# 9 • Overview of Modal Plans

## Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to Part 3 of the Plan. This part of the plan includes chapters discussing:

- Major street and highway network
- Transit systems
- Active transportation
- Financial assessment of each mode looking at revenues that have been historically available to support these modes and expected costs looking forward to 2045

Each chapter highlights recommended projects as well as investment in preservation activities needed to support infrastructure already in place.

The Plan seeks to advance coordinated development and enhancement of a multi-modal transportation system, expanding travel options individuals will have available to meet their daily travel needs. The modal plans discussed in the following chapters provide a strategic framework plan to help guide transportation and land use decisions and public investments for years to come.

This chapter also provides information related to federally required performance planning measures, targets, and current data observations as to how systems in the ROCOG area are performing. An Environmental Justice assessment discusses how populations of minority and low-income persons are served or potentially affected by projects identified as candidates for federal funding. The chapter ends with an introduction to how project prioritization is used to identify federal projects, discussed more fully in Chapter 10, and general financial planning outcomes, which is the topic of Chapter 15.

## Key System Development Outcomes

Major street and highway corridors are the backbone of the physical infrastructure that is discussed in the Plan, serving not only vehicular traffic, but also much of the active transportation infrastructure and transit infrastructure and service in the community. The multiple purposes that street and highway corridors serve need to be considered throughout the planning, design, and capital investment process whenever a project to improve or preserve a corridor is anticipated.

It's important to consider the following outcomes when identifying and advancing projects in the planning phase:

- Design **networks** by taking connectivity and access to destinations into account. This means identifying the connections essential for local, regional, statewide, national or global travel so persons can reach the destinations important to them in a safe and convenient manner.
- **Incorporate multiple modes** of travel, where feasible, to provide safe, reliable and economical transportation choices.
- Assess transportation investment by considering the **land use context** within which a project will be located and whether the project can be designed to further enhance the attractiveness and viability of land use activities occurring within the corridor.
- Enhance economic competitiveness through providing **reliable access** to employment centers, educational opportunities, services, and other basic needs.
- Utilize **preservation projects as an opportunity** to implement missing elements of complete corridors such as pedestrian or bicycle enhancements or transit infrastructure where feasible.
- Consider whether better **management of existing capacity** can address travel demand needs before investing in additional roadway capacity.
- Improve **safety and security** for all modal users of street corridors.
- Enhance **environmental outcomes** and expand economic travel options for underserved populations

## System Elements

Figure 9-1 visually illustrates the range of transportation networks and systems that ROCOG supports in planning and programming of federal funds.

## Highlighted Actions

Development of complete networks and complete corridors are fundamental to the vision of the plan. Certain elements of the network will have greater importance than others due to the service they provide or the impact they have as "city-shaping" infrastructure. The following subsections highlight proposed regionally significant infrastructure improvements identified in the plan.

### Highways

Chapter 11 highlights preservation and improvement needs on the major street and highway system in the ROCOG area. Significant projects include:

- Construction of new and upgraded interchanges on the National Highway System (NHS), particularly on TH 14 West starting at TH 52 in Rochester and extending to the Olmsted County boundary in Byron

## Figure 9-1: Elements of the ROCOG Area Transportation System

- Improvements to regional gateway corridors entering downtown Rochester, including North and South Broadway Avenue, Civic Center Dr connecting to TH 52 northwest of the CBD, and 2nd St SW at its connection to TH 52
- Development of primary arterial corridors to provide service in planned NW and NE urban growth areas identified in the 2018 Rochester Growth Management Plan

### Transit

- Development of Downtown Rapid Transit corridor connecting proposed transit villages/mobility hubs west and southeast of downtown Rochester to help minimize growth of commuter traffic in downtown Rochester
- Significant expansion to the capacity of the Rochester Park & Ride Network
- Development of a Bus Rapid Transit network in Rochester to anchor fixed route transit service in the future

### Active Transportation

- Expand the River Trails network to provide connections to south Rochester and flood control reservoirs east and west of the city
- Complete connections to future State trails

## Performance Planning for the Three Transportation Modes

With the enactment of MAP-21 and the FAST Act, performance planning requirements were introduced as a new component of the MPO 3-C planning process. Performance planning is a national initiative that will coordinate goals developed by the FHWA and FTA with performance measures targets adopted by the states and their respective MPOs. 23 CFR 450.306(d) identifies that the metropolitan transportation planning process shall support national goals identified in 23 U.S.C. 150(b) including safety, infrastructure condition, congestion, system reliability, and freight movement. In the ROCOG Planning Area, MnDOT and ROCOG have been coordinating development and adoption of performance targets in a phased approach, beginning in 2017 with safety performance targets. Since that time, performance targets have also been developed for NHS pavement and bridge condition as well as travel and freight reliability. As of the adoption of this plan, work is underway by Rochester Public Transit on development of performance targets addressing transit asset management and transit safety.

Table 9-1 outlines the basic steps that have been followed in the coordination process between MnDOT and ROCOG to establish performance targets. To date the reporting of progress on performance outcomes has

been included annually in the ROCOG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), beginning with the 2018-2021 TIP. Consistent with 23 CFR 450.324(f)(4), reporting on system performance in relation to established performance targets for the ROCOG Planning Area is documented for the first time in the Plan in Tables 9-2 through 9-5.

**Table 9-1: Development and Documentation of ROCOG PM Targets/Outcomes**

| Performance Target Development Step *By Authority: 23 CFR 450.324(f)(3) and (4)* | Notes |
|---|---|
| **Coordination with MnDOT on development of Performance Target(s)** | MPO's have coordinated with MnDOT in a phased process to development PM targets since 2017. ROCOG has adopted targets established through this process. |
| **Development of outcome information for ROCOG Planning Area is provided by MNDOT system performance reports.** | MnDOT reports are issued at least bi-annually. |
| **Annual adoption of new or updated targets and documentation of latest information on performance planning results** | Reporting is included in the Transportation Improvement Program annually |
| **Discussion of progress achieved in meeting targets (from Plan to updated Plan).** | The ROCOG 2045 Long Range Plan adopted in 2020 will be first plan to report baseline data and early year outcomes in meeting targets. Future plans will provide updated system reporting, assessment of trends and proposed recommendation for meeting targets. |

Table 9-2 reports on 2020 safety targets that have been established cooperatively by MnDOT and Minnesota MPO's. Targets are adopted by ROCOG annually as part of the TIP approval.

Table 9-2 shows the historical pattern of performance outcomes for the last five years in regard to the rate of fatalities and serious injuries, and the last 9 years in regard to absolute number of fatalities and serious injuries. The legend for the tables is as follows:

- √ Met Target
- X Did not Meet Target

Absolute numbers for the ROCOG area are included for information purposes only. Annual rates as well as five year rolling average rates are shown for comparison purposes.

