Chapter 4

The ROCOG Network

While ROCOG's policy-making authority guides the spending of federal funds in their planning area, state and local governments are responsible for maintaining and improving the transportation infrastructure and services used by residents, businesses, visitors, and workers. People of all ages and abilities use these systems to get to their destinations or other modes of travel. Some use sidewalks and paths to walk or roll. Others bike on roadways and trails. Transit, automobiles, and trucks move people and goods on the roadway network. Railroads move freight, and aviation transports cargo and passengers. This chapter of MTP 2050 describes the status of the primary transportation systems serving the ROCOG planning area.

4.1. Walking and rolling

The sidewalk systems in the urbanized parts of ROCOG's

planning area vary from city to city. Historic downtowns and older central neighborhoods are most likely to have sidewalk networks, dating back to the days when people walked to many of their destinations. Official adoption of sidewalk policies and ordinances has resulted in sidewalk construction

in newer neighborhoods. Many gaps in the sidewalk network exist, however, creating travel barriers for users when walking or rolling.

4.1.1 Rochester

Rochester has long required sidewalk construction as part of new development. Figure 1 illustrates existing and missing sidewalk facilities in Rochester. Most of the sidewalk gaps are in neighborhoods developed before they were annexed into the city. They also exist in older neighborhoods along the major street network, where state and county roads were built without sidewalk facilities.

Until 2022, Rochester assessed adjacent properties to build and replace sidewalks. Sidewalks, however, are used by people throughout the community and benefit more than just the immediate neighbors. Rochester, therefore, adopted a Sidewalk Improvement District (SID) program that distributes the cost of sidewalk repairs and replacement among a greater portion of the community.

4.1.2 Greater Olmsted cities

Byron: Some of Byron's older core neighborhoods have sidewalks. Byron adopted a sidewalk ordinance in 2006, requiring all new subdivisions to install sidewalks on both sides of local streets; exceptions for difficult terrain or other circumstances may be granted. Byron reviews sidewalks, or lack of them, on a biennial basis to determine construction and funding options. Figure 3.13 of Byron's comprehensive plan illustrates its bike and pedestrian network concept plan.

Chatfield: Chatfield has a sidewalk system, primarily in the city's core, though they are only required in areas their city council determines to have a potential for high pedestrian traffic. The city's comprehensive plan (2015) includes a sidewalk map (Figure 2).

Eyota: Eyota has sidewalks in some areas of the city. Eyota's Code of Ordinances states that the placement of sidewalks or trails will be determined by the location of the plat/subdivision. Sidewalks are required where needed to provide a connecting link to existing or planned sidewalks or trails on adjacent properties in order to fill gaps in the pedestrian network. Eyota's comprehensive plan states that sidewalks should connect businesses to schools and residential neighborhoods.

Dover: Aerial photos indicate that Dover has sidewalks in some areas of the city; they do not have a sidewalk plan.

Oronoco: Oronoco does not have sidewalks, though the City's comprehensive plan recognizes the need for a network of sidewalks and trails connecting neighborhoods and parks.

Pine Island: The Pine Island Code of Ordinances requires concrete sidewalks to be installed along both sides of all local residential and local commercial/industrial streets (except for cul-de-sacs) as designated by the city's comprehensive plan.

Stewartville: While sidewalks are primarily found in Stewartville's historic downtown and adjacent neighborhoods, their Code of Ordinances does require sidewalks in all subdivisions unless their city council specifically determines that they are not needed in the subdivision under review.

Figure 1: Rochester Sidewalk Facilities

Source: Rochester Public Works

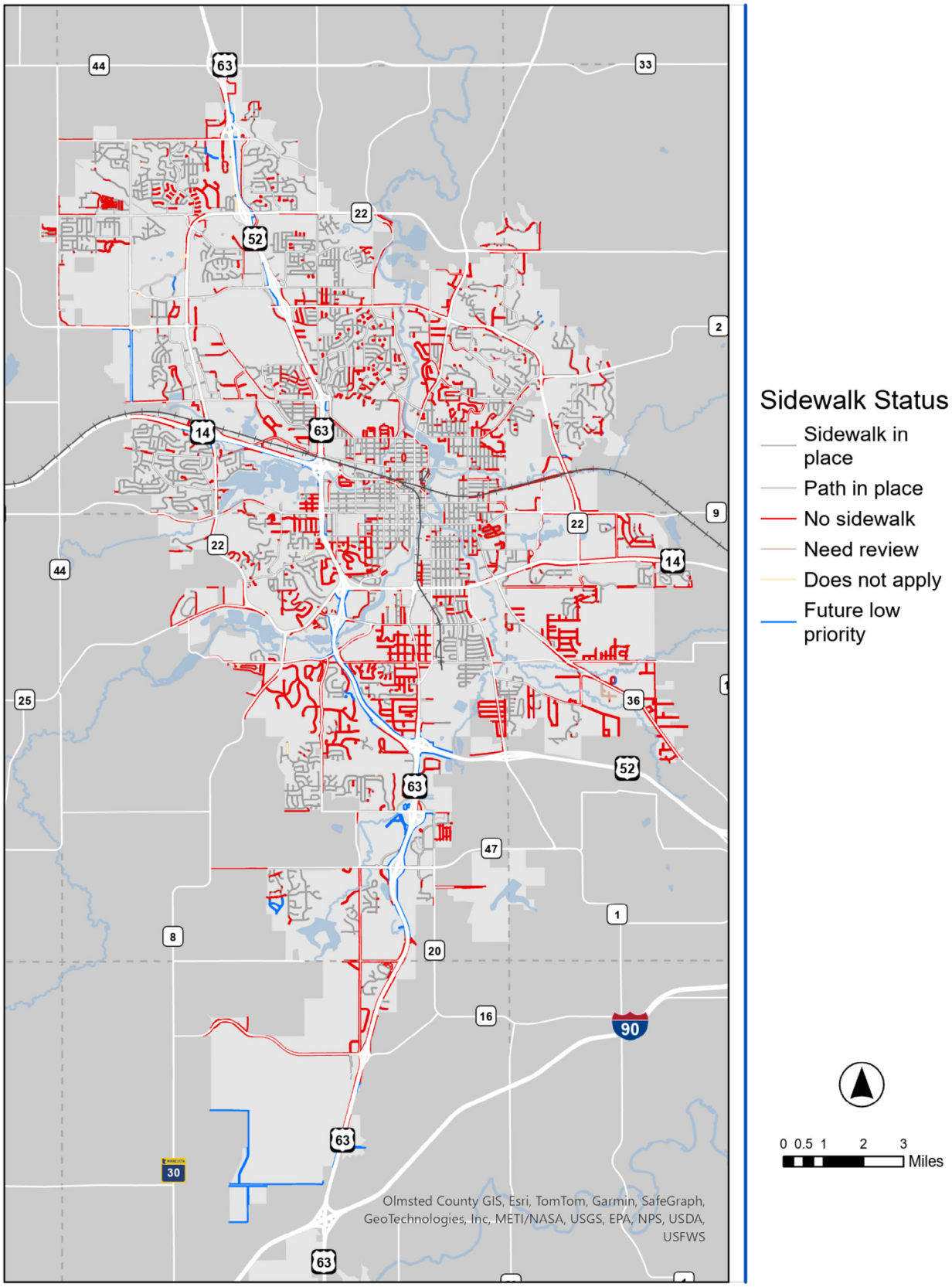
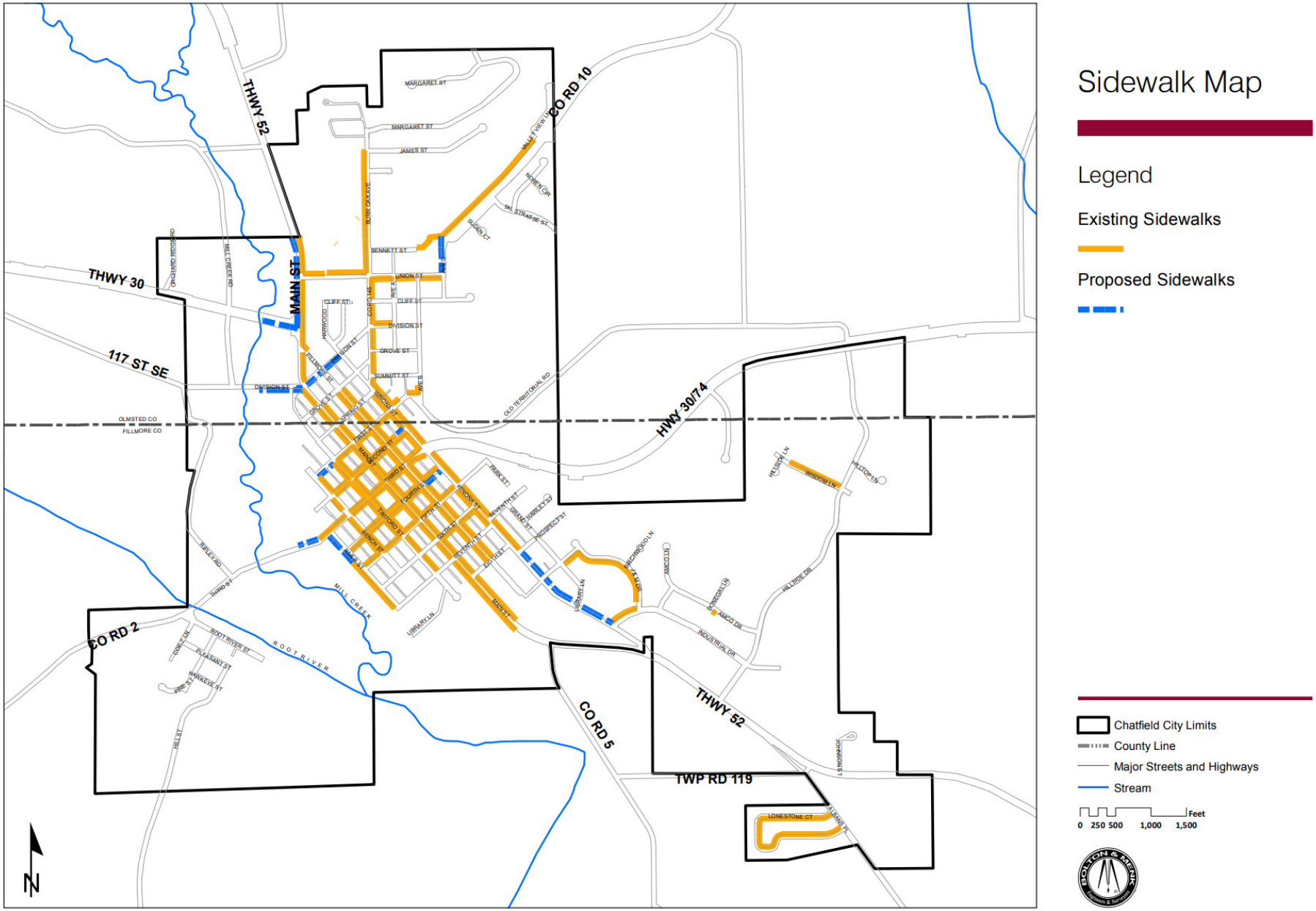


