

1 • Introduction & Plan Development

Overview/Summary

The Rochester-Olmsted Council of Governments (ROCOG) is the designated metropolitan planning organization for the Rochester urbanized area. As such, it is federally charged with developing a long-range regional transportation plan (also known as a Metropolitan Transportation Plan, see Figure 1-1). This plan presents the region's vision for a multimodal transportation system needed to respond to future growth and demographic trends. Incorporated within this plan is a discussion of what can be accomplished under the fiscal constraints faced by public agencies and authorities responsible for development and operations of transportation facilities and services in the ROCOG area. Nevertheless, the vision is not limited by financial restrictions, and it includes illustrative projects that meet the region's transportation needs, but whose funding sources are not yet identified.

Chapter 1 describes the scope of the ROCOG 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (referred to hereinafter as "LRTP" or "the Plan") and the process followed in updating the Plan. The planning area, time horizon and

organizational structure of ROCOG are reviewed. This chapter also discusses the history of LRTP updates and supporting policy plans and presents the long-range goals that help to drive the content of the modal elements of the Plan that are outlined briefly below.

Figure 1-1

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

Overview

Each **metropolitan planning organization** (MPO) must prepare a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), in accordance with 49 USC 5303(i), to accomplish the objectives outlined by the MPO, the state, and the public transportation providers with respect to the development of the metropolitan area's transportation network. This plan must identify how the metropolitan area will manage and operate a multi-modal transportation system (including transit, highway, bicycle, pedestrian, and accessible transportation) to meet the region's economic, transportation, development and sustainability goals – among others – for a 20+-year planning horizon, while remaining **fiscally constrained**.

The Plan provides a description of the transportation facilities and services that can be provided over the next 25 years based on reasonably expected revenues. This description considers both facility development as well as costs to maintain and operate the transportation system, including roadway, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities and services. Expected revenues fall far short of fully addressing future transportation needs and desires, but the 2045 Plan does identify a path to provide for high-priority strategic investments.

Introduction

Preparation of a Long Range Transportation Plan is mandated under federal transportation planning guidelines first established in the 1962 Federal-Aid Highway Act. All urbanized areas over 50,000 in population, in order to be eligible to receive federal funding, must maintain a "continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process" that results in the periodic preparation of a Long Range Plan, as well as adoption of an annual program of federally funded projects known as the Transportation Improvement Program (Figure 1-2).

This ROCOG 2045 LRTP represents another step in the ongoing evolution of regional planning for transportation in the Olmsted County area that began in 1972 with the creation of the Rochester-Olmsted Council of Governments. The previous 2040 Long Range