## Table 9-2: Summary of Performance Targets and Outcomes for Safety Measures

**Joint MnDOT / ROCOG Performance Planning Outcomes for ROCOG Area**

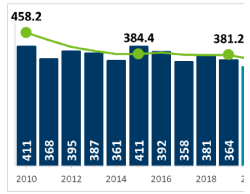
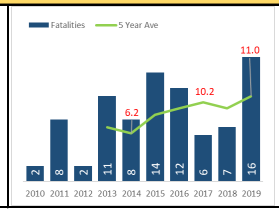
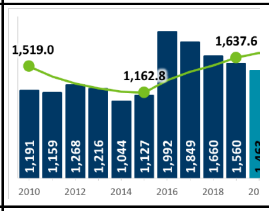
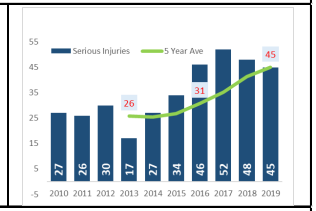
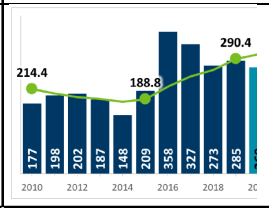
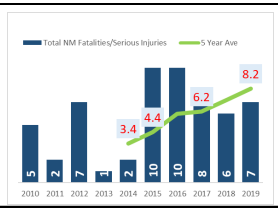
| Measure | 2020 Target | State Data | ROCOG Area |
|---|---|---|---|
| **SAFETY PERFORMANCE MEASURES** | | | |
| Annual Number of Fatalities | 375.4 Statewide<br><br>No Specific ROCOG Area Target / ROCOG data for information only |  |  |
| Fatalities per 100 million vehicles mile of travel | 0.626 | 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019<br>ANNUAL FATALITY RATE PER 100 MILLION VEHICLE MILES OF TRAVEL<br>MN 0.07 0.66 0.60 0.63 0.60<br>ROCOG 0.96 0.81 0.40 0.44 1.01<br>FIVE YEAR ROLLING AVERAGE RATE PER 100 MILLION VEHICLE MILES OF TRAVEL<br>MN 0.544 0.546 0.528 0.518 0.512<br>ROCOG 0.603 0.650 0.701 0.634 0.725 | |
| Number of Serious Injuries | 1741.2 Statewide<br><br>No Specific ROCOG Area Target / ROCOG data for information only |  |  |
| Serious Injuries per 100 million vehicles mile of travel | 2.854 | 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019<br>ANNUAL SERIOUS INJURY RATE PER 100 MILLION VEHICLE MILES OF TRAVEL<br>MN 1.94 3.38 3.08 2.75 2.50<br>ROCOG 2.33 3.11 3.44 3.03 2.84<br>FIVE YEAR ROLLING AVERAGE RATE PER 100 MILLION VEHICLE MILES OF TRAVEL<br>MN 2.03 2.30 2.47 2.59 2.73<br>ROCOG 1.89 2.13 2.39 2.76 2.95 | |
| Combined number of pedestrian & bicycle fatalities & Serious Injuries | 317 Statewide<br><br>No Specific ROCOG Area Target / ROCOG data for information only |  |  |

Table 9-3 reports on performance of Interstate and non-Interstate highways on the NHS system in regard to the percentage of pavements and bridges that are in good and poor condition. For all historic reporting periods except bridges in good condition in 2019, performance targets were exceeded.

The legend for the tables is as follows:

- √ Met Target
- X Did not Meet Target

## Table 9-3: Summary of Performance Targets and Outcomes for NHS Pavement and Bridge Conditions

| Measure | 2020 Target | ROCOG Area |
|---|---|---|
| **NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM PAVEMENT AND BRIDGE CONDITIONS** | | |
| % of Interstate Highway Pavement in Good Condition | 55%<br>Percentage of Interstate Pavements that are in Good Condition | 2017: 78.4 ✓; 2018: 84.5 ✓; 2019: 77.4 ✓ |
| % of Interstate Highway Pavement in Poor Condition | 2%<br>Percentage of Interstate Pavements that are in Poor Condition | 2017: 0.00% ✓; 2018: 0.00% ✓; 2019: 0.00% ✓ |
| % of Non-Interstate Highway Pavement in Good Condition | 50%<br>Percentage of Non-Interstate Pavements that are in Good Condition | 2017: 54.08 ✓; 2018: 66.30 ✓; 2019: 67.60 ✓ |
| % of Non-Interstate Highway Pavement in Good Condition | 4%<br>Percentage of Non-Interstate Pavements that are in Poor Condition | 2017: 0.37% ✓; 2018: 0.1% ✓; 2019: 0.1% ✓ |
| % of NHS Bridges in Good Condition | 50%<br>Percentage of Bridges on the National Highway System that are in Good Condtion | 2015: 61.83% ✓; 2016: 62.55% ✓; 2017: 62.55% ✓; 2018: 58.18% ✓; 2019: 48.50% X |
| % of NHS Bridges in Poor Condition | 4%<br>Percentage of Bridges on the National Highway System that are in Poor Condtion | 2015: 0.00% ✓; 2016: 0.00% ✓; 2017: 0.00% ✓; 2018: 0.00% ✓; 2019: 0.00% ✓ |

Table 9-4 summarizes outcomes for the percentage of person miles of travel that is reliable on the Interstate and non-Interstate NHS system in the ROCOG Area, along with truck travel time reliability on Interstate Highways. For all reporting periods performance in the ROCOG Area has met the established target.

The legend for the tables is as follows:

- √ Met Target
- X Did not Meet Target

## Table 9-4: Summary of Performance Targets and Outcomes for NHS Reliability and Truck Travel Reliability

| Joint MnDOT / ROCOG Performance Planning Outcomes for ROCOG Area | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Measure** | **2020 Target** | **ROCOG Area** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM RELIABILITY/INTERSTATE TRUCK TRAVEL RELIABILITY** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Percentage of person-miles on Interstates that is reliable | 80%<br>Percentage of person-miles of travel on the Interstate Highway System that are reliable | | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | | | | |
| | | ROCOG Area | √ 100 | √ 100 | √ 100 | √ 100 | √ 100 | √ 100 | | | | |
| Percentage of person-miles on Non- Interstates that is reliable | 75%<br>Percentage of person-miles of travel on the Non-Interstate Highway System that are reliable | | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | | | | |
| | | ROCOG Area | √ 86.8 | √ 80.4 | √ 80.7 | √ 94 | √ 99.9 | √ 100 | | | | |
| Truck Travel Time Reliabiilty on Interstate Highways | 1.5<br>Truck Travel Time Reliability Index (TTTR) Index rating | | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | | | | |
| | | ROCOG Area | √ 1.18 | √ 1.13 | √ 1.13 | √ 1.11 | √ 1.13 | √ 1.18 | | | | |

Rochester Public Transit is currently in the process of finalizing performance targets for transit asset management and transit safety. Table 9-5 identifies the performance measures for which targets are in development. The last column in Table 9-5 provides a qualitative summary of current performance of RPT relative to the measures that are under development. It is expected that final targets will be selected early in 2021.