Figure 2: 2015 City of Chatfield Comprehensive Plan - Sidewalks

Source: City of Chatfield



4.1.3 Implications

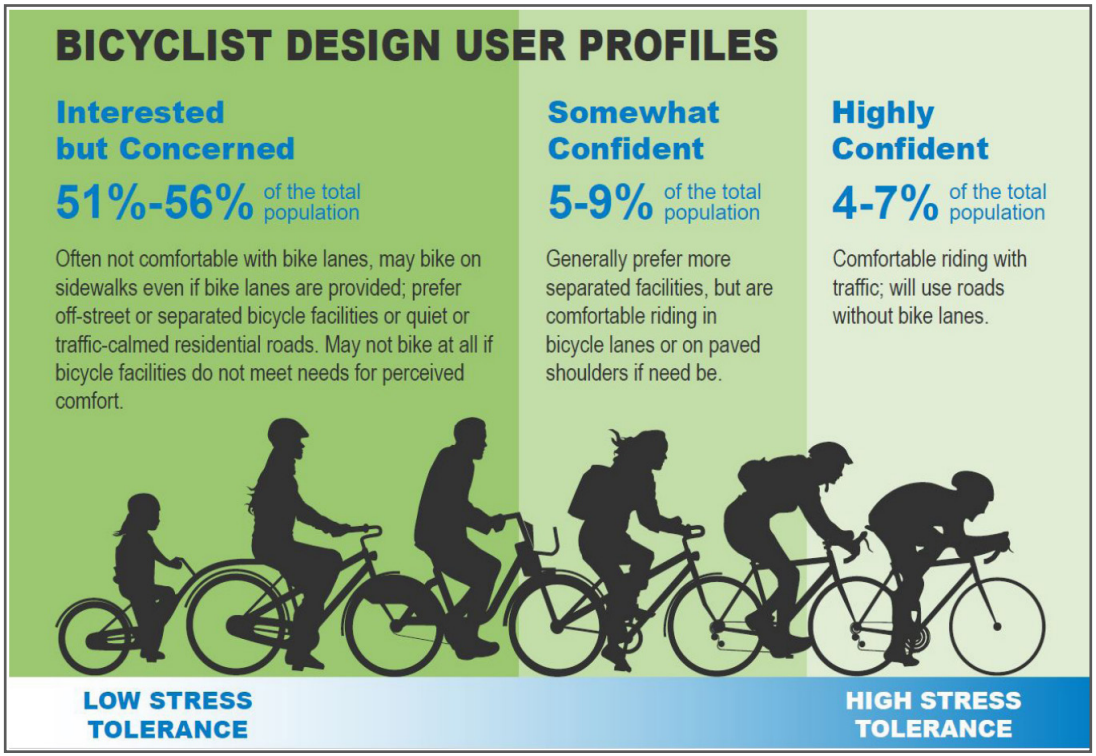
Sidewalks and paths connect users who cannot or choose not to drive to the places they need to go. Where system gaps exist, pedestrians and wheelchair users may be forced to use roadway edges and risk their safety. Chapter 6 of MTP 2050 analyzes sidewalk gaps and accessibility issues for policy recommendations.

4.2. Biking

The ROCOG planning area is served by multiple tiers of bicycle facilities catering to a variety of user groups and their cycling comfort level (Figure 3). These include local, regional, and state bicycle facilities.

Bike routes, sharrows, and bike lanes use signage or paint to mark the intention of bicyclists to share the road with motorized vehicles. Trails and bike paths, on the other hand, are typically separated from roadways and motorized traffic.

Figure 3: Bicyclist Types
Source: FHA Bikeway Selection Guide, 2019



4.2.1 Urban facilities

Rochester has an extensive 130+ mile network of trails and paths, including more than 40 miles of on-street bicycle facilities. Figure 4, from Rochester's Active Transportation Plan, illustrates their bicycle network vision. Rochester's Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee (PBAC) meets monthly to inform City departments on the needs of the user groups they represent.

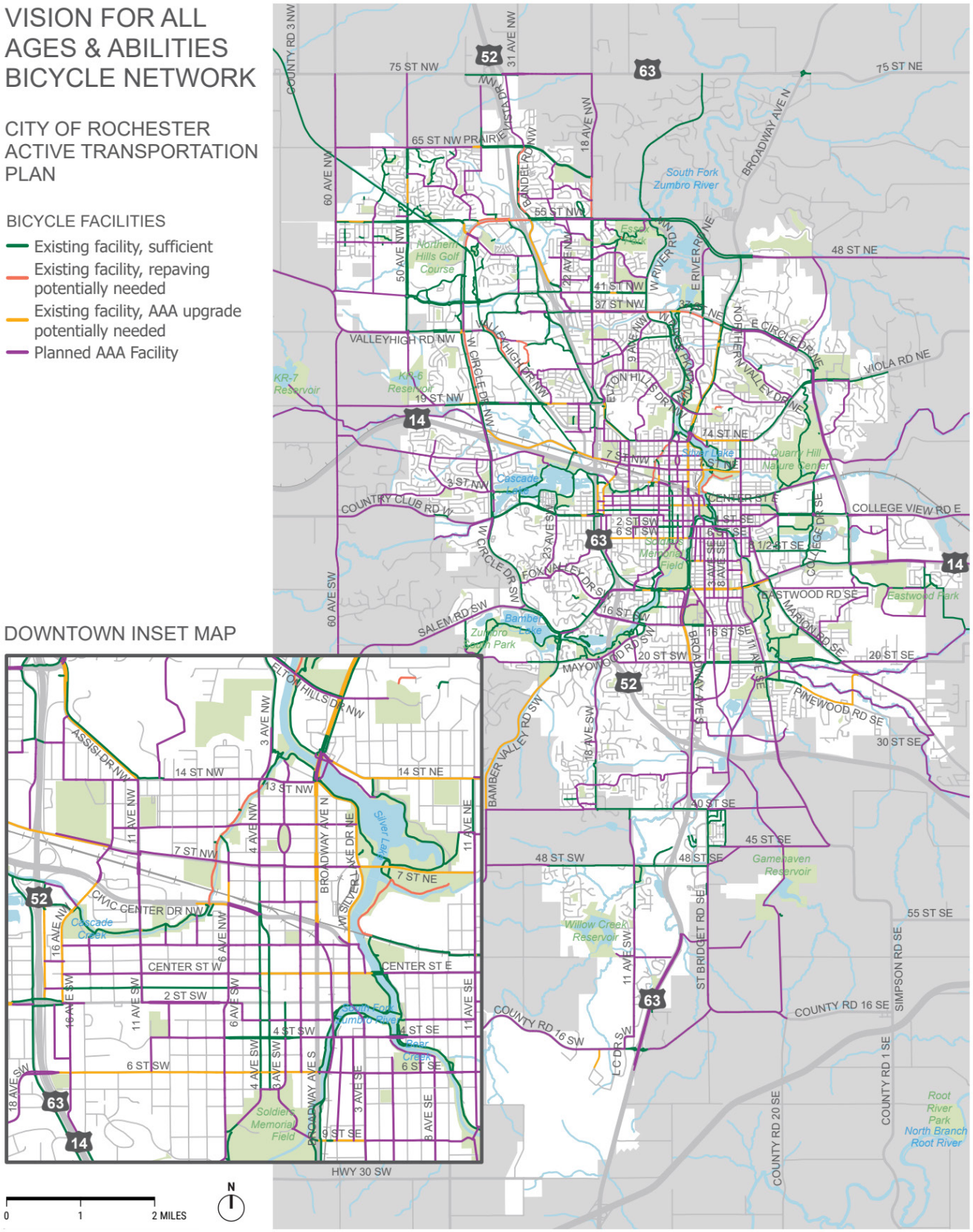
Many Greater Olmsted urban comprehensive plans also indicate where those cities have and are planning for bicycle and active transportation facilities.

4.2.2 Regional facilities

The ROCOG planning area's regional active transportation system is composed of three primary parts.

Figure 4: Rochester Bicycle Network

Source: Rochester Active Transportation Plan



4.2.2.1 MnDNR state trails

State trails, such as the Douglas Trail, connect population centers and major regional parks and recreation facilities. Figure 5 shows the Southeast Minnesota Trail System. The system map identifies both existing state trails and locations where interest in developing future state trail connections has been recognized through state legislation.

State trails in the ROCOG planning area include:

- **The Douglas State Trail**, a 12.5-mile trail running from northwestern Rochester and ending in Pine Island.
- **The Great River Ridge State Trail**, a 15-mile trail connecting Plainview and Eyota, and ending at County Road 9. Currently, 13 miles of this trail is paved.
- **The Stagecoach State Trail** has a master plan but is not yet built. It will connect the cities of Rochester, Mantorville, Dodge Center, Claremont, and Owatonna as well as Rice Lake State Park in Steele County.
- **The Whitewater Country Loop State Trail Master Plan** addresses the connection of two authorized state trails: the Great River Ridge State Trail described above and part of the Blufflands Trail system that would connect Rochester, Chester Woods County Park, Eyota, Dover, St. Charles, and Elba.

4.2.2.2 MnDOT priority corridors

Developed by MnDOT in 2016, the Statewide Bicycle System Plan (SBSP) identifies a state bicycle network connecting destinations across Minnesota. MnDOT District Bicycle Plans (2019) build on the SBSP by identifying Bicycle Investment Routes and a prioritization framework that will guide system investment (Figure 6). Facility development depends on working with local and regional partners to find comfortable and direct connections.

The State's priority corridors in the ROCOG planning area include:

- A north/south route connecting Red Wing to Rochester to Preston and the Iowa border
- An east/west corridor roughly following the Minnesota River from the western state border at Browns Valley southeast to Mankato, and then continuing on to Owatonna, Rochester, and Winona

District 6 priority corridors include

- A north/south route from Rochester to Stewartville to Spring Valley
- A north/south route from Rochester to Lake City

4.2.2.3 Bike lanes and roadway shoulders

Unprotected bike lanes and roadway shoulders may provide the minimum level of non-motorized access to/from all areas within the ROCOG planning area. As shown earlier in Figure 3, this network of roads and highways will likely be most attractive to experienced bicyclists who are comfortable riding along with high-speed vehicular traffic. Interstate I-90 and Highway 52 north of I-90, however, are prohibited for active transportation uses.

Figure 5: MnDNR State Trails

Source: MnDNR Stagecoach State Trail Master Plan

Figure 6: MnDOT District 6 Priority Corridors

Source: MnDOT District 6 Bicycle Plan, 2019

4.3. Transit

There are a variety of transit services operating in the ROCOG planning area. These include urban and regional buses on fixed routes, demand-responsive bus services, and express buses. These services will likely be expanded and enhanced during the scope of the MTP 2050 and supplemented with high-capacity transit service in key Rochester areas.

