

# EXISTING CONDITIONS & EXISTING DATA



ROGUE VALLEY  
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

**Date** November 29, 2018

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**Project** Rogue Valley Active Transportation Plan

**Subject** Final Existing Conditions and Existing Data Memorandum

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# EXISTING CONDITIONS AND EXISTING DATA

This memorandum describes a set of maps developed to provide an understanding of the existing active transportation system within the Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RVMPO) boundary. The maps have been developed based on the current available data and information provided by the Rogue Valley Council of Governments (RVCOG), the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Transportation Planning and Analysis Unit (TPAU), United States Census Bureau, and a review of existing plans of local jurisdictions. The Active Transportation Plan (ATP) process will build on the current available data to identify gaps and deficiencies in the regional active transportation network that can be addressed to increase connectivity between cities, transit, activity centers, and locations of major employment and housing.

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## Rogue Valley Planning Area Characteristics

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The ATP will identify regional active transportation networks within the RVMPO boundary. These networks will provide connections between cities, transit, activity centers, and locations of major employment and housing. The planning area for the ATP consists of all areas within the RVMPO boundary, which includes the incorporated cities of Ashland, Central Point, Eagle Point, Jacksonville, Medford, Phoenix, and Talent, as well as the unincorporated city of White City; however, it does not include the entire county. The total population of the planning area is approximately 179,340.<sup>1</sup> While comprehensive data about walking and bicycling activity for all purposes is not readily available, the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) estimates the number of people using these modes for commuting purposes. The 2012-2016 5-Year ACS Estimates for commuting mode share percentages are shown in Chart 1. Exhibit 1-Exhibit 3 show the ACS estimates for people commuting on foot, by bicycle, and on transit for census block groups across the region. Exhibit 4 shows the ACS estimates for the number of households without vehicle access.

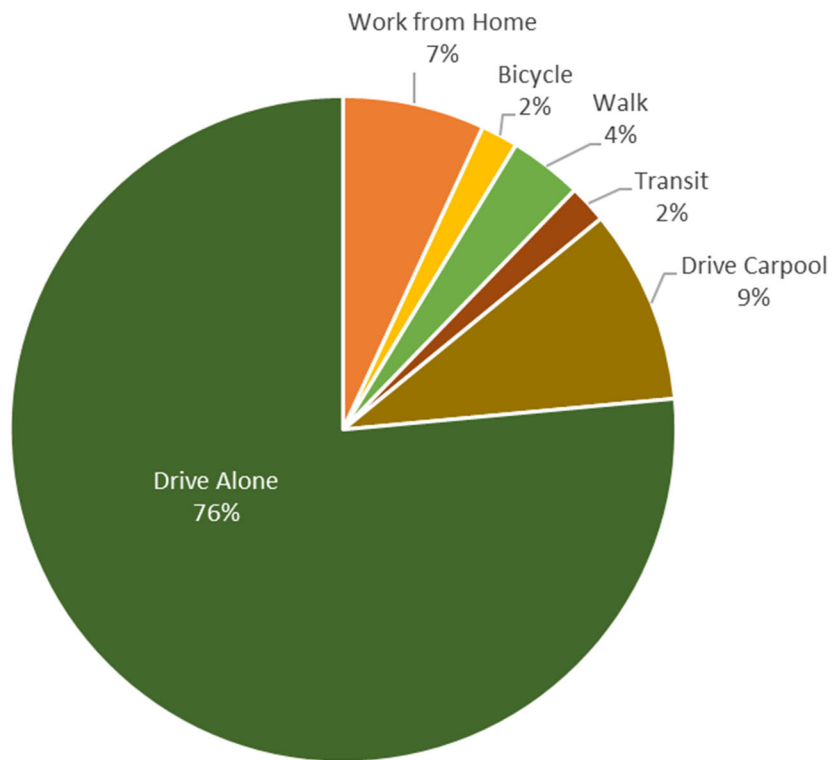
There are some caveats related to the census data. The ACS is a data source that estimates the number of people with certain characteristics based on a statistical sample of the population. Therefore, each of the maps contained in this memo is a best estimate, but it may have a margin of error of several percentage points. Additionally, the data is compiled into geographic units – census block groups, or census tracts – that aggregate the data to ensure it remains anonymous, among other reasons. In some cases, these block groups or tracts may be quite large geographically, when population density is low. In

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<sup>1</sup> FY 2018-19 RVMPO Dues Recommendation Memorandum. The RVCOG staff utilized Portland State University population estimates for the incorporated areas for 2017. Unincorporated populations estimates utilize geo-enriched data.

some cases, the ACS data for a large block group may not match expectations – this is due to the aggregation of data across a relatively large area.

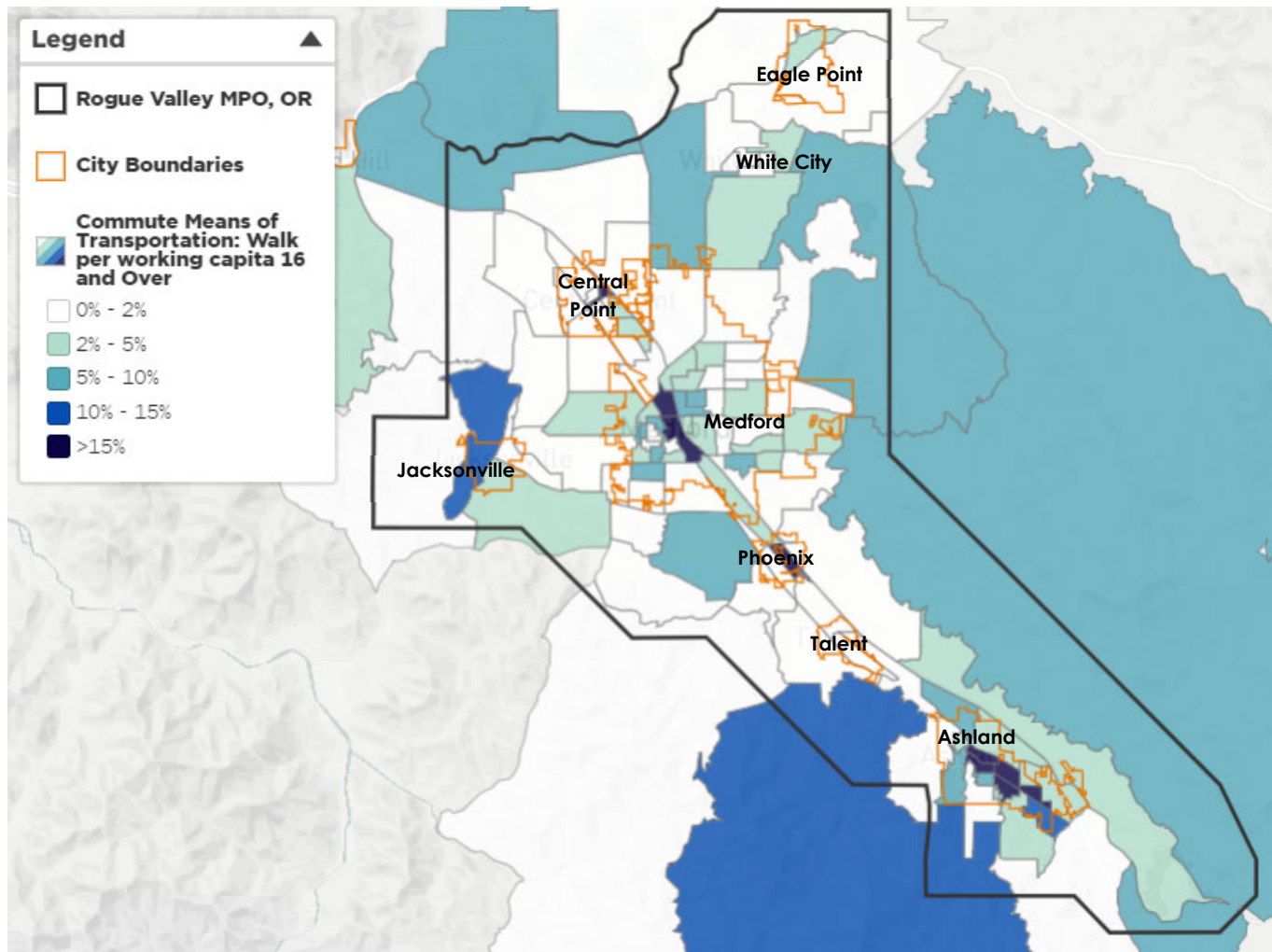
**Chart 1: Commute Means of Transportation (Travel Mode) in the Rogue Valley**