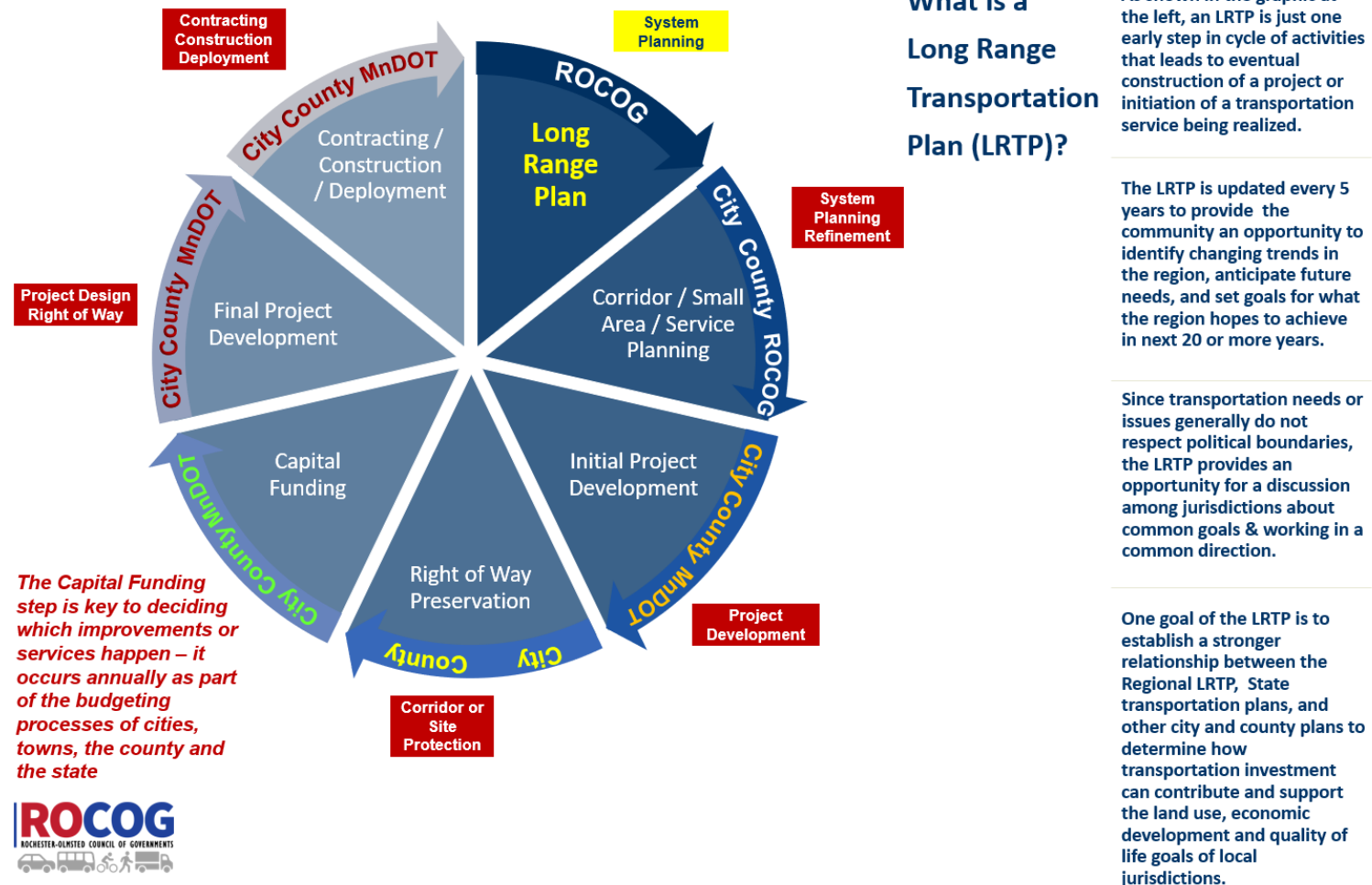
Transportation Plan Re-Affirmation was adopted by ROCOG in August of 2015. Under federal guidelines, the Plan needs to be updated every five years, normally with a new horizon year.

Federal guidelines also require a minimum 20-year horizon to be maintained throughout the life of the Plan. For traffic and financial forecasting, a 25-year horizon is a reasonable and realistic limit for projecting the specifics of traffic volumes or funding availability.

However, given that the life cycle of road facilities varies from 50 to 60 years (for roads) and up to 90 years for bridges, ROCOG has formulated certain aspects of this plan to reflect consideration of those longer time horizons to better guide future planning. For concerns such as corridor preservation or strategic-level planning, a longer view is considered appropriate by ROCOG since land use decisions in the near term may preclude long-term transportation options if not strategically accommodated in the development approval process. In these cases, the Plan looks at areas that may be influenced by urban growth trends over a 50 to 75-year period and considers infrastructure, such as urban rail, that may not be feasible within the 25 year plan horizon but strategically may need to be considered for its potential to address long term urban growth and travel needs. This decades-long view allows concepts such as extension of a basic arterial/collector grid, circumferential

Figure 1-2: Relationship of Long Range Plan to Transportation Facility Development Process

Transportation Planning & Development Process



arterials (beltways), or major transit supportive infrastructure to be considered at an appropriate scale. It also enables recommendations for long term expansion needs, such as right-of-way preservation, to be built into the Plan.