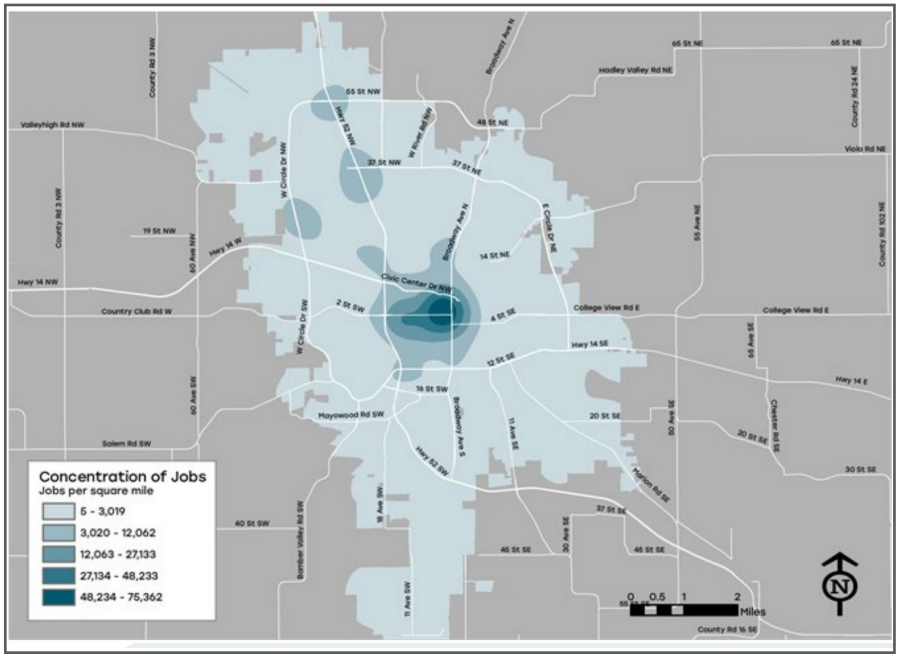
4.3.1 Rochester Public Transit (RPT)

RPT is a Rochester public service, operating 31 transit routes 365 days a year from 5 AM to 10:30 PM on weekdays and 6:30 AM to 7:30 PM on weekends and holidays. Its community advisory board, Citizens Advisory on Transit, supports and voices the needs of public transportation users and meets bi-monthly to assist with planning for service improvements.

4.3.1.1 Fixed routes

RPT's fixed route system is designed as a hub and spoke network, with all routes converging at the Downtown Transit Center. Figure 7 shows the concentration of jobs in Rochester's downtown area, supporting the system's design concept. RPT is heavily used during the weekday AM and PM peak periods, with maximum accumulation of buses at any one time at the downtown station averaging 22 vehicles.

Figure 7: Job Location in Rochester
Source: Rochester Transit Development Plan, 2022



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 Rochester residents live within ¼ mile of the fixed route service.

4.3.1.2 ZIPS

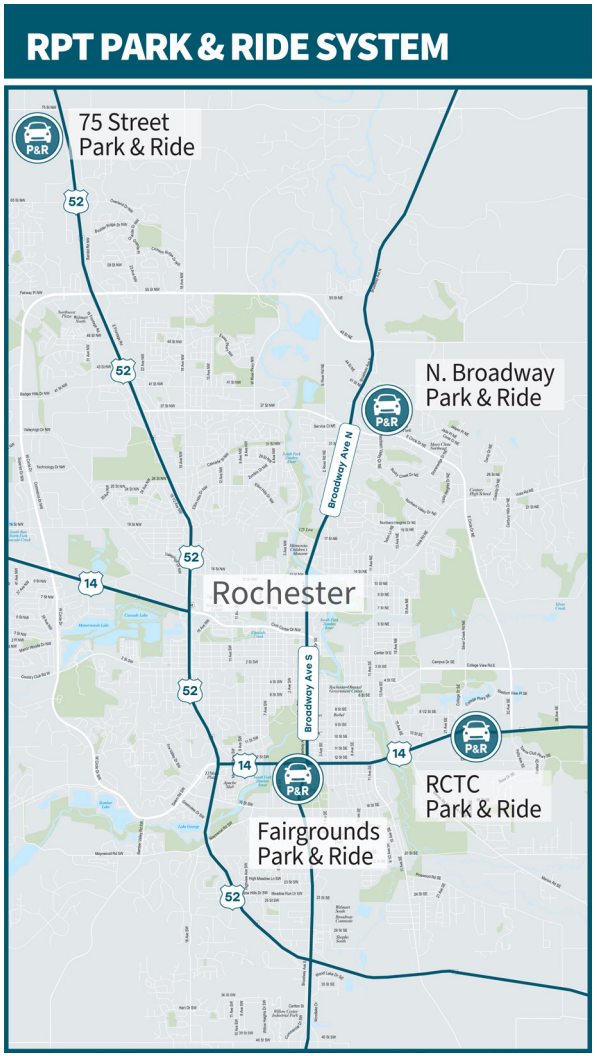
Zumbro Independent Passenger Service (ZIPS) is RPT's dial-a-ride service for those unable to use fixed routes due to physical, mental, or other functional limitations. ZIPS made substantial gains in ridership during 2023. The number of trips on this paratransit service in 2022 was 26% higher than in 2021. And in 2023 the gains were even larger - a 35% increase in the number of trips provided in 2022. The number of trips increased by 25% in 2024. With increased attention to operations, RPT was able to accommodate this growth while simultaneously improving overall on-time performance from 89% in 2022 to 90% in 2023. In 2023, the City of Rochester signaled ongoing support for growth in this important service by approving a full-time, permanent position dedicated to supporting ZIPS.

4.3.1.3 Park & Ride

Rochester's Park & Ride service (Figure 8) has evolved into an important tool to minimize traffic congestion and parking needs in their downtown while maintaining reliable peak period accessibility to the area. The City has established a network of remote parking lots served by express buses to the Downtown Transit Center and St. Marys Hospital area.

More than 1,500 parking spaces are currently provided around the urban area, located along major corridors and regional highways. The lots provide free parking and are open to all

Figure 8: Rochester Park & Ride System
Source: Rochester Public Transit



customers. Utilization rates vary by location and time of day but have reached 90% over the last five years.

Most of this parking capacity is provided through City leases with private business or landowners. The first City of Rochester-owned Park & Ride facility was completed in 2023. Costs for the system are recovered through user fees and support from employers. For example, Mayo Medical Center pays an annual sponsorship fee to the city for providing service to their employees.

4.3.1.4 Link rapid transit

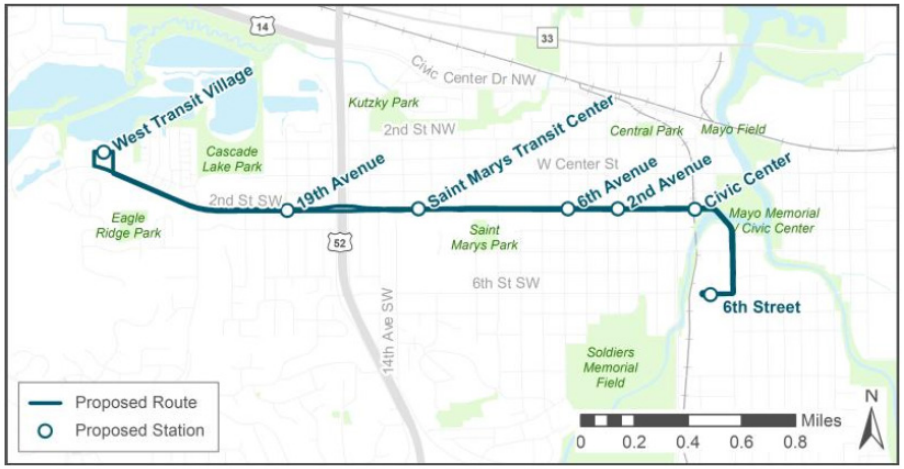
The Link bus rapid transit project is a 2.8-mile bus route that will connect the West Transit Village, downtown Rochester, the Mayo Clinic campuses, Mayo Civic Center, and the southeast Downtown Waterfront area. The project will utilize dedicated transit lanes, thus reducing traffic volume in the 2nd Street corridor, which currently carries more than 21,800 vehicles and 13,000 transit riders each day. Link is expected to begin operating in Spring 2027.

The proposed Link route is shown in Figure 9. Its high-amenity buses will provide service to seven stations across the city. It will operate from 5 AM to midnight on weekdays and 8 AM to midnight on weekends. Service intervals will be every 5 minutes on weekdays from 6 to 9 AM and 3 to 6 PM, and every 10 to 15 minutes at other times. It will be free for all users.

The frequency and accessibility afforded by the Link system should free up high-value downtown land for uses other than off-street parking. This is one of the key strategies of the Destination Medical Center (DMC) Planning.

Figure 9: Proposed Link Route

Source: City of Rochester



4.3.1.5 Park Once district

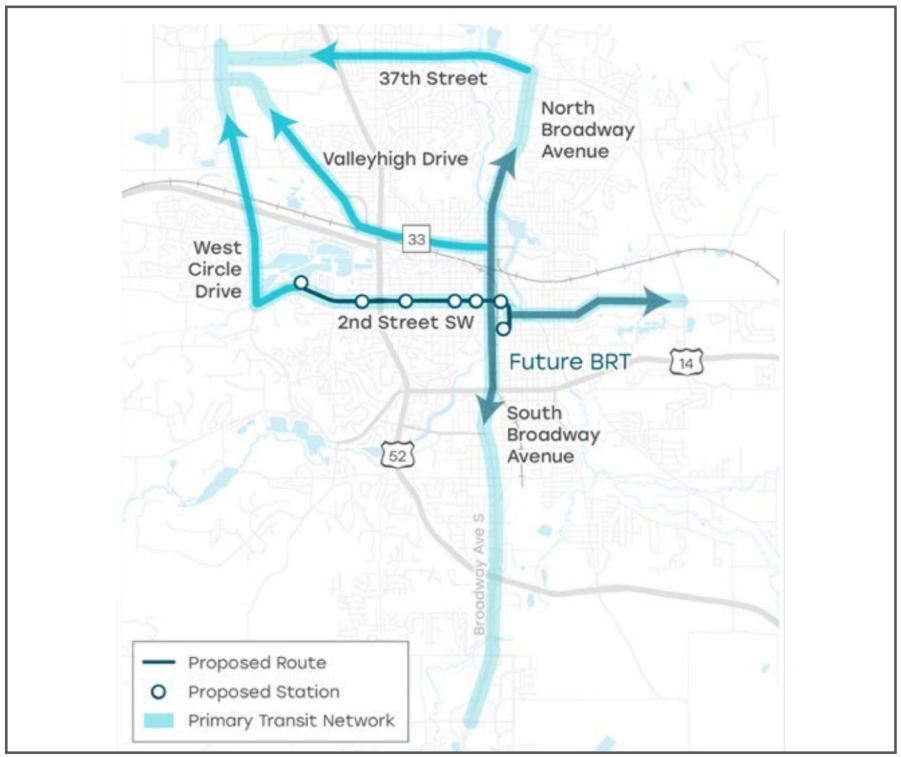
Rochester is also working on the concept of a “Park Once District”. Individuals will park their vehicles at a location when they arrive downtown, or at its fringe, and then move about downtown during the day without further need for their automobiles until the end of their stay. The downtown skyway/subway pedestrian network, as well as Link’s frequency and amenities, are intended to make the Park Once option an easy choice for downtown employees and visitors.