Source: 2012-2016 5-Year ACS Estimates (B08301 - Means of Transportation to Work)

Exhibit 1 shows the portion of people who walk to work by census block group within the RVMPO boundary. As displayed in Exhibit 1, the highest concentrations of people commuting to work by foot are located in the downtown Medford and Ashland areas as well as Central Point and Phoenix. As illustrated in Exhibit 1, several rural areas within the RVMPO boundary also show relatively high percentages of people who walk to work compared with the rest of the region.

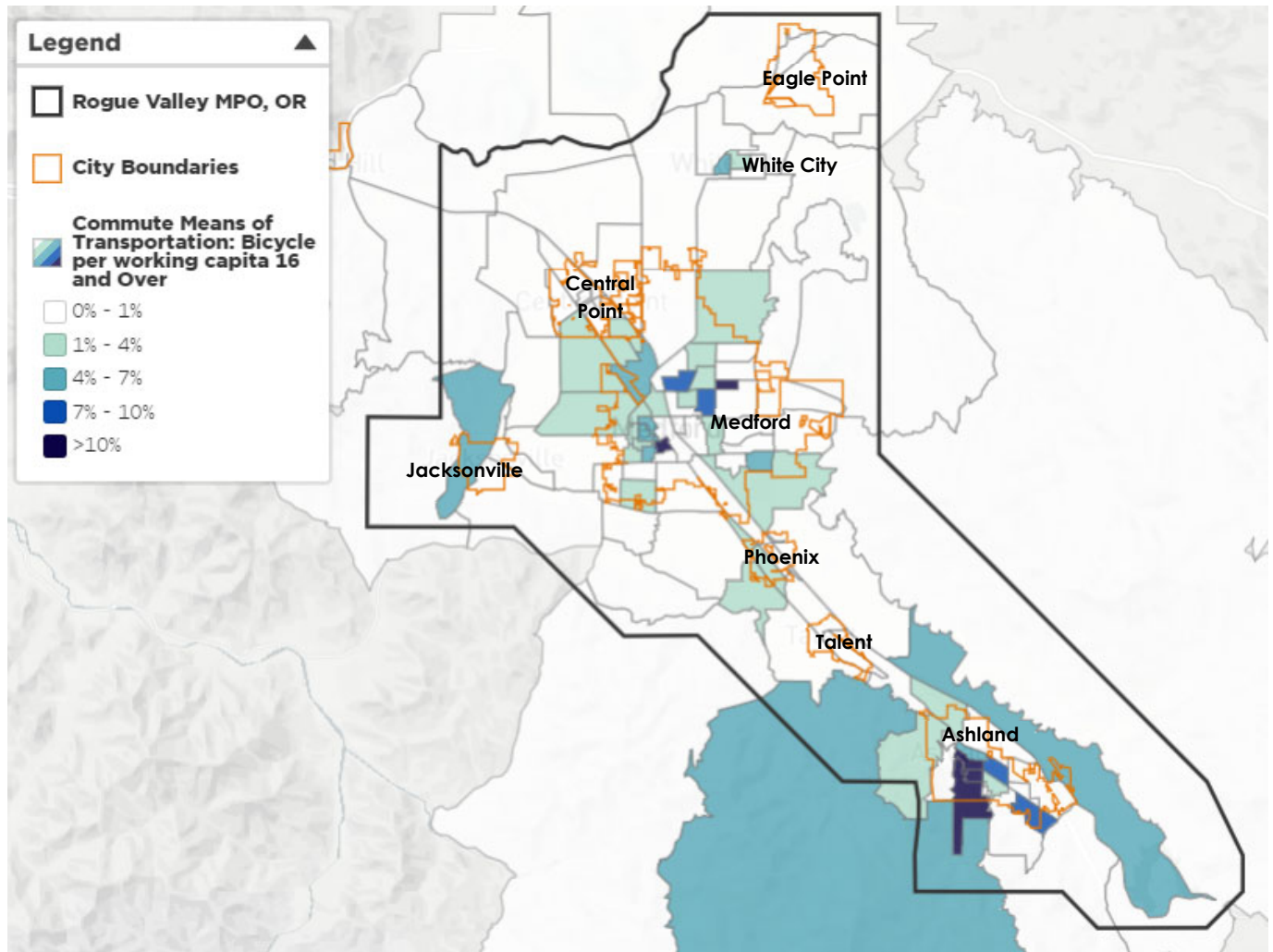
### Exhibit 1: Walking Commuters



Source: 2012-2016 5-Year ACS Estimates (B08301 - Means of Transportation to Work)

Exhibit 2 shows the portion of people who bike to work by census block group within the RVMPO boundary. As displayed in Exhibit 2, the highest concentrations of people commuting to work by bike are located in the downtown Medford and Ashland areas.