## Table 9-5: Performance Planning Outcomes for Transit Asset Management and Safety

| Joint MnDOT / ROCOG Performance Planning Outcomes for ROCOG Area | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Measure** | **2020 Target** | **ROCOG Area** |
| **TRANSIT ASSET MANAGEMENT AND TRANSIT SAFETY** | | |
| Transit Asset Management | MnDOT and public transit agencies in MN currently engaged in setting performance targets for the following measures:<br><br>- Percent of Non-Revenue vehicles that have met or exceeded Useful Life Benchmark (ULB)<br><br>- Percent of Transit Facilities (non-vehicle structures) with an asset class rated below 3 on FTA's Transit Economic Requirements Model<br><br>- Percent of Revenue Vehicles that have met or exceeded their ULB | Currently Rochester Public Transit (RPT) has no non-revenue vehicles exceeding UBL or non-vehicle facilities with an asset class rating below 3<br><br>RPT currently has no revenue vehicles that exceed its internal ULB of 17 years but 17% of current fleet exceeds Federal ULB of 15 years; these vehicles all programmed for replacement in 2020-2022 period |
| Transit Safety | MnDOT and public transit agencies in MN currently engaged in setting performance targets for the following measures:<br><br>- Total number of tansit related reportable fatalities and rate per vehicle revenue miles of travel<br><br>- Total number of transit related reportable injuries and rate per vehicle revenue miles of travel<br><br>- Total number of reportable events and rate per vehicle revenue miles of travel<br><br>- Mean distance between major mechanical failures | RPT has reported no fatalities and only 1 injury/reportable event during the last five years of operations on the fixed route Bus system and no fatalities or injuries on the ZIPS ADA/Paratransit System.<br><br>For the fixed route system, the rate vehicle revenue miles between major mechanical failures has been 73,291 miles and for the ZIPS paratransit system the rate has been 36,900 vehicle revenue miles between mechancial failures |

## Discussion of Performance Planning

After the full rollout of federal performance measures is completed at the state level, guidelines stated that future Metropolitan Transportation Plans must discuss progress toward meeting the targets adopted by MPOs. Tables 9-2 through 9-5 provide historic and current baseline information that has been gathered during the initial phase-in period of performance targets by MnDOT and ROCOG, with additional targets for transit assets and safety still in development.

Future plans will provide updates to this baseline information which will provide the benefit of additional years of data to establish meaningful trend information regarding progress being made as data from over several multi-year time periods will become available. Since ROCOG currently follows the lead of MnDOT in terms of most performance planning efforts, the State's progress on certain performance targets effectively informs the progress that ROCOG is making on certain targets. This is particularly noteworthy on certain safety measures such as the absolute annual number of fatalities and serious injuries among motorists and non-motorists, where the small sample size observed in the ROCOG Planning Area has resulted in a very erratic trendline, at least in the early years of performance measurement.

## 2045 Plan Projects and Performance Targets

This section provides a list of the Regionally Significant projects from this 2045 Plan and which performance measures are meant to be affected by the project's implementation. Projects identified as candidates for implementation in the years 2020-2029 are considered Short Range projects, and projects anticipated to occur in the 2030-2045 timeframe are considered Long Range projects (Table 9-6).

Projects are identified individually for the short-range group, whereas the long-range group has general groups of projects. Also note that the transit safety target has yet to be designated, with Rochester Public Transit working on development of transit safety targets which are expected to be adopted in 2021.

## Table 9-6: Regionally Significant Projects and Performance Impact

| Years | Government Agency | Perf Measures➲ Project Description↓ | Safety | Transit Asset Management | NHS Pavement Condition | NHS Bridge Condition | NHS Performance | Freight Interstate Movement | Transit Safety |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Short Range | | | | | | | | | |
| 2020 to 2029 | Rochester | Annual Rochester Transit Operations | | X | | | X | | |
| 2020 to 2029 | Rochester | Rapid Transit Station Development | X | X | | | X | | |
| 2020 to 2029 | Rochester | Annual Replacement Buses | | X | | | | | X |
| 2020 to 2029 | Rochester | Annual Expansion Buses | | X | | | X | | |
| 2020 to 2029 | Rochester | Permanent Park & Ride Sites | X | X | | | X | | |
| 2020 to 2029 | Olmsted | CR 101 Upgrade 2 lane gravel to Expressway / CSAH 1 to 20 | X | | | | X | | |
| 2020 to 2029 | Olmsted | 48 St NE-Upgrade 2 lane gravel to Arterial / CSAH 33 to 11 | X | | | | | | |
| 2020 to 2029 | Rochester | 65 St NW Arterial: Reconstruct TH 52 to 50 Av NW | X | | | | X | X | |

| Years | Government Agency | Perf Measures➲ Project Description↓ | Safety | Transit Asset Management | NHS Pavement Condition | NHS Bridge Condition | NHS Performance | Freight Interstate Movement | Transit Safety |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2020 to 2029 | Rochester | North Broadway Rebuild / 14th St to Elton Hills Dr | X | | | | | | X |
| 2020 to 2029 | Rochester | 20 St SW Collector: South Broadway to CR 125 Reconstruct | X | | | | | | X |
| 2020 to 2029 | Rochester | 50 Av NW: 19 St to CSAH 4 / new arterial corridor | X | | | | | | |
| 2020 to 2029 | Rochester | 19 St NW Arterial Ashland Dr to 50 Av Reconstruct | X | | | | X | | |
| 2020 to 2029 | Rochester | 19 St NW Arterial: 50 Av to 60 Av Reconstruct | X | | | | X | | |
| 2020 to 2029 | Olmsted | CSAH 44: 65 St to 75 St & 60th Ave to TH 52- Upgrade 2 lanes gravel to 2 lane Expressway | X | | X | | X | X | |
| 2020 to 2029 | Olmsted | CSAH 44: 55 St to 65 St- Upgrade 2 lanes gravel to 2 lane Expressway | X | | X | | X | X | |

| Years | Government Agency | Perf Measures➲ Project Description↓ | Safety | Transit Asset Management | NHS Pavement Condition | NHS Bridge Condition | NHS Performance | Freight Interstate Movement | Transit Safety |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2020 to 2029 | Olmsted | CSAH 44: 19 St to CSAH 4-Upgrade 2 lanes local to 2 lane Expressway | X | | X | | X | X | |
| 2020 to 2029 | Rochester | Extend Members Parkway Minor Collector | X | | | | | | |
| Long Range | | | | | | | | | |
| 2030 to 2045 | Rochester | 24 Street – Highway Projects | X | | X | X | X | X | |
| 2030 to 2045 | Rochester | 1st Phase Primary Transit Network (Broadway Ave Bus Rapid Transit) | | | | | | | X |
| 2030 to 2045 | Rochester | 35 Active Transportation Projects | X | | | | | | |

## Environmental Justice Assessment

Building on the previous section, which reviewed proposed regionally significant projects for their potential impact on system performance, this section provides an analysis looking at the potential for disproportionate impact of these projects on minority and low income communities, consistent with the guidance provided under Executive Order 12898 issued under the Clinton Administration. This high-level assessment looks at the relation of project locations to areas of residence for environmental justice populations.