4.3.1.6 PTN

Rochester’s Primary Transit Network (PTN) will provide enhanced high frequency service to major origins/destinations along the city’s key corridors (Figure 10). The PTN will serve

as the framework for the development of a permanent transit infrastructure that will attract private investment to growth-oriented transit corridors, major destinations, and mixed-use centers.

Figure 10: Primary Transit Network and Corridors
Source: Rochester Transit Development Plan, 2022



4.3.2 Regional transit

Rolling Hills Transit provides reservation-based dial-a-ride bus service for the public in five counties; several smaller cities, including Byron, Chatfield, Dover, Eyota, and Stewartville; and neighboring townships. Service is provided curb-to-curb and offers general, school age, and senior citizen transportation. It is administered by the Southeast Minnesota Community Action Council (SEMCAC) under contract with Rolling Hills Transit. Service availability is:

Byron: Monday-Friday from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Chatfield: Monday-Thursday from 7:15 AM to 3:45 PM

Dover-Eyota: Monday-Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Stewartville: Monday-Friday from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM

4.3.3 Other transit

Private transit companies (such as Jefferson Lines and Groome Transportation), Mayo Clinic, hotels, senior living communities, and others provide van and shuttle services to the ROCOG planning area's residents, workers, and visitors.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, regional long-distance commuter bus service was subsidized by Mayo Clinic on Rochester City Lines (RCL), a privately owned and operated company. This regional commuter service also had designated

areas for boarding and unloading adjacent to RPT's downtown station within the Mayo Medical Center campus and at Saint Marys Hospital. Mayo Clinic, however, terminated their transit contract with RCL due to the pandemic. They are bringing back some of these commuter lines, as discussed in Chapter 6. The availability of public funding for this type of service may determine the extent of its future availability.

4.3.4 System implications

RPT's ridership in 2020, like most transit agencies in the United States, experienced a drop due to COVID-19 and is gradually recovering back to pre-pandemic ridership levels. RPT's ridership was hit particularly hard in part because of its focus on serving commuters working in downtown Rochester and the growth in working from home, particularly for office and knowledge workers. The 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) commute to work data indicates 12,078 Olmsted County workers do so remotely.

In 2023, RPT replaced over 700 bus stop signs with new signs that are 50% larger and feature a distinctive design. The new signs are intended to raise awareness of the location of RPT's bus routes and attract new riders. In addition, over 200 stops were identified to receive improvements such as cement pads, benches, or shelters. By increasing awareness, accessibility, and comfort, RPT seeks to welcome new and returning users by making transit a convenient transportation option.

According to the Rochester Transit Development Plan, ridership on the ZIPS service returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2021. Demand for this service is expected to increase, particularly as Rochester's population of seniors and non-institutionalized residents with disabilities increases (US Census) and service reliability improves.

Continued public and private investment in RPT, ZIPS, regional bus services, and other transit options will help those who cannot or choose not to drive access critical goods, services, and medical facilities.

4.4. Roadway network

The roadway network is the primary system for moving people and goods in the ROCOG planning area. To meet the standards described in Chapter 2, roadway classification, jurisdiction, traffic volume, and infrastructure condition must be considered throughout the planning, design, and capital investment process, ensuring we are maximizing our returns on limited funding sources.

4.4.1 Roadway classification

Roadway networks are categorized in different ways depending on the purpose of the classification system. Key systems include the National Highway System, the Federal Functional Classification System, and the Minnesota Local State Aid Highway System.

4.4.1.1 National Highway System

The National Highway System (NHS) is the network of roads

identified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as the most important to supporting the nation's economy, defense, and mobility needs. The NHS consists of urban and rural highways that connect major population centers, airports, major terminal facilities, and major national or regional travel destinations. Each state devotes a share of federal funding to improve and preserve the NHS.

In the ROCOG planning area, Interstate 90, US 52 north of I-90, US 63 south of Rochester, and US 14 west of Rochester are part of the NHS.

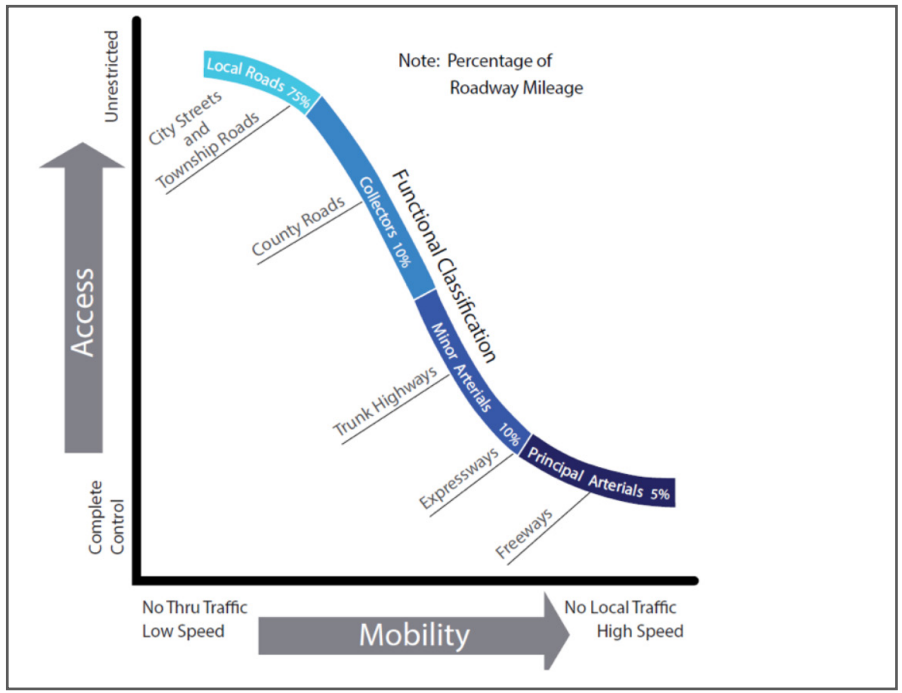
4.4.1.2 Federal Functional Classification

Streets and highways in ROCOG's planning area are organized into the Federal Functional Classification System (FC) using FHWA rules (Figure 11). ROCOG works with MnDOT to periodically update the FC in its planning area, typically as part of the MTP update. This system classifies roads by their purpose, such as whether they mainly serve local traffic or long-distance travel, creating a network that effectively moves traffic from neighborhoods to state and interstate highways (Figure 12).

Mobility is how far you can go in a given amount of time. **Accessibility** is how much you can get to in that time.

- **Interstates:** Officially designated by the Secretary of Transportation, Interstates are the highest classification of arterials, designed and constructed for mobility and long distance travel.

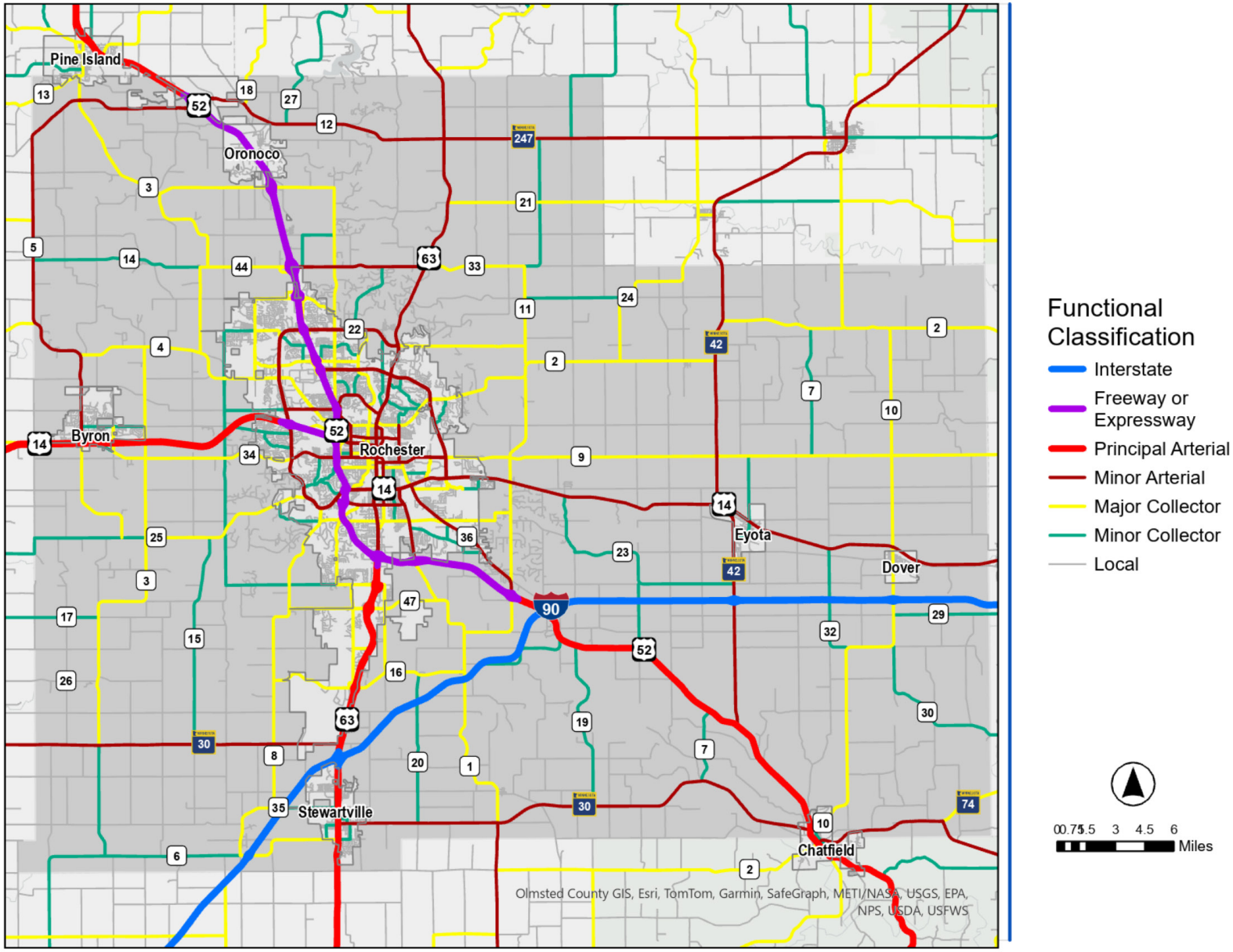
Figure 11: Access and Mobility
Source: MnDOT



- **Freeways and expressways:** These arterial roadways have directional travel lanes that are usually separated by some kind of physical barrier with access/egress limited to ramps and a few at-grade intersections. Like Interstates, they are designed and constructed for mobility and do not directly serve abutting land uses.
- **Other principal arterials:** These roadways provide a high degree of mobility to major metropolitan centers and

Figure 12: Federal Functional Classification

Source: MnDOT



can also provide mobility through rural areas. Abutting land uses can be served directly by at-grade intersections and driveways.

- **Minor arterials:** Minor arterials provide service for moderate length trips, serve geographic areas that are smaller than their higher arterial counterparts, and offer connectivity to the higher arterial system.
- **Major and minor collectors:** Collectors gather traffic from local roads and funnel it to the arterial network. Typically, major collectors are longer in length; have fewer driveway access points; have higher speed limits; are spaced at greater intervals; have higher annual average traffic volumes; and may have more travel lanes than minor collectors. Major collectors typically provide more mobility while minor collectors offer more access.
- **Local roads:** Local roads account for the largest percentage of all roadways with respect to mileage. They are not intended for long-distance vehicle travel except at the beginning or end of the trip since they provide direct access to abutting land.