Influences Shaping the Future

The 2045 LRTP provides a comprehensive look at anticipated transportation system development in Olmsted County for the next 25 years. This Plan reviews and updates the current 2040 Plan Reaffirmation's project planning information and cost/revenue information by shifting the Plan's horizon year to 2045 and the base year to 2020.

Finding a balance between prioritizing the maintenance of our existing transportation system while promoting trip reliability and system resiliency in the future is key to transportation planning in the ROCOG area. It is vital that the region focuses adequate resources on maintaining and operating the existing transportation system.

Key Strategic Plans

Two significant new planning developments affect this Plan update:

- Integrated Transit Studies (ITS) to support the Destination Medical Center (DMC) Plan implementation

- *Planning to Succeed: Rochester Comprehensive Plan 2040 (P2S 2040)*

The ITS focused on how to achieve the transportation goals of the DMC Plan, which centered on reducing single-occupant auto travel to and parking in downtown Rochester. The DMC program, the largest economic development initiative in state history, provides a framework for the use of state, city, and county funding for public infrastructure to support an expected 50% increase in downtown employment and the continued success of the Mayo Medical Center as one of the premier health centers in the world. This DMC initiative is also expected to drive a significant increase in downtown housing and supporting visitor and hospitality uses in downtown Rochester. A mode shift from 10% downtown commuter transit usage today to 30% by 2035 was the ambitious goal of the DMC Plan, in recognition that with the dramatically increased employment expected in those years, downtown transportation would be hopelessly gridlocked if current auto usage patterns continued.

Providing improved transit and non-single occupant vehicle options to support this economic development vision has been identified as an important strategy for the future. Key elements of the DMC vision are expanded transit services coupled with a focused parking management strategy and expanded Travel Demand Management (TDM). "Arrive Rochester" is the City's newly formed TDM initiative, which will work with

downtown employers and property owners to incentivize downtown workers to use a mode other than a private car to get to work downtown. Improved transit, TDM efforts, and the projected increase in downtown housing are expected to reduce the need for peak period, single occupant vehicle commuter vehicle travel into Rochester's urban core.

The second significant planning development to inform the ROCOG LRTP is the 2018 adoption of Rochester's comprehensive plan, *P2S 2040*. This document provides a new look at future transit in the area, particularly as it affects work trips to the central business district. A backbone of high capacity, high frequency transit, referred to as the Primary Transit Network (PTN), envisions bus rapid transit service along a series of major arterial corridors in the city, connecting existing and future activity centers identified as part of transit-oriented land development strategy for the city.

Growth Impacts

In addition to these two significant planning initiatives, the Plan anticipates there will be instances where strategic improvement of the major road network is needed to support local growth and land use plans while enhancing connections between urban and regional areas. Olmsted County expects its population to increase from approximately 160,000 to 210,000 over the next 25 years. For the last half-century, Rochester has served as a major regional employment hub, attracting its

workforce from a 40-50-mile radius in Southeast Minnesota.

Technological Advancements

ROCOG is aware of the advancement of technologies that continue to change the way people live and travel and acknowledges that technology may alter the way people go about their daily lives in the future. Rochester has been involved, along with other public partners including MnDOT, in discussions with private companies exploring autonomous transit and the chance to serve as an early testbed for these emerging technologies. The Plan supports the development, enhancement and further application of technologies to improve the travel experience.

Accessibility and Equity

The need to promote accessible and equitable transportation options will continue to be important as our aging population grows, while others continue to face barriers created by inadequate access to private travel options and transit. It will be vital to continue to maintain and look to expand the transportation system to ensure equal access for everyone.