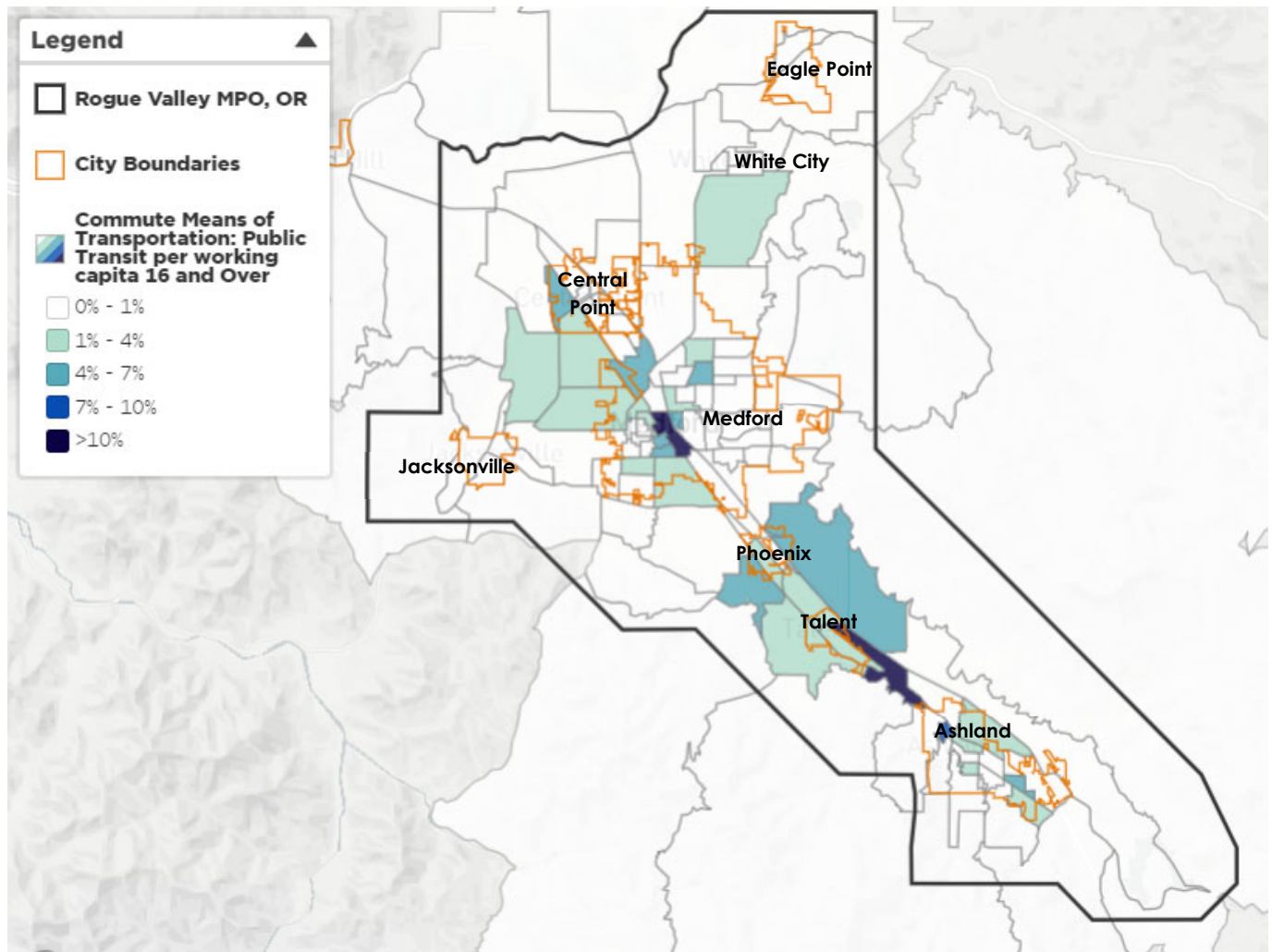
### Exhibit 2: Biking Commuters



Source: 2012-2016 5-Year ACS Estimates (B08301 - Means of Transportation to Work)

Exhibit 3 shows the portion of people who take transit to work by census block group within the RVMPO boundary. As displayed in Exhibit 3, the highest concentrations of people commuting to work by transit are located along the I-5 corridor in downtown Medford and Talent. The ATP will focus on improving pedestrian facilities that provide access to transit stops to increase opportunities for people to safely and conveniently access this regional system.

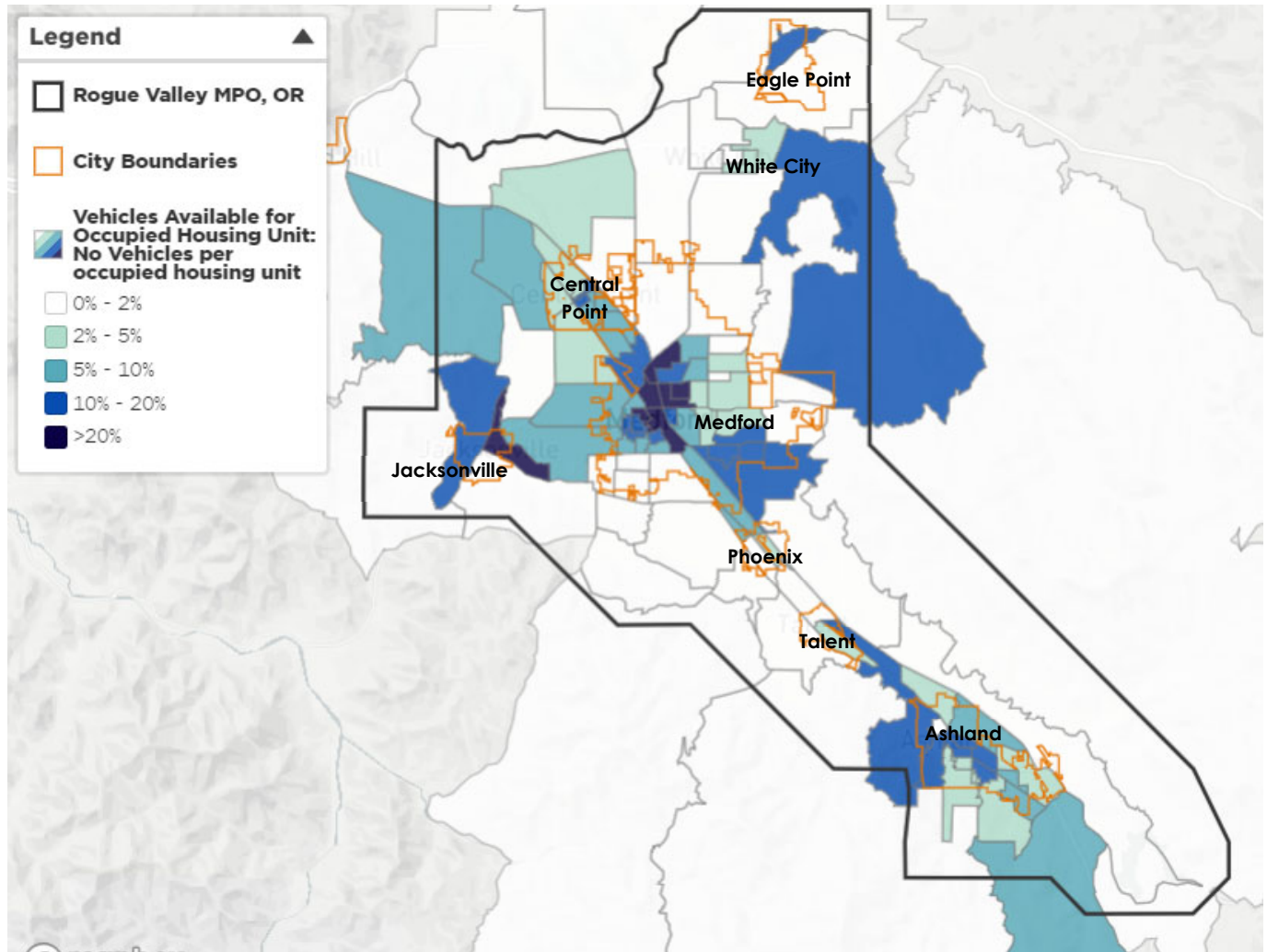
### Exhibit 3: Transit Commuters



Source: 2012-2016 5-Year ACS Estimates (B08301 - Means of Transportation to Work)

The ACS also reports on the number of vehicles available to each household, by census block group. Households with no vehicle access are more likely to be reliant on walking, bicycling, and transit for their transportation. The ATP will seek to ensure that these households have access to regional active transportation networks. Exhibit 4 shows the portion of households that do not own or have access to a vehicle. As displayed in Exhibit 4, the highest concentrations of households without access to vehicles are located in downtown Medford and eastern Jacksonville. Other areas with high concentrations include western portions of Ashland, unincorporated areas southeast of White City, and the northwestern portion of the region.