Analysis of these classifications, and their implications for the planning area's roadway system, is reviewed in Chapter 6 of MTP 2050.

4.4.1.3 Mileage

Figure 13 lists the number of centerline miles and lane miles for each functional class in Olmsted County and displays these figures in percentages. Implications for these statistics will be reviewed in Chapters 5 and 6 of this document.

- **Centerline miles** refer to the length of a single roadway, regardless of the number of lanes.
- **Lane miles** are a multiple of continual driving lanes and centerline mileage.

4.4.1.4 Minnesota Local State Aid System

MnDOT has identified a system of city and county roadways that serve collector and arterial functions vital to traffic flow and connecting major areas within a city. For cities, this system is called the Minnesota Municipal State-Aid System (MSAS); its county counterpart is the County State-Aid Highways program (CSAH). Roadways identified in these networks receive annual state funding for maintenance and construction based on defined formulas. These roadways are also eligible for federal funding under certain programs. The cities of Byron, Rochester, and Stewartville, as well as Olmsted County, qualify in the ROCOG planning area.

4.4.1.5 System implications

Roadway classification makes sure road types match the surrounding land use and manage things like traffic flow and access. It may also determine a road project's eligibility for federal or state funding.

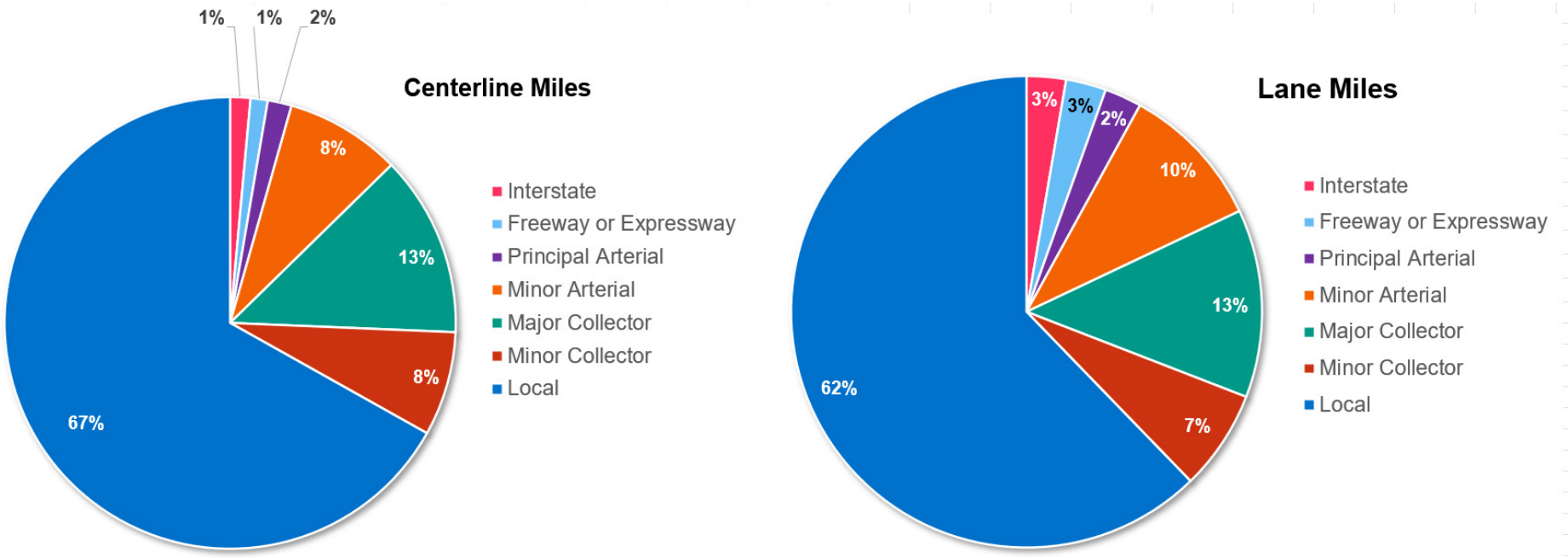
4.4.2 Roadway jurisdiction

Roadway jurisdiction refers to the primary agency charged with maintaining and operating a roadway. Roadway management should be closely aligned with function and the jurisdiction best suited to provide maintenance. The agencies responsible for

Figure 13: 2024 Road Mileage by Functional Class

Source: MnDOT

Centerline Miles and Lane Miles by Functional Class		
Class	**Centerline Miles**	**Lane Miles**
Interstate	27.19	108.83
Freeway or Expressway	23.09	111.39
Principal Arterial	32.17	102.77
Minor Arterial	155.56	402.21
Major Collector	243.67	520.49
Minor Collector	140.12	277.16
Local	1255.37	2511.78
Total	1877.17	4034.64



maintaining and operating the ROCOG area's roadways include MnDOT, Olmsted County, townships, Rochester, and Greater Olmsted cities (Figure 14).

4.4.2.1 System implications

Roadway jurisdiction is an important component of MTP 2050 because it defines the regulatory, maintenance, construction, and financial obligations of each government unit. The hierarchy of jurisdictional classification is typically established so that higher volume, regional corridors carrying inter-county traffic are maintained by MnDOT (e.g. Interstates, US highways, and state trunk highways), while intermediate volume corridors with more limited travelsheds (e.g. County State-Aid Highways and county roads) are maintained by Olmsted County. Roadways serving local traffic (e.g. Municipal State-Aid Streets, city streets, and township roads) are maintained by Olmsted County's cities and the surrounding townships. As the planning area grows in population, it will become more common for higher volume roadways to be under the jurisdiction of the county or a city.

4.4.3 Traffic volumes

Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) is the volume of traffic moving in both directions on a typical day of the year (Figure 15). Each year, MnDOT's Traffic Forecasting & Analysis group (TFA) provides estimates of AADT volumes for all trunk highways and local roads as part of the MnDOT State Aid System.

The highest traffic volumes are located on the MnDOT system. US 52 leads the way with nearly 95,000 vehicles per day at the interchange with west US 14. Other roadways seeing a large volume of vehicles per day include US 14 between West Circle Drive and US 52, US 63 south of US 52, and US 52 between Pine Island and Oronoco. Most of these roadways handle more traffic in a day than the Olmsted County portions of Interstate 90.

Local roadways seeing up to 30,000 vehicles per day include West and East Circle Drives, Civic Center Drive, and Broadway Avenue between US 14 and Civic Center Drive.

4.4.4 Pavement type

Figure 16 describes the ROCOG area road network by pavement type. It is interesting to note that while concrete roads (interstates, some major highways) are a small proportion of the network, they account for a large proportion of trips as discussed in the section on traffic volumes.

4.4.5 Complete streets

Minnesota Statutes §174.75 defines "Complete Streets" as "the planning, scoping, design, implementation, operation, and maintenance of roads in order to reasonably address the safety and accessibility needs of people of all ages and abilities using the transportation system. Complete Streets considers the needs of motorists, pedestrians, transit users and vehicles, bicyclists, and commercial and emergency vehicles moving along and across roads, intersections, and crossings in a manner that is sensitive to local context and recognizes that the needs vary in urban, suburban, and rural settings."

Complete Streets does not mean that every road will have separate facilities for every mode of transportation. MnDOT's