Looking to the future, ROCOG will continue to support investments to:

- Preserve and manage the existing investment in the region's transportation system

- Develop the region's potential to grow into a uniquely attractive, vibrant, and diverse metropolitan area
- Link transportation and land use planning to meet the Plan's goals for urban investment, concentrated development patterns, and smart economic growth
- Plan and build for all modes of transportation, including pedestrian, bicycle, public transit, cars, and trucks

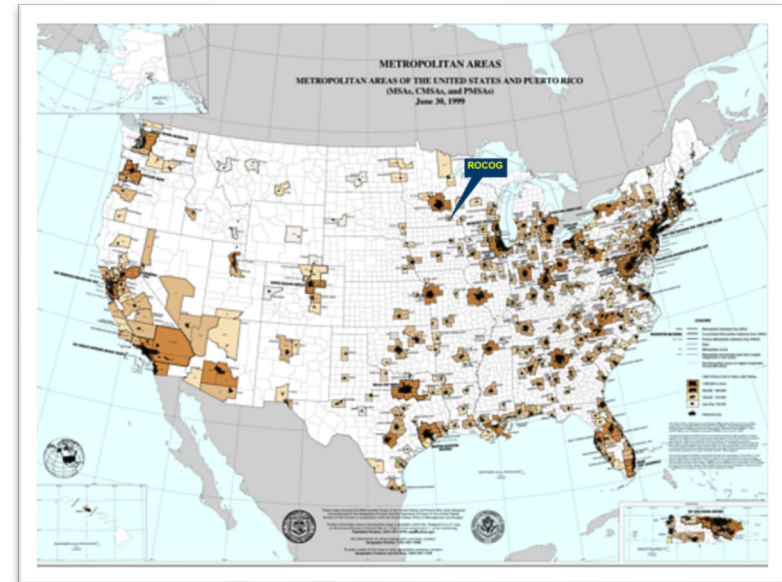
ROCOG Organization

ROCOG is located in southeastern Minnesota (Figure 1-3) and is one of Minnesota's eight Metropolitan Planning Organizations (Figure 1-4). It is one of three that are entirely within the state, as the others are "bi-state" organizations. ROCOG was founded in 1972 following completion of the 1970 Census which found Rochester's urban area population to exceed 50,000.

The ROCOG formal organization structure includes a Policy Board and a Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC). ROCOG also works with the City of Rochester's Pedestrian-Bicycle Advisory Committee (PBAC) and the Citizen's Advisory on Transit (CAT) for consultation during long range plan updates. Staffing for ROCOG is provided by the Olmsted County Planning Department. The 16 members of the Policy Board represent a cross section of local units of government in Olmsted County, including mostly elected officials, some

government agency staff, and two resident members (see Figure 1-5). The jurisdictional delegates to ROCOG

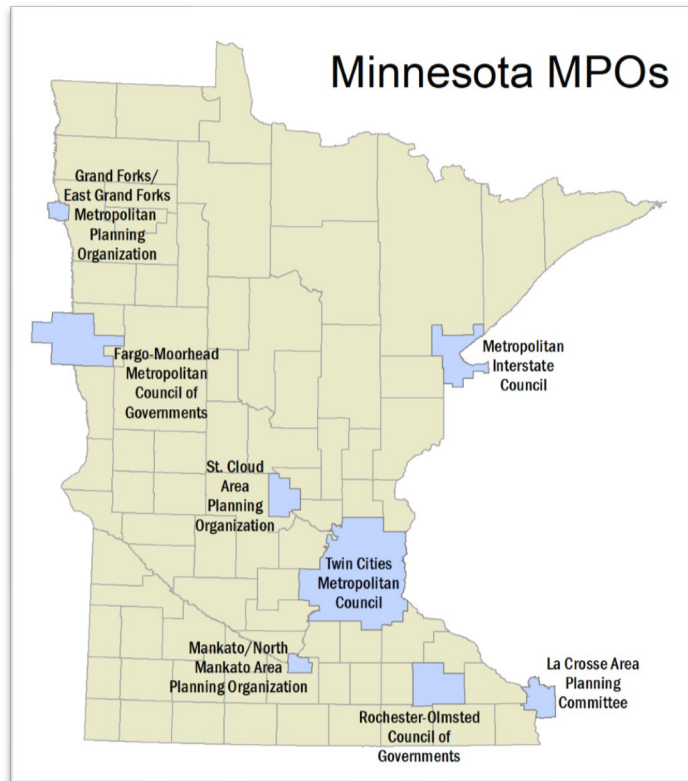
Figure 1-3: U.S. Metropolitan Areas



select the two (2) citizen delegates who act as voting members of ROCOG. The Policy Board is served by a Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) composed of agency staff representing those organizations responsible for managing the major transportation systems within Olmsted County. It meets periodically during the year to discuss and coordinate transportation planning matters, with a focus on the

Rochester urbanized area and the adjacent area influenced by Rochester's urban growth patterns.

