jwojtylko@romulusgov.com)



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Almost 600 of the Romulus community completed the Community Survey. Future iQ would like to acknowledge the community members for their thoughts, commitment and time.

Future iQ acknowledges the substantial work and on the ground support from City Staff and Mayor Robert McCraight. This includes the direct one to one work on the project and weekly communications with Chief of Staff, Julie Wojtylko and communications liaison with Mike Laskaska, Communications Director.

Future iQ also would like to acknowledge the participation over two evenings from over 60 members of the Romulus community who took part in the Think-Tank. Taking part in two evening sessions was a commitment regarding time, energy and intellect. Thank you to the Think-Tank participants.





## »»»» 13.0 | ABOUT FUTURE IQ

Future iQ specializes in applying innovative tools and approaches to assist municipalities, organizations, regions and industries shape their economic and community futures. With nearly two decades of experience, the company has a global clientele spanning three continents. To learn more about Future iQ, and our recent projects visit [www.future-iq.com](http://www.future-iq.com) or by email at [info@future-iq.com](mailto:info@future-iq.com).

### WORKSHOPS, DATA VISUALIZATION AND REPORT PREPARED BY:



**David Beurle**  
CEO & Founder



**Celine Beurle**  
Chief Operating Officer



**Brittany Rempe**  
Creative Director



**Walter R.  
Paixão-Côrtês**  
Data Engineer

Find out more about the Vision Romulus - Our Community, Our Future project at :

<https://lab2.future-iq.com/vision-romulus/>







# VISION ROMULUS OUR COMMUNITY, OUR FUTURE

THINK-TANK REPORT

CITY OF ROMULUS, MICHIGAN, USA

NOVEMBER 2022