3 • Today's Transportation System

Overview

Improving and maintaining the existing transportation infrastructure and services that currently serve the needs of residents, businesses, customers, visitors and workers is one of the major responsibilities of state and local governments. To effectively plan for transportation, it is important to understand the investment that has been made in transportation and how it is utilized. This section of the Plan describes current travel levels and condition of the primary transportation modes that serve the ROCOG area, including the roadway network, transit services, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and commercial vehicle travel. Providing quality transportation infrastructure is critical to the success of our local economy and the quality of life in the ROCOG area and other jurisdictions.

There are approximately 1,873 centerline miles of roadway in the ROCOG Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), a 3% increase from the 1,820 miles reported in the 2015. Currently, state highways account for about 9% of the mileage, Olmsted County roadways about 27%, municipal roads 31%, and townships roads

approximately 33%. Interstate 90, TH 52 north of I-90, TH 63 south of Rochester, and TH 14 west of Rochester are corridors on the National Highway System in the ROCOG area.

Growth in Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT), which slowed during the recession years of 2007-2011 to an annual rate of 1.2% from 2.2% annually prior to the recession (2001-2007), has rebounded to a 2.1% annual rate of growth for the years 2011 through 2018. State highways carry approximately 56% of the VMT, with about 23% of VMT on county roads and 21% on Rochester city streets.

All jurisdictions have invested considerable funds in the maintenance and preservation of the road and bridge network. Pavement conditions across Olmsted County and Rochester have improved since the 1990s, while MnDOT faces challenges with unmet preservation needs, due partially to the impact of mega-project construction since 2000. Two such projects are the Rochester TH 52 reconstruction and the new Mississippi River crossing projects on I-90 and in Winona. The overall bridge condition has improved, with the share of bridges with a sufficiency rating of 80 to 100 having increased from 42% to 87% between 1995 and 2018.



Annual fixed route transit ridership in Rochester reached 1.8 million in 2017, with the system exceeding the prerecession ridership peak of 1.7 million from 2008 after a period in which annual ridership dipped as low as 1.5 million in 2010. In 2018 and 2019 the system has seen continued growth, with 2.0 and 2.1 million riders, respectively, in those years. Dial-a-Ride ridership for elderly and handicapped has generally been steady over the last decade, though the introduction of evening and peak period taxi service starting in 2017 to supplement traditional reservation service provided by buses has increased ridership by about 12%. The growth in transit ridership, of which about 70% is for travel to work, has helped to hold the percentage of single occupant vehicle commuting relatively steady the last decade at about a 71% mode share.

Metrics regarding the total amount of bicycle and pedestrian travel are not available. ROCOG has participated in count efforts as part of MnDOT sponsored research efforts in recent years which are reported later in the chapter. Based on Census reported data from the 2014-2018 ACS, a total of 2500 individuals walk to work and bicycle travel accounts for over half of the reported 1100 individuals using "Other Means" to get to work in the city of Rochester.

Relative to freight travel, MnDOT has upgraded all state highways to support 10-ton travel and 60% of the

Olmsted County State-Aid Highway (CSAH) currently supports 10-ton travel.

ROCOG Area Roadway Network

There are 1,850 centerline miles of highways and local roadways in the ROCOG area. As shown in Table 3-1, state highways account for about 9% of the mileage, county roadways for about 27%, and local roads for 64% mileage.

Table 3-1: Roadway Ownership in ROCOG Area

	MnDOT	Olmsted	Local	% Local
	Miles	Miles	Miles	Miles
ROCOG Area	160	499	1,192	64%
% ROCOG Network	9%	27%	64%	
Township Area	129.6	451.0	608.8	51%
% Township				
Network	11%	38%	51%	
Rochester	21.4	36.7	472.9	89%
% Rochester				
Network	4%	7%	89%	
Byron	1.0	1.9	30.5	91%
Chatfield	0.8	1.3	7.5	78%
Dover	0.6	2.1	5.0	65%
Eyota	2.3	2.2	11.9	73%
Oronoco	2.0	0.0	21.9	92%
Pine Island	0.0	2.0	8.7	82%
Stewartville	2.7	2.3	24.7	83%
% Small City				
Network	9%	8%	83%	

Source: MnDOT Roadway Data @ http://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadway/data/



Figure 3-1 illustrates the breakdown of road ownership in the ROCOG area based on centerline mileage. Township roads and local city streets (non-MSAS) account for 53% of mileage, followed by the Olmsted County road network which accounts for about 27% of mileage.