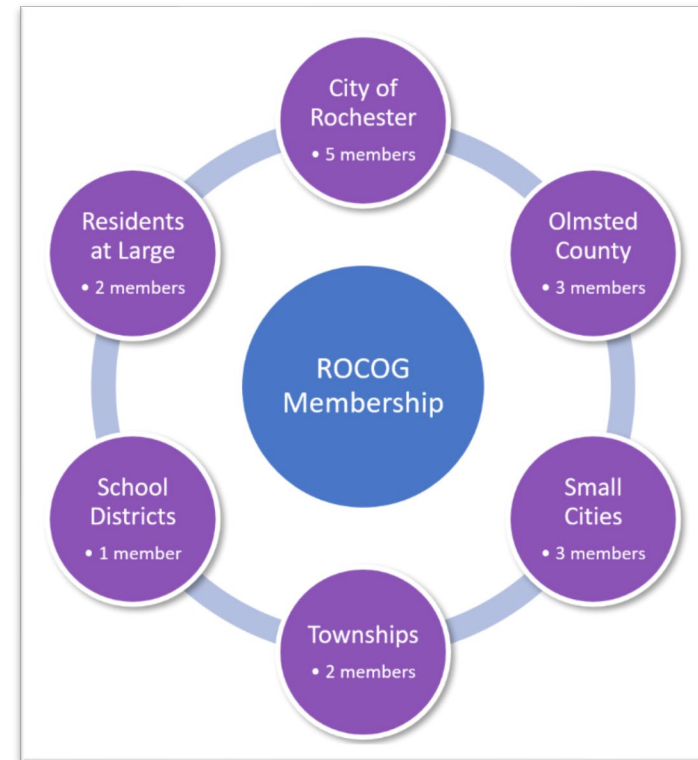
Figure 1-4: Minnesota MPOs



The Pedestrian-Bicycle Advisory Committee (PBAC) is an advisory committee appointed by the Rochester City Council and Mayor comprised of citizen volunteers as well as representatives of organizations such as neighborhood councils and public health. It advises the City Council and the City Engineer on planning and programming matters

related to bicycle and pedestrian needs, and its members are involved directly in various initiatives related to

Figure 1-5: ROCOG Policy Board Membership



education, encouragement and the promotion of non-motorized modes of travel.

The Citizens Advisory on Transit (CAT) is a seven-member citizen advisory board appointed by the Rochester City Council and Mayor that assists in the planning and review of public transportation services

within the Rochester area. In addition to planning and programming, the committee supports efforts to build community awareness of issues related to public transportation service.

Study Area and Time Horizon of the Plan

The Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) for the Plan encompasses all of Olmsted County, including the planned urban expansion areas of the cities of Pine Island and Chatfield.

The MPA is broken into two sub-areas referred to as the Urban Study Area and the Regional Study Area, as illustrated in Figure 1-6. In the Regional Study Area, the focus is limited to those facilities or services important to the regional movement of persons and goods. The Urban Study Area focus is comprehensive in terms of considering issues and needs across the entire transportation system.

History of ROCOG Long Range Plan Updates

Prior to the organization of ROCOG in 1972, most transportation system planning in the Rochester area was done on the jurisdictional level. For example, the City of Rochester developed transportation plans in 1947 and 1960 as part of broader comprehensive planning efforts, and in 1968 through a joint effort with MnDOT. Table 1-1

lists the plans and policy reports that have been prepared and adopted by ROCOG since its establishment.

Federal/ROCOG Plan Goals

ROCOG has adopted a set of goals that describe desired future priorities for the region's transportation system and guide the preparation of the 2045 Long Range Plan, as listed in Table 1-2. ROCOG also supports the U.S. DOT Planning Factors as listed in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The Planning Factors inform the long-range planning goals for the ROCOG planning area. It is recognized that the Planning Factors must be considered in the development of long-range transportation plans according to federal statute Title 23 § 450.306.

