

slats
STATELINE AREA
TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Appendix H

Community Impacts

This appendix summarizes the potential community impacts associated with the fiscally constrained projects in the SLATS 2055 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Consistent with federal transportation planning requirements, SLATS and its member agencies are committed to developing and maintaining a transportation system that serves residents, workers, businesses, and visitors throughout the planning area while providing meaningful opportunities for public participation and complying with applicable federal requirements.

The fiscally constrained transportation investments were evaluated at a planning level to identify potential benefits and challenges relative to the goals and objectives of the SLATS 2055 LRTP, including safety, mobility, accessibility, connectivity, economic vitality, and quality of life. Because the LRTP projects are conceptual in nature, more detailed evaluations of potential community impacts will occur as projects advance through project development, environmental review, design, and implementation. A high-level environmental mitigation analysis was also conducted as is summarized in **Appendix I**.

Federal Transportation Planning Framework

Federal transportation planning is guided by laws and regulations intended to ensure that transportation investments are developed and implemented in a fair, transparent, and accessible manner. These requirements include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and metropolitan transportation planning regulations administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

These requirements prohibit discrimination in federally funded transportation programs, support accessibility for individuals with disabilities, and encourage meaningful public involvement throughout the transportation planning process. During preparation of the 2055 LRTP, SLATS implemented a Public Engagement Plan (PEP) that provided residents, businesses, community organizations, transportation providers, and other stakeholders with a variety of opportunities to review information and provide feedback on transportation needs, priorities, and proposed investments.

Communities and Demographic Considerations

SLATS reviewed demographic and socioeconomic characteristics throughout the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), including areas with higher concentrations of minority populations and households experiencing poverty. **Figures 1** and **2** identify the distribution of these populations in the MPA. Understanding demographic patterns helps identify where residents may experience transportation barriers, including limited access to personal vehicles, transit dependency, greater reliance on walking and bicycling, or longer travel times to employment, education, healthcare, and other essential services. This information is used to help inform transportation planning decisions and support continued compliance with federal requirements. Additional demographic data is summarized in **Appendix C**.

