

# Rochester-Olmsted Council of Governments (ROCOG)

## Public Involvement Policy (PIP)

May 2022





## Acknowledgements and Disclaimers

Preparation of this document is financed in part by the U.S. DOT and the Minnesota Department of Transportation. Any questions or comments regarding this document may be directed to the Rochester-Olmsted Council of Governments (ROCOG) at 2122 Campus Drive SE, Ste 100, Rochester, MN. 55904, 507.328.7100. This document can be made available in alternative formats by contacting ROCOG at the mailing address above, or by email at [rocog@co.olmsted.mn.us](mailto:rocog@co.olmsted.mn.us).

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The preparation of this report has been funded in part by the Minnesota DOT. The contents of this document reflect the views of the authors who are responsible for the facts or accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Minnesota DOT. The report does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation.

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In accordance with Federal, State and other authorities, ROCOG does not tolerate discrimination and encourages broad participation regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. For more information about the applicable legal authorities, please refer to ROCOG's Title VI Plan.

### Section 508 Compliance

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# Resolution Adopting Revised Public Involvement Policy

Resolution No. 2022-09



## A RESOLUTION Adopting the 2022 Revision of ROCOG’s Public Involvement Policy

**WHEREAS**, the governor of Minnesota and jurisdictions representing at least 75% of the population within Olmsted County organized the Rochester-Olmsted Council of Governments (ROCOG) in 1972 to serve as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) under 23 CFR Subpart A Part 450 for the Rochester urbanized area; and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Department of Transportation requires each MPO designated with the authority to carry out metropolitan transportation planning in their given urbanized area to prepare and maintain a 20-year transportation plan for that area; and

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the Rochester-Olmsted Council of Governments and each metropolitan planning organization shall provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the transportation plan and all activities during the planning process; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2022 ROCOG draft Public Participation Policy was opened to public and agency comment for a 45-day period, and comments have been incorporated into the document.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Rochester-Olmsted Council of Governments approves the 2022 revision to the Public Involvement Policy.

Upon motion by Mr. Palmer, seconded by Ms. Norton, this 25th day of May, 2022.

ROCHESTER-OLMSTED COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

By:  Chairman

ATTEST: 

Dated: 5/29/2022 | 1:52 PM CDT

Ben Griffith, AICP, Executive Director, ROCOG

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## Introduction & Federal Guidance

This document details how ROCOG, as the area's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), will continue to involve the community in its transportation planning process and decisions. It is being revised as a result of changes in ROCOG's bylaws adopted in 2021, and to incorporate lessons learned about online, virtual meetings as a result of social-distancing requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), changed the rules and regulations for transportation planning in metropolitan communities around the county. Subsequent legislation such as The Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21) of 1998, The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users of 2005 (SAFETEA-LU), and Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) expanded on the general intent of ISTEA.

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act of 2015 was reauthorized by the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which is also known as Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), and continues to require demonstration of inclusive and open public involvement processes during MPO transportation planning. In order for local jurisdictions in the ROCOG area to continue to be eligible for federal transportation funding, substantial and modern efforts need to be directed to providing the public the opportunity to participate in transportation planning decisions. Other partner transportation implementation authorities, such as the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), also rely on ROCOG's compliance with federal public participation guidance to maintain eligibility for spending federal transportation funds in the ROCOG area.

Major guidance in the development of this ROCOG Public Involvement Policy is taken from 23 CFR 450.316.

# PIP Update & On-Going Review Procedures

The ROCOG Public Involvement Policy will be updated on a 5-year cycle normally. The following may cause either an amendment or total update to occur sooner than 5 years:

- Significant public input has occurred whereby the ROCOG Policy Board believes action is needed. Any discussion of this nature by ROCOG will occur at a normal Board meeting with a 30-day notice of the discussion and possible actions.
- Federal notification received by ROCOG staff directing all MPOs to update their Public Participation Policies. Typical causes of this action would be initiated due to a new surface transportation authorizing bill enacted or a Department of Justice lawsuit settlement that affects public participation in surface transportation planning and/or programming.

Further, per 23 CFR 450.316(a)(1)(x), MPOs are required to periodically review public engagement procedures and strategies for effectiveness. This information may also include data such as website hits, newspaper of record reach, public presentations by ROCOG staff around the community, meeting attendee numbers, etc.



# Public Involvement Vision

This ROCOG Public Involvement Policy illustrates how, through citizen and community involvement activities, ROCOG will strive to:

- Involve the community in all MPO planning, project development, and service development activities that impact the delivery of transportation services to the citizens of this community.
- Provide multiple means for citizens to become involved in transportation planning efforts that are convenient to the citizenry and tailored to their levels of interest.
- Provide information on both broad and specific planning issues and about available public involvement opportunities.
- Inform citizens not only about planning options and alternatives but also about the constraints and political considerations that affect decisions.
- Seek broad-based community consensus on transportation plans through a collaborative process by involving and listening to the views of representatives of divergent interests and reflecting those interests in adopted plans. Area residents, member jurisdictions, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees or unions, and public/private providers of transportation will be made aware of the activities of the MPO.

ROCOG will provide early and continuing public involvement opportunities throughout the planning and programming process as follows:

**Planning:** ROCOG emphasizes public engagement in planning studies that form the basis for programming decisions. Planning studies include development of the [Long Range Transportation Plan](#), corridor studies, and environmental assessment studies. These activities offer the public the earliest opportunity to participate in the development of project proposals that might eventually be programmed for funding. For special studies, ROCOG will identify and involve persons and groups that might be affected by potential changes to the transportation service or facility under review. Examples include adjacent property owners, neighborhood associations, and businesses within the study area.

**Programming:** ROCOG provides opportunities for public involvement throughout [Transportation Improvement Program](#) (TIP) project selection and programming. These activities include the adoption or amendment of the annual 4-year TIP. In programming related activities, ROCOG may partner with or rely on member jurisdictions to conduct project level public involvement activities. It is also understood that member agencies also offer public comment opportunities on projects that they will implement.

**Project Development:** Late stage phases of project development, such as preparation of geometric layout and final design plans, generally follow a programming decision to fund the project and are not subject to this policy. Existing state and federal guidelines govern the public outreach activities that are required during these later phases. Regarding right-of-way preservation, ROCOG frequently works with local units of government to prepare and adopt

official maps protecting needed future rights of way. The adoption process for official maps also provides opportunities for public involvement, but under a set of procedures spelled out by state law.

**Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP):** ROCOG staff prepare the [UPWP](#) for ROCOG review and adoption in late summer of each year. The document can be of interest to the public in that it shows the types of work tasks to be done in the next program year and the funding obtained to support the work. During the meeting when the UPWP is discussed and adopted, the Chair takes comments from the public.

# Organization Chart

## ROCOG Policy Board

Rochester-Olmsted Council of Governments (ROCOG) is technically the 16-member Policy Board that provides leadership and staff oversight of the agency. The Policy Board is comprised of representatives from the governmental jurisdictions within Olmsted County, as indicated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Membership in ROCOG**



The Policy Board provides a forum for these representatives to discuss issues of common concern in transportation policy and project programming. ROCOG's website is [rocogmn.org](http://rocogmn.org).

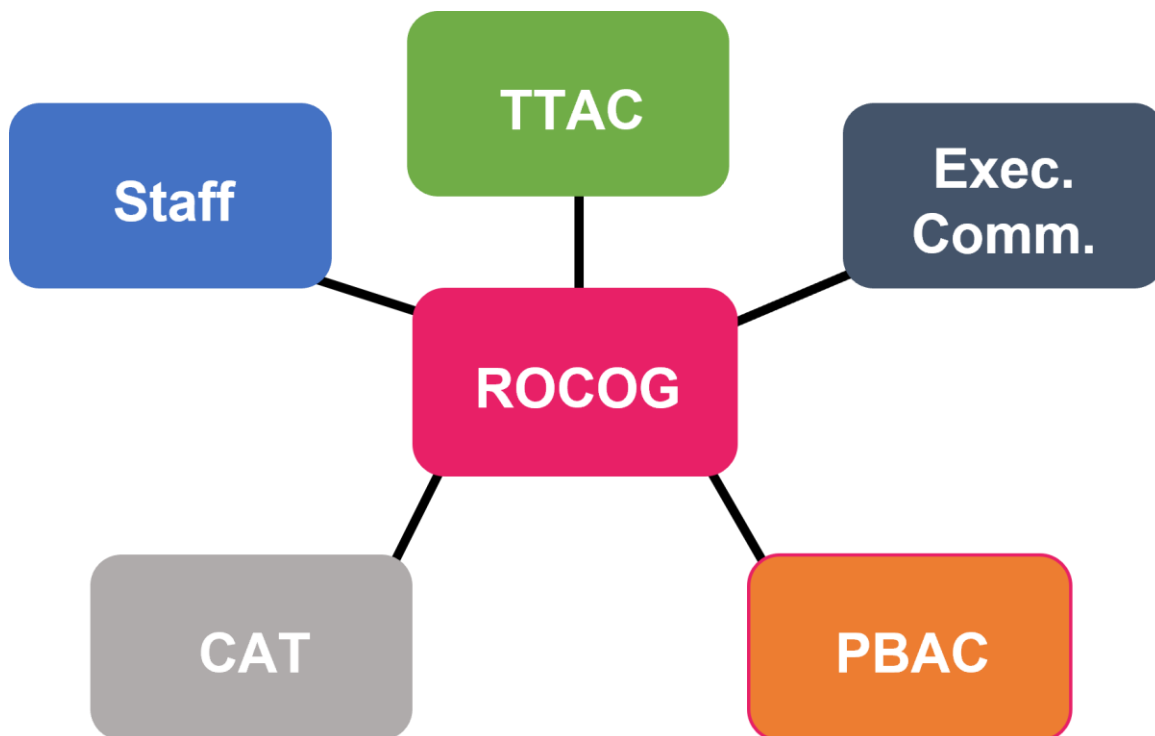
ROCOG, as the MPO, is the area's lead agency for transportation planning for the Greater Rochester urban area and Olmsted County. Operating and planning costs for ROCOG are

provided by federal transportation planning funds, state planning funds and local jurisdictional match funds. ROCOG is not an implementing agency. This means that the transportation projects ROCOG plans for are implemented by other entities, such as local governments, MnDOT, transit providers, etc. Street/highway, bridge, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and other projects that use federal transportation funds need to be included in the ROCOG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), be consistent with the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and be approved by ROCOG Policy Board. The TIP is the programming document that contains an annual list of projects using federal funds.

The Policy Board is supported by staff of the Olmsted County Planning Department. Staff prepare materials and provide content to the ROCOG Policy Board and standing committees for review and consensus. Figure 2 shows the ROCOG committee structure with the four current standing committees that advise the ROCOG Policy Board.

## Standing Committees

**Figure 2: ROCOG Committee/Staff Structure**



### Executive Committee

The Executive Committee consists of the ROCOG chair, vice-chair, and immediate past chair. The Executive Committee's main purpose is to review and approve minor changes to the TIP (known as administrative modifications) that do not require a formal amendment. The Executive Committee can also call special meetings of the ROCOG Policy Board.

## **Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC)**

TTAC consists of local and state planners, engineers, and transit operators from the Olmsted County area and MnDOT. TTAC reviews plans and programs from a technical perspective and makes recommendations to the ROCOG Policy Board. TTAC was formed in 1974 as a means of providing technical review and analysis of transportation planning products. During TTAC's review of transportation planning products unanimous or split recommendations are carried forward for consideration and final action by the ROCOG Policy Board.

## **Rochester's Pedestrian Bicycle Advisory Committee (PBAC)**

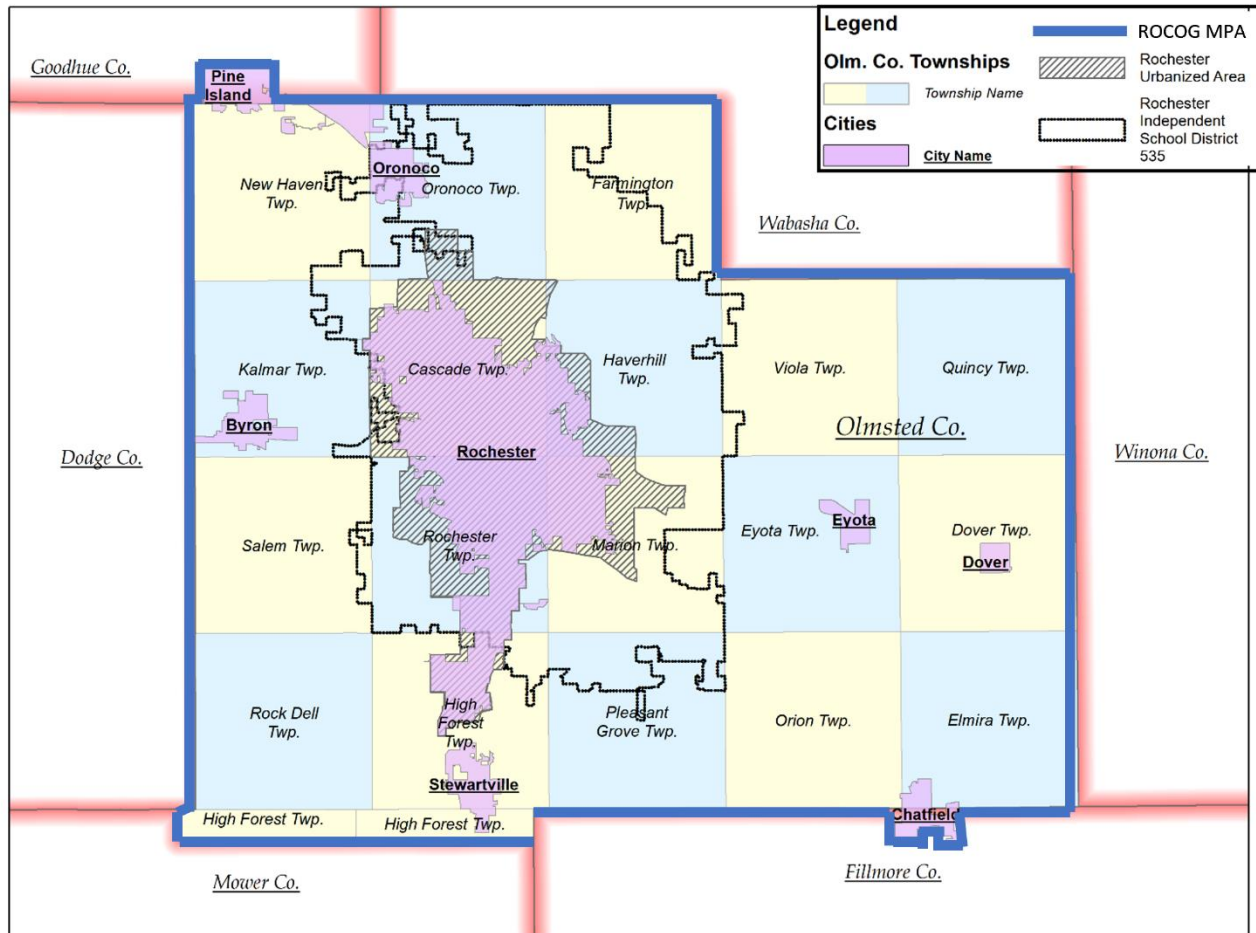
The PBAC consists of citizen volunteers representing the City of Rochester who have special interest in bicycle and pedestrian issues. This PBAC reviews City of Rochester and ROCOG transportation studies, plans, and projects from a citizen perspective. The committee is staffed by the Rochester Public Works Dept with ROCOG staff regularly attending meetings.

## **Rochester's Citizen's Advisory on Transit (CAT)**

The CAT provides advice and direction on fixed route and dial-a-ride services serving the City of Rochester and immediate surrounding townships. The CAT makes recommendations to the Rochester City Council, which is responsible for policy-making for the fixed route and dial-a-ride services in the Rochester area. They also review various transportation studies, plans, and projects from a citizen perspective. The committee is staffed by the Rochester Public Works Dept with ROCOG staff regularly attending meetings.

The ROCOG planning area includes the entirety of Olmsted County, as illustrated in Figure 3, with defined urban and regional study areas delineated to reflect the differing nature of transportation issues that exist in these areas.

### Figure 3: ROCOG Metropolitan Planning Area



# Scheduling and Noticing Procedures

## ROCOG Meetings

ROCOG Policy Board meetings are scheduled for the fourth Wednesdays of the month at 12:00 pm. They are typically held 6 to 8 times per year at the County Planning offices which are accessible and on a fixed-bus route. Additional meetings are held when needed. The agenda and materials are distributed directly to the Policy Board members and others via general distribution e-mail and are posted on the ROCOG section of the [Olmsted County website](#) at least 5 days prior to the meeting. The Post-Bulletin, the local newspaper of record, also posts notice of the meetings in their government meeting calendar. The meeting notices, agendas, and minutes are sent to all townships and small cities in the county where they are posted on their meetings boards.

Given certain circumstances where public health and safety require it, ROCOG Policy Board meetings can be held remotely using digital meeting technology (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Zoom, etc.) whereby remote attendees will be able to participate and vote. Meetings shall otherwise be broadcast live using digital technology (Microsoft Teams) for members of the public to access and audio recordings shall be posted to the ROCOG website afterwards.

On all meeting posts the following language is included:

ROCOG fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. For more information or to obtain a Discrimination Complaint Form, you may call 507-328-7100; email [planningweb@co.olmsted.mn.us](mailto:planningweb@co.olmsted.mn.us); visit ROCOG's administrative office at 2122 Campus Drive SE, Rochester, MN; or write to the Olmsted County Planning Department, 2122 Campus Drive SE, Suite 100, Rochester, MN 55904. Accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made at all ROCOG meetings. ROCOG welcomes comments from all members of the public, including those with low English proficiency. Anyone with needs for accommodations should contact the ROCOG offices.

## Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The ROCOG TIP contains the next 4-years of projects located within the MPA that will use federal funding. Projects include, but are not limited to, street/highways, bicycle, pedestrian improvements and implementation, and transit capital and operating expenses. The TIP is updated annually. Amendments to the TIP may occur at any time throughout the year.

### TIP Development and Public Comment Period

ROCOG develops the TIP list of projects in cooperation with local, state, and federal planning partners. Local road authorities, transit agencies, and other implementing agencies work with ROCOG to identify which projects will use federal funding, in which years, and how they will be

funded. Projects that go into the TIP have already gone through a public engagement process through the development of the state's Capital Highway Investment Plan or local jurisdictions' Capital Improvement Plans.

A public comment period of 30 calendar days will be provided for public review of the draft 4-year TIP before it is adopted. This usually occurs between the July or August ROCOG Policy Board meeting, when the draft is presented to ROCOG, and September, when the final draft must be adopted. During this 30-day period, if comments received are viewed by the staff and the ROCOG Chair as significant to the point where additional review time is needed or a ROCOG meeting is needed, a meeting will be convened to review and respond to comments before the September meeting. Members of the public will be notified of these meetings using the methods identified in the *Methods of Public Involvement* section of this document.

During the 30-day public comment period, ROCOG will hold in-person and virtual public meetings with visual presentations and similar content. The intent is that members of the public will be equally informed about the TIP by attending either an in-person or a virtual meeting, with no need to attend both. Those public comments that do not alter the TIP projects significantly will be brought to the ROCOG meeting at the time the Final TIP is approved. Comments and staff responses will be in the meeting packet and then incorporated into the TIP along with ROCOG Policy Board comments.

If the final draft TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment, a second public comment period of at least 15 calendar days will be held before final approval by the ROCOG Policy Board.

Later in this PIP document information is provided as to how ROCOG seeks out and considers the needs of those traditionally underserved in the entire ROCOG planning process including the development of the TIP.

### **Changes to the current TIP: Administrative Modifications and Formal Amendments**

The TIP may need to be changed from time to time to maintain its accuracy of projects. Changes to the TIP can come from local road authorities, public transit providers, or MnDOT. Depending on the change, an administrative modification or a formal amendment may occur. See the current TIP for what changes initiate an administrative modification or a formal amendment.

Administrative modifications go to the ROCOG Executive Committee for review and approval. No public comment period is required.

Public comments about formal TIP amendments will be welcomed at the meeting where the amendment is considered, or accepted in writing/email before the meeting. The TIP amendment will be on the agenda, which is posted at least 5 days before the meeting.



## Process for Amending the ROCOG TIP

The TIP must be flexible enough to allow for changes to the first program year resulting from emergencies, implementation opportunities, or changes in priorities. To keep the TIP current, amendments may be necessary from time to time. Amendments shall only be required when a new project is added, the project involves significant changes to federal funding levels proposed for a project, or when there is a change in the scope. Changes to the ROCOG TIP will also need to be reflected in MnDOT’s STIP, necessitating a close collaboration between the two entities. To help ensure consistency between the TIP and the STIP, ROCOG’s criteria for amending the TIP will follow MnDOT’s criteria for amending the STIP, as articulated in MnDOT’s document, *Procedures for Amendments and Administrative Modifications to the Minnesota State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)*, effective November 2020. The following criteria will be used when determining the need for a local TIP amendment:

- 1) *Add a new project*
- 2) *Revise a project scope such as changing the major work from bridge rehabilitation to replacement, resurface to reconstruct, removing or adding additional work/bridge/lane/intersection/route; removing or adding a phase of work such as preliminary engineering/right-of way/construction*
- 3) *Change a project limit/termini/length greater than 0.3 miles in any direction*
- 4) *Impact air quality conformity*
- 5) *An increase or decrease in a project’s total programmed cost that falls within the ranges as listed in Table 1.*

**Table 1: Ranges of Project Changes That Require a TIP Amendment**

FHWA Amendment		FTA Amendment	
STIP Programmed Cost	Cost Increase* or Decrease More Than:	STIP Programmed Cost	Cost Increase* More Than:
<\$1,000,000	NA**		
\$1,000,001 -- \$3,000,000	50%		
\$3,000,001 -- \$10,000,000	35%		
\$10,000,001 -- \$50,000,000	20%	Any Amount	20%

\$50,000,001 -- \$100,000,000	15%	
>\$100,000,000	10%	

\*Fiscal constraint justification required

\*\*No action required if the current TIP cost and the cost on the amendment is less than \$1M

### Procedure for a Regular TIP Amendment

- 1) Reviewed by the Transportation staff of each of the implementing agencies for amendment content accuracy (e.g., MnDOT, Olmsted County, City of Rochester and possibly other cities and/or townships)
- 2) Reviewed and endorsed by the ROCOG Transportation Technical Advisory Committee if time allows. Otherwise, notice is made to TTAC members via email.
- 3) Public input is solicited (see above)
- 4) Amendment information is included in a ROCOG Policy Board packet for their review and action. Part of the action item is an open comment period. Also, staff provides comments from the public as available to date.
- 5) Following formal action by ROCOG, it is sent to MnDOT D-6 staff and the local jurisdiction (s) if other than MnDOT, where it can then be sent on to FHWA and FTA.

### Administrative Modification

Administrative modifications are minor changes to the TIP that can be made without a formal amendment if they meet certain explicit criteria. ROCOG’s Executive Committee may process administrative amendments in the instances noted below. Meetings of the Executive Committee will be properly noticed and open to the public consistent with the requirements of the Minnesota Open Meetings Law. To better ensure that MnDOT’s STIP, which can similarly be altered to reflect minor changes, remains consistent with ROCOG’s TIP, ROCOG’s administrative modification criteria parallel those articulated in MnDOT’s document, *Procedures for Amendments and Administrative Modifications to the Minnesota State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)*, effective November 2020. Upon completion of an administrative modification, ROCOG shall be notified either at their next meeting or via email/paper mail. The public will also be notified via normal communication channels.

1. Remove a project;
2. Combine a new non-federally funded project to an existing federally funded project provided the cost of the administrative modification is within the ranges as listed in Table 2;
3. Convert a non-federally funded project to a federally funded project with no change to cost or scope;
4. Identify a new project from an existing federal set-aside in the same fiscal year;

5. Revise a project description without change to scope or conflict with the environmental document such as clarifying project description, adding/removing project smart code or incidental work;
6. Make a technical correction which includes changing State Project Number (SP), funding source, funding type, work type, or lead agency;
7. Change a funding year which includes advancing or deferring with no change to scope and cost (fiscal constraint justification required for advancing project);
8. Add, remove, increase, or decrease Advance Construction (AC);
9. Split or combine individually listed projects provided projects remain within the original planned location, no change in split/combine scope/cost, no shift in funding year, and logical termini maintained;
10. An increase or decrease in a project's total programmed cost that falls within the ranges as listed in Table 2, provided there is no change in scope.

**Table 2: FHWA Administrative Modification**

STIP Programmed Cost	Cost Increase* or Decrease More Than:
< \$1,000,000	NA**
\$1,000,001 - \$10,000,000	20%
\$10,000,001 - \$100,000,000	10%
>\$100,000,000	***

\*Fiscal constraint justification required

\*\*No action required if TIP programmed cost and the cost of the administrative modification is less than \$1M

\*\*\* Prior collaborative discussion between MnDOT and FHWA required

Note: No TIP administrative modification is required for cost increase or decrease under 20% on FTA projects.

## Long Range Transportation Plan Updates (LRTP)

One of the more important roles of an MPO is to develop and maintain a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Under federal regulations, the LRTP needs to be updated every five years with a minimum of a 20-year planning horizon. The next LRTP update will use a horizon year of 2050.

The LRTP is multimodal and fiscally constrained. Projects include those that improve the street/highway network in Olmsted County. The transit section includes a compilation of recent and anticipated planning work with an emphasis on the morning/afternoon work trip to/from downtown Rochester. The bicycle and pedestrian section identifies a network of major bicycle and pedestrian paths and trails. The LRTP is developed with input from MnDOT, City of Rochester, Olmsted County, surrounding small cities and townships, and the ROCOG Policy Board. Beyond these stakeholders, the public has a critical role to provide input on the LRTP. These points for public input include the following:

- a) During the start-up
- b) When the Modal Plans are in early draft stage
- c) When the Modal Plans are in final draft stage and supporting chapters are in draft stage.
- d) When the Draft Plan has changed significantly during previous public and policy-maker input, so as to require additional public input.
- e) During the Public Hearing near the time of adoption.

ROCOG conducts public outreach events in the community at milestones a) through d). For each of these in-person events, ROCOG will also hold at least one virtual public meeting using online remote-meeting technology. Virtual meetings consist of, at a minimum, a visual presentation (PowerPoint, maps, etc.) and an opportunity for those in attendance to ask questions and make comments. Virtual public meetings will be publicized in the same announcement as the corresponding in-person meeting. This underscores the intent of virtual public meetings to be another version of the in-person event. That is, virtual and in-person events are intended to be co-equal in informing the public, and the public should understand that they will receive the same information at either event.

On all meeting posts the following language is included:

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members of the public, including those with low English proficiency. Anyone with needs for accommodations should contact the ROCOG offices.

The milestones for public input opportunities are discussed below in more detail.

### *LRTP Start-up*

Often called a “kick-off meeting” this is an early Open House hosted by ROCOG staff and invited ROCOG/TTAC members to engage the public in commenting on needs that should be addressed during a new update of the LRTP. This Open House is held about 30 days after the ROCOG Policy Board meeting where the LRTP Update schedule is approved. Notification of the Open House is sent out using a combination of public engagement methods 15 to 30 calendar days prior to the event.

On all meeting posts the following language is included:

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Materials available include supporting data, transportation and safety information, and detailed information on the current transportation systems. Other information provided includes the state of the implementation of the existing LRTP and base maps for the public to identify where they see congested areas, safety concerns, and new service recommendations. These materials are replicated for the virtual public meeting and made available for attendees to view or download. Attendees at either type of public meeting can access interactive materials (e.g. Storymaps) that summarize or further explain key concepts and provide opportunities for public input and questions. These materials are developed and provided by ROCOG staff.

### *Modal Plans are in early draft stage*

The LRTP considers street/highway, transit, and bicycle and pedestrian (i.e., active transportation) modes in the draft. Major improvements and planned systems are developed or coordinated in the LRTP. More detailed plans are developed by member jurisdictions.

Following a draft of these modal plans this information is shared with the public through an open house, virtual public meeting, and other public input opportunities. These meetings typically occur at about 5 to 7 months into the LRTP update process.

### *Modal Plans are in final draft stage and supporting chapters are in draft stage*

The draft LRTP transportation modal plans are refined after the early draft stage by ROCOG and TTAC input. This information is then shared with local jurisdictions, such as the committees of the whole of the City of Rochester and Olmsted County as well as MnDOT District 6, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). After local jurisdictions and state and federal planning partners have given their input on the draft plan, the draft LRTP is ready for public comment. An Open House and virtual public meeting are held during this period. This is the point where final draft information will be available for public input and comment for at least 30 calendar days.

*Draft Plan has changed significantly during previous public and policy-maker input*

With on-going public input opportunities on modal plans, many changes to the draft LRTP can occur. If major LRTP changes are requested and considered, a new round of public input on the modified parts of the LRTP should occur. The second public comment period is at least 30 calendar days. At least one ROCOG Policy Board meeting would be held to address this occurrence with an open house and virtual public meeting held at least 15 calendar days prior to the ROCOG Policy Board meeting where a formal public comment opportunity is held as part of the approval of the LRTP.

*Public Hearing near the time for adoption*

Adoption of the Final Plan is done by ROCOG Policy Board with a formal resolution, which is inserted into the LRTP. A minimum of 30 calendar days prior to the meeting where adoption occurs, a public hearing will be held by ROCOG as part of a regular ROCOG Policy Board meeting. Staff will respond to questions and comments at the meeting when this can be done, and in cases where responses must be researched, responses will be provided at the next ROCOG Policy Board meeting prior to adoption of the LRTP. In some cases, responses will be provided to the questioner and copied to ROCOG Policy Board members prior to the Policy Board meeting where adoption is to occur. Minutes of the public hearing will be included in the Appendix of the LRTP showing comments and ROCOG staff responses.

Notification of the hearing will be made through the usual means of communication with the public as listed in this document. Notification of upcoming LRTP adoption will be made 30 calendar days prior to the meeting

On all meeting posts the following language is included:

ROCOG fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. For more information or to obtain a Discrimination Complaint Form, you may call 507-328-7100; email [planningweb@co.olmsted.mn.us](mailto:planningweb@co.olmsted.mn.us); visit ROCOG's administrative office at 2122 Campus Drive SE, Rochester, MN; or write to the Olmsted County Planning Department, 2122 Campus Drive SE, Suite 100, Rochester, MN 55904. Accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made at all ROCOG meetings. ROCOG welcomes comments from all members of the public, including those with low English proficiency. Anyone with needs for accommodations should contact the ROCOG offices.

## Amendments to the LRTP

There are times when a LRTP may be amended. Determination as to this action will be made in the following manner:

- Staff and ROCOG Policy Board will have an initial discussion as to whether a need exists.
- Staff will discuss the information with MnDOT Central Office and MnDOT District 6 for input.
- If necessary, either MnDOT or ROCOG staff will contact either FHWA or FTA to discuss the matter in more detail.

If it is found that an amendment is needed, the entire Chapter(s) will be amended rather than only parts of a Chapter(s). LRTP Amendments will be processed formally.

An open house and virtual public meeting will be scheduled to make the information available to the public. Online information will also be available for the entire public comment period. All information will be available for a period of not less than 30 calendar days, with the open house and virtual public meeting held during this period. Notification will also be made of the date of the ROCOG Policy Board meeting when the amendment will be acted on, with a public comment opportunity as part of that meeting. Staff will report on all comments and responses made during the public comment period at the time of the LRTP amendment meeting.

If, at the time of an amendment adoption, ROCOG Policy Board decides that they would like additional public comment period, they can extend the time another 15 to 30 days and move the amendment adoption out to a later date. The public will be notified of this action via all public engagement methods used by ROCOG staff.

## How the Public Can Contact ROCOG with Input

ROCOG always welcomes public input in its planning efforts, but it is especially important during specified public comment periods. When the public wants to give its input, the following are the most effective ways to contact ROCOG:

- Email ROCOG at [rocog@co.olmsted.mn.us](mailto:rocog@co.olmsted.mn.us)
- Telephone ROCOG at 507-328-7100 (office hours are Monday-Friday, 8:00 am-5:00 pm)
- Write to ROCOG at 2122 Campus Dr SE, Ste. 100, Rochester, MN 55904
- Comment in-person or during a virtual public meeting to ROCOG Policy Board members and/or staff

During specified public comment periods for plans, ROCOG often has online opportunities for the public to comment, such as Storymap summaries of the plan being drafted.



# Methods of Public Involvement

Citizen involvement needs to accommodate a wide range of interests, as shown in Figure 4. This section describes the many methods that ROCOG now has available to communicate with the public regarding plans, programming documents and timing of various meetings.

**Figure 4: Potential Stakeholders in Transportation Planning**



## Citizen and Community Notification

- Provide adequate notice of public involvement activities for review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to approval of transportation plans and system improvement programs.
- ROCOG will distribute notices and other materials in a timely manner to the public to inform them of opportunities to participate in the development of transportation plans and studies.
- Every attempt is made to design notifications to be easy to understand and provide adequate information and/or indicate how additional information can be obtained.
- Notifications of public involvement activities will include the following information:
  - What action is being undertaken and an explanation of the process
  - The purpose, schedule, location, and time of meetings
  - The location(s) where information is available
  - Who is holding the event/meeting

- Who should be interested/concerned and what are the major issues
- Who may be contacted by telephone, in writing or via the internet to offer comments and/or suggestions
- The comment period for written/oral comments
- Notice of available accommodations for disabled and LEP individuals
- All documents and information provided on the Olmsted County website will be Section 508 compliant to the maximum extent possible. This includes those documents used during ROCOG meetings.
- On all meeting posts the following language is included:

ROCOG fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. For more information or to obtain a Discrimination Complaint Form, you may call 507-328-7100; email [planningweb@co.olmsted.mn.us](mailto:planningweb@co.olmsted.mn.us); visit ROCOG's administrative office at 2122 Campus Drive SE, Rochester, MN; or write to the Olmsted County Planning Department, 2122 Campus Drive SE, Suite 100, Rochester, MN 55904. Accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made at all ROCOG meetings. ROCOG welcomes comments from all members of the public, including those with low English proficiency. Anyone with needs for accommodations should contact the ROCOG offices.

## Community Outreach

ROCOG staff work with the local media on transportation-related news items and regularly posts information on the ROCOG website to ensure that the public can stay abreast of transportation planning and programming activities. ROCOG will make reasonable attempts to gather demographic information from those who participate in outreach activities. Methods for gathering this demographic information can include survey cards at in-person events, online surveys for those who participate remotely, and other means that allow participants to self-report their race, gender, income, and other demographic information that is pertinent to ROCOG's planning efforts. From time to time, ROCOG will analyze the demographic data gathered, and determine if outreach strategies need to be changed in order to attract more participation from groups or populations that are not being reached, particularly historically underrepresented populations.

Examples of community outreach strategies include:

- Engage area residents in the transportation planning process by informally meeting with them in their neighborhoods, at their businesses, at their schools, at their community centers, and in other locations throughout the area.
- ROCOG will at times rely on the public involvement activities of its member jurisdictions and will strive to coordinate its public involvement activities to complement, and not to duplicate, those activities.

- Staff may make presentations to community groups such as the League of Women Voters, business groups, neighborhood groups, and service clubs.
- ROCOG will cooperate with the MnDOT in both planning and public participation efforts.
- The Rochester Chamber of Commerce Transportation Forum provides local businesses and members of the community a voice in the transportation needs of the local economy. Meetings are attended from time to time by some members of ROCOG and TTAC and provide an opportunity for discussion of important local business transportation needs.
- ROCOG will engage community residents in the transportation planning process via Facebook as a means to get direct public input.
- When appropriate, surveys will be available on ROCOG's website for direct public input.
- ROCOG will conduct virtual public meetings in parallel with in-person events to reach people who may not come to in-person events because of factors like conflicting work schedules, lack of childcare, transportation limitations, etc. These virtual public meetings will present the same information as the in-person event, so that the public can be equally informed by attending either one. Virtual public meetings can function as a substitute for in-person events, but only under clearly stated conditions of natural disaster, public health emergency, etc., where in-person gatherings present a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of the general public.
- Staff will make every effort to collect demographic data from all community outreach and engagement activities in accordance with ROCOG's Title VI Non-Discrimination and Limited English Proficiency Plan.

### **Outreach to Underrepresented Groups**

- ROCOG will identify barriers to public participation for those traditionally underrepresented in the transportation planning process and attempt to transcend those barriers or devise additional outreach efforts to these populations.
- Virtual public meetings can give underrepresented groups more opportunities to participate in the planning process.
- Public engagement opportunities will target low-income and minority populations and Limited English Proficient populations identified in ROCOG's Transportation Infrastructure Environmental Justice Protocol and Title VI Non-Discrimination and Limited English Proficiency Plan; public meetings will be conducted, as needed, at ADA compliant venues in proximity to these communities.
- Where projects involve areas with significant populations of persons of limited English language ability, interpreters will be provided for public meetings, notices, and informational materials.

Appendix A provides more information on this subject.

## Evaluation of Public Involvement Efforts

ROCOG will periodically review the effectiveness of the public participation process, including a critical look at how much is enough, and revise public participation processes as necessary. Information such as website hits and comments received throughout the year will be discussed with the ROCOG Policy Board.

## Meeting Scheduling, Location, and Accessibility

- Public meetings will be scheduled to increase the opportunity for attendance by stakeholders and the general public. This may require scheduling meetings during non-traditional business hours, holding more than one meeting at different times of the day or on different days, and checking other community activities to avoid conflicts. These scheduling considerations apply to in-person events and virtual public meetings.
- Public meetings will continue to be the primary means of outreach to the public. In general, any time an in-person public meeting is needed, ROCOG will also hold a virtual public meeting to disseminate the same information. These in-person and virtual public meetings should have content that is as similar as possible, allowing for some inherent differences in setting/medium, so that attendance at either event provides attendees with the same information.
- When a public meeting or public hearing is focused on a planning study or program related to a specific geographic area or jurisdiction within the ROCOG area, the meeting or hearing will be held, if possible, within that geographic area or jurisdiction. Appropriate elected officials as identified in the stakeholder analysis should be consulted and/or informed of relevant outreach activities within their jurisdictions.
- Public meetings will be held in locations accessible to people with disabilities and should be located near a transit route that operates at that time and day when possible.
- ROCOG will continue to observe open public meeting requirements (Ch. 13D, Minnesota Statutes, known as the Minnesota Open Meeting Law).

## Communication Tools

In addition to public meetings, ROCOG has many communication options. ROCOG will use these methods in various combinations, tailoring the communication methods to each project. The varied means of communication with the public that ROCOG will use in its efforts to distribute information to the public will include:

- **Web Resources:** ROCOG will post, update, and make available project information on its website, including such information as project overviews, project schedule information, notices of public meetings, project reports,

- comment and contact links, and project-specific surveys on key issues as well as more general online surveys. Web resources will be Section 508 compliant, to the maximum extent possible, to make them accessible to those with disabilities.
- **Project Newsletters:** Newsletters (paper and email) can be used to disseminate information to individuals and organizations who are part of project mailing lists as well as posting on the project website. Newsletters would be used at key milestones in projects to inform citizens about project goals, upcoming meetings, key study findings and decision points for the project.
  - **Media Coordination:** Press releases, meeting advertisements, and event announcements will be coordinated with appropriate media to gain broad exposure for the public process. Public access channels may be used where appropriate to broadcast information about public meetings and public input availability. Media contacts will include newspapers, radio, and television.
  - **Facebook:** ROCOG started a Facebook page in February 2019 to use for a wide variety of information dissemination. Primarily started to assist in the 2045 LRTP update, it will be used to engage the public in annual TIP development, the Work Program development and project work of ROCOG into the future. Links will be used regularly to share information to/from partners such as Olmsted County, the City of Rochester and Small Cities, and MnDOT.
  - **Story Maps:** This method of visualizing information will be used to engage the public in reviewing/commenting on LRTP development as well as direct online input into the proposed and final LRTP modal projects, i.e. street/highway, multi-use trails/path, and transit. Story Maps are also used in corridor/sub-area studies and the annual TIP development.
  - **Legislative Briefing:** ROCOG may give legislative briefings during the course of projects when deemed appropriate to the goals of the project and identified as part of the public involvement plan for a project.
  - **Group Presentations:** Slide shows that can be presented to business and community groups will be prepared when deemed appropriate and used in outreach efforts to distribute information on specific planning projects or the general activities of ROCOG.
  - **"Going to Them":** During the LRTP updates ROCOG's practice is for staff to "go to them" to bring draft and final draft Plan components to places where the public congregates to gather input. Festivals, farmer's markets, central downtown skyway locations, etc. would be typical examples. The TIP development can also benefit from this type of communication, particularly after/during the development of the 2045 LRTP Update.
  - **Visualization Tools:** Visualization tools will be used where there will be limited use of rendering tools but greater use of graphics such as charts, maps, tables, or illustrations highlighting typical or standard project elements.

## Project Level Studies

At the project study level such as corridor and subarea studies, ROCOG organizes project committees composed of a mix of residents, interested parties, and jurisdictional representatives to provide guidance on the process and input into the findings and analysis of the study. Typically, the following committees provide direction on a project:

- Project Steering Group: provides strategic direction in terms of the tasks and scope of work for the project.
- Policy Advisory Group: provides local political leadership and the key interested parties affected by the project.
- Technical Advisory Committee: provides the technical analysis and assessments completed as part of the project. This committee is typically composed of engineers and planners from ROCOG and affected jurisdictions.

Resource agencies are invited to participate at the Policy Advisory Group or Technical Advisory Group to provide input on environmental issues that may arise as part of the project.

Project based public involvement uses the methods described above and includes Environmental Justice populations in the study area as described in Appendix A. The participation of these parties is invited in a number of ways, including online input, public information meetings, public hearings, project forums, or small group meetings (see glossary for description of these public involvement methodologies).

## Responding to Public Comments and Questions

- ROCOG documents public comments received during a study or development of the LRTP and TIP and documents responses to public comments. Documentation is accomplished in a manner appropriate to the project and the nature of the comments. Documentation may consist of meeting minutes, a file of letters, included as a separate section or addendum to a project report, or as a special memo that summarizes the comments.
- A written summary is provided to decision makers at key points in the planning process, such as when members of the relevant study committee must decide to narrow the range of alternatives, select a preferred alternative, or make a decision of a similar nature. The written summary of comments made at a public information meeting is provided to committee members.
- Comments are responded to in a timely manner. As appropriate, comments and concerns may be addressed as a group rather than individually. A general summary of public comments and agency responses will be provided to participants throughout the planning process, while maintaining a complete record of all public input for public review.

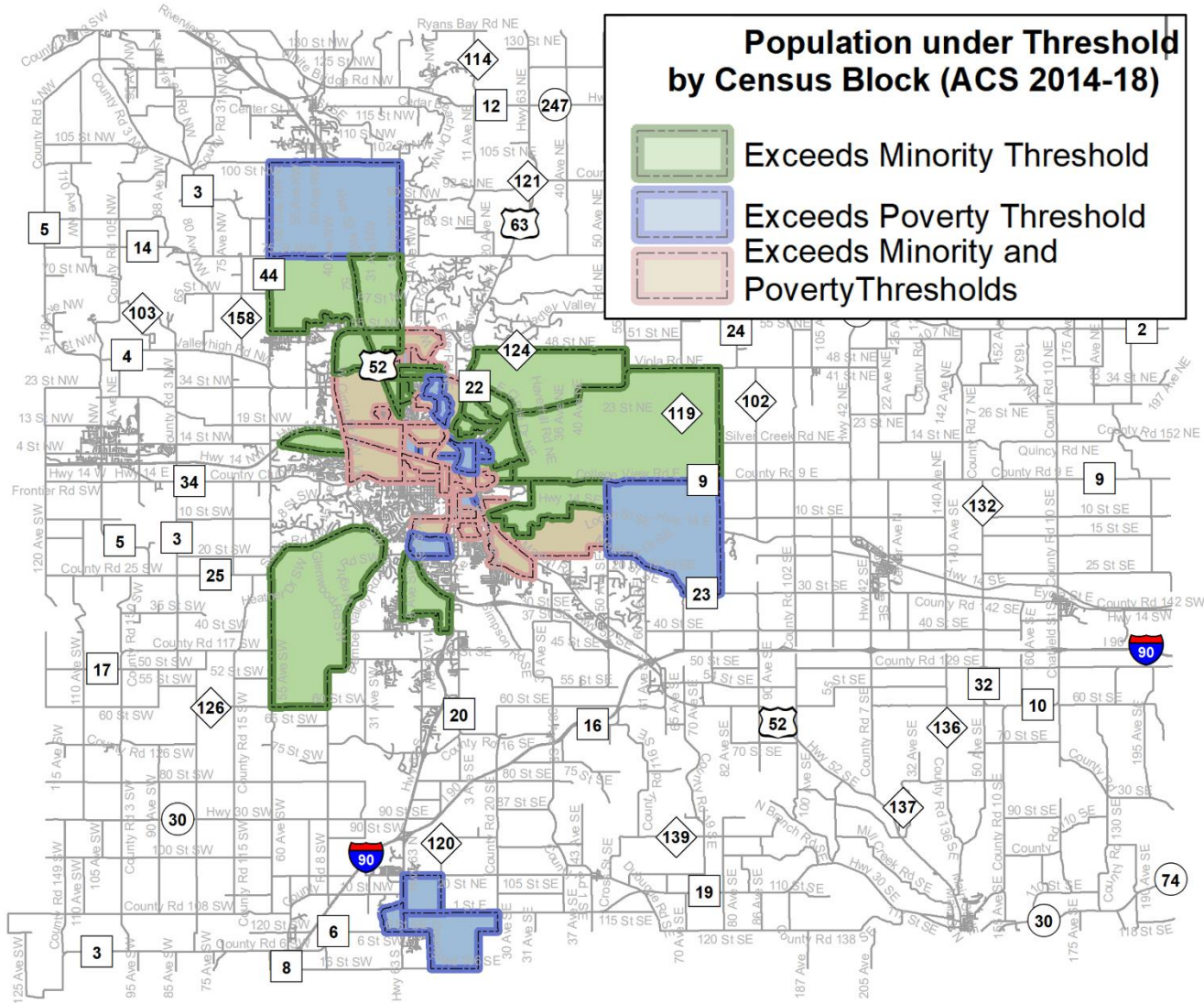
## **APPENDIX A: Outreach to Underrepresented Populations**

Consistent with Environmental Justice Executive Order (EO 12898), ROCOG considers the needs of groups or communities not traditionally well-served by existing transportation systems. These include, but are not limited to, low-income and/or minority households. To assure adequate participation of these groups, it may be necessary to conduct additional outreach efforts. At a minimum, ROCOG will identify groups that it needs to be involved, add them to appropriate mailing lists, and define methods for engaging them in relevant programs or projects.

ROCOG adopted the Title VI Non-Discrimination and Limited English Proficiency Plan in October 2020. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits federal agencies and sub-recipients of federal funds from discriminating based on race, color or national origin, and against participants or clients of programs that receive federal funding. In addition to nondiscrimination, this plan provides information relative to Presidential Executive Order 13166 which mandates that federal agencies ensure that people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access to federally-conducted and/or funded programs and activities.

### **Figure 5: Communities of Concern in ROCOG Planning Area**





In the [Title VI Non-Discrimination and Limited English Proficiency Plan](#), ROCOG identified Census Block Groups with disproportionate populations of minority and/or low-income residents. ROCOG’s analysis found that the entire MPA was 19.4% minority (i.e., other than non-Hispanic, white) and 8.8% in poverty (based on household income in the previous 12 months being at or below the US Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines). Census Block Groups with a percentage of minority residents that was higher than 19.4%, a percentage of low-income residents higher than 8.8%, or both, were identified as communities of concern.

**Table 3: Minority Population Thresholds**

Geography	Total Population	Minority Population	% Minority 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%

**Table 4: Low-Income Population Thresholds**

Geography	Total Population	Low-Income Population	% Low-Income 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%

Further discussion of these issues is provided in the ROCOG document titled [A Matter of Fairness: ROCOG’s Transportation Infrastructure Environmental Justice Protocol](#), dated April 8th, 2016. Specific outreach strategies in that document are summarized below.

## Outreach to Underrepresented Populations

At the project level, ROCOG will encourage road authorities and other transportation service providers to identify a range of options for mitigating adverse impacts of transportation investments, relying on standard engineering practices as the source for those options. In addition, ROCOG area communities are committed to involving affected neighborhoods in refining and advising on selection of preferred options.

At the planning and program levels, ROCOG will adhere to the public input strategies identified in Chapter 6 of the LRTP to involve persons of diverse backgrounds and interests in its advisory committees and to fully involve the general public in its public outreach efforts. Efforts to involve disadvantaged populations generally and environmental justice communities specifically in transportation mitigation efforts at the project level will include the measures described below.

### 1.1 General

In addition to the special outreach efforts to disadvantaged populations described in the Chapter 6 of the LRTP, development of mitigation efforts will include notices of meetings and other materials sent directly to tenants and owners of property in the area affected by the

proposed mitigation. For areas served by neighborhood associations, ROCOG will also contact neighborhood associations serving geographic areas that include communities of concern, including:

- Kutzky Park Neighborhood Association
- East Side Pioneers Neighborhood Association
- Southeast Settlers Neighborhood Association
- Goose Egg Park Neighborhood Association
- Rochester Neighborhood Resource Center

## **1.2 Low-Income**

ROCOG will involve the following community organizations in planning and program level efforts and will rely on these organizations to assist in contacting and advocating for low-income populations in the ROCOG area:

- Olmsted County Community Action Program
- Olmsted County Housing and Redevelopment Authority
- Channel One, Inc. (the local food shelf)
- the Salvation Army
- Family Service Rochester
- Lutheran Social Services
- Southeast Minnesota Workforce Center
- Catholic Charities.

In addition, when transportation investments affect employers with significant numbers of low wage employees, ROCOG will contact those employers to ask for assistance in contacting their employees and providing information about projects and mitigation options.

## **1.3 Race and Ethnicity**

ROCOG will involve the following community organizations in planning and program level efforts and will rely on these organizations to assist in contacting and advocating for ethnic and racial minority populations in the ROCOG area:

- Olmsted County Community Action Program
- Rochester branch of the NAACP
- Rochester – Olmsted County Diversity Council
- Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association
- Rochester International Association
- faith organizations serving minority communities, especially religious institutions serving recent immigrants to the ROCOG area (see below).

## 1.4 Refugee and Immigrant Status

ROCOG will involve the following community organizations in planning and program level efforts and will rely on these organizations to assist in contacting and advocating for ethnic and racial minority populations in the ROCOG area:

- Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association
- Rochester Islamic Center
- Buddhist Support Society
- Somali Refugee Resettlement
- Rochester International Association
- Olmsted County Community Action Program
- Rochester School District English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Adult Basic Education programs
- Lutheran Social Services and Catholic Charities.

ROCOG will also work through employers and apartment management companies to distribute information. Because a number of recent refugees and immigrants have limited English language ability, ROCOG's outreach measures will include efforts to provide translation and interpreter services at meetings and in other written and oral contacts.