**Exhibit 4: No Vehicle Access**



Source: 2012-2016 5-Year ACS Estimates (Table: B25044 - Tenure by Vehicles Available)

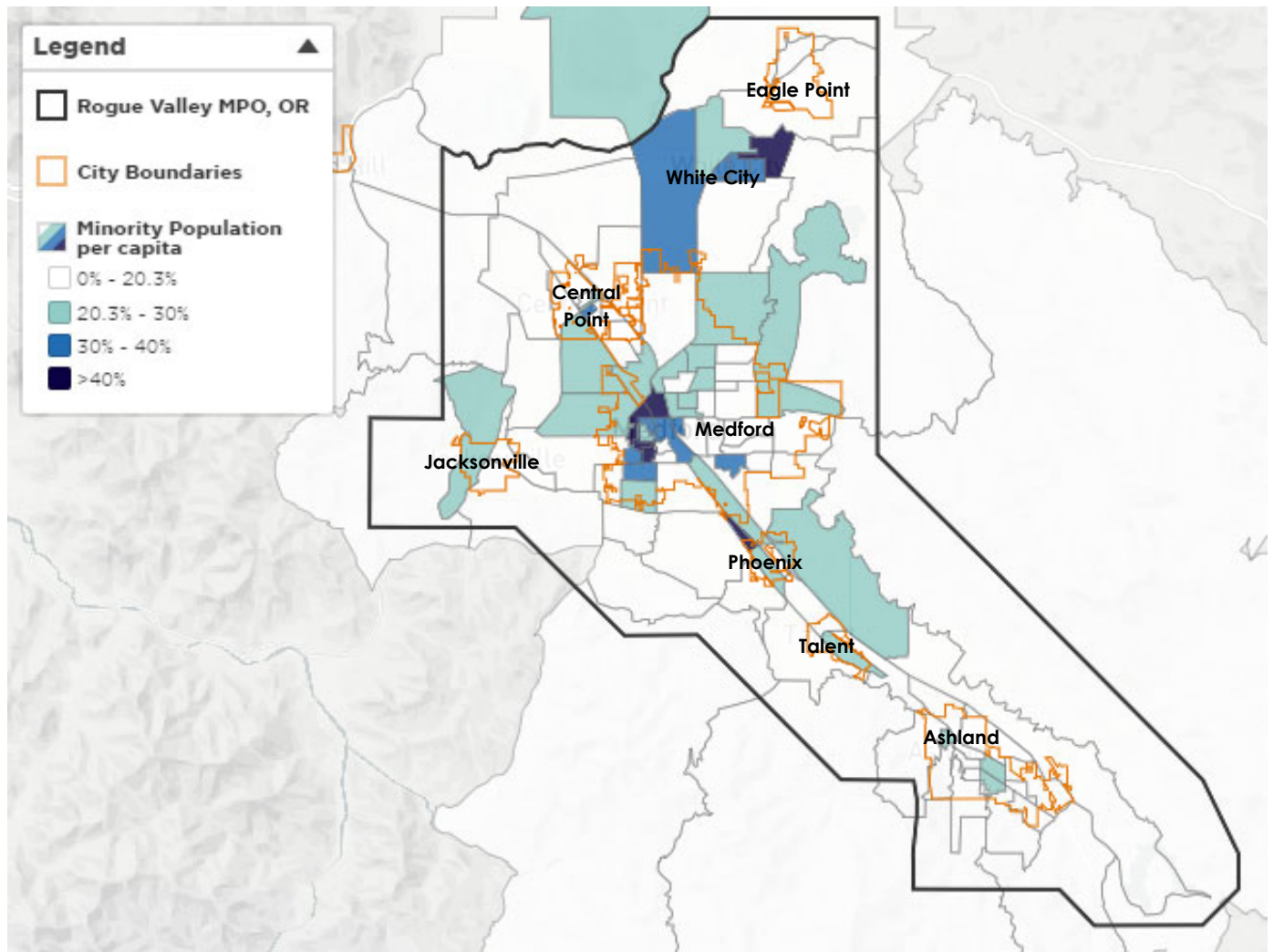
## Sociodemographic Information

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The ATP will also draw on other sociodemographic data, such as minority populations, poverty, older and younger populations, and people speaking limited English. This information will help the project team understand the distribution of the population to inform the public outreach strategy. Further, it can demonstrate concentrations of populations that may have a higher need or higher likelihood of using active transportation. Finally, it will help ensure that the development of the plan is equitable across different parts of the population. Exhibits 5-9 show the distribution of these populations within the Rogue Valley. Within each map, the white areas represent areas at or below the average for the entire Rogue Valley. Darker blue areas are above the Rogue Valley average. The maps included in this report all are developed based on 2012-2016 ACS data, with individual table sources shown for each map.

Exhibit 5 illustrates the location of minority populations in the RVMPO boundary. In the ACS, minority populations include non-white racial groups as well as people identifying as Hispanic or Latino. Minority populations account for 20.3 percent of all residents in the Rogue Valley. All census block groups where the percent of minority populations is at or below the regional average are shown in white – all other census block groups are above the regional average. As shown in Exhibit 5, the highest concentrations of minority populations are located in White City, downtown Medford, and southern Medford toward Phoenix. The overall minority population within the RVMPO boundary falls below the national average for minority population per capita residents.