Figure 1-6: The ROCOG Study Area

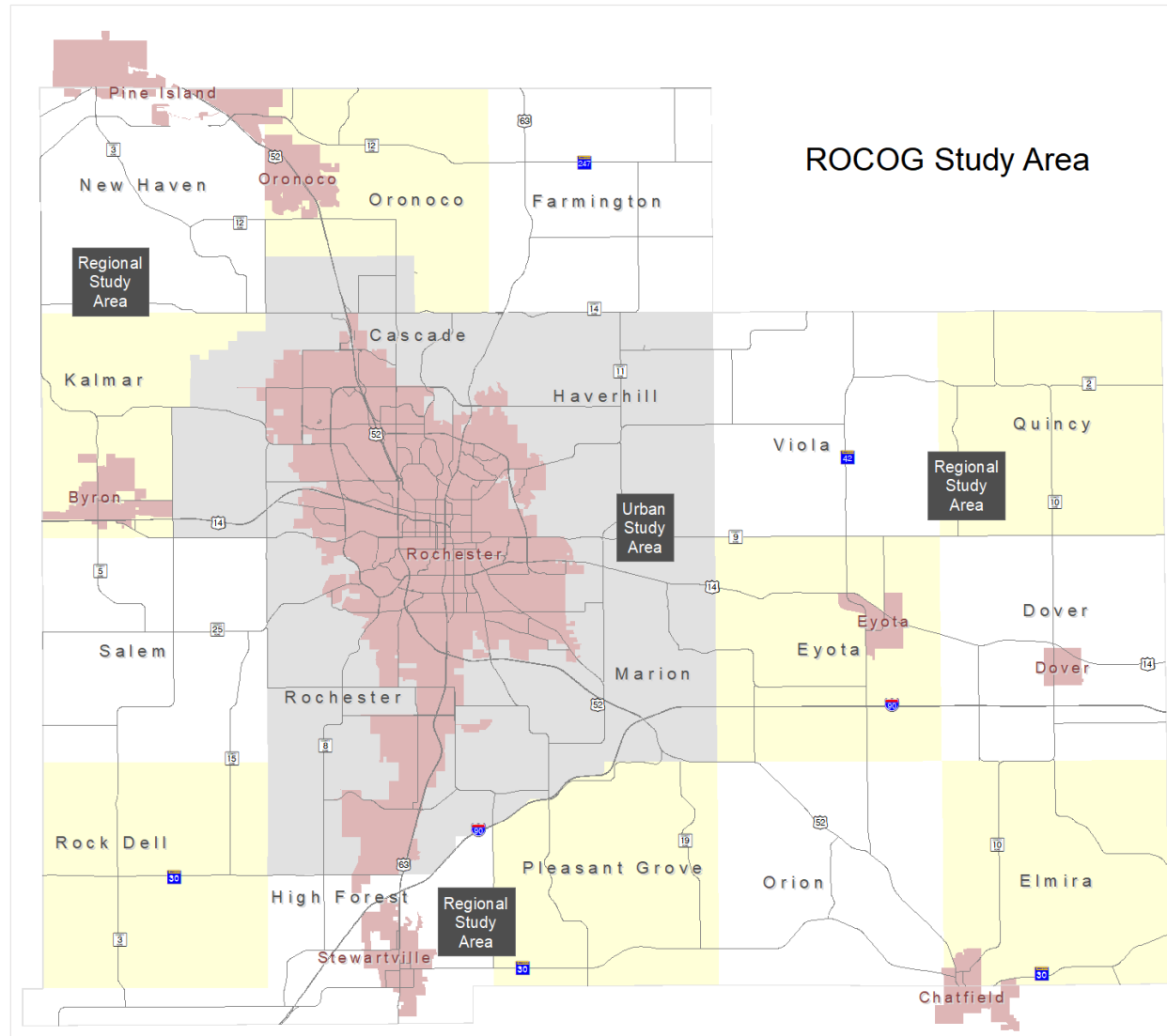


Table 1-1: ROCOG's Historic Long Range Transportation Plans and Policy Plans

Transportation LONG RANGE PLANS	Note: (xxxx) = Year Issued
ROCOG Thoroughfare Plan (1977)	
ROCOG Thoroughfare Plan Update (1982) <i>Downtown and Medical Campus amendments</i>	
ROCOG Thoroughfare Plan Update (1985) <i>Northwest Rochester amendments</i>	
ROCOG Thoroughfare Plan Update (1995) <i>Willow Creek amendments</i>	
ROCOG Long Range Transportation Plan Update (June 1997) <i>Comprehensive LRTP update</i>	
ROCOG Interim Long Range Transportation Plan Update (June 2003)	
ROCOG 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (2005) <i>Comprehensive LRTP update</i>	
ROCOG 2035 Interim Long Range Plan Update (2007) <i>Policy Review of SAFETEA-LU Priorities</i>	
ROCOG 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (2010) <i>Comprehensive LRTP update</i>	
ROCOG 2040 Reaffirmation Long Range Transportation Plan (2015)	
ROCOG 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (2020) <i>Comprehensive LRTP update</i>	
Transportation POLICY PLANS	
ROCOG Transportation Plan Policies (1977)	
ROCOG Policy Directions Report (1996)	

Table 1-2: ROCOG Planning Goals

ROCOG Long Range Plan Transportation Planning Goals	U.S. DOT Planning Factors*									
	Safety	Security	Connectivity	Efficiency	Accessibility	Preservation	Resiliency	Environment	Economic Vitality	Travel & Tourism
Preserve existing transportation infrastructure through systematic maintenance to sustain a state of good repair.										
Ex: Roadway and trail mill & overlay projects, replacement of bridges due to structure issues, transit vehicle replacement										
Mitigate current & future congestion by considering operational improvements or multi-modal options as well as capacity expansion.										
Ex: Expand Rochester Park & Ride system, interchange improvements @ TH 14/52, pave gravel roads in urban growth areas										
Improve safety through mitigation of high risk/high conflict locations & behaviors.										
Ex: Build interchange at TH 14/CSAH 44, convert TH 63 South from rural expressway to freeway, roundabout at TH 14/MN 42										
Provide adequate capacity and travel options to serve future 2045 urban growth areas.										
Ex: Upgrade 65 St NW west of TH 52, upgrade 48th St NE east of CSAH 33, expand city bus route network										