Figure 3-1: Distribution of Centerline Road Mileage by Road System



Source: MnDOT Roadway Data

However, when viewed from the perspective of capital value (based on what the estimated cost would be to construct each system today), the County State Aid Highway Network accounts for the largest share of investment, followed by US Trunk Highways and local city streets. In aggregate, roads managed by MnDOT account for about 30% of road investment, roads owned by Olmsted County for about 33%, the Rochester and small cities street networks for about 25% and township roads for about 12%. Figure 3-2 illustrates the relative

h (LRTP) 2045 breakdown of the value of different road system throughout the ROCOG area.

Figure 3-2: Capital Value of Roads by Road System



Source: ROCOG

Measured by the share of areawide vehicle miles of travel (VMT) occurring on each system, roads under MnDOT management account for approximately 53% of all travel, city roads approximately 25% of VMT, Olmsted County roads approximately 20%, and town roads the final 1-2% of vehicle travel. Figure 3-3 illustrates this in chart form.

Figure 3-4 illustrates the road network in the ROCOG Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), indicating jurisdictional ownership of various roadways and the local city and township jurisdictions throughout the area.



Figure 3-3: VMT Distribution by Road System

Source: MnDOT Roadway Data @ http://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadway/data/

Roadway Classification

Classification of roadway networks occurs for different reasons but one of the most important to road authorities are those that have implications relative to funding eligibility. Three road classifications in particular play a significant role in this regard:

- The National Highway System (NHS) which is defined by the United State Department of Transportation and used to determine eligibility for certain federal funds set aside for the NHS
- The Federal Functional Classification System, required by the U.S Department of Transportation as a basis for reporting system data and used in part to determine allocation of federal transportation funding

and identifying roadways eligible for use of these funds

 Minnesota Local State Aid highway systems, including both County and Municipal State Aid systems, towards which a dedicated portion of state Highway User Trust Funds are directed according to a formula set in state statute

Figures 3-5 through 3-7 highlight these systems. Figure 3-5 illustrates the National Highway System (NHS) in the ROCOG area, which consists of urban and rural principal arterials that connect major population centers, airports and other major terminal facilities, and major national or regional travel destinations. NHS designation also signifies roads that have been designated to have a role in meeting national defense needs. A share of federal funding must be specifically devoted by each state to improve and preserve of the NHS.

Figure 3-6 illustrates the Federal Functional Classification (FC) system in the ROCOG area. The FC system is particularly important in the programming of programmatic federal funds in that only work on Interstate Highways as well as designated arterials and collectors on this system are eligible for federal funding. The FC system is basically a tool for understanding the existing and near-term function of the roadway system. Roadways cannot be added to the system until roads function in a different way.





Figure 3-4: Roadway Ownership in ROCOG Area

Source: ROCOG



Figure 3-5: National Highway System in the ROCOG Planning Area



National Highway System: Rochester, MN

Source: MnDOT National Highway System Information page

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/national_highway_system/nhs_maps/minnesota/rochester_mn.pdf





Figure 3-6: Federal Functional Classification System in the ROCOG Area

Source: MnDOT Federal Functional Classification, http://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadway/data/functional_class.html





Figure 3-7: Roadways Eligible for State and Federal Funding

Source: ROCOG GIS Division, MnDOT State Aid for Local Transportation http://www.dot.state.mn.us/stateaid/



Minnesota Municipal and County State Aid funding is targeted to municipalities over 5,000 in population as well as counties. Maintenance at the township and small city level comes from local property tax. Cities are given more flexibility to add mileage to MSAS systems, while counties must go through a statewide screening board to make changes to their system. Each jurisdiction receives an allotment of funding annually based on defined allocation formulas, with a portion of funds set-aside for maintenance purposes.

Roadway System Conditions

The condition of roadways is affected by many factors, including the age of the pavement structure, the amount of traffic that uses the roadway, environmental conditions, and the frequency of maintenance actions applied to the roadway. This section reports on the current condition of the primary roadway networks in the ROCOG MPA, including roads managed by MnDOT, Olmsted County, and the City of Rochester.