## Definition of Environmental Justice (EJ) from the U.S. Department of Transportation

"Environmental Justice (EJ) is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, income, national origin, or educational level with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. DOT is committed to ensuring a fast, safe, efficient, accessible, and convenient transportation system for communities nationwide. In doing so, DOT comprehensively incorporates environmental justice (EJ) considerations into all of the Department's programs, policies, and activities. By ensuring opportunities for minority and low-income communities to influence the transportation planning and decision-making processes through enhanced engagement and meaningful input, the Department actively prevents disproportionately high and adverse effects of transportation projects on minority and low-income communities".

It should be noted that for transit, the analysis was limited to the project area of the planned transit infrastructure for a proposed Downtown Rapid Transit system and the phases of Bus Rapid Transit system to be known as the Primary Transit Network that are anticipated to occur in the 25 year Plan horizon.

Rochester Public Transit fixed route service will continue to provide local transit service to all Rochester urban neighborhoods that currently exist and those that will develop in the future. In addition, the paratransit service area that is provided today currently exceeds both the existing geography of Rochester and the expected growth area of Rochester by the year 2045.

## Distribution of Environmental Justice Populations

In completing the assessment of the impact of proposed federally funded projects on environmental justice populations, it is necessary to identify where such populations reside. For the purposes of this assessment, ROCOG used data from the American Community Survey 5 year estimates for the period of 2014-2018 at the Block Group level to map areas of interest (https://www.census.gov/geographies/mapping-files/time-series/geo/tiger-data.html ). This analysis considered both minority populations and low income populations; results are mapped illustrating block groups where only a minority threshold population was identified, block groups where only a low income threshold population was identified, and block groups within which both minority and low income thresholds were identified.

The first step in the process was to determine the threshold values for identifying block groups of interest. Table 9-7 reports the results of this analysis.

### Table 9-7: Environmental Justice Population Thresholds

| Minority Population Calculation | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Geography | Total Population | Minority Population | Percentage E.J. Population |
| ROCOG Planning Area | 153,065 | 29,766 | 19.4% |
| Rochester Urban Area | 123,232 | 28,241 | 22.9% |
| Regional Area | 29,833 | 1,525 | 5.1% |

| Low Income Population Calculation | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Geography | Total Population | Low Income Population | Percentage E.J. Population |
| ROCOG Planning Area | 153,065 | 13,490 | 8.8% |
| Rochester Urban Area | 123,232 | 11,892 | 9.7% |
| Regional Area | 29,833 | 1,598 | 5.4% |

Minority population for purposes of calculating the minority threshold represents the different between the total population and the reported "Not Hispanic or Latino: White Alone" total population. For purposes of calculating the percentage of low income, the threshold represents the number of persons for whom "Poverty Status is determined based on income in the past 12 months", divided by the total population. The Planning Area results were chosen to use for selecting block groups where minority and low income populations exceeded a threshold value of 19.4% for minority populations and 8.8% for low income individuals; separating the planning area into urban and rural areas had very limited impact on which block groups were identified.

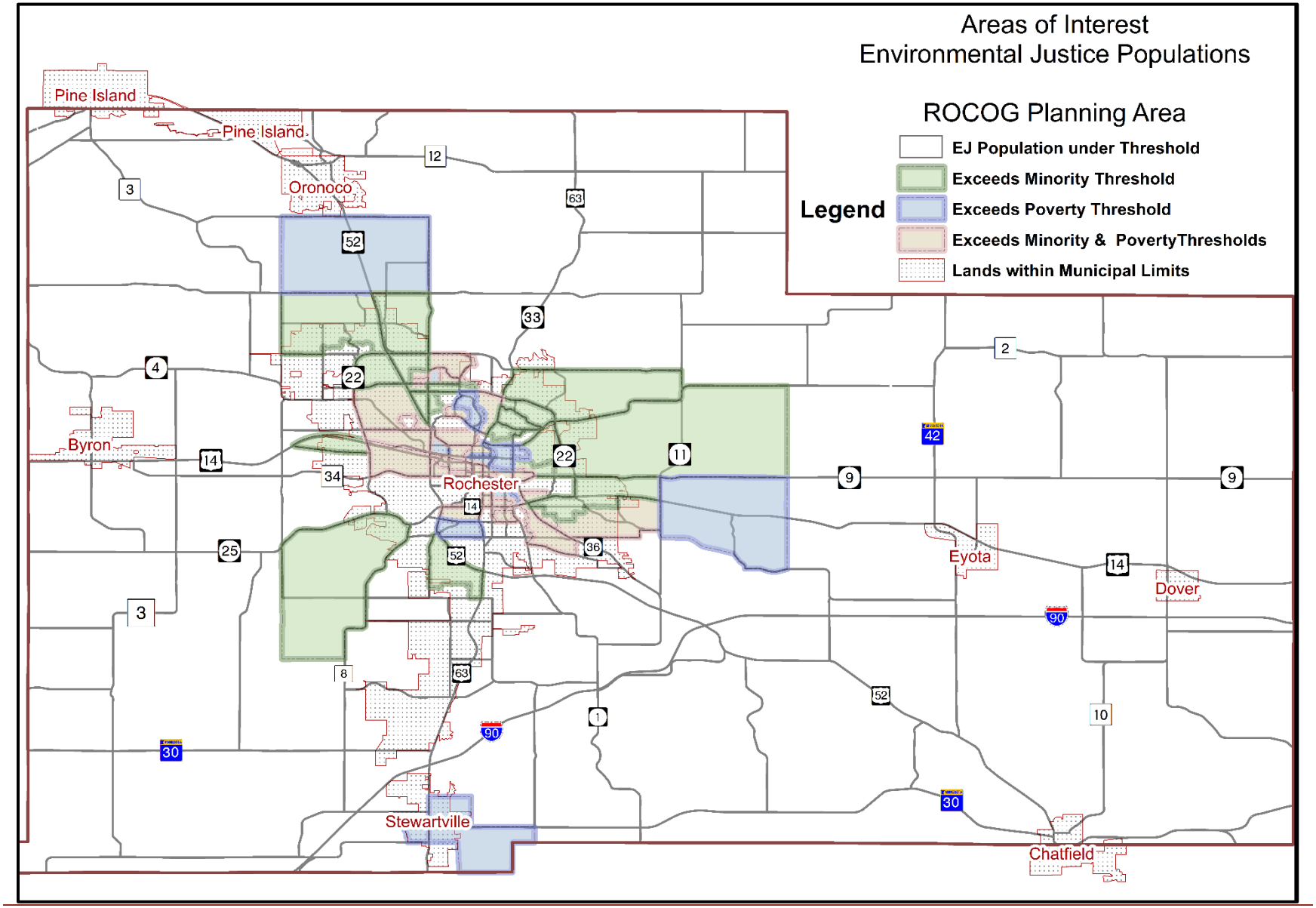
Figure 9-2 maps results for the entire ROCOG Planning Area and Figure 9-3 maps results for the Rochester Urban Area.