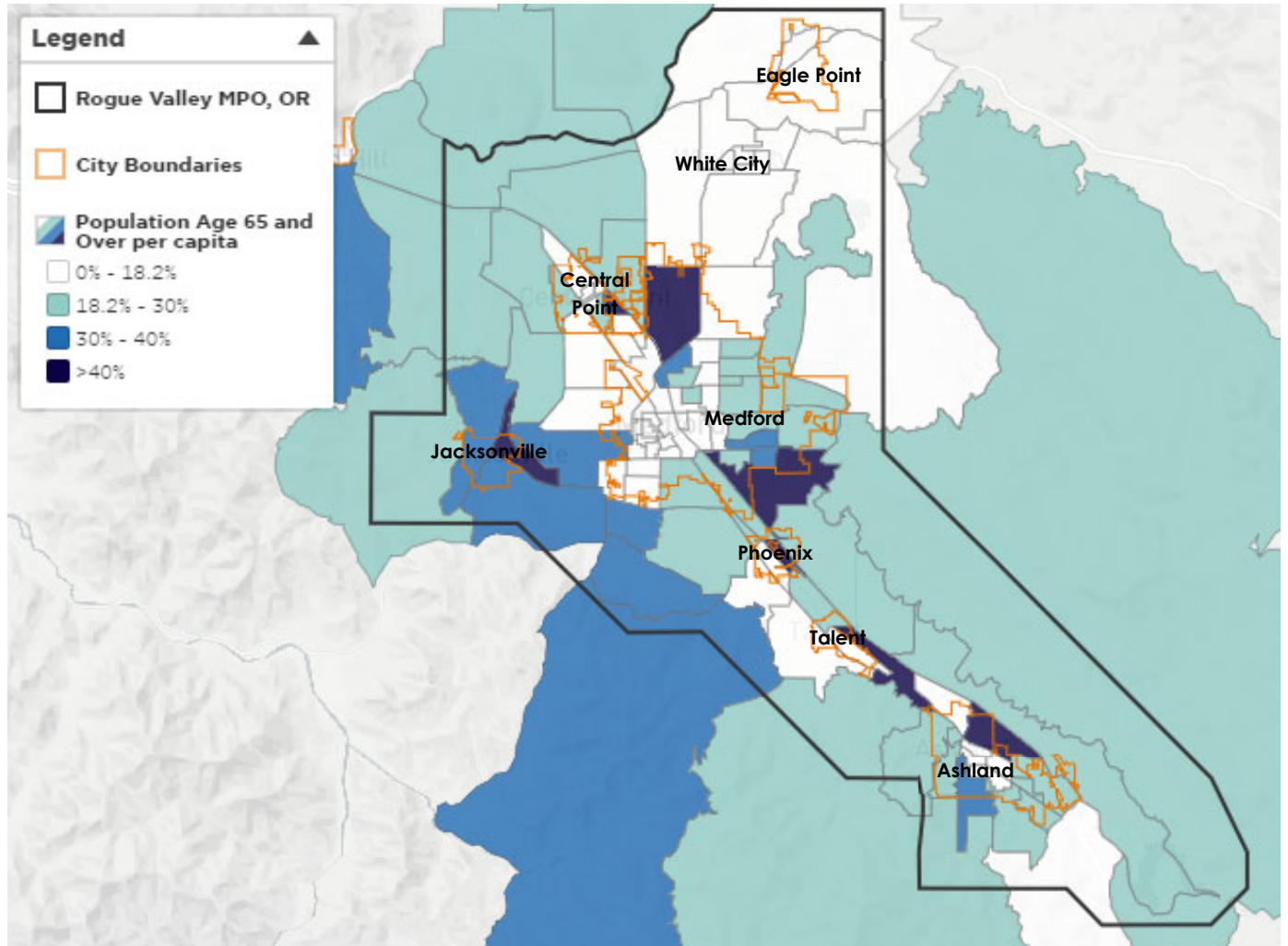
### Exhibit 5: Minority Populations



Source: 2012-2016 5-Year ACS Estimates (Table: B01003 - Total Population and Table: B03002 - Hispanic or Latino Origin by Race)

Exhibit 6 illustrates the locations of people age 65 and older in the RVMPO boundary. People 65 and over account for 18.2 percent of all residents in the Rogue Valley. All census block groups where the percent of population 65 and over is at or below the regional average are shown in white – all other census block groups are above the regional average. As shown in Exhibit 6, the highest concentrations of populations 65 and older are located in north and southeast Medford, eastern portions of Jacksonville, Central Point, Phoenix, and Talent west of I-5, and a segment of eastern Ashland where there is a retirement community known as Mountain Meadows. This area also contains a specialized care facility. Areas in the northern portion of the MPO, which include White City and Eagle Point, do not have any block groups where people age 65 and over comprise a larger share of the block group than the regional average.

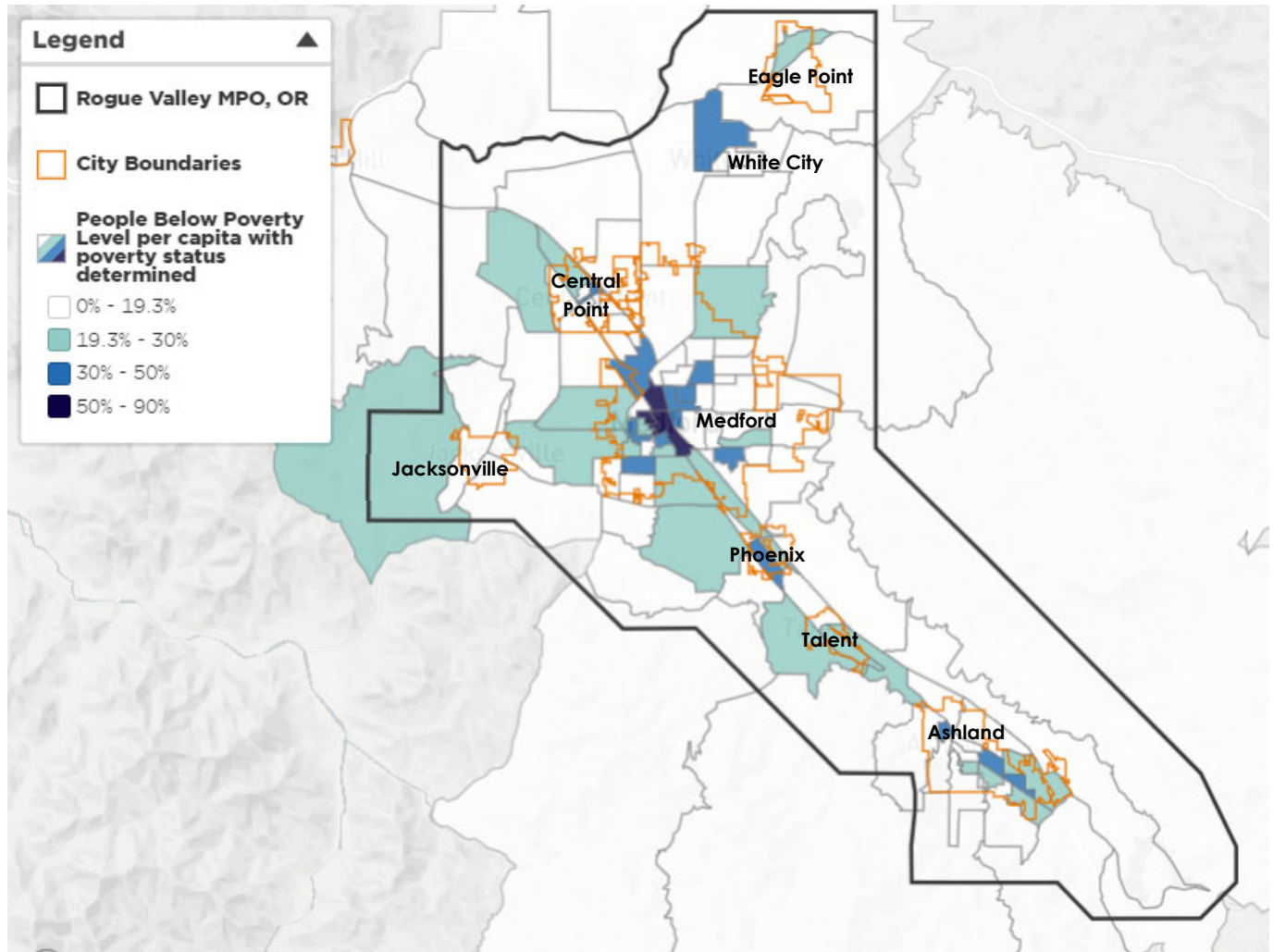
**Exhibit 6: Population 65 and Over**



Source: 2012-2016 5-Year ACS Estimates (Table: B01001 - Sex by Age)

Exhibit 7 illustrates households below the poverty level in the RVMPO boundary. The federal poverty level is calculated by size of household and is adjusted annually – the 2018 federal poverty level for an individual is \$12,140 in annual earning, and \$25,100 for a household of four.<sup>2</sup> Across the Rogue Valley, 19.3 percent of the population lives below the federal poverty level. All census block groups where the percent of people living below the federal poverty level is at or below the regional average are shown in white – all other block groups are above the regional average. As shown in Exhibit 7, the highest concentrations of these populations are located in downtown Medford. Other areas with high concentrations include northwest White City, central Medford, western Phoenix, and southern Ashland.