Figures 3-8 through 3-11 illustrate the age profile of road networks managed by these road authorities. The typical life cycle of pavements, particularly arterial roadways, is estimated at about 50 years. Age since first construction or last reconstruction is an indicator of roadway maintenance needs, since the passage of time affects the level of pavement deterioration and the structural base of the roadway. Figure 3-8 illustrates the age profile of MnDOT pavements. Many of the heavily traveled urban arterials, such as TH 63 or TH 52 in Rochester, are fairly new roadways where need for replacement will not occur during the horizon of this Plan. The Interstate system in the ROCOG are was built in the 1960s and early 70s, so consideration needs to be given to possible major rehabilitation work during the horizon of the Plan.

Approximately 55% of the Rochester street network as illustrated in Figure 3-9 has been built in the last 30 years, indicating it should only require periodic preservation work such as seal coating and mill and overlay projects during the horizon of the Plan. Much of the Rochester network is composed of low volume roads (78%) typically found in neighborhoods, which potentially can be managed to allow for a 60 to 70-year life cycle before major rehabilitation is needed.

The Olmsted County network is broken into separate rural and urban profiles as shown in Figures 3-10 and 3-11. The urban network, illustrated in Figure 3-11, is generally newer, which should require less in the way of major rehabilitation work during the horizon of this Plan, but will need attention to preservation such as timely mill and overlay projects because of heavier traffic loadings. The rural system, illustrated in Figure 3-10, is generally older, but as highlighted by the large share of orange and blue color in the columns, these are typically low



Figure 3-8: MnDOT Road Network Age Profile



Figure 3-9: Rochester Road Network Age Profile



Figure 3-10: Olmsted County Rural Network Age **Profile**



Figure 3-11: Olmsted County Urban Network **Age Profile**





volume roads (less than 1500 ADT), which likely can be managed through a longer 60 or 70 life cycle with proper maintenance.

Pavement Condition Trends in the ROCOG Planning Area

Figures 3-12 through 3-14 provide a profile of current pavement conditions on MnDOT, Olmsted County, and Rochester streets and highways. Maintaining the upper wearing layer of pavements is important in order to provide acceptable ride quality for users. It also provides safety and environmental benefits (such as lower noise levels during tire contact with the pavement) that are important to quality of life, particularly in more densely populated areas. Various measures are used to measure pavement quality, but generally they all provide similar qualitative reporting results wherein a pavement surface is rated on 4-point scale of Very Good to Poor. The condition of a pavement and how it is trending over a period of years is also an indicator of what type preservation activity may be needed.

Figure 3-12 provides 2018 ratings for MnDOT roadways in the ROCOG Area. MnDOT uses a family of 4 measures to judge pavement condition:

- Ride Quality provides an indication of user satisfaction
- Surface Rating quantifies that condition of the top pavement layer

- Pavement Quality Index takes these factors into account to create a single overall rating scale that can be used for prioritizing
- Remaining Surface Life (RSL) is an estimate, based on standard life cycle practice given the condition of a road, of how long before preservation work will be needed

The pavement ratings are generally Good, although as can be seen in the RSL, there are roadways (including TH 52 in Rochester and most state roads south and east of I-90 that need attention in the near term.

Figure 3-13 shows how the condition of Olmsted County roads has changed over time. In the early 2000s the county was faced with a serious backlog of preservation needs, as seen in the large share of "Poor" and "Fair" pavements in the 2003 numbers. The County spent a significant share of their roadway budget on just preservation for a period of 3-4 years, which has resulted in a more stable overall network condition, particularly for the share of road miles rated Poor.

Figure 3-14 illustrates condition trendlines for Rochester's asphalt and concrete pavements for the last 10 years. Similar to Olmsted County, in the early 2000s Rochester had a significant share of roadways classified as "Poor" pavement conditions as growth pressures in the 1990s led to a significant share of roadway dollars being spent on system improvements. Rochester was able to direct







Source: MnDOT Roadway Data 2018 Pavement Management https://www.dot.state.mn.us/materials/pvmtmgmt.html





Figure 3-13: Trends of Pavement Condition in Olmsted County 2003-2017

Source: Derived from the data provided by Olmsted County Public Works on Pavement Conditions and MnDOT http://www.dot.state.mn.us/materials/pvmtmgmt.html





Rochester Bituminous Pavement Conditions 2009-2018



20% 0% 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018

Source: Derived from data provided by Rochester City Public Works on pavement conditions



more dollars into preservation in the 2000s, resulting in a more stable condition profile where the city has been able to maintain 70-80% of roadways in Good or Very Good condition over the last 10 years.

Bridge Conditions

Currently there are a total of 538 bridge and culverts in the ROCOG MPA that are part of the statewide Bridge Management System. This includes 179 bridge structures and 359 culvert structures. Of these, 357 are over 20 feet in length and thus eligible for federal bridge funding. Olmsted County is responsible for 217 of these structures, with an additional 158 managed by MnDOT. Olmsted County also assists local townships with their bridge management needs, which involve 111 structures, while 40 structures are under the ownership of municipalities. Poor bridge and culvert based on sufficiency rating at Olmsted County level is shown in Figure 3-15. Through a concentrated partnership between the state and local units of government, the structural quality of bridges has been improved over the last 25 years; however, maintaining this level of quality will require continual investment in the ROCOG MPA.

Figure 3-15: Bridge and Culvert Sufficiency Rating in Olmsted County





Bridges and Culverts Rating by Sufficiency and Age

Figures 3-16 shows the age and sufficiency rating of bridges from 1995 to 2018 in ROCOG area. Significant efforts have been made in the last 20 years to increase the share of bridges in "Very Good" condition (a sufficiency rating above 80), and the age profile of the bridge inventory has also improved. The number of bridges exceeding 60 years in age has been reduced significantly. Currently only 5 bridges in the county have a sufficiency rating below 40. Culverts generally are not subject to the same wear and tear as bridges and thus have a longer service life (typically lasting upwards of 90 years versus 60 years for bridge structures) and are in better condition. The structural integrity, adequacy, and safety of bridges in meeting all functional travel requires a continuous flow of federal and state funding.

Figure 3-16: Trends in Bridge Sufficiency Rating and Distribution of Bridges by Age 1995-2018



Source: Developed by ROCOG from data provided by Olmsted County, City of Rochester, & MnDOT Bridge Rating Data https://www.dot.state.mn.us/bridge/datamanagement.html



Similarly, trends in culvert sufficiency rating and culvert age in Olmsted County are shown in Figure 3-17. 98% of culverts have a sufficiency rating of "Very Good" (between 80 and 100) in Olmsted County. Only 1% of culverts have a sufficiency rating of "Fair" (between 40-59). The culvert by age graph in Figure 3-17 shows that only 1% of culverts are over 90 years old. The majority of culverts fall in the age category of between 16 and 35 years. The culvert age group between 76-90 years has grown to 12% in 2018 which requires extra federal and state funding in a few years to improve integrity, adequacy and safety of bridge structure for public use.

Figure 3-17: Culverts by Age and Sufficiency Rating 1995-2018



Source: Developed by ROCOG from data provided by Olmsted County, City of Rochester, & MnDOT Bridge Rating Data https://www.dot.state.mn.us/bridge/datamanagement.html



Vehicle Miles of Travel

Vehicles miles of travel (VMT) in the ROCOG area has experienced three periods of change over the last 20 years. Prior to the Great Recession starting in 2008, VMT grew at a rate of 2.2% annually from 2000 to 2007, driven by significant population and employment growth in Olmsted County, particularly in the Rochester urban area. During this period VMT increased 26% in the Rochester urban area but only 4% in the regional ROCOG area. With the onset of the recession, VMT slowed to a 1% annual rate from 2007 to 2011, again with growth in the urban area (13% over 4 years) paired with a 9% reduction in VMT in the regional area. Since 2011, VMT growth has accelerated again to a rate of 2% annually, expanding 9% between 2011 and 2017. Unlike earlier periods, however, total VMT growth has been greater in the regional area (10%) than the Rochester urban area (8%) during this period.



Figure 3-18: Trend in Vehicles Miles of Travel Growth – ROCOG Planning Area 2001-2017

Source: MnDOT Roadway Data https://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadway/data/data-products.html#VMT



Figure 3-19 compares VMT growth against a series of metrics that are fundamental to the level of travel occurring in any region. The chart compares growth rates over different recent time periods for VMT, number of households, population, and employment.

The left half of the chart compares change in these factors for the last three decades, with the 1990s representing a high-water mark for overall growth in the Rochester area. Growth in the early 2000s was strong enough to overcome the loss of jobs and slowing activity in the latter part of the 2000s, while growth has rebounded since 2010, but at a lower level. Of note during all three periods is the fact that VMT growth was stronger than growth in the other factors except for employment growth in the 2010s.

The right half of the chart breaks down the period since 2000 into three periods including pre-recession, the Great Recession itself, and post-recession. This comparison shows growth in all factors except for employment during the recession. Of note in this time frame is that VMT growth has slowed to be more consistent with the other factors, unlike earlier periods where VMT growth was always higher. While slowing VMT growth is understandable during the recession, since that time the pattern may be influenced by Rochester attracting a larger share of population and employment growth to the urban area coupled with a slowing in commuter growth (as was shown in Chapter 2), which has tempered the overall level of VMT growth.

Daily Travel in the Rochester Urban Area

Figure 3-20 illustrates the current level of traffic occurring on Rochester area roadways based on the latest State Aid traffic counts collected by MnDOT in 2018. Figure 3-21 illustrates for the urban area the level of growth that has occurred between 2000 and 2018 on individual corridors throughout the urban area.



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Figure 3-19: Comparative Trends in VMT, Population and Employment in Olmsted County

Source: MnDOT Roadway Data https://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadway/data/data-products.html#VMT and US Census Bereau, https://data.census.gov/cedsci/all?q=olmsted%20county,%20mn





Figure 3-20: Average Annual Daily Traffic in Rochester Urban Area – 2018

Source: MnDOT Traffic Counting Program/State Aid Traffic Count Maps





Figure 3-21: Traffic Growth on Streets and Highways in ROCOG Area – 2002/2004 to 2018

Source: ROCOG based on information from MnDOT State Aid Count Maps



Public Transit Ridership and Operating Cost

Figure 3-22 illustrates the steady growth in annual ridership that Rochester Public Transit has experienced since 2010 along with the growth in annual fixed route operating expenses. Ridership was impacted in 2009/2010 by the recession that began in 2008 but began growing again in 2011. Annual ridership reached 2.1 million in 2019, with 42% of ridership associated with direct service routes from city Park & Ride lots to downtown and 58% associated with regular route service. Annual per capita ridership is also showing an upward trend, reaching 17.12 trips per capita in 2019. Funding of fixed route transit shows operating costs reached \$8.5 million in 2018. As a result of State Legislative action in 2016, an increasing share of operating costs are covered by state funding sources.

Figure 3-23 illustrates ridership and operating expenses for Rochester paratransit service for elderly and disabled known as "ZIPS" (Zumbro Independent Passenger Service). Ridership on the service has been fairly steady with a slight upward trend observed in recent years. ZIPS added taxi service for evening and peak demand periods in 2017. Operating costs have trended upward in line with general labor cost and supply cost trends.

A series of metrics for public transit are shown in Figure 3-24. Ridership has increased by over 3.5% annually,

supported by an increase in both vehicle hours of service and miles of service. Key findings include:

- The rate of ridership growth has exceeded the growth rate in service as measured by vehicle miles and vehicle hours of service
- The rate of growth in operating costs has tracked the combined impact of service growth and cost inflation for inputs such as fuel, labor and maintenance
- Passenger levels as measured by passengers per hour has ticked up slightly over the last 10 years

Other key transit services in the ROCOG area include private, for-profit regional commuter bus service and a regional subscription service provided by Rolling Hills bus service in the City of Rushford that serves the communities of Stewartville, Byron, Eyota and Dover. Besides public transit, there are a variety of for-profit and non-profit services operating within Olmsted County, as well as private bus/vans connected with senior and special needs housing sites, places of worship, regional shopping centers, lodging facilities and select multi-family housing projects.

Fixed Route Service/Service Area

Primary service operates on weekdays from 5 AM to 8 PM with late night service until 11 PM. Weekend service is provided from 7 AM to 7 PM. The fixed route service includes 17 basic weekday routes, four evening routes









Source: Ridership from National Transit Database; operating cost breakdown from Minnesota State Transit Report



Figure 3-23: Rochester Dial-a-Ride Transit Ridership and Operations Costs/Funding



Ridership on ZIPS Dial-A-Ride Service

Zips Dial A Ride Annual Operating Costs



Source: Ridership from from National Transit Database; Operating Cost Breakdown from Minnesota State Transit Report



Figure 3-24: Transit Operating Metrics and Annual Rate of Change 2001-2017



Source: Data from National Transit Database and Minnesota State Transit Report



and seven weekend routes. Weekday service is supplemented by two peak hour service routes and six express routes. Common headways are 30 minutes during peak periods and one hour during off-peak times.

The fixed route system is currently designed as a hub and spoke system, with all routes converging at the Downtown Transfer Area. It is heavily utilized during the AM and PM peak periods, with heavy station utilization occurring about every 30 minutes as buses "pulse" into and out of the downtown station. The maximum accumulation of buses at any one time in this area averages 22 vehicles. Buses serving regional commuter routes also have designated areas for boarding and unloading adjacent to the Downtown Station within the Mayo Medical Center campus and at Saint Mary's hospital.

With the city growing in both geographic size as well as population, the number of peak hour vehicles in service has expanded by 50% in the last 13 years. Over 90% of the population of Rochester lives within 1/4 mile of fixed route service. Figure 3-25 shows the coverage area in Rochester and major trip generators of transit trips.

Regional Commuter Bus Service

Rochester City Lines (RCL) is a private, for-profit carrier that provides commuter bus service to 32 communities in nine counties throughout Southeast Minnesota. They provide peak hour mass transit service and add/subtract routes based on ridership. Figure 3-26 shows the communities Rochester City Lines serves with a fleet of 31 buses. While not a true subscription service, RCL bases decisions regarding initiating or expanding service on interest expressed by individuals in the community. Once the level of expressed ridership demand has reached a point that running a bus would be financially viable, RCL will start service. All of the current routes are served by multiple vehicles, allowing a choice of trip times for residents of the communities served.

Mayo Clinic supports the service by providing a base subsidy to employees by assisting RCL in the sale of passes through bulk purchase of passes from RCL and reselling those to employees at discounted rate to help encourage use of alternative modes of transportation.

RCL has an agreement with Rochester Public Transit to allow users taking an RCL bus to Rochester to transfer for free to any local RPT route to complete their trip. RCL is looking to expand their service area in the future. They also intend to increase frequencies of their peak hour service as envisioned in the Destination Medical Center (DMC) planning.

Rochester Park and Ride System

To assist in managing the flow of traffic in and out of downtown Rochester in peak periods, the City of Rochester has established a network of remote park and





Figure 3-25: Transit Coverage Area in Rochester 2017





Figure 3-26: Rochester City Lines Service Area

Source: Regional Public Commuter Services, Rochester City Lines https://www.rochestercitylines.com/commuter.php

ride lots for commuters (and open to others as well) with express buses providing service to the Downtown Transit Station and St. Marys Hospital area (Figure 3-27). Park & Ride service has evolved into an important tool to minimize traffic congestion and parking needs while



Figure 3-27: Rochester Park and Ride System

Source: Rochester Public Transit website; ROCOG

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maintaining reliable peak period accessibility to the downtown.

A total of 2,710 spaces are currently provided at six locations around the urban area, located along major regional highways. Utilization rates are very high, averaging above 90% and in the case of some lots, including the IBM lot (NW), the Target South lot, and the Chateau Theatre lot (NE), seeing demand exceeding capacity.

This parking capacity is provided through the city leasing parking capacity from private business or landowners. Recently the rate has been \$25 per space per month. Costs for the system are recovered through fees charged to users and support from employers. For example, Mayo Medical Center pays a sponsorship fee on the order of \$750,000 annually to the city for providing service to their employees.

Rural Area Transit Service

Rolling Hills Transit provides reservation-based dial-a-ride bus service for the general public in a number of small cities and nearby township areas in Olmsted County including Byron, Chatfield, Dover, Eyota, and Stewartville. Service is provided curb to curb which is convenient for riders with disabilities and the public without limitations, as well as offering preschool service to the public.



This transit service is administered by the Southeast Minnesota Community Action Council (<u>SEMCAC</u>) under contract with Rolling Hills Transit. In addition to areas in Olmsted County, service is also provided to Dodge, Winona, Fillmore and Houston Counties. Daily service availability is summarized in Figure 3-28.