## Environmental Justice Population Involvement in Plan Development

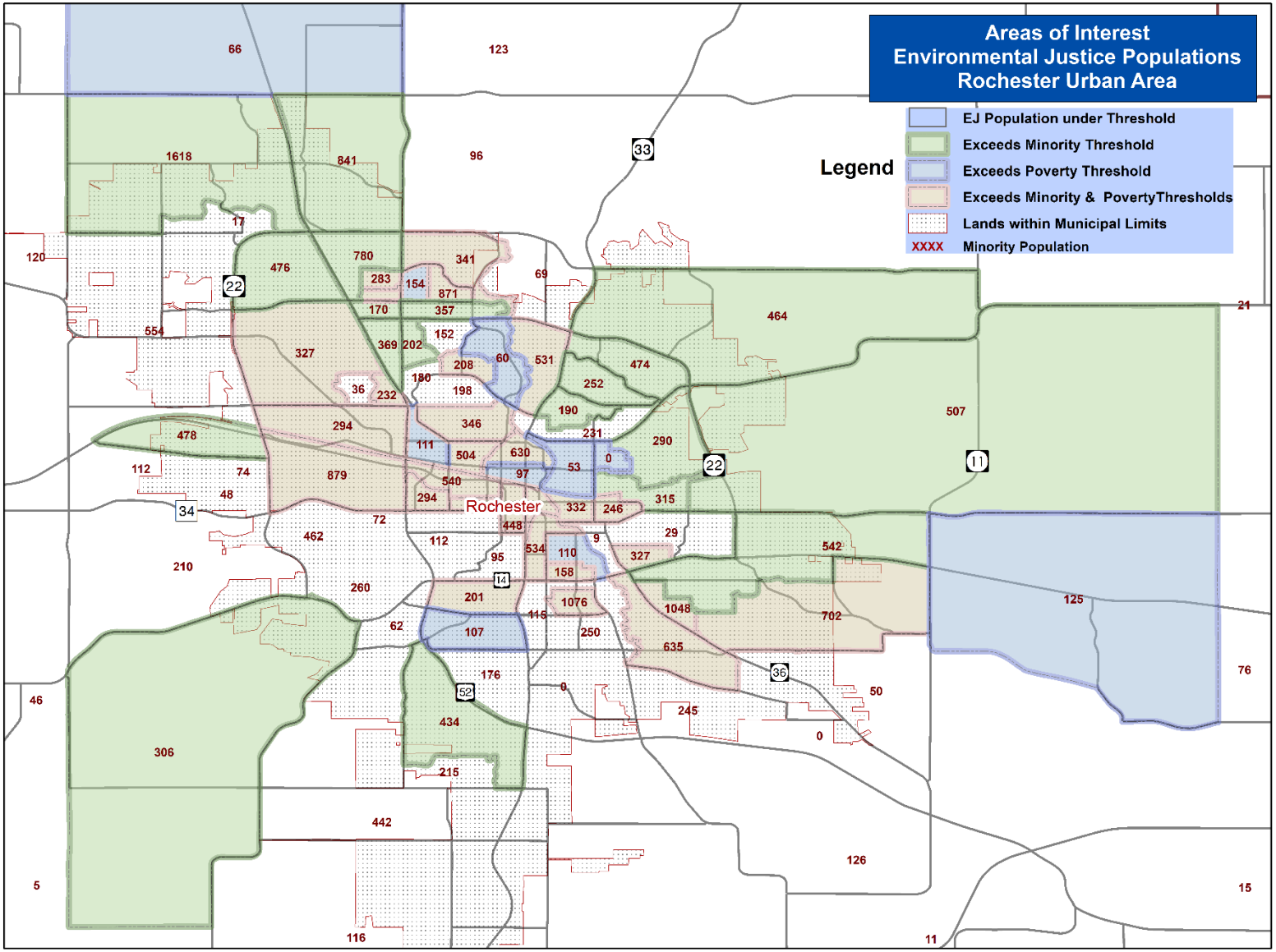
ROCOG staff conducted outreach aimed at getting input from diverse groups of people in the Rochester area. A special effort was made to reach out to low-income and minority populations by partnering with groups that work closely with these populations. ROCOG contacted the following organizations who potentially would be helpful in reaching out to members of low-income and minority populations:

- Adult Learning Center - Brookside
- Community Learning Center
- Diversity Council
- Elder Network
- Hiawatha Homes
- Hope Coalition
- Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association
- Rochester Public Transit
- Rolling Hills Transit
- Semcac Family Planning

**Figure 9-2: Block Groups Exceeding Minority or Low-Income Thresholds—ROCOG Planning Area**



## Figure 9-3: Block Groups Exceeding Minority or Low-Income Thresholds—Rochester Urban Area



- Southeast Minnesota Area Agency on Aging
- Southeast Minnesota Center for Independent Living
- Southeast Minnesota Together
- Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation
- Three Rivers Community Action
- Women's Resource Center

The Diversity Council and the Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association (IMAA) were two groups that responded to the opportunity to work with ROCOG in soliciting this input. ROCOG staff attended various Diversity Council events as well as attending meetings of the IMAA to discuss the LRTP and take questions and comments. The IMAA also allowed ROCOG to display posters about the LRTP and distribute comment cards at their office the entire month of September 2019.

Comments and questions with regard to streets and highways tended to be focused on major highway congestion at intersections and interchanges in Rochester, especially US-14 where it meets US-52 and West Circle Dr NW. People also suggested the need to improve roadway operations near downtown and on Broadway Ave (north and south of downtown).

On transit, there was a lot of interest in the BRT systems envisioned for Rochester over the next 20-25 years. Overall, the responses were positive about the idea of living and working in Rochester without the need to own a car. Another general comment was support for the idea of being able to travel downtown without having to find a place to park a car.

For active transportation, the major themes that were expressed were connecting pedestrian and bicycle paths into useful systems for people to travel around the city and region, and safety in the sense of the need to reduce conflict between users of various modes.