Figure 14: Road Authorities

Source: Olmsted County GIS

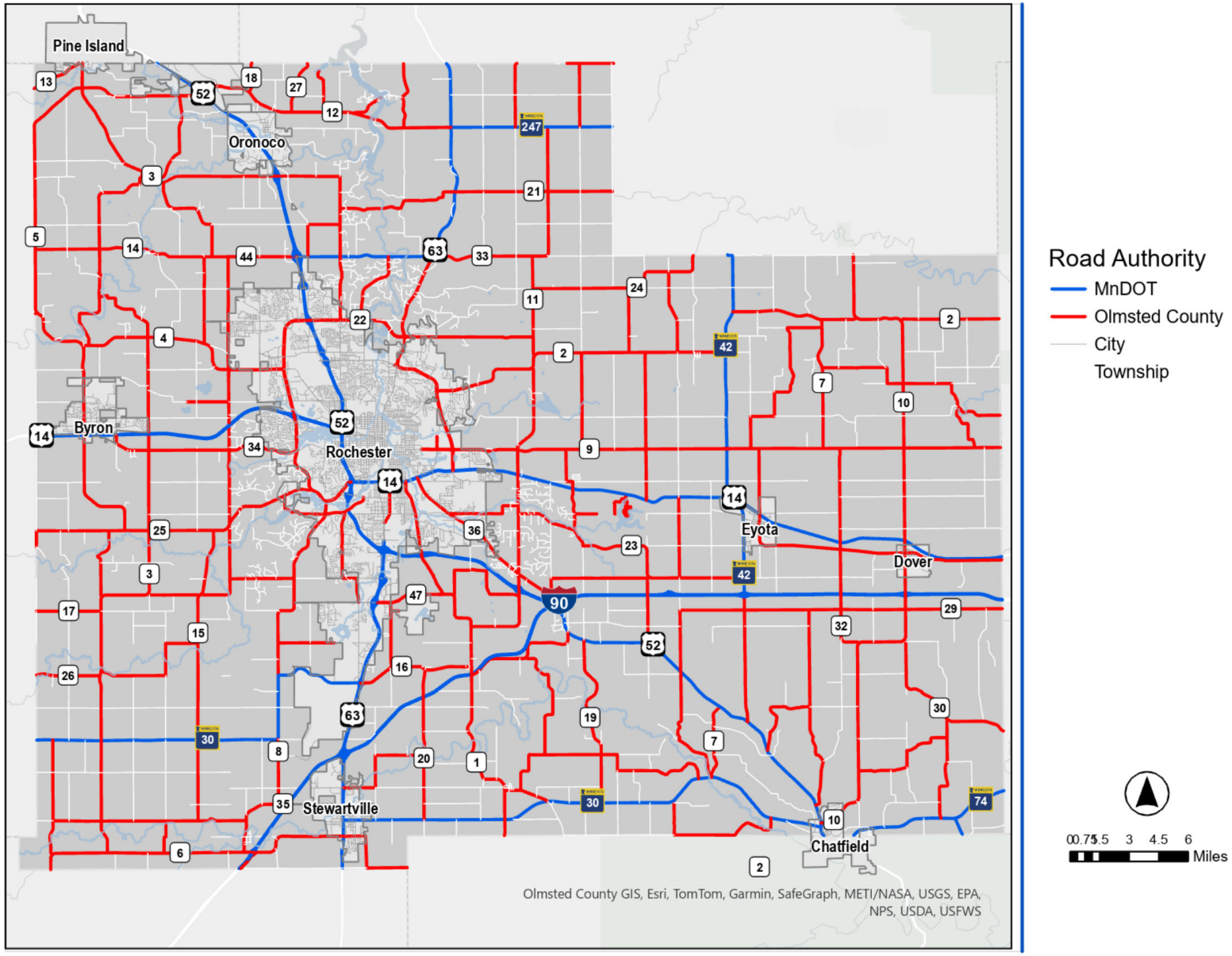


Figure 15: 2024 Annual Average Daily Traffic

Source: MnDOT

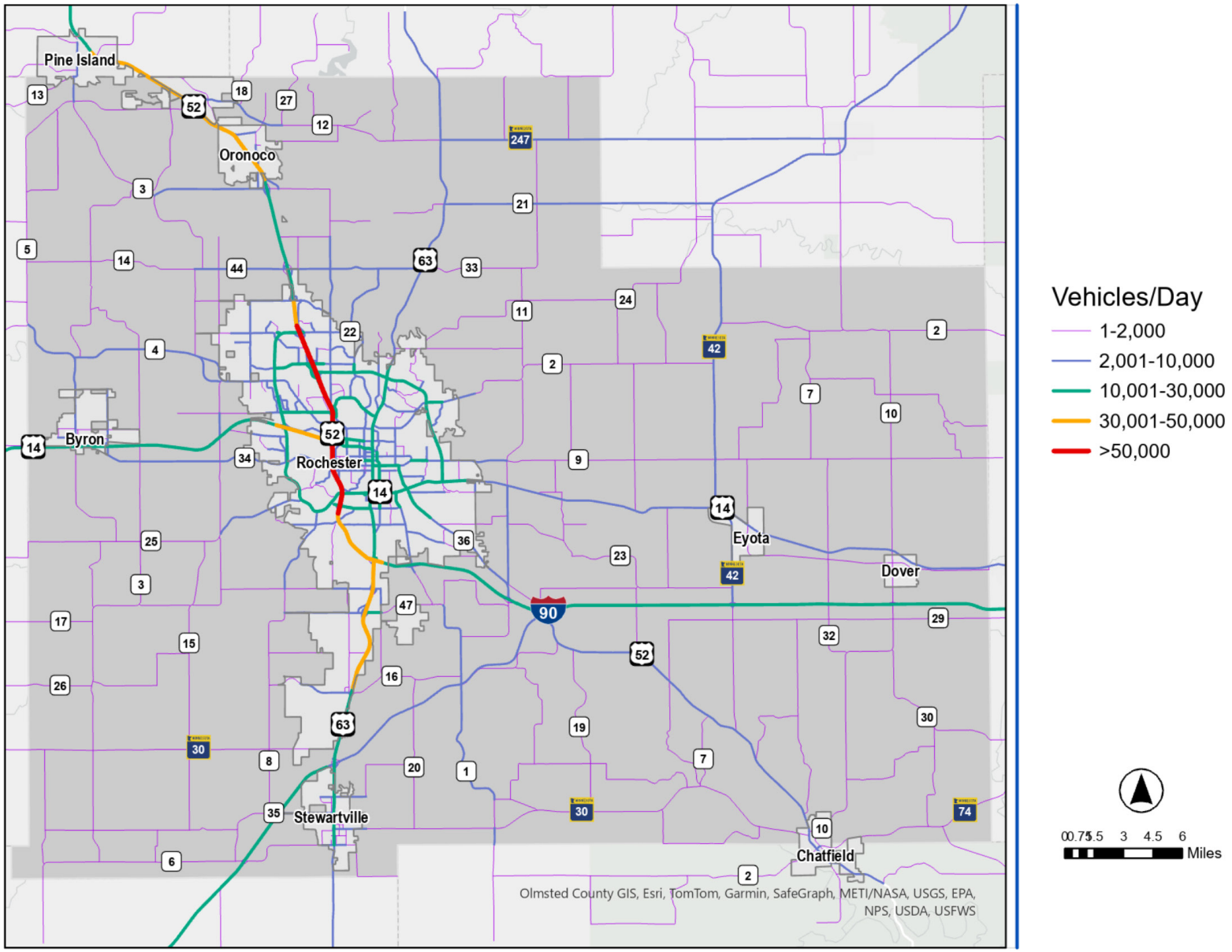
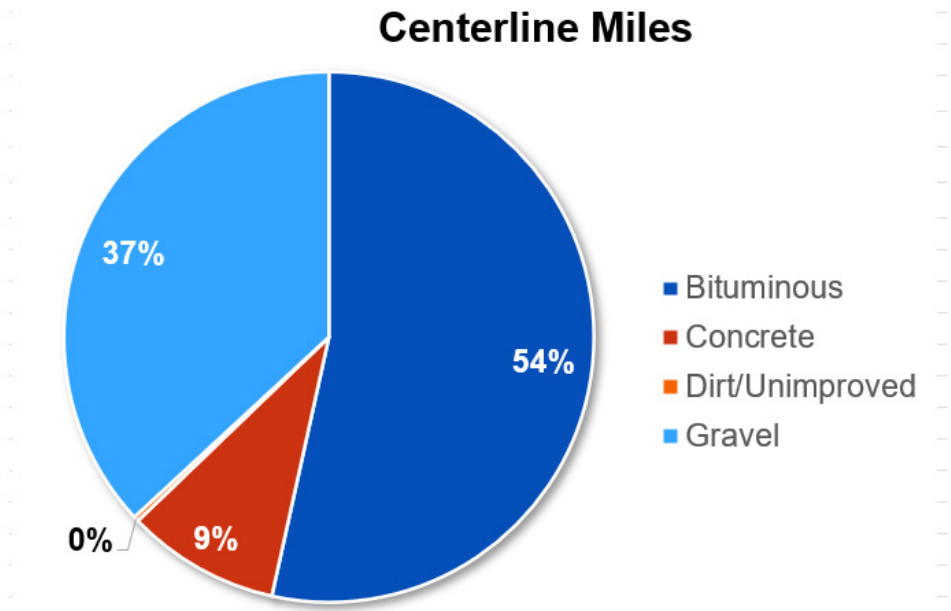


Figure 16: 2023 Centerline Miles of Pavement Type

Source: MnDOT

Centerline Miles of Pavement Type	
Pavement Type	**Centerline Miles**
Bituminous	1002.8
Concrete	175.5
Dirt/Unimproved	5.7
Gravel	691.7



Complete Street Handbook states that it does mean that:

- All modes are thoughtfully considered in the planning and design of all transportation policies, systems, networks, facilities, programs, and activities.
- Conscious decisions are made about how and where each mode is served.
- User needs, financial feasibility, local interests, and adherence to state transportation policy are considered.
- Network connections and individual linear facilities are factored into all transportation plans and project designs.

ROCOG passed a Complete Streets resolution in 2011. Rochester adopted a Complete Streets policy in 2009; Byron and Stewartville passed Complete Streets resolutions in 2010.

In 2021, as an implementation action of their Complete Streets policy, the City of Rochester used the "Safe Systems" approach to determine the speed limits on all city-owned streets. This strategy puts the safety of all road users as the top priority when making roadway decisions. The speed limit was lowered to 25 mph on all unsigned city streets; others have been signed for 25 mph. Speed limit changes on major city-owned streets may occur in the future.

4.4.6 System condition

4.4.6.1 Roadways

Pavement management is the process of timing roadway maintenance to prolong pavement life and optimize funding.

Federal and state policies require that MTP 2050 emphasizes system preservation and maintenance while ensuring a state of good repair. Current pavement conditions are evaluated to understand existing roadway quality and identify potential needs.

Roadway condition is affected by many factors, including the age of the pavement, the amount of traffic using the roadway, environmental conditions, and the frequency of maintenance actions applied to the roadway. Typical pavement improvements include:

Overlays: Putting new pavement on top of old pavement to smooth the road surface.

Mill and overlays: Removing a few inches of the existing pavement and then putting new pavement on top.

Reconstruction projects: Completely rebuilding the road and the road base.

Preventive maintenance: Activities to help slow pavements from deteriorating from good to fair condition.

Figure 17 shows current pavement conditions on MnDOT and Olmsted County controlled roadways in the ROCOG planning area. A roadway's pavement condition is a good indicator of when a construction activity, be it preventive or reconstruction, may be required. But more often, a single roadway's condition status, or rating, is better analyzed at the system level, to understand the financial implications for maintaining the larger system. Pavement Quality Index (PQI) is used to prioritize State and County roadways.

Figure 18 shows current pavement conditions in Rochester.

Figure 17: 2024 MnDOT and Olmsted County Roadway Pavement Conditions

Source: MnDOT

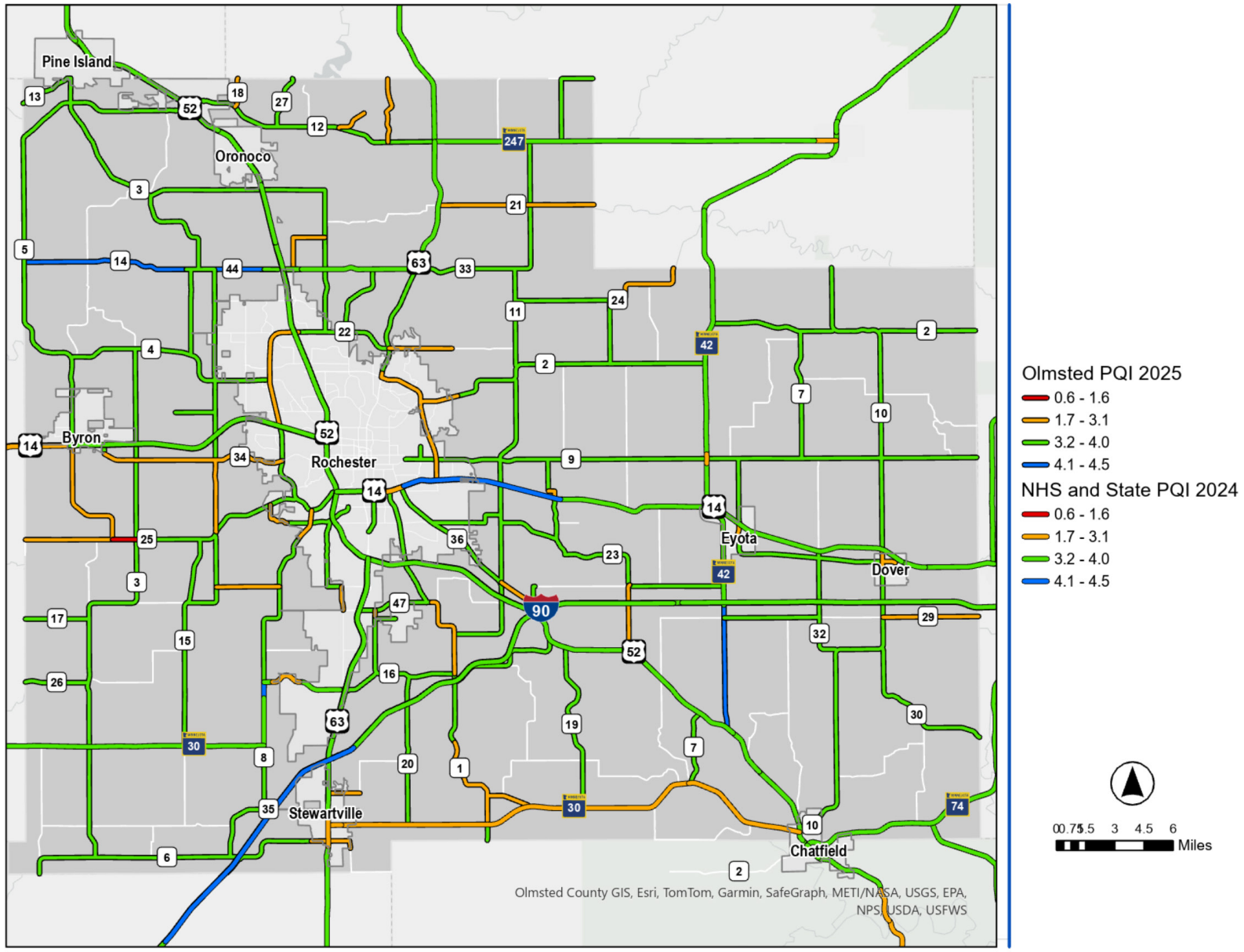


Figure 18: 2024 Rochester Pavement Conditions

Source: Rochester Public Works

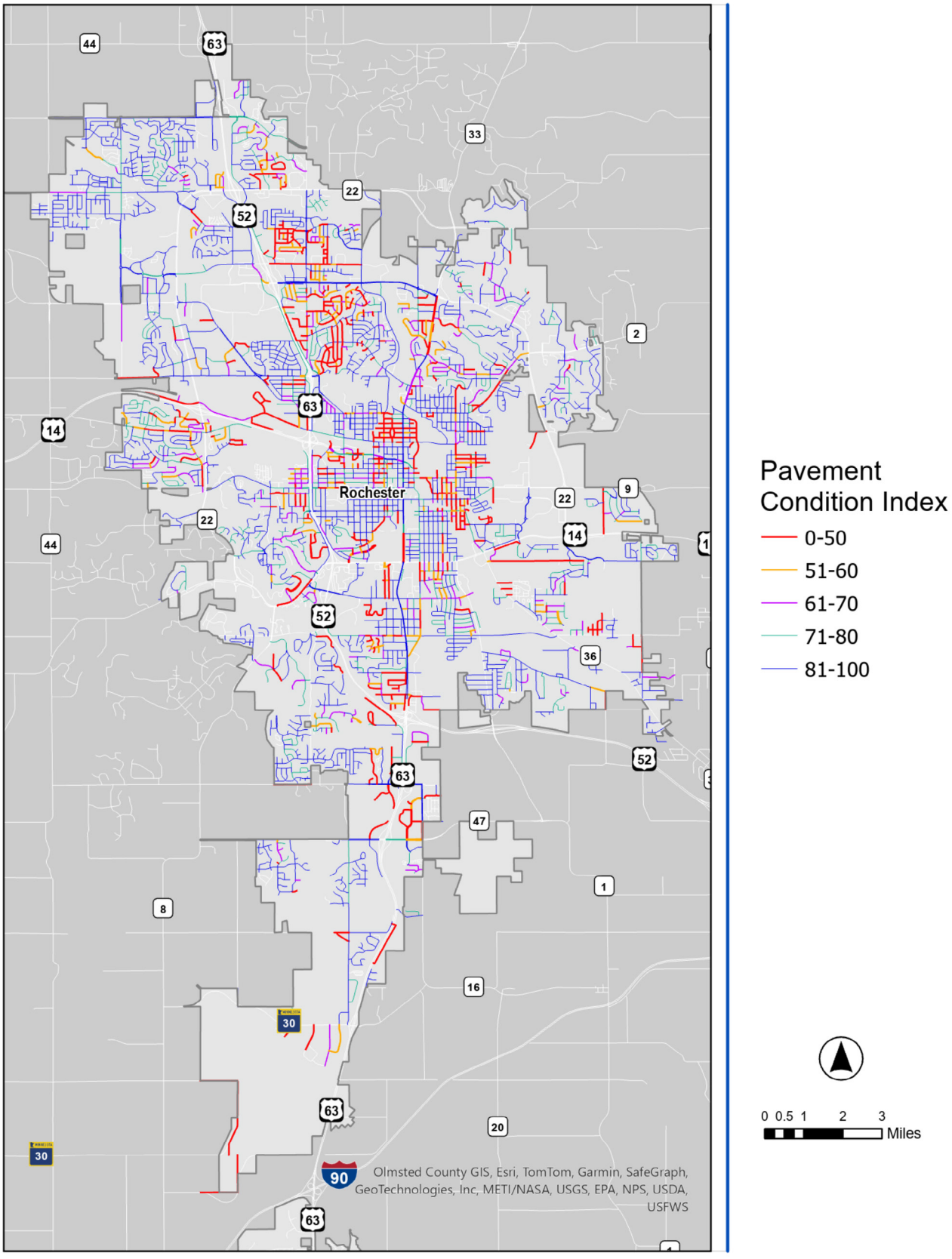
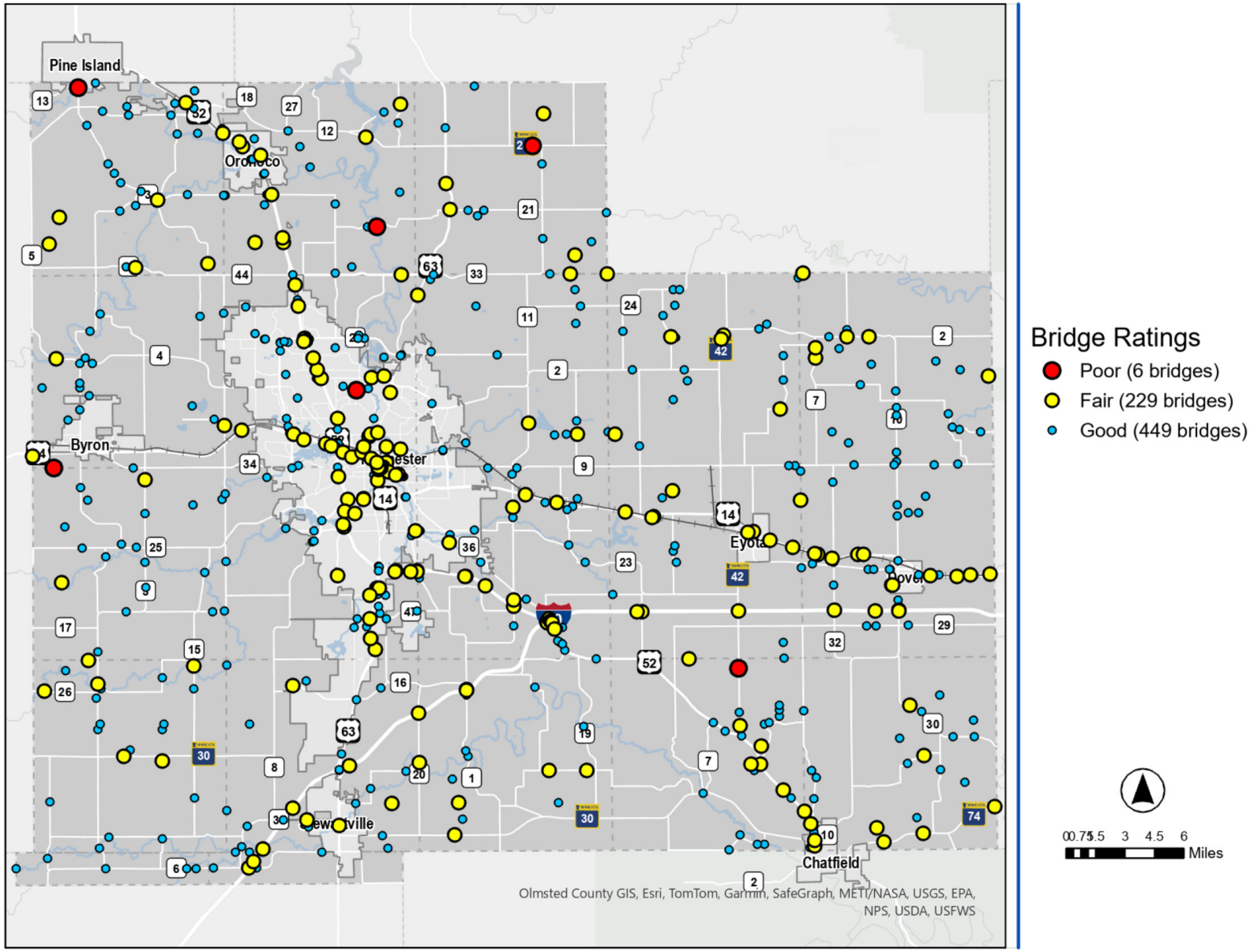


Figure 19: 2025 Bridge Conditions

Source: MnDOT



While Olmsted County uses the same rating system as MnDOT, Rochester uses a scale from 0-100.

Rochester Pavement Score	
Condition Category	PCI Category
Very Good	91-100
Good	67-90
Fair	34-66
Poor	0-33

4.4.6.2 Bridges

MnDOT's Bridge Inventory Management Unit maintains data for all Minnesota bridges. Several components contribute to bridge ratings, including the deck, superstructure, and substructure condition. This scoring results in a rating of "good", "fair", or "poor" (Figure 19). MnDOT is currently updating their Structure Inventory Management System (SIMS).

With adequate maintenance and repair projects, most bridges last 60 to 80 years before needing replacement. Delaying repairs can lead to more extensive maintenance needs and shorter service life. Asset management principles are used to plan optimal preventive maintenance, preservation, rehabilitation, and replacement projects.

4.4.6.3 System implications

The information obtained from MnDOT, Olmsted County, and the City of Rochester indicates that their systems are generally in good condition. ROCOG intends to monitor pavement conditions over time, with the help of its partner agencies, to better understand where the system as a whole is heading. As part of this endeavor, agencies without condition status data will be encouraged to start tracking it. Most importantly, ROCOG will monitor and assist agencies, when requested, to aid in the financial funding discussion with their respective policy boards.

Understanding future financial commitments to pavement preservation in the ROCOG planning area will better inform our future vision of the roadway network.

4.5. Aviation

Rochester International Airport (RST) serves domestic and international flights in the ROCOG area. It is owned by the City of Rochester with day-to-day operations managed by the Rochester Airport Company, a subsidiary of the Mayo Clinic. This close relationship plays a significant role in the airport's activities. Operations are overseen by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). RST's current Master Plan, which guides future development, was completed in 2021 and approved by the FAA and MnDOT's Office of Aeronautics.

The airport primarily offers passenger connections to major airline hubs in Chicago and Minneapolis. While passenger traffic has experienced fluctuations, particularly due to the recent global pandemic, the airport also plays a vital role in the region's economy. It facilitates access to the Mayo Clinic and supports significant medical cargo operations.

ROCOG has a limited role in aviation and the operation of airports. RST has its own planning requirements established through the FAA. As an MPO, ROCOG's involvement is limited to network-related concerns and providing adequate "landside" access to the airport via US 63 and MN 30, considering not only passenger traffic to the airport but also air freight traffic.

The Rochester International Airport Joint Zoning Board enforces airport zoning and restricts land use on and near RST. State statutes grant the Board the right to adopt, change, and enforce airport zoning rules.