## 1.5 Elderly Status

ROCOG will involve the following community organizations in planning and program level efforts and will rely on these organizations to assist in contacting and advocating for ethnic and racial minority populations in the ROCOG area:

- Elder Network
- Family Service Rochester
- Senior Citizens Services Inc.
- owners and tenant groups in senior housing complexes.

ROCOG's outreach measures will include efforts to overcome barriers to participation through such measures as the use of TDD devices.

## 1.6 Other Groups Not Concentrated in Neighborhoods

ROCOG will make special efforts to involve other populations in its planning efforts, where those groups have a potential to have special transportation needs or increased risk of adverse impacts. To accomplish this, ROCOG will make efforts to involve representatives of the following groups whenever changes in services or other transportation projects may affect their interests.

- disabled individuals (representatives could include Southeast Minnesota Center for Independent Living, Possibilities of Southern Minnesota, Family Service Rochester, the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, and operators of transitional housing for chemically dependent and others recovering from impairment);

- children (who could be represented by youth and child service and advocacy organizations such as Childcare Resource and Referral, the Olmsted County Youth Commission, Boys and Girls Clubs, and the Rochester Area Family Y; and/or by area school districts);
- residents of group quarters and transitional housing;
- landlords and tenants of low-income housing; and
- employers and employees of industries with high proportions of low-wage and off-shift workers.

## APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY

**Access/Accessibility** The opportunity to reach a given end use within a certain time frame, or without being impeded by physical, social or economic barriers.

**Air Quality Conformity** Process to assess the compliance of any transportation plan, program, or project with air quality implementation plans. The conformity process is defined by the Clean Air Act.

**Amendment** A major change in the approved TIP or LRTP that requires public review and comment and approval by ROCOG.

**Capital Improvement Program (CIP)** A plan for future capital infrastructure and program expenditures which identifies each capital project, its anticipated start and completion and allocates existing funds and known revenue sources for a given period of time. Most local governments have a CIP.

**Clean Air Act (CAA)** Federal statutes established by the United States Congress which set the nation's air quality goals and the process for achieving those goals. The original Clean Air Act was passed in 1963, but the national air pollution control program is actually based on the 1970 version of the law. The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments are the most far-reaching revisions of the 1970 law.

**Environmental Assessments (EA)** Prepared for federal actions under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) where it is not clearly known how significant the environmental impact might be. If, after preparing an environmental assessment, it is determined that the project impact is significant, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is then prepared. If not, a "finding of no significant impact" (FONSI) is documented.

**Environmental Impact Statements (EIS)** Prepared for federal actions that have a significant effect on the human and natural environment. These are disclosure documents prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that provide a full description of the proposed project, the existing environment and analysis of the anticipated beneficial and adverse environmental effects of all reasonable alternatives. There are various stages — Draft EIS and Final EIS.

**Environmental Justice (EJ)** Environmental justice assures that services and benefits allow for meaningful participation and are fairly distributed to avoid discrimination.

**Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)** A branch of the U.S. Department of Transportation that administers the federal-aid Highway Program, providing financial assistance to states to construct and improve highways, urban and rural roads and bridges.

**Federal Transit Administration (FTA)** A branch of the U.S. Department of Transportation that is the principal source of federal financial assistance to America's communities for planning, development and improvement of public or mass transportation systems.

**Fiscal Constraint** Making sure that a given program or project can reasonably expect to receive funding within the time allotted for its implementation.

**Forum** A public meeting in which a panel presents divergent opinions on an issue, followed by a public discussion either as questions and answers or in small group discussions with reporting to the larger group

**Geographic Information System (GIS)** Computerized data management system designed to capture, store, retrieve, analyze and display geographically referenced information.

**Intermodal** The ability to connect and the connections between modes of transportation.

**Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)** The official intermodal transportation plan developed and adopted thorough the metropolitan transportation planning process for the metropolitan planning area which provides guidance in the development of an efficient transportation system over a period of 20 years.

**Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)** An MPO is a planning agency established by federal law to assure a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process takes place that results in the development of plans, programs and projects that consider all transportation modes and supports the goals of the community. Any urbanized area or contiguous urbanized areas, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, containing a population of greater than 50,000 are required to have an MPO. ROCOG is the MPO for Rochester and Olmsted County.

**Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)** The State agency that manages the highway system within Minnesota. MnDOT's mission is to plan, implement, maintain and manage an integrated transportation system for the movement of people and products, with emphasis on quality, safety, efficiency and the environment for citizens. MnDOT is the administrative agency that responds to policy set by the Minnesota Legislation.

**Mode** Form of transportation, such as automobile, transit, bicycle, and walking.

**Multimodal** The availability of transportation options within a system or corridor.

**Open House** A public meeting providing an opportunity for flexible presentation of information, informal question-and-answer exchanges, and direct recording of participant input.

**Public Hearing** A more or less formal public meeting hosted by the project oversight committee at which testimony for the record is submitted. In the ROCOG area, public hearings are still fairly informal.

**Public Meeting** An informal but structured gathering hosted by the project oversight committee featuring a presentation followed by an opportunity for public questions (which are answered if possible) and other testimony

**Right-of-Way (ROW)** Public space legally established for the use of pedestrians, vehicles, or utilities. Right-of-way typically includes the street, sidewalk and buffer strip areas.

**Stakeholders** Individuals and organizations involved in or affected by the transportation planning process. Include federal/state/local officials, MPOs, transit operators, freight companies, shippers, and the general public.

**Title VI** Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The legislation prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any program receiving federal assistance.

**Underrepresented** Persons historically or potentially under-served by the transportation system. Individuals who have difficulty in obtaining transportation because of their age, income, physical or mental disability. This includes, but is not limited to, low-income and minority populations. Persons who are unable to own and/or operate a private automobile (e.g., youth, the elderly and the disabled) and those with low English proficiency may also be included in this category.

**Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** A staged, multiyear (typically three to five years) listing of surface transportation projects proposed for federal, state and local funding within a metropolitan area. MPOs are required to prepare a TIP as a short-range programming document to complement its long range transportation plan. The TIP contains projects with committed funds over a multiyear period (five years).

**Transportation Planning** A collaborative process of examining demographic characteristics and travel patterns for a given area. This process shows how these characteristics will change over a given period of time and evaluates alternatives for the transportation system of the area and the most expeditious use of local, state and federal transportation funding. Long range planning is typically done over a period of 25 years; short-range programming of specific projects usually covers a period of 3 to 5 years.

**Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC)** A standing committee established by ROCOG with wide representation of local and state transportation planners, engineers, and transit operators who provide technical input regarding transportation plans and programs and make recommendations to the ROCOG Policy Board.

**Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)** The management plan for the (metropolitan) planning program. Its purpose is to coordinate the planning activities of all participants in the planning process.

**Urbanized Area** An area that contains a city of 50,000 or more population plus incorporated surrounding areas meeting size or density criteria as defined by the U.S. Census.

**Virtual Public Meeting** An online or digital version of an in-person event. Virtual public meetings are intended to present information as identical as possible to that presented during an in-person public meeting, so that attendance at one is reasonably considered the same as attendance at the other.



## **APPENDIX C: Public Comments and ROCOG responses during the 45-day comment period for this document.**

The public comment period ran from March 28 to May 13, 2022. The comments received consisted of those from staff at MnDOT staff at the Central Office and those comments were incorporated into this document prior to this finalization. The document from MnDOT showing comments is available by contacting ROCOG staff at 507.328.7100.