Improve bicycle and pedestrian connections with and through Downtown Rochester.										
Ex: Build protected bike lanes on Center Street & 3rd/4th Ave, develop future DMC Downtown City Loop and Discovery Walk										
Provide neighborhood bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to urban trail and path networks and major activity hubs outside of area downtowns.										
Ex: Chester Woods Trail connection in SE Rochester, path along north/east side of Crossroads Shopping Center, Willow Creek Trail										

ROCOG Long Range Plan Transportation Planning Goals	U.S. DOT Planning Factors*									
	Safety	Security	Connectivity	Efficiency	Accessibility	Preservation	Resiliency	Environment	Economic Vitality	Travel & Tourism
Plan with long-range future land use as factor.										
Ex: Upgrade CSAH 44 from Valleyhigh Drive to 65th St NW, extension of 55th ST from West River Rd to CSAH 33										
Support implementation of transit system enhancements to increase transit mode share.										
Ex: Expand neighborhood bus routes, introduce new payment systems, add real time bus tracking information										
Support implementation of DMC Development Plans.										
Ex: Reflect DMC Transportation Plan elements in ROCOG Long Range Plan for federal funding, such as Downtown Rapid Transit										
Provide convenient access to goods, services, jobs and recreation for all residents regardless of socio-economic status, physical ability, and age.										
Ex: Enhance Dial-a-Ride service with complementary evening/peak taxi, close gaps in sidewalk network on major streets										
Support targeted areas of planned growth at transit supportive densities (TODs) with investment in transit and non-motorized infrastructure.										
Ex: Develop Downtown Rapid Transit, future development of Primary Transit Network, strategic siting of Park & Ride lots										
Educate, motivate and reward people through programs and services that make it easier for commuters to travel by bus, carpool, walking, and biking.										
EX: Support Arrive Rochester, preferential carpool parking, onsite locker facilities for bike commuters										
Ensure commercial passenger and freight traffic is convenient, safe and reliable.										
Ex: Improve access to/from Interstate 90 at TH 52 South interchange, improve airport access from CSAH 16/future MN 30										