## Assessment of Projects relative to Environmental Justice Populations

Figures 9-4 through 9-6 provide high-level mapping illustrating the location of potential federally funded projects relative to environmental justice (EJ) populations in the Rochester urban area. A more detailed assessment of potential impacts and mitigation needs relative to specific projects will be required during the project development phase when more detailed environmental assessment is completed. Relative to the modal maps on the following pages:

- Figure 9-4 maps potential major street and highway projects in relation to Census Block Groups where EJ populations exceed threshold population levels calculated for Rochester. Based on a qualitative assessment, there is no disproportionate high and adverse impact expected from any of anticipated federally funded street and highway project locations illustrated. Many of the project locations are in urban

fringe areas showing a high percentage of EJ population in areas that are in fact sparsely populated suburban areas. Among projects located in more dense urban locations, the North Broadway project is located in an area of commercial and service business with little direct impact to residential properties. The 20th St SW project is one corridor where attention will need to be paid to potential EJ population impacts, though lot sizes in this area are larger and may provide greater opportunity for mitigation.

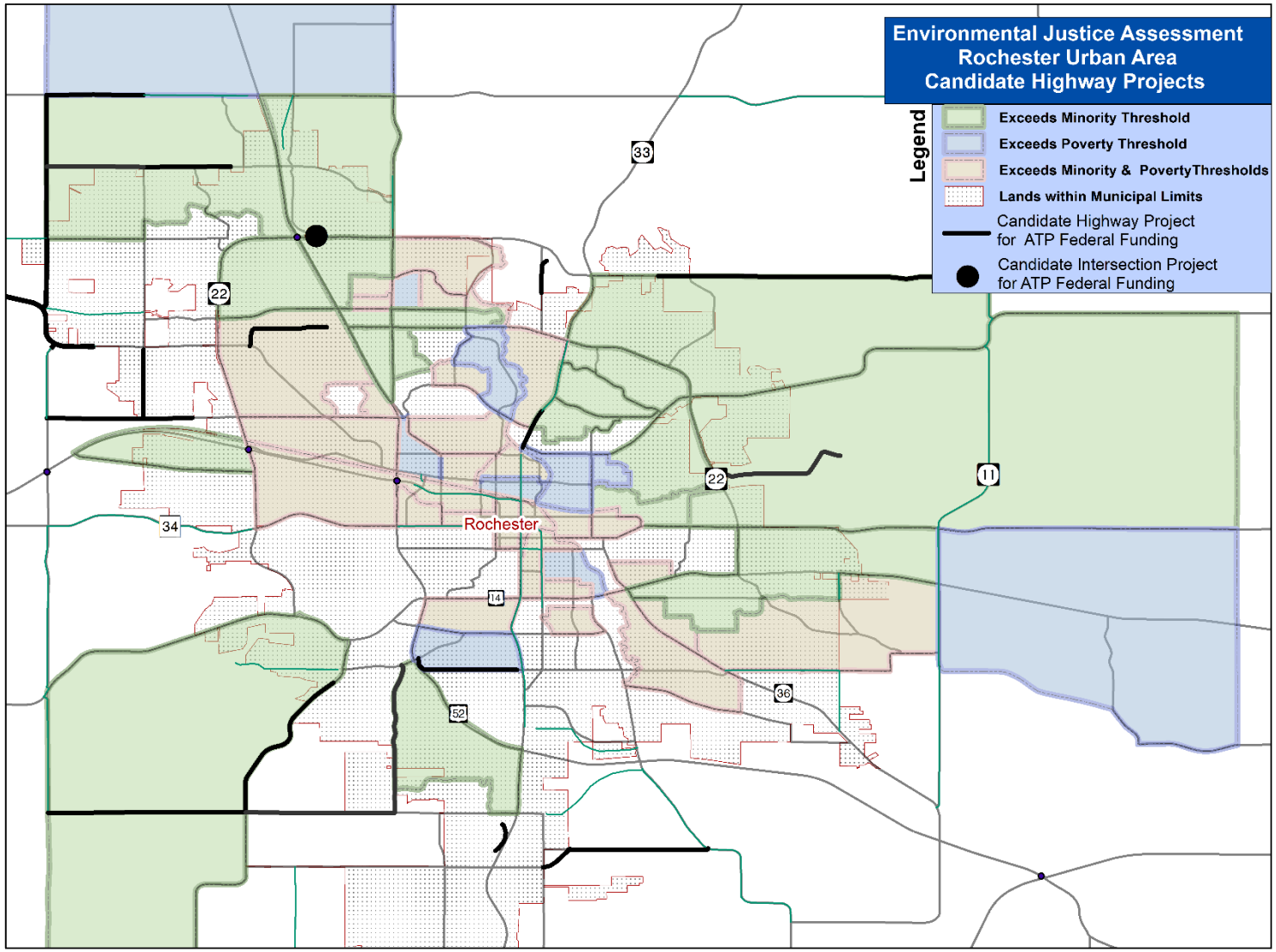
- Figure 9-5 illustrates city transit routes along with proposed corridors for anticipated Bus Rapid Transit service, with 750' to 1000' route buffers mapped. Existing route service planned for expansion in 2020 was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic but will expand service into a number of block groups areas identified on the fringe of the city where EJ populations are found to reside in higher numbers. Generally, all areas within the cities are well served with transit, although off peak frequency is generally limited to between 30 and 60 minute service.
- Figure 9-6 illustrates active transportation infrastructure focusing on trail and path facilities. The city, with approximately 140 miles of existing infrastructure, provides most neighborhoods with a minimum level of access to the city trail and path system. Planned improvements corridors have been identified to fill in most of the network gaps currently found to exist, which will improve access for EJ populations. Rochester's policy since the early 1990's has provided for sidewalks on all new streets, with most gaps existing in older areas originally developed in adjacent townships prior to annexation to the city; ROCOG prepared a study in 2016 looking at these areas and are recommending non-motorized infrastructure improvements to address this issue.

## Relationship of Plan's Financial Analysis with Project Selection in the Transportation Improvement Program

ROCOG adopted a policy in 2017 guiding how projects would be selected for federal funding that ROCOG programs in the annual Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