**Exhibit 7: Populations in Poverty**

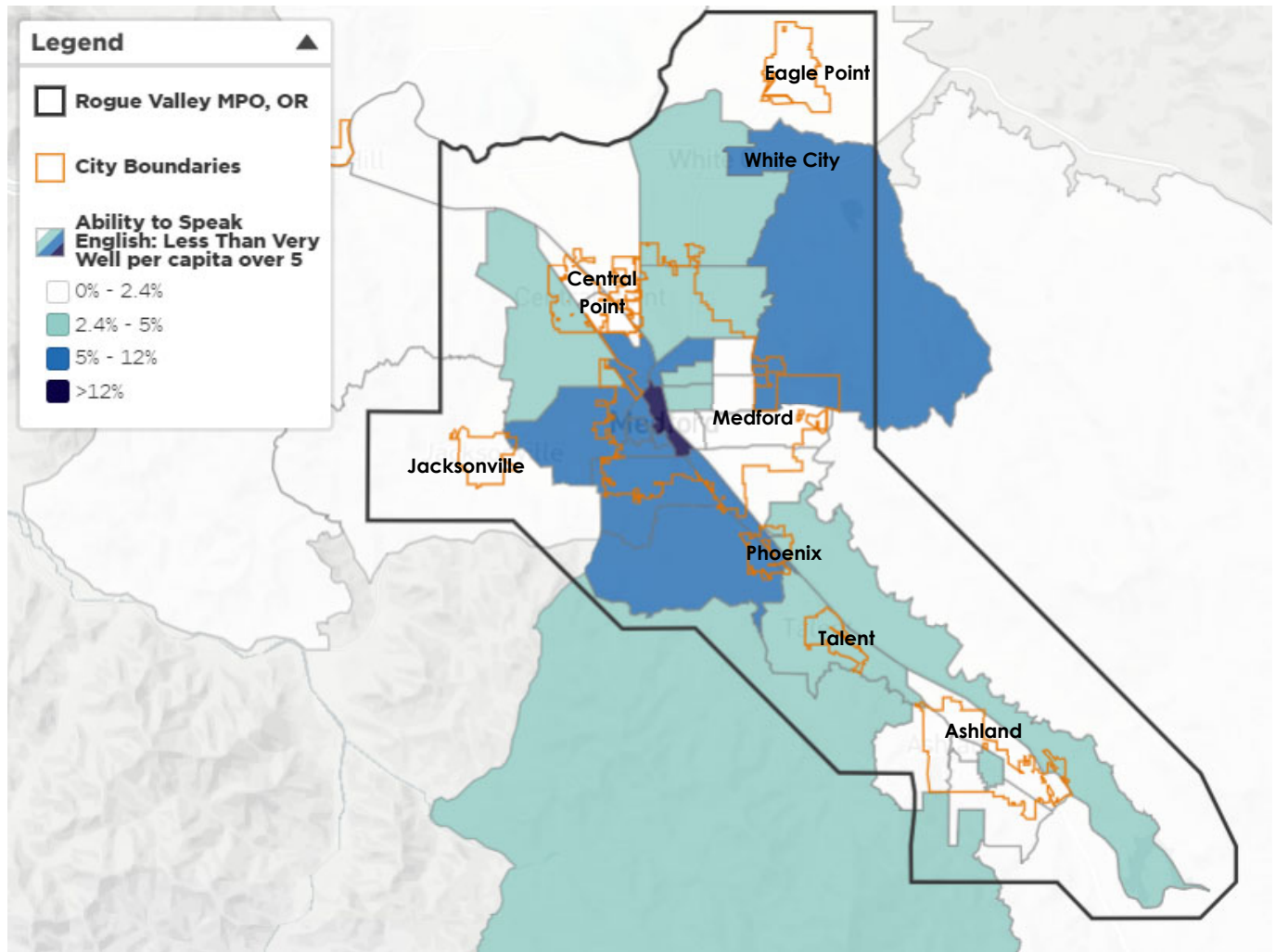


Source: 2012-2016 5-Year ACS Estimates (B17021 - Poverty Status of Individuals in the Past 12 Months by Living Arrangement)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.healthcare.gov/glossary/federal-poverty-level-fpl/>

Exhibit 8 illustrates the locations of people with limited English proficiency in the RVMPO boundary, by census tract. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, limited English proficiency refers to anyone over the age of five who reported speaking English less than “very well.”<sup>3</sup> Across the RVMPO boundary, 2.4 percent of residents have limited English proficiency. All census tracts where the percent of residents with limited English proficiency is at or below the regional average are shown in white – all other census tracts are above the regional average. As shown in Exhibit 8, the highest concentrations of residents with limited English proficiency are located in downtown Medford. Other areas with high concentrations include southwest Medford and Phoenix and southeast White City.