***U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT) Planning Factors**

Safety: Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users

Security: Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users

Connectivity: Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight

Efficiency: Promote efficient system management and operation

Accessibility: Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight

Preservation: Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system

Resiliency: Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation

Environment: Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns

Economic Vitality: Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency

Travel & Tourism: Enhance travel and tourism

Plan Organization

The Plan is organized into four parts, with 16 chapters and appendices. Each part builds on the information in the previous part. Following this introductory chapter, the remainder of the Plan is organized as follows:

Part 1: The ROCOG Planning Region

Part 1 describes the ROCOG Planning Area, profiling the communities within the region and the state of the current transportation system.

Chapter 1 is the current chapter.

Chapter 2 presents information about the residents of the region and the local economy, including projections

of population and employment growth expected to shape the future. The importance of regional commuters to the local economy is highlighted.

Chapter 3 presents summary information about the current state of the transportation system serving the ROCOG area. Network statistics on existing streets and highways, transit, facilities for pedestrians and low speed, two wheeled vehicles and commercial vehicles are presented.

Part 2: Planning Considerations

The chapters in Part 2 summarize the information that was used to inform preparation of the Plan.

Chapter 4 discusses the integration of land use and transportation planning in the Rochester region and what steps have been taken to ensure that the interrelationship between land use and transportation have been considered not only in this Plan but in other community planning projects.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of community comprehensive plans, transportation studies, and land use and economic development plans that have been considered in development of the Plan.

Chapter 6 provides a summary of public and public agency involvement that has occurred during development of this Plan.

Chapter 7 discusses existing transportation safety and security issues, current plans and programs in place to provide for safe travel during normal times as well as critical security events, and recommended programs and strategies for the future.

Chapter 8 provides an overview of technologies that are likely to influence future travel and discusses the types of actions communities should consider or take in the near term in preparation for a changing future.

Part 3: ROCOG Long Range Plan

The chapters in Part 3 focus on preparing modal plan recommendations and ways to improve the efficiency of the current travel network.

Chapter 9 introduces this section of the Plan and summarizes the key recommendations along with important factors such as metrics for the ROCOG relative to federal performance measures and a review of environmental justice considerations.

Chapter 10 presents the street and highway plan, including a policy-based highway system plan structured to account for both land use and travel needs, a summary of major preservation needs, and a list of priority projects.

Chapter 11 summarizes both existing and anticipated transit service changes envisioned for the region. Future downtown rapid transit service, a bus rapid transit system, and a robust expansion of the Rochester Park & Ride System are described.

Chapter 12 discusses active transportation modes with a focus on pedestrian and bicycle travel. It includes system plans highlighting major corridors targeted for regional and urban area bicycle travel, as well as transit related pedestrian improvement areas and other gaps in the major street network affecting pedestrian travel.

Chapter 13 highlights emerging and expanding Travel Demand Management (TDM) efforts in the Rochester area, including a review of emerging new travel options such as e-scooters.

Chapter 14 provides an overview of Transportation System Management and Operations (TSMO) efforts in the Rochester MPO area.

Chapter 15 presents a financial analysis of the various modal plans along with conclusions relative to fiscal constraints that will impact the level of investment and the types of investment activities that can be supported.

Chapter 16 concludes the Plan with a discussion of considerations that will affect its implementation.

Part 4: Appendices

Part 4 includes summaries and important detailed analyses used to inform preparation of the Plan.

Plan Update Schedule

Figure 1-7 lays out the schedule used to guide the development of the ROCOG Plan.

Figure 1-7