The Master Plan reserved space for a park & ride facility to be located on RST property, within the terminal area, which would enhance commuter and passenger transit between the airport and downtown. Taxis, shuttle services, and rideshares are currently available at RST. No fixed RPT routes currently serve the airport; however, RPT GO, a pilot microtransit project, did during its trial. While the airport does not have significant influence over transit and connectivity, it can provide support and advocate for the efforts of the city and other partners to improve connectivity, minimize single-occupancy trips, ease traffic congestion, and improve air quality.

4.6. Freight

The primary mode for moving Olmsted County goods is truck travel. In particular, accessibility and mobility affect truck travel. Primary roads and bridges need to be sufficiently strengthened to withstand the added loads of heavy truck travel, and geometric design features must accommodate the restricted handling capability of large trucks.

4.6.1 Plans

MnDOT's District 6 Freight Plan (2022) identifies opportunities to improve freight infrastructure for all modes that use the Southeast Minnesota system. The plan identifies freight needs and overlays those with the locations of programmed transportation improvements (Figure 20). Needs were scored on a variety of factors, such as truck volume, crash history, and bridge conditions. Investment in these opportunities will increase the region's economic status.

Manufacturers' Perspectives on Minnesota's Transportation System for District 6 collected and analyzed qualitative transportation information from manufacturers to better understand their perspectives and priorities. The following is a list of key findings and requested actions from this report.

Safe passing opportunities are critical due to curvy roads and slow farm equipment.

- Install passing lanes on Highway 14 between Eyota and Lewiston to reduce shipping delays and costs.

Requests were made for additional four-lane highways.

- Make US 52 a four-lane highway to the Iowa border.

Safe intersections are needed for merging into fast traffic.

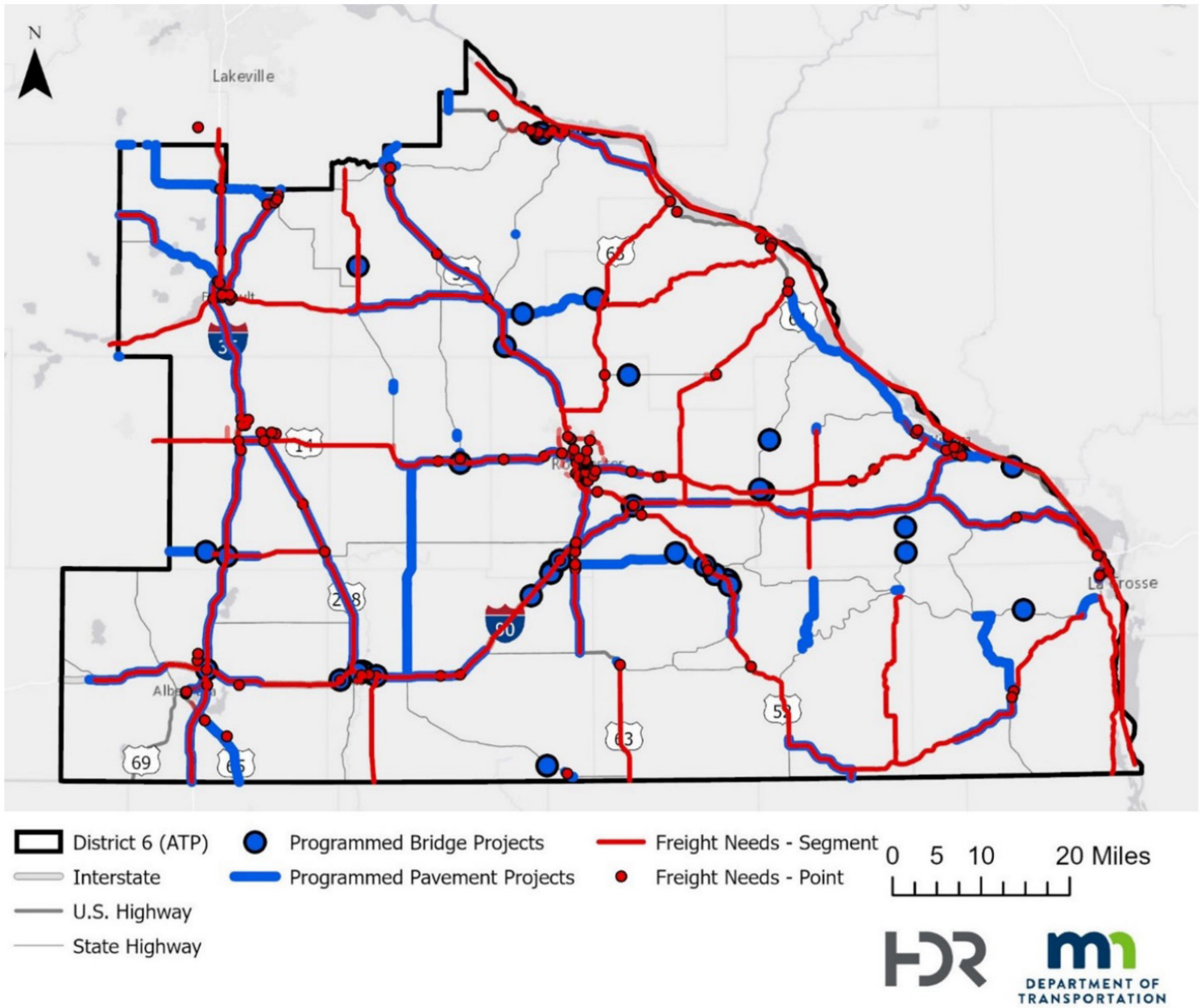
- Improve the interchange at Interstate 90 and US 52.
- Add a stoplight or roundabout at the intersection of MN 30 and US 52 to reduce travel delays.

There is appreciation and additional requests for MnDOT safety enhancements (stoplights, warning lights).

- "One specific area of concern includes southbound Highway 52 to the southbound Highway 63 ramp. The curve is sharp and cambered in the wrong direction. There have been many truck rollovers at this location. We have tipped trucks at this location. It is the number one location [of concern] in Rochester. There should be advanced

Figure 20: MnDOT District 6 Freight Needs vs Programmed Projects

Source: MnDOT



warning signs or flashers warning of a truck tipping hazard with a picture of a truck tipping over."

Smooth pavements are necessary.

- Businesses most often said that highways 14, 52, and 63 have rough pavement.

There is a need for more dynamic messaging signs for weather/road updates.

- Several businesses requested additional signs, particularly on US 52 and US 63.

Truck parking is lacking.

4.6.2 Roadway weight limits

Local municipalities, Olmsted County, and MnDOT all monitor 10-ton route needs on a regular basis. Current regional routes seasonal weight limits are shown in Figure 21. Rochester truck route limits are shown in Figure 22. All State highways have a 10-ton weight limit.

4.7. Rail

Rail infrastructure in Olmsted County is used solely for the movement of freight. The Class I Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC) railroad line runs east-west across the county, parallel to US 14, and connects to ports along the Mississippi River. This 2023 merger of the Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern companies is the only single consolidated rail network that directly connects Canada, the United States, and Mexico. The line through Olmsted County is a single track; all in-town road crossings are at grade. In Minnesota, CPKC's top markets are grain, energy, chemicals, plastics, metals, and fertilizers (Minnesota State Rail Plan: Public Engagement Plan, 2024).

No passenger rail service is available in the ROCOG planning area.

Figure 21: 2025 Seasonal Weight Limit on State and County Roads

Source: Olmsted County Public Works

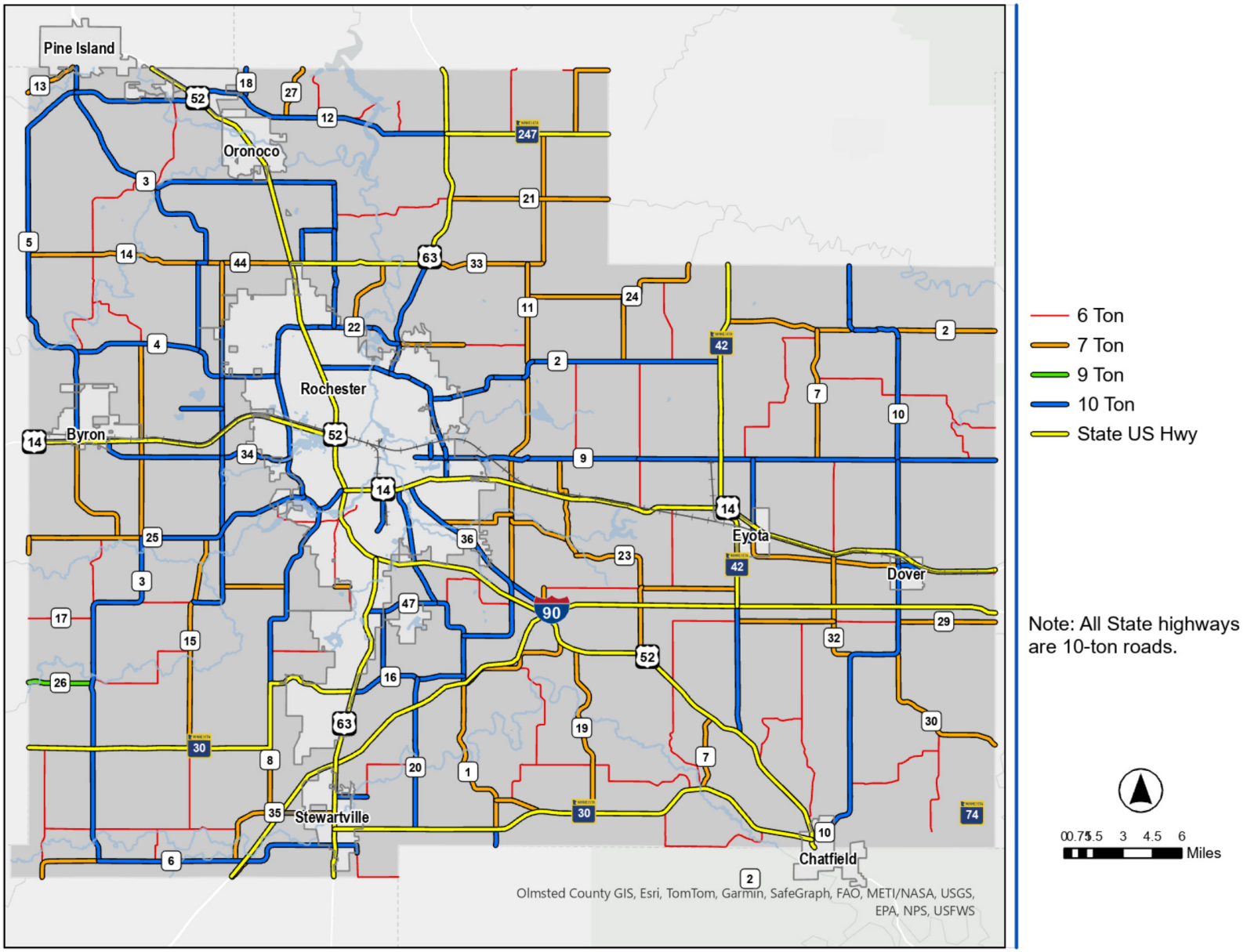


Figure 22: City of Rochester Seasonal Weight Limits

Source: Rochester Public Works