**Exhibit 8: Limited English Proficiency**

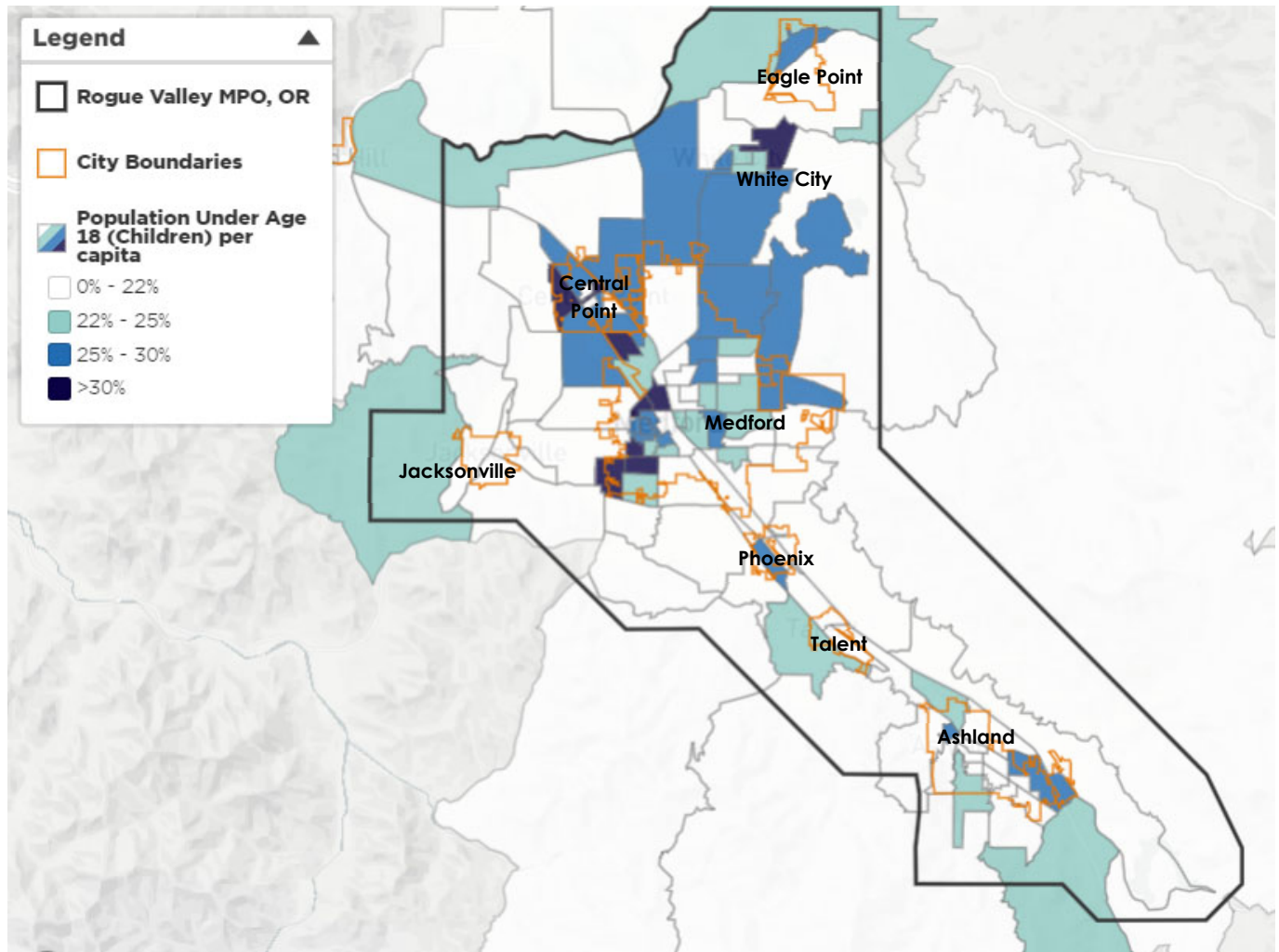


Source: 2012-2016 5-Year ACS (Table: C16001 - Language Spoken at Home for the Population 5 years and over)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/limited-english-proficient-population-united-states>

Exhibit 9 illustrates the locations of people under the age of 18 in the RVMPO boundary. People under the age of 18 account for 22 percent of all residents in the Rogue Valley. All census block groups where the percent of residents under the age of 18 is at or below the regional average are shown in white – all other census block groups are above the regional average. As shown in Exhibit 9, the highest concentrations of people under the age of 18 are located in Medford, Central Point, and White City. South of Medford, much of region has a lower percentage of people under the age of 18 relative to the regional average.

### Exhibit 9: People under 18



Source: 2012-2016 5-Year ACS Estimates (B09001 - Population Under 18 Years by Age)

# Land Use and Destinations

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## Figure 1: Activity Centers

The RVCOG provided the Activity Center data shown in Figure 1. Each incorporated jurisdiction within the RVMPO boundary defines their own Activity Centers based on their understanding of commercial and employment land uses as well as a location's local relevance in the community. One consistent approach across all jurisdictions within the RVMPO boundary is to define an Activity Center as land within a ¼-mile radius around schools. More broadly, Activity Centers can be defined as destinations or attractions for bicyclists, pedestrians, and other active modes of transportation (e.g., rollerblading, and skateboarding).

## Figure 2: Active Transportation Destinations and Daily Needs

RVCOG also provided specific destination data for various types of land uses in the RVMPO boundary. Figure 2 shows a subset of destinations determined to be particularly suited for active transportation, many of which are considered to be essential daily needs. These are referred to as "active transportation destinations and daily needs" and include banks, commercial or retail facilities, community/recreation, hospitals or medical facilities, houses of worship, libraries, municipal government facilities, museums/attractions, parks, post offices, restaurants/eating establishments, and schools.

Figure 2 shows activity centers in addition to the active transportation destinations and daily needs, to compare the activity center boundaries with the clusters of individual locations. As shown in Figure 2, some locations, including portions of southwest White City and south Medford, have several active transportation destinations and daily needs outside of the designated activity centers.

While the designated Activity Centers can provide broad guidance on locations that need regional connections, the ATP process can also consider the destinations that lie outside current activity center boundaries.

## Figure 3: Higher Density Housing

Higher density housing including multi-family dwellings and mobile home parks data was provided through the Jackson County Geographic Information System (GIS) web portal and is illustrated in Figure 3. As shown in Figure 3, central Medford and downtown Ashland along Siskiyou Boulevard have the highest concentration of multi-family dwellings in the region. Mobile home parks are largely located in White City and northwest Phoenix along N Main Street.

## Figure 4: Place Types 2017

Place type data for the year 2017 was provided by the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD). Figure 4 shows the predominant land use pattern within different areas of the Rogue Valley, including Employment, Residential, Rural, and Mixed Use, with lower and higher levels of density. The I-5 corridor, western White City, northern Medford, and downtown Jacksonville are major employment zones in the region. The majority of residential place types are located adjacent to employment areas and within the urban growth boundaries (UGB) of Jackson County cities.

## Figure 5: Place Types 2042

In addition to 2017 Place Type data, the DLCD also provided Place Type data for the year 2042 based on the distribution of anticipated growth, shown in Figure 5. Similar to Figure 4, Figure 5 place types include

Employment, Low Density/Rural, Mixed Use, and Residential. In comparing Figure 4 and Figure 5, the I-5 corridor in southern Medford, western White City, and northern Medford are expected to see the majority of growth by 2042.

## Figure 6: Employment Density

Figure 6 displays the major employment areas in the RVMPO boundary as a heat map, based on data supplied by the Oregon Employment Department for business establishments. Specific points within the data set are confidential, meaning that specific employment locations could not be mapped. As an alternative, this heat map shows overall concentrations of job locations in the RVMPO boundary. High employment areas include downtown Medford, southeastern Medford (along and to the east of I-5), White City, and Central Point.

## Active Transportation Facilities

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### Figure 7: Existing Pedestrian Facilities

RVCOG provided existing pedestrian facility data, seen in Figure 7. The data includes existing sidewalks on Arterial and Collector roadways that are located within Activity Centers. The 2017 data came as part of an Alternative Measures project and includes the Bear Creek and Rogue River Greenways. As shown in Figure 7, the city centers of most jurisdictions, including Medford, Ashland, Jacksonville, Central Point, Talent, and Phoenix, have relatively high coverage of existing sidewalk infrastructure. However, sidewalk data is not shown for areas outside designated Activity Centers. As part of the ATP development, sidewalk data on designated “regional routes” will be compiled and completed. The following provides a definition of facility types included in the existing pedestrian facility map.