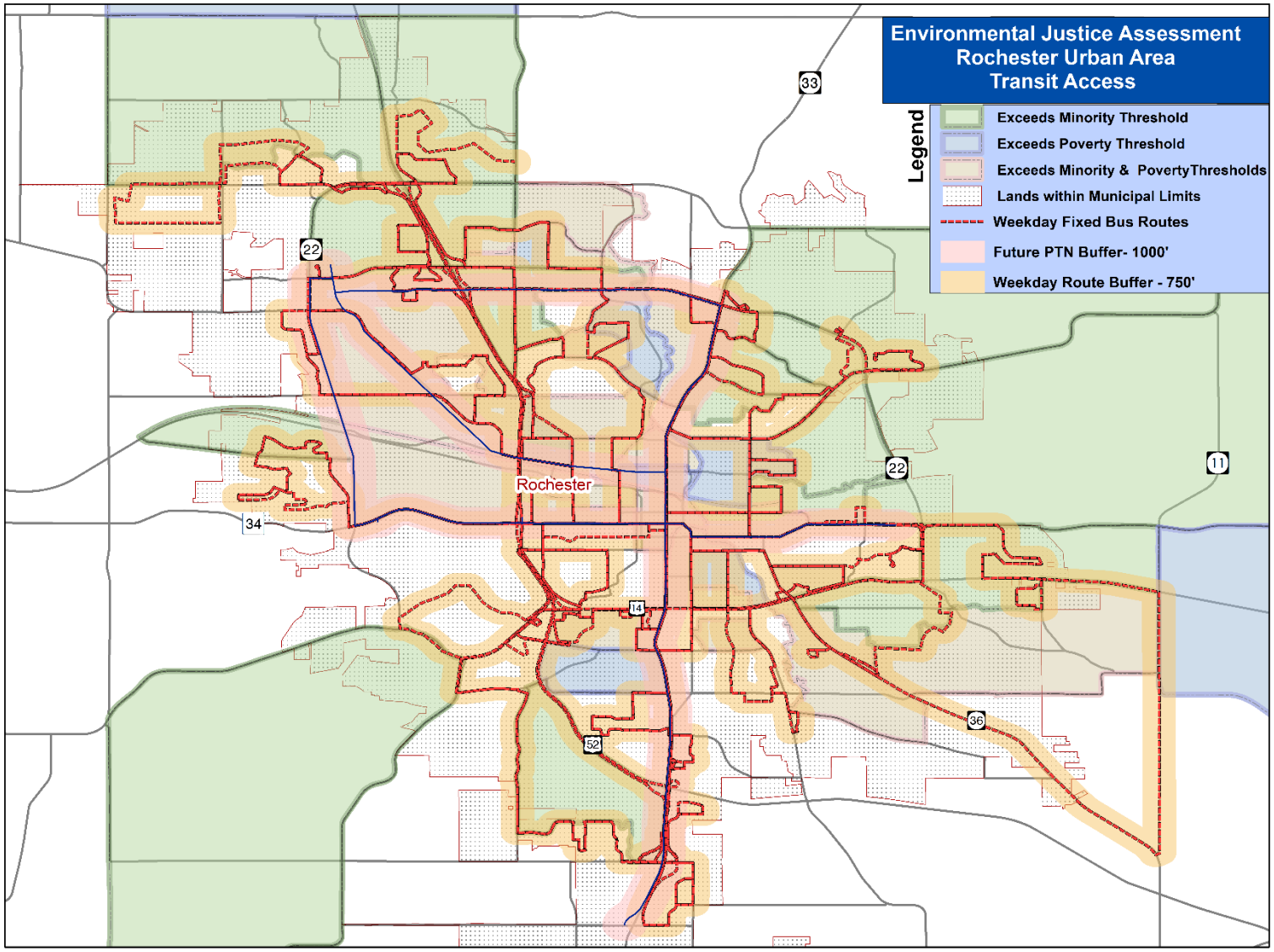
- The selection policy relies on the creation and periodic updating of a slate of projects (referred to as the "ROCOG-ATP Project List") developed by ROCOG and the jurisdictions eligible to receive federal funding.
- ROCOG, at the time this plan was adopted, has responsibility to program $2.37 million dollars of federal Surface Transportation Block Grant funding annually, out of an average of approximately $14 million in federal funding that has on average been programmed over the last 10 years by ROCOG and the Area Transportation Partnership. (Based on

## Figure 9-4: Environmental Justice Assessment – Candidate ATP Highway Projects



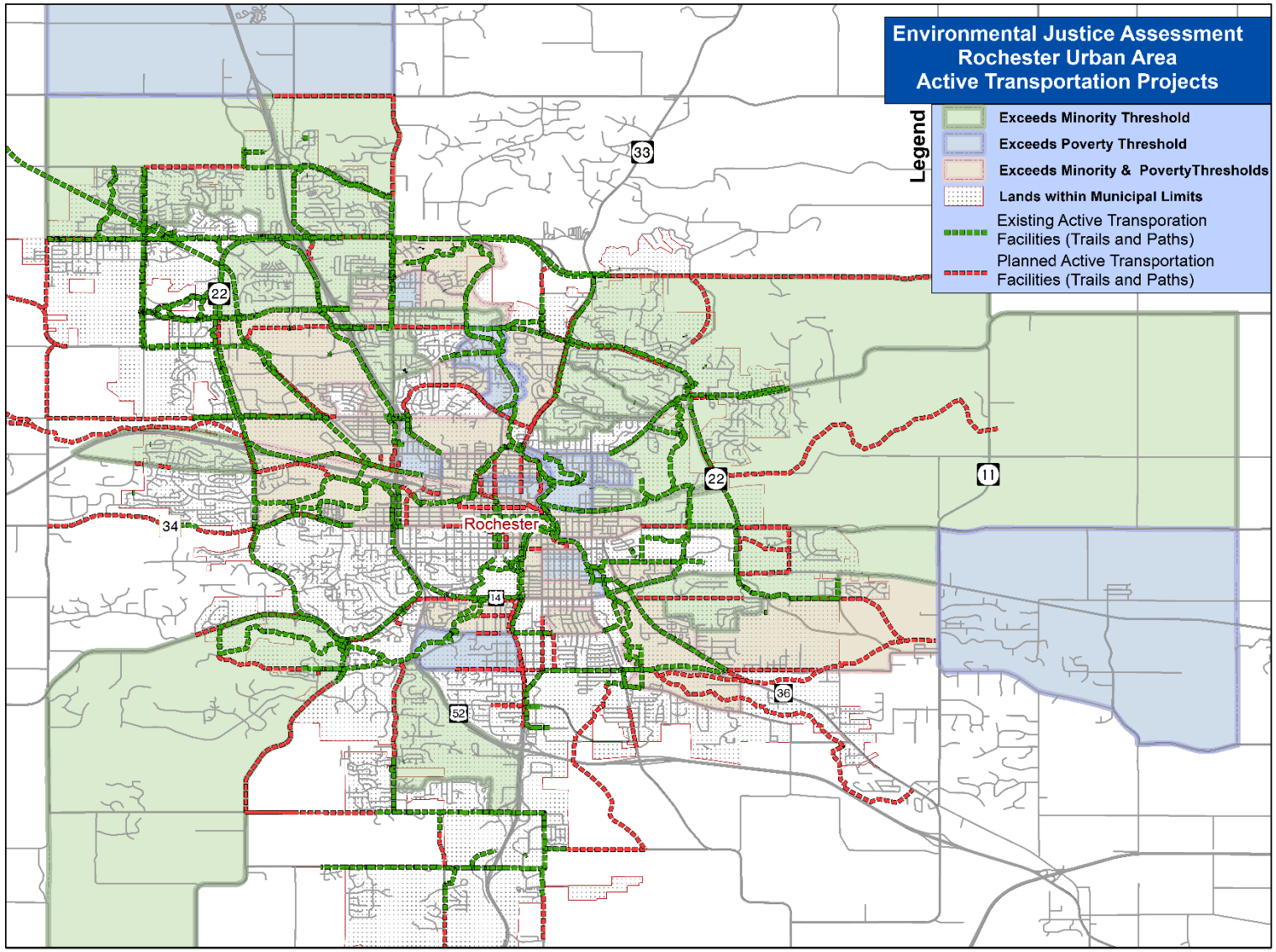

Source: Block Group data from 2013-2017 American Community Survey

## Figure 9-5: Environmental Justice Assessment – Fixed Route Transit/Planned Bus Rapid Transit




Source: Block Group data from 2013-2017 American Community Survey

## Figure 9-6: Environmental Justice Assessment – Active Transportation Facilities




Source: Block Group data from 2013-2017 American Community Survey

analysis of the annual ROCOG TIP's for fiscal years 2009 through 2019)