FIGURE 1. MINORITY POPULATION WITHIN THE SLATS MPA

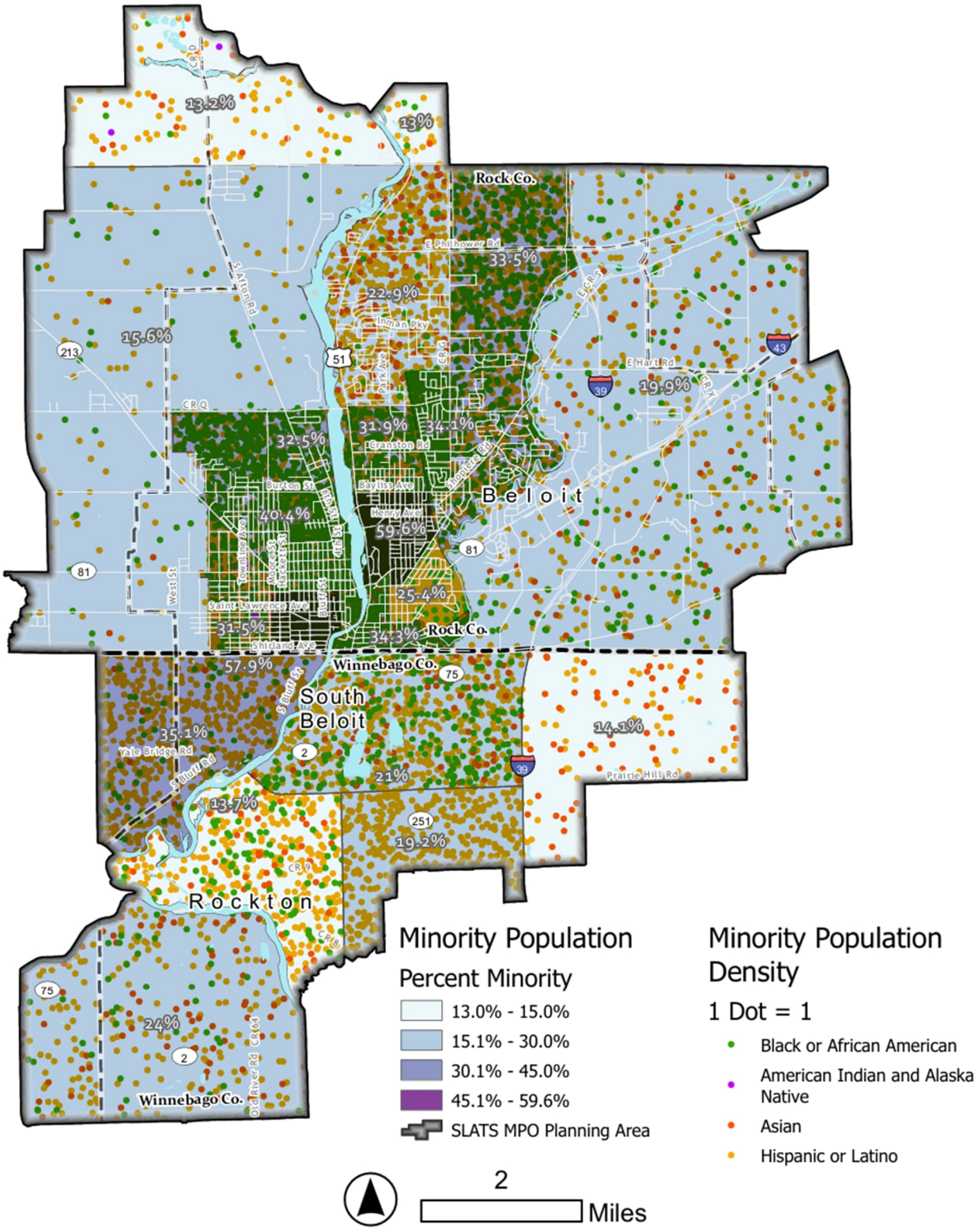
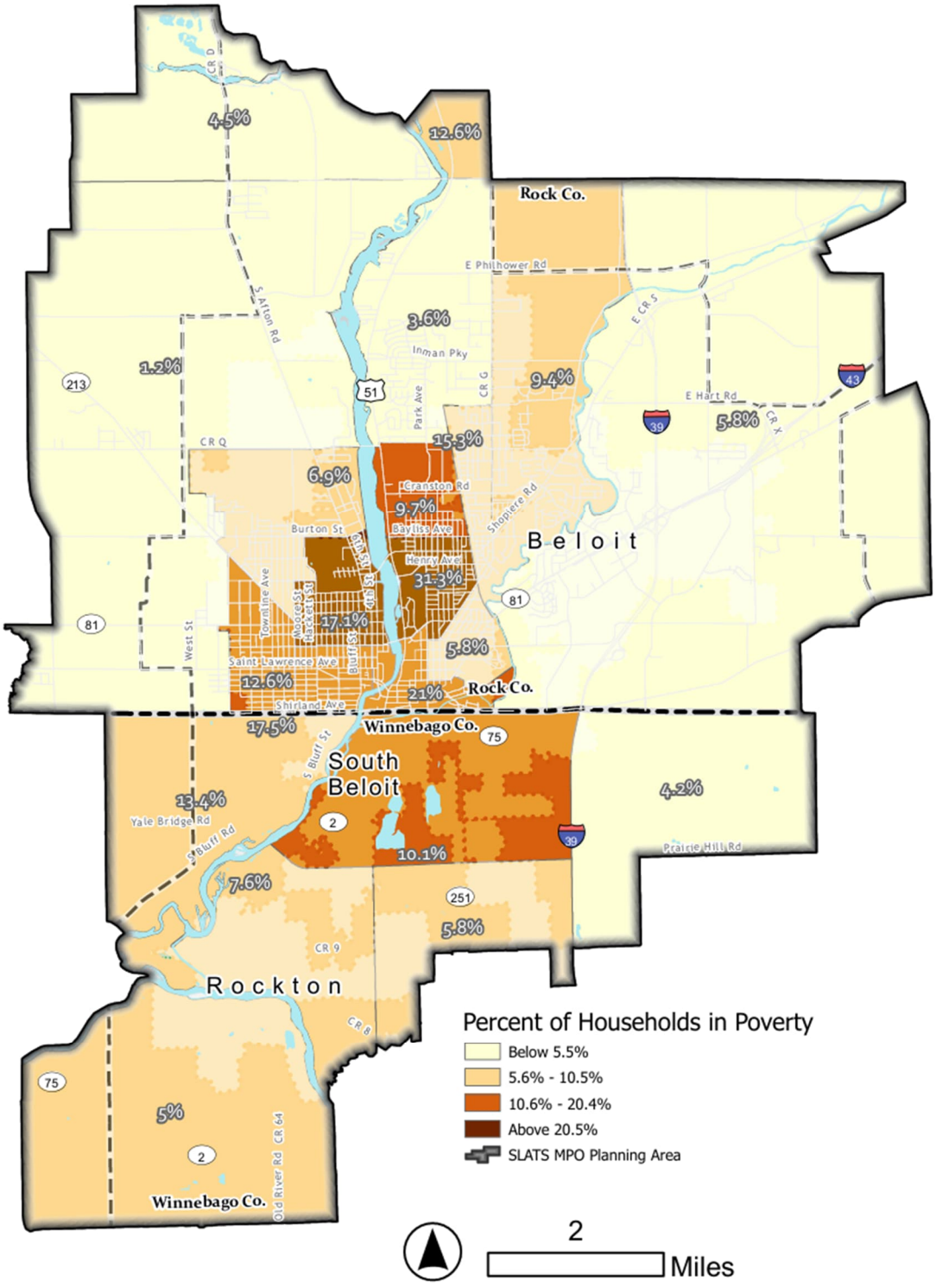


FIGURE 2. ARES OF POVERTY WITHIN THE SLATS MPA



Community Considerations in Project Development

Transportation investments provide essential access to employment, education, healthcare, shopping, recreation, and community services throughout the region. Improvements to the transportation network can also enhance safety, support economic development, improve freight movement, and expand travel options for all users. Throughout development of the 2055 LRTP, public and stakeholder input identified several recurring transportation priorities:

- Improving safety along roadway corridors and at intersections.
- Expanding and enhancing bicycle and pedestrian facilities, particularly connections to schools, parks, community facilities, and employment areas.
- Improving regional east-west and north-south connectivity to support mobility and access to jobs, services, and the I-39/90 corridor in general.
- Improving freight movement while reducing the impacts of through-truck traffic on local roadways and residential areas.

These factors were considered in the project evaluation and identification of the fiscally constrained project list.

Community Impact Evaluation of Fiscally Constrained Projects

SLATS reviewed the fiscally constrained transportation projects to better understand how the proposed investments may influence communities throughout the MPA. