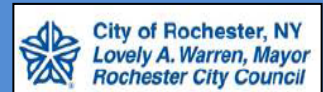


# CITY OF ROCHESTER



## ROCHESTER MOBILITY ENHANCEMENT STUDY





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## TITLE OF PROJECT:

ROCHESTER MOBILITY ENHANCEMENT STUDY (RMES)

### A. Project Background

The City of Rochester, with a 2010 population of 210,565 and a land area of 37 square miles, is the principal municipality within the greater Rochester metropolitan region and is the urban core of Monroe County. The city is experiencing increased public and private investment, particularly in its downtown area, and a growing community consensus around broad principles and practices of sustainability that aim to advance safe and walkable neighborhoods, economic opportunity, and mobility choices for all residents.

The city's comprehensive plan (The Renaissance Plan) was adopted in 1999 and is now being updated. The updated plan will be a product of extensive public interaction between the mayor and city staff, a project steering committee, five neighborhood planning committees, and the citizens of Rochester. The updated plan will describe a vision for the city over the next ten years. The plan will articulate goals, policies, strategies and recommendations that the city will implement over time to achieve that vision.

In 2015, the city received federal transportation funds through the Genesee Transportation Council to assist with identifying potential revisions to its zoning code and map in order to better coordinate transportation goals, policies and projects with land use development and regulation in conformance with the updated comprehensive plan.

### B. Project Purpose

This project is entitled: Rochester Mobility Enhancement Study (RMES). The purpose of this project is to first generally identify, examine and understand the broad connections, impacts, feedbacks and relationships between urban transportation goals and policies, key land use and development patterns and issues and the urban regulatory framework (zoning and permitting). These connections, impacts, influences and relationships (or feedback "loops") are conceptually illustrated in **Figure 1** on page 3.





**Figure 1: Transportation / Land Use Synergies and Relationships**

The project will then specifically evaluate the relationships between Rochester's current and future transportation goals, policies and projects and the city's current and future land use map and development pattern in order to determine appropriate changes or modifications to the city's zoning code and map. These modifications will be proposed in order to align the code with potential new city development and transportation goals and objectives related to transportation choice, transit oriented development (TOD), improved walkability, sustainability and inter-modal connections, the "complete streets" concept and improved public realm design.

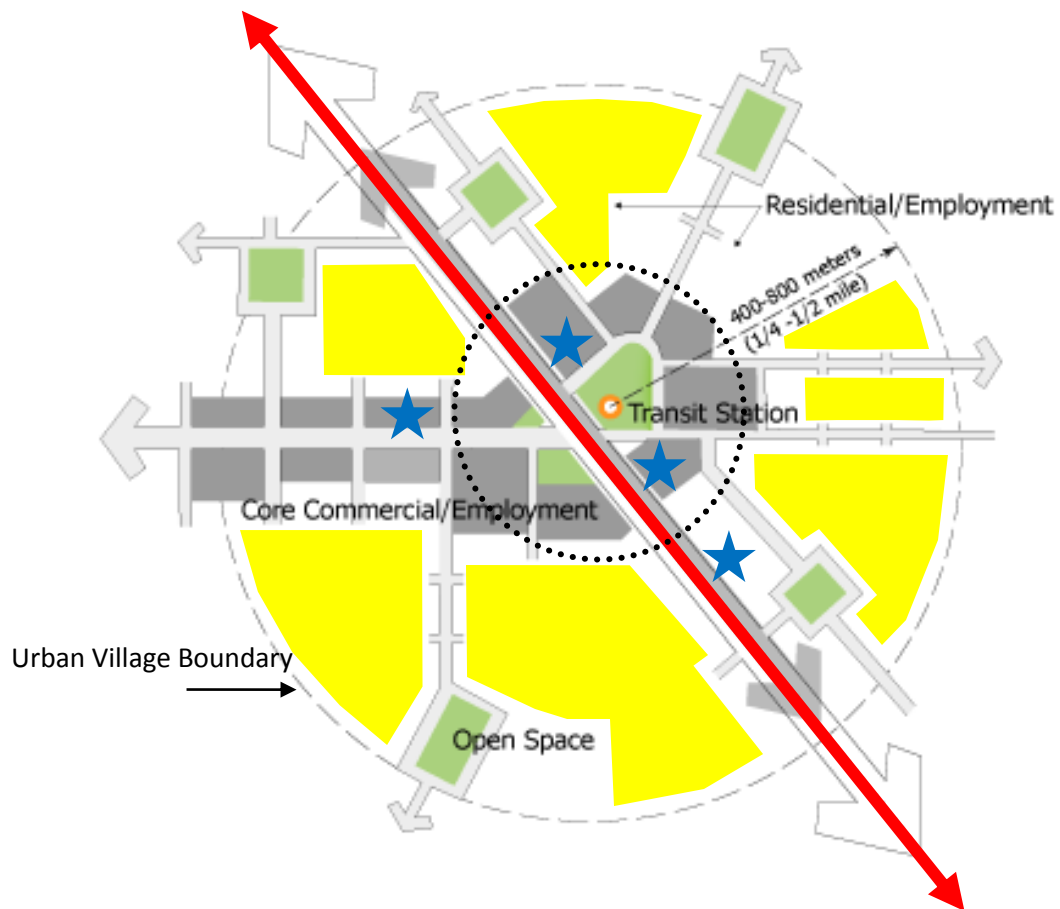
The project will propose revisions to the city's zoning code and zoning map within the five planning areas being utilized as part of the city's comprehensive plan update project. These revisions will be developed through an analysis of the relationships and influences between the city's current and future land use development patterns, zoning district regulations and transportation policies, objectives and projects. The zoning revisions proposed within the five planning areas will be developed in order to promote a future land use pattern and regulatory framework in the city that encourages sustainable development, denser, more pedestrian-scaled neighborhoods, improved access to jobs, parks and open space, reduced auto dependency and increased mobility options and transportation choices for residents and visitors. The concept of transit oriented development and how it might be adapted to Rochester will be a key component of this phase of the project.

Transit-oriented development, or TOD, is a type of community land use development that includes a mixture of housing, office, retail and/or other amenities integrated into a walkable neighborhood and located within a half-mile of quality public transportation. In the City of Rochester, TOD is also known as the "urban village" development concept. A successfully executed TOD concept creates better access to jobs, housing and other opportunities for people of all ages and incomes, provides people from all walks of life with convenient, affordable and active lifestyles and create places where children can play and parents can grow old comfortably. Some of the benefits of TOD include:

1. Reduced household driving and thus lowered regional congestion, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions;
2. Walkable communities that accommodate more healthy and active lifestyles;
3. Increased transit ridership and fare revenue;
4. Potential for added value created through increased and/or sustained property values where transit investments have occurred;
5. Higher density mixed-use development, community resources, public realm amenities and public open space within easy walking distance;
6. Improved access to jobs and economic opportunities for low-income people and working families; and,
7. Expanded mobility choices that reduce dependence on the automobile, reduce transportation costs and help free up household income for other purposes.

A conceptualized, graphic illustration of the transit oriented development concept is shown in **Figure 2** on page 5.

- Higher Density Residential and/or Employment Center
- Mixed-Use (Commercial/Office/Retail/Residential)
- Open Space / Public Park / Green Space
- Transit Corridor and Public Realm Transit Amenities (Inter-Modal Transit Station Adjacent)
- Urban Village Inner Core
- Community Resources (School / Library / Recreation Center / Church)



Adapted from The Next American Metropolis: Ecology, Community, and The American Dream. Peter Calthorpe.

**Figure 2: Conceptual Illustration of the  
Transit Oriented Development / "Urban Village" Concept**

**Walking Distance =  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile**

The project will examine the relationships between city and regional transportation policies, objectives and projects, the evolution of current and potential future land use development patterns and the city's zoning district regulatory framework within the five planning areas of the city (see **Figure 5** on page 11). Key elements of the project will include:

1. An inventory of land uses, zoning regulations and transportation/census data by planning area;
2. An Identification of key transportation corridors and transit routes and their surrounding land use characteristics;
3. A summary of current and proposed future city transportation and land use development policies, goals and objectives and their impacts and relationships to land use and development;
4. An examination and analysis of the city's current transportation system and infrastructure including streets, highways and trails, as well as the bus, rail and urban goods movement systems and their overall relationship to land use development patterns and related zoning regulations.
5. A re-examination of the city's "urban village model" (proposed in The Renaissance Plan) and its relationship to improved mobility, transportation choice, the transit oriented development concept and ultimately, the city's zoning code regulations;
6. A re-examination of the "neighborhood schools" concept and its transportation, land use and zoning impacts;
7. Preparation of conceptual zoning code revisions to permitted zoning district densities and categories based on transportation impacts and influences;
8. Preparation of zoning code revisions to parking requirements and design standards; and,
9. Potential modifications to other zoning district regulations and boundaries based on transportation issues, goals and priorities.

The project will be coordinated and closely aligned with the on-going update of the city's comprehensive plan. The project will utilize the five city planning areas that have been developed as part of that project and will inventory each area for key transportation data, characteristics and issues. The project will analyze, from a generalized perspective, the impacts of those city transportation characteristics and policies on land use development and zoning code regulations as well as the impacts of land use development and regulations on transportation policy. The project will then propose conceptual changes or modifications to land use patterns and specific changes to the city zoning code and map that are designed to

1. enhance and improve city transportation policies and initiatives;
2. create new mobility options, transportation choices, job growth and sustainable development patterns within the city; and
3. further the concept of transit oriented development / urban village land use patterns in the city.

The project will also be coordinated and closely aligned with the start-up of the city's Comprehensive Access and Mobility Plan (CAMP). The CAMP study is a two-year project which is being funded by the Genesee Transportation Council (GTC) starting April 1, 2016. The CAMP study will provide critical assistance in developing the details of a potential transportation component or element of the updated

comprehensive plan, including detailed refinement of and implementation actions for specific transportation project recommendations included in the plan.

The relationships, connections and feedback between the three projects are conceptually shown in **Figure 3** on page 8. City planning staff will be responsible for ensuring appropriate alignment, feedback and coordination between these projects. Key connection points within and between the three projects are shown in the graphic with vertical arrows. The RMES project is shown in blue, the CAMP project is shown in green, the comprehensive plan update project is shown in red / grey and the overall project schedule / timeline is shown in yellow. Project timelines have been adjusted forward somewhat since the development of that timeline.

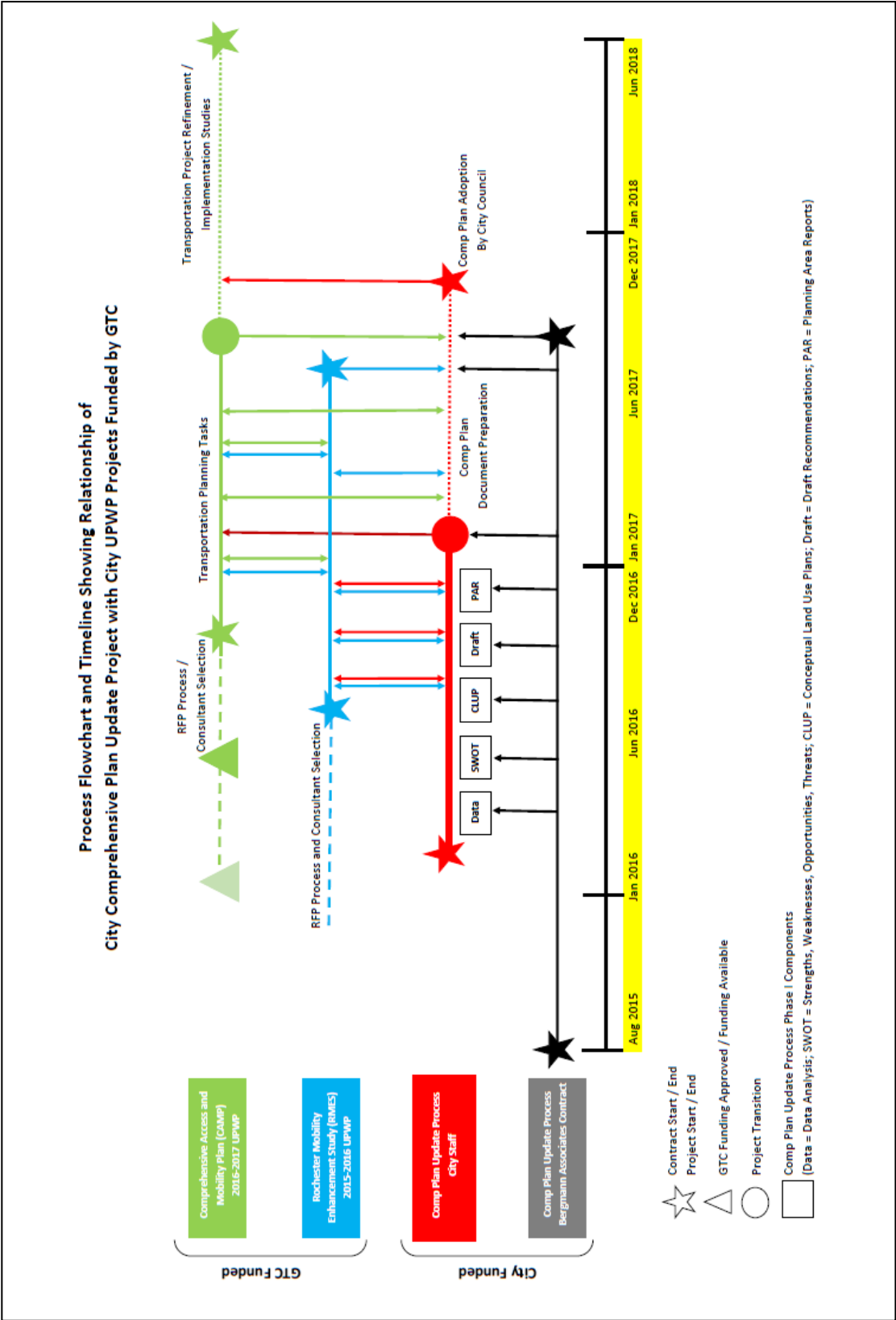
For the RMES project, the city has hired a consultant team with experience in developing innovative land use regulations and strategies, as well as with GIS mapping and public involvement processes (especially the ability to effectively present zoning issues and concepts to policy makers and the general public). Public input and community engagement will be a significant part of this project.

This project will require a coordinated effort between the consultant and staff of the City of Rochester's Bureau of Planning and Zoning. City planning staff can offer deep knowledge of city neighborhoods in the five planning areas, the city's zoning code and map and also serve as project managers for the other related planning studies mentioned in this RFP. The consultant will work with city staff to identify and discuss innovative zoning concepts and approaches to further transportation goals and policies that may be appropriate. It is expected that current zoning district regulations may have to be revised, current zoning district boundaries may have to be adjusted and perhaps new overlay districts or other regulatory approaches may have to be developed. The consultant will create a framework for new zoning district regulations, as necessary. The consultant will also analyze zoning district boundaries and may, as necessary, propose conceptual revisions to the city's zoning map. The consultant will create innovative opportunities for public outreach and then lead that citizen participation process.

### **C. Project Objectives**

With regards to its development regulation processes and their relationships to transportation policies and projects, the city desires zoning code text and map modifications that:

1. Support and reinforce the recommendations of and future conceptual land use plans prepared for the city's updated comprehensive plan;
2. Promote and encourage land use patterns which support and enhance transit use, biking, pedestrian circulation and movement, inter-modal connections, personal mobility, transportation choice and a reduced need for the automobile and for associated parking;
3. Create an overall regulatory framework that provides sufficient flexibility to support new residential and commercial markets as they emerge;
4. Integrate and accommodate, as appropriate, the city's "urban village" development concept; and,
5. Consider changes in population growth and density since 2003 as well as other emerging demographic, transportation and land use trends affecting the city.



**Figure 3: RMES Process Flowchart, Project Coordination Relationships and Timeline**

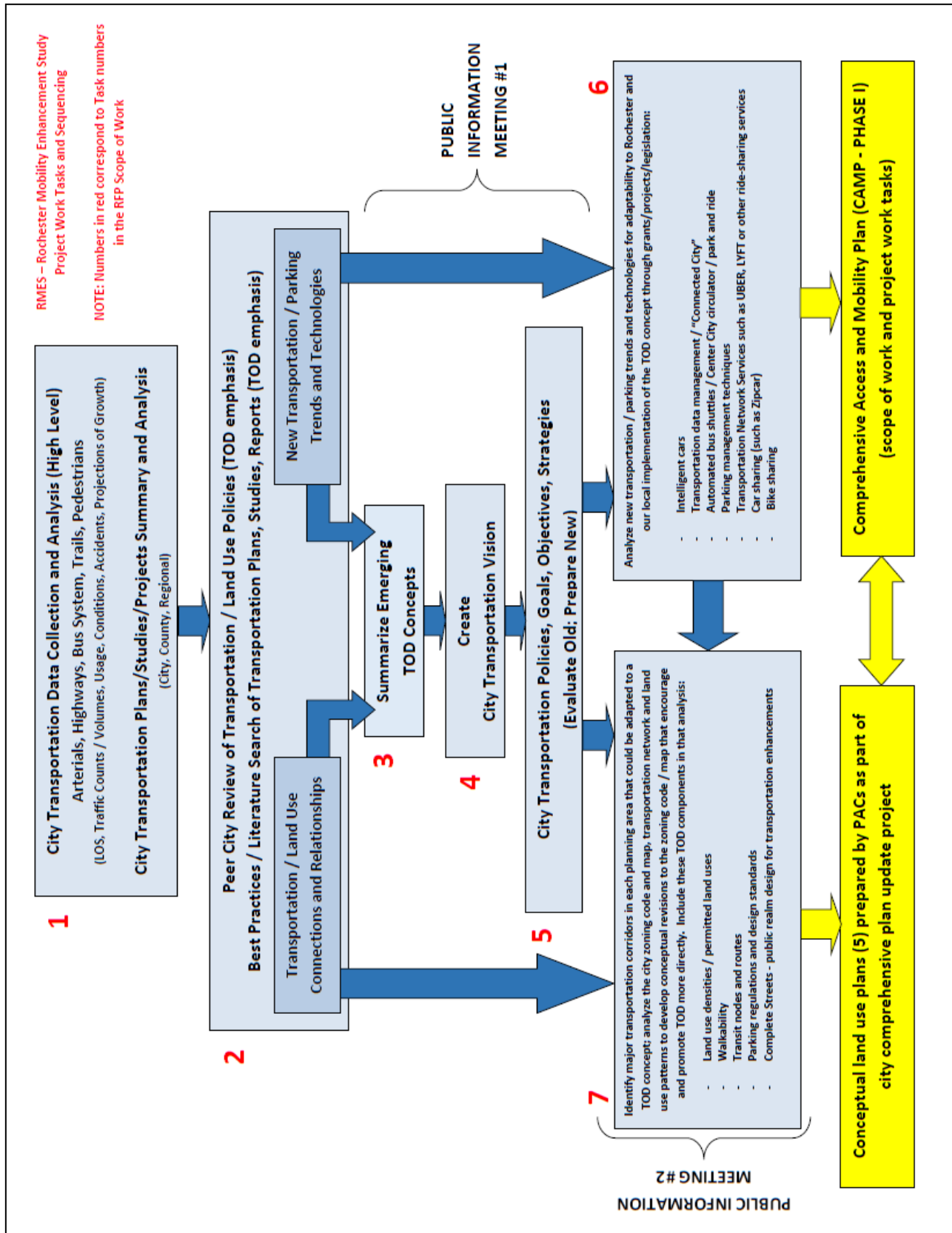


**D. Project Budget / Project Resources Provided by the City**

The City of Rochester has budgeted \$70,000 for project consultant fees, including expenses. City in-kind planning staff services in the amount of \$30,000 will also be provided to support the project. The total project budget is \$100,000.

The City of Rochester will provide significant in-kind services, including base map information (geo-database and shape files) from the city's Geographic Information System (GIS), meeting coordination assistance, public outreach assistance, zoning code and zoning map interpretation, SEQR compliance and other planning support efforts to facilitate the project.

**E. PROJECT CONSULTANT: Parsons/Brinckerhoff, Buffalo, New York**



**Figure 4: RMES Project Components and Work Flow**

## STUDY AREA MAP AND FIVE CITY PLANNING AREAS

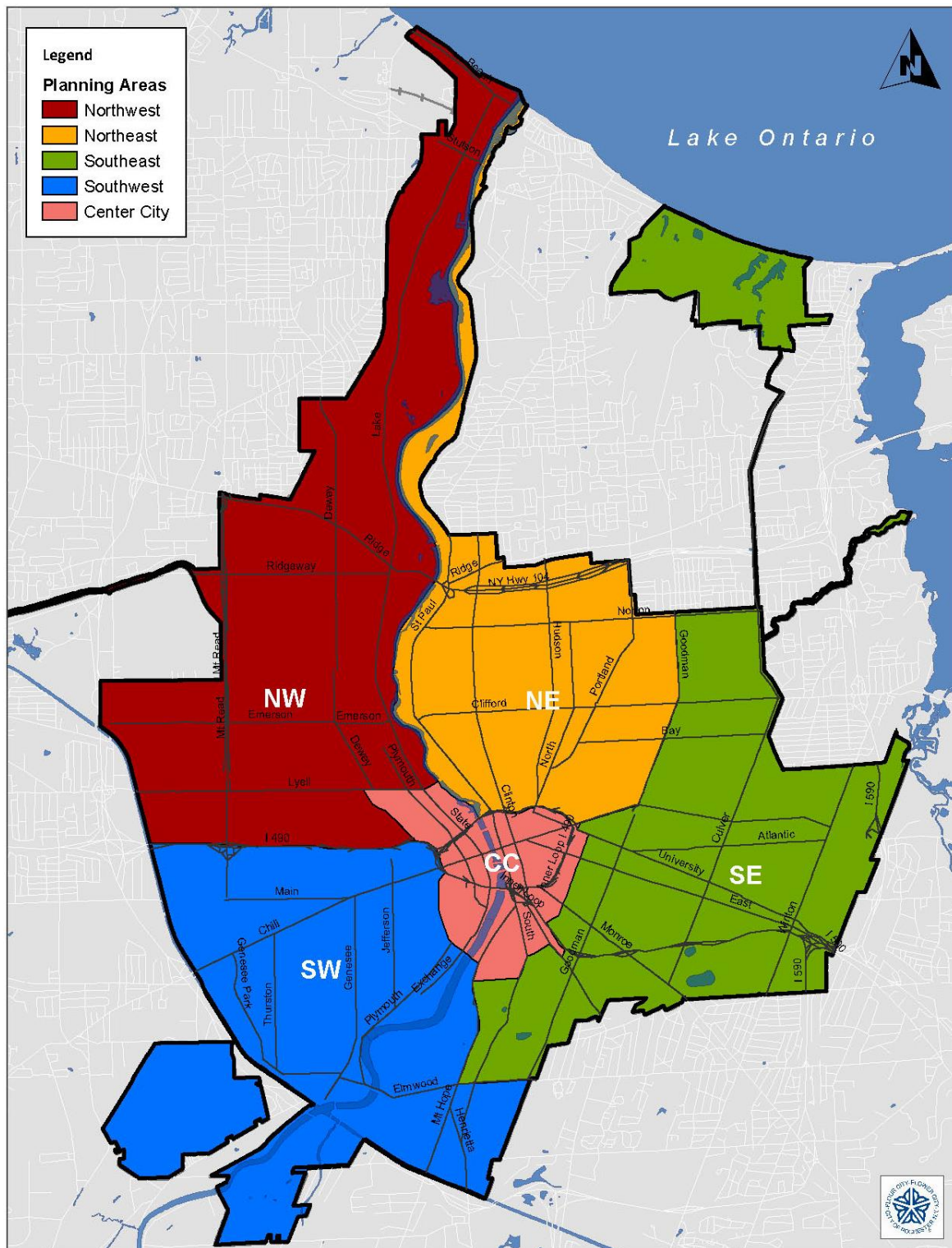


Figure 5: RMES Study Area and City Planning Areas (5)

## **ADDITIONAL PROJECT BACKGROUND MATERIAL**

### **Urban Village Model:**

The concept of “urban villages” within the city was first proposed in 1999 as part of the preparation and adoption of the city’s comprehensive plan, also known as “The Renaissance Plan”. The original name of the “Healthy Urban Neighborhoods” campaign in that plan was actually “A City of Vital Urban Villages”.

As part of developing that campaign and its action agenda, the city prepared an urban village development concept or model that included a set of eight detailed design and development criteria or “filters”. The model described the advantages of implementing an urban village development strategy for the city and outlined the key factors or characteristics that would be part of creating those urban villages (higher land use densities around “village center nodes”, mixed-use development, transportation options, walkability, public realm enhancements, access to key community facilities and resources, neighborhood schools, etc.).

The city then conducted an extensive analysis of its principal commercial nodes and corridors and rated all of those areas (36 to be exact) against that set of eight criteria. The final results indicated that four commercial areas within the city could already be considered and essentially functioned as urban villages and that an additional seven areas had definite potential for being developed into urban villages through a variety of public and private investment programs, projects and other initiatives. The final report detailed specific strategies that the city could use to implement an urban village development concept in those areas that included