Freight

The primary mode for moving goods associated with the economy of Olmsted County is truck travel. Whether for agricultural products, building materials,



Figure 3-28: Rolling Hills Transit Service Hours



Eyota-Dover bus operates from 9 am – 5 pm



Byron bus operates from 7:30 am – 4:00 pm



Stewartville bus operates Tues, Weds & Fri., 7:30 am - 5:30 pm. | Mon & Thurs



Mon & Thursdays in Chatfield 7:30 am - 5:00 pm

Source: Rolling Hills Transit web site

manufactured goods, or merchandise delivery to retail stores, freight trucks move the majority of goods in the ROCOG MPA. Accessibility and mobility are key concerns affecting truck travel, as they are with other vehicular traffic, though vehicle weight and size present further

considerations for heavier truck travel.

Primary roads and bridges need to be strengthened sufficiently to withstand the added loads of heavy truck travel, and geometric design features need to accommodate the restricted handling capability of large trucks.

Local municipalities, Olmsted County, and MnDOT all monitor 10-ton



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route needs on a regular basis. Current regional routes seasonal weight limits along with the Rochester truck route network and allowed weight limits are shown in Figure 3-29.

Figure 3-29 also illustrates the location of vehicle crashes involving heavy commercial vehicles over the last 15 years. As expected, frequency of crashes correlates with Heavy Commercial Average Daily Traffic (HCADT) levels,





Figure 3-29: Seasonal Weight Limit on State and County Roads in Olmsted County 2019

Source: ROCOG



with the majority of crashes found on the Interstate and Trunk Highway network.

The MnDOT Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations publishes the Minnesota Commercial Truck and Passenger Regulations to advance highway safety by working with providers of commercial transportation to improve and enhance the safety of their operations. MnDOT also completed a <u>"Manufacture's Perspective on</u> <u>Minnesota's Transportation System</u>" in Southeast Minnesota. MnDOT collected and analyzed information on manufacturers' perspective in its District 6 in order to:

- Better understand their perspectives and priorities
- Build relationships to better align the transportation system in the long-term with shippers' needs
- Support continuous improvement at MnDOT with ongoing input from this customer segment

Commercial transport infrastructure represents an investment in quality transportation connections needed to serve the local and regional economy.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Rochester has more than 125 miles of paved paths and trails, 37 miles of on-street bicycle facilities and 31 bridge

structures and underpasses exclusively for bicycle and pedestrian use in the Rochester urban area. The Rochester River Trails system, which was largely constructed as part of the Rochester Flood Control Project in the 1980s and 1990s, provides a core network of trails interconnecting many subareas within the urban area. Existing non-motorized facilities in Rochester are shown in Figure 3-30.

Utilization data is limited and was gathered primarily from pilot count studies organized in 2011/2012 by MnDOT focused on high activity locations. The survey counting station stations and peak hour counts are shown in Figure 3-31 (Map A). The Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee (PBAC) established by the City of Rochester in 2017 has worked with a committee comprised of City Public Works, Rochester Parks and Recreation, and ROCOG staff to develop the survey sites in and around Rochester for the regular counting of bicyclists and pedestrians. The counting sites developed by the subcommittee are shown in Figure 3-31 (Map B). The city is intending to use those potential survey sites for the future counting of pedestrian and bicyclists in and around downtown and surrounding areas of the city on a regular basis.







Source: Rochester Public Works and Park & Recreation Depts.











Journey to Work

Figures 3-32 through 3-34 illustrate information derived from the 2012-2016 American Community Survey Block Group data that illustrates where users of alternative commute modes reside within the ROCOG Planning area and the level of utilization in each block group area. Each graphic includes a map showing data for the greater regional ROCOG area along with an inset map for the core Rochester Area.

Figure 3-32 illustrates where persons who walk or bike to work reside. As expected, the largest concentration for such commuters is in neighborhoods adjacent to downtown Rochester. Figure 3-33 illustrates where those who use carpools or transit reside. Generally speaking, persons in the regional area will be carpoolers, while those shown in the core urban area are likely to be transit users. Figure 3-34 reflects the residence location of those who telecommute for work.

Figure 3-35 reports summary Journey to Work data for select years for Olmsted County and Rochester residents. Mode shares for various commute travel modes are illustrated in the table. Solo commuting has declined in recent years in Rochester, likely driven by efforts of the Mayo Medical Center and other downtown employers.

Figure 3-32: Walk and Bike to Work



Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey





Figure 3-33: Transit and Carpool Work Travel

Figure 3-34: Telecommuters



Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey



Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey



Figure 3-35: Census Journey to Work Trends

Source: Developed from mode share data of US Census 1990-2010 and American Community Survey 2018