- This federal funding represents about 25% of the average annual investment by MnDOT, Olmsted County, and Rochester in roadways in Olmsted County over the last 10 years (Based on data included in Chapter 15 of the 2015 ROCOG Long Range Transportation Plan and analysis).

At the time the policy was adopted, it was stipulated that an interim project list would be developed for the annual 2019 and 2020 project selection, and during the update of the LRTP, the ROCOG – ATP Project List would be updated and synched with the financial plan included in the LRTP for use until the next plan update in 2025.

Under federal regulations that guide metropolitan area transportation planning, "project selection" and "prioritization" are actions that occur during the annual TIP process. Prioritization is not referenced as an action or activity required during the LRTP process as guided by 23 U.S. Code § 134 and 23 CFR Title 23 Part 450).

- The LRTP, however, is to include a financial plan that discusses system-level estimates of revenues anticipated to be available for investment and the cost of potential programs or projects. This information forms the basis of an analysis leading to definition of a "Fiscally Constrained Plan" that demonstrates the amount of investment (grouped by categories) that can be supported by historically available funding or potential new revenue sources for which there is high certainty of availability in the future.
- Projects subsequently programmed for federal funding in the TIP must be consistent with the described Fiscally Constrained Plan.
- The LRTP can include a supplemental list of "illustrative projects" that could be completed if additional funding can be secured.

Given that ROCOG only programs a limited share of federal highway funding ($2.37 million) out of an average of $14 million annually programmed in the ROCOG Area, and MnDOT, Olmsted County, and Rochester invest on average $40 million dollars annually above this level of federal funding, it is incumbent on ROCOG to facilitate collaborative discussion among these entities as to what is feasible within a fiscally constrained plan while respecting the priorities of the agencies and jurisdictions responsible for project implementation.

## The ROCOG-ATP Project List

This Plan (in Chapter 10) identifies a ROCOG-ATP Project List identifying projects to be considered for future federal funding in the ROCOG Transportation Improvement Program. Development of the project list is part of a project selection policy adopted by ROCOG in 2017.

The ROCOG-ATP Project List is intended to serve as a bridge between the larger list of preservation and improvement projects and programs identified in the LRTP and the projects ultimately selected for possible federal funding by ROCOG during the annual development of the TIP.

The $2.37 million dollars reflects ROCOG's 30% share of federal Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STPBG) funds that are allocated to MnDOT District 6. STPBG funds are not the only federal transportation funds that flow to the ROCOG area; they are the only federal funds for which ROCOG has project selection responsibility. Among the authorities that have responsibility for programming federal transportation funds include:

- ROCOG
- District 6 Area Transportation Partnership
- MnDOT Transit Office
- MnDOT Office of Transportation System Management
- MnDOT State Aid for Local Transportation
- MnDOT Office of Traffic Engineering
- Federal Highway Administration
- Federal Transit Administration

## Prioritization of Projects

"Prioritization" of projects is recognized in federal MPO planning regulations in reference to the action of an MPO Policy Board (such as ROCOG) or state department of transportation when it is acting to select projects for inclusion in the four-year TIP. The definition of the TIP found in the federal Code of Regulations Title 23, Chapter 450 is:

> "**Transportation improvement program** (TIP) means a prioritized listing/program of transportation projects covering a period of 4 years that is developed and formally adopted by an MPO as part of the metropolitan transportation planning process, consistent with the metropolitan transportation plan, and required for projects to be eligible for funding under title 23 U.S.C. and title 49 U.S.C. chapter 53".

Prioritization is further described as "the cooperative process among States, MPOs, and transit agencies for identifying projects and strategies from the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) that are of sufficiently high priority as to be included in the TIP."

The definition of the TIP contrasts with the description of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan that states "MTP means the official multimodal transportation plan addressing no less than a 20-year planning horizon that the MPO develops, adopts, and updates through the metropolitan transportation planning process". The

strategic investment direction provided in the MTP is to align with the programming and selection of projects in the TIP that advances the goals and implement strategies first presented in the MTP.

So, while ROCOG does not select and prioritize projects for the majority of federal or state transportation funds that flow into the area, ROCOG does have a strategic role in projects selected for inclusion in the TIP. These projects should reflect the goals and strategies first identified in the MTP and be consistent with the level of fiscal resources available for implementation.

## Financial Planning in the LRTP

Chapter 15 presents a financial planning element that is intended to establish the reasonableness and credibility of the long-range plan. The LRTP, which has a 20-year planning horizon, must include a financial plan that estimates how much funding will be needed to implement identified programs or improvements, as well as operate and maintain the transportation system, over the life of the plan. Relative to the TIP, projects which are selected and programmed for funding need to be consistent with recommendations of a "Fiscally Constrained" long range plan. **Fiscal constraint** is defined in federal guidelines as follows:

"Financially constrained or fiscal constraint means that the metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, and STIP includes sufficient financial information for demonstrating that projects in the metropolitan transportation plan, TIP, and STIP can be implemented using committed, available, or reasonably available revenue sources, with reasonable assurance that the federally supported transportation system is being adequately operated and maintained."

This Plan will include information on the funding sources and anticipated level of revenue the MPO can reasonably expect to be available. It will include revenues from FHWA and FTA, state government, local or regional government or semi-public entities, the private sector, and user charges. An MTP must demonstrate that there is a balance between the expected revenue sources for transportation investments and the estimated costs of the projects and programs described in the Plan.

The planning regulations provide for the accommodation of projects which may be considered beyond the ability of existing revenue streams to fund by allowing for the identification of an "illustrative" project list. Illustrative projects are defined to mean "additional transportation projects that may be included in a financial plan for a MTP, TIP, or STIP if reasonable additional resources were to become available." Many competitive grant programs, such as federal Small Starts or BUILD grants, or state programs such as Corridors of Commerce or MnDOT Transportation – Economic Development (TED) grants, are examples of additional resources that could be

referenced to support the inclusion of projects as illustrative projects in the MTP.