- ▶ **Sidewalk:** Sidewalks are typically located along roadways, separated with a curb and/or planting strip or swale, and have a hard, smooth surface. Sidewalks are sometimes used by bicyclists that are not comfortable riding on the street.
- ▶ **Bear Creek Greenway:** The Bear Creek Greenway is a 20-mile multi-use path connecting Ashland, Talent, Phoenix, Medford, and Central Point. The Bear Creek Greenway is used for recreation and commuting and travels through numerous parks that provide restrooms drinking water, and picnicking areas. Per the Jackson County Transportation System Plan (TSP), the Bear Creek Greenway is now focusing on making connection improvements to the Greenway to both new and existing connections.
- ▶ **Rogue River Greenway:** The Rogue River Greenway is a planned 30-mile “emerald necklace” of parks and public access areas along the Rogue River. Work is currently happening in Grants Pass, Gold Hill, Rogue River, and Central Point. The goal is to have an off-road separated trail where possible; in sections with significant constraints, widened shoulders and on-street bike lanes may be present.
- ▶ **Central Ashland Bikepath:** The Central Ashland Bikepath is a two-mile multi-use path that runs next to a railroad track in Ashland. The path stretches from Railroad Park, a few blocks northeast of downtown Ashland, to Tolman Creek Road in southeast Ashland. The path connects downtown with Walker Elementary School, Ashland Middle School, portions of the Southern Oregon University campus, and several parks.

## Figure 8: Existing Bicycle Facilities

Figure 8 presents the existing bicycle facilities within the RVMPO boundary. Jackson County provided the existing bicycle facility data. The GIS department does not actively update information related to the bike routes, but rather relies on input from jurisdictions. The map displays all existing bicycle facility types including 3-foot plus shoulders, bike lanes, mountain bike, multi-use paths, and shared lanes. The Bear Creek Greenway from Ashland through Central Point is included in the existing bicycle facility map.

- ▶ **Shoulder Bikeway:** A shoulder bikeway is a paved shoulder that provides a suitable area for bicycling, reducing the potential for conflicts with motor vehicles. The shoulder bikeways shown in Figure 8 have a minimum striped shoulder width of 3 feet. Most bicycle travel on the rural state highway system, and on many County roadways, is accommodated on shoulder bikeways.
- ▶ **Bike lanes:** Bike lanes designate an exclusive space for bicyclists through the use of pavement markings and signage. Bike lanes are appropriate on a wide range of roadway types. Bike lane design can range in width and whether or not there is an additional buffer space between the bike lane and motor vehicle lane. Bike lanes on local streets are appropriate where bicycle volumes are high, vehicle speeds are higher than 25 miles per hour, and/or poor sight distance exists. Bike lanes must always be well-marked to call attention to their preferential use by bicyclists.
- ▶ **Mountain Bike:** Mountain bike trails are unpaved trails used primarily for recreational biking in the surrounding hills and mountains. For example, Figure 8 shows mountain bike trails around Mount Ashland, a regional outdoor destination.
- ▶ **On-Street/Shared Lane/Sharrows:** On-street bicycle infrastructure is used on low-traffic or low-speed streets where it is possible for a bicyclist to comfortably ride in the motor vehicle travel lane. Sharrows – typically featuring a stenciled bicyclist with two chevron symbols – denote where bicyclists should share the road with motor vehicles. Different jurisdictions label this infrastructure in different ways.
- ▶ **Multi-Use Path:** Multi-use paths are separated from the roadway by an open space or barrier. Multi-use paths are typically used by pedestrians and bicyclists as two-way facilities. Such paths can also be constructed on alignments separate from roadways to create more direct routes between destinations and also serve as elements of a recreational trail system.

## Figure 9: Planned Bicycle Facilities

Figure 9 presents the planned bicycle facilities within the RVMPO boundary. Similar to Figure 8, Figure 9 displays all planned bicycle facilities types, including 3-foot plus shoulders, bike lanes, mountain bike, multi-use paths, and shared lanes.

Planned route information is based on a survey done in 2012; some of the planned routes are slated to be completed soon, while others are long-term plans that may have routing changes prior to completion. This planned route information is also not fully updated; Jackson County, Medford, Phoenix, and Talent have all updated their TSPs since 2012. The development of the ATP will consider the locations of planned bicycle facilities in these TSPs, in addition to those shown in Figure 9.

## Figure 10: Existing Transit Facilities

Figure 10 shows the current transit system within the RVMPO boundary. The Rogue Valley Transit District (RVTD) operates nine fixed-route bus services operating six days a week, with limited Saturday service. Generally, weekday service operates from 5:00 AM to 9:30 PM, dependent on the route, while Saturday service operates from 7:00 AM to 7:30 PM. The RVTD is currently working on the RVTD 2040 Transit Master Plan with the purpose in identifying near-, mid-, and long-term transit services for the existing RVTD service

area and the surrounding areas into which RVTD may extend. The plan will focus on exploring and testing additional routes and service enhancements over the Fall and Winter of 2018 and will have recommendations for improvements by June 2019. Transit service and stop locations are an important consideration in identifying and prioritizing active transportation infrastructure needs, as people often need to walk or bicycle to and from transit stop locations.

## Crash History

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The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) provides crash data for reported crashes across the state. The data includes crashes reported by police departments and includes a number of characteristics describing each crash. In some cases, crashes that occur may not be reported to police, and therefore would not be shown in the data. Also, if a motor vehicle is not involved (for example, if a bicyclist crashes without interaction with a vehicle), the crash will not be reflected within the dataset. There is not a comprehensive source of data for these crashes not reported to police; therefore, the data shown in the crash figures only includes the data for reported crashes.

Chart 2 shows the crash cause for all reported bicycle and pedestrian crashes in the Rogue Valley for the five-year period between January 1, 2012 to February 28, 2017. For both bicycle and pedestrian modes, the most likely crash cause was a motorist not yielding the right-of-way. The next most common crash causes were a vehicle disregarding a traffic signal and a non-motorist illegally located in the roadway.

### Figure 11: Pedestrian Crash History

Figure 11 illustrates the reported pedestrian related crash locations and severity for the five-year period between January 1, 2012 to February 28, 2017 within the RVMPO boundary. Crashes have been coded as property damage only (PDO), injury crashes (including Injury B and C), serious injury crashes (injury A), and fatal crashes. There were 203 pedestrian related crashes reported within this timeframe. Of the total pedestrian crashes reported, 190 resulted in non-fatal injuries and 13 resulted in fatalities.

A review of the fatal pedestrian crash data found that eight of the 13 crashes occurred at night at an intersection where street lights were not present. Of the 13 fatal crashes, one occurred in Ashland, one occurred in Phoenix, and four occurred in Medford; the remaining seven crashes occurred on state highways outside city limits.

### Figure 12: Bicycle Crash History

Figure 12 illustrates the reported bicycle related crash locations and severity for the five-year period between January 1, 2012 and February 28, 2017 within the RVMPO boundary. Crashes have been coded as property damage only (PDO), injury crash, and fatal crash. There were 253 bicycle related crashes reported within this timeframe. Of the total bicycle crashes reported, 248 resulted in non-fatal injuries, 4 resulted in property damage only (PDO), and one resulted in a fatality.

Seven of the reported 253 bicycle crashes were classified as involving a "moped, minibike, motor scooter (sitting), or motor bicycle." The lone fatal bicycle-related crash was the result of a turning movement crash between a motor bicycle (also known as an "electric bicycle or E-bike") and a passenger vehicle. The crash occurred along S Riverside Avenue in Medford near the intersection of Boyd Street in October 2013.

**Chart 2: Crash Cause for Crashes Involving Bicycles and Pedestrians in the Rogue Valley**