relocation or redevelopment of city facilities and infrastructure, new street and public realm projects, zoning district changes, housing programs, business and façade grants and other commercial assistance programs. The report also detailed how the other commercial areas in the city that were not proposed as urban villages could be further analyzed and improved through other development strategies and funding.

The results of the urban village analysis were presented to City Council and the Mayor. After much discussion and political debate about where the potential future urban villages were most appropriate and should actually be located, how much funding they should get and what should be done about the many other city commercial areas that needed help and assistance, the concept and strategy were eventually dropped and nothing was ever implemented. However, in light of the recent recommendation of IBM’s Smarter Cities Challenge report (2016) which mentioned a potential urban village model or concept for the city as a way to combat concentrated poverty, the original urban village development concept and work presented in The Renaissance Plan have new importance, meaning and relevancy.

As part of the Rochester Mobility Enhancement Study (RMES), the city is investigating the potential adaptability of transit oriented development concepts and new transportation technologies as they relate to city land use, zoning and transportation planning policies and objectives. In light of this, the city desires to investigate the urban village strategy once again to determine how it potentially relates to those new transportation and land use issues, how it can be used to create and develop a more dense, compact, sustainable and diverse urban land use development pattern, how it can enhance and promote the city’s transportation network, and how it can promote and enhance city living and attract new residents, businesses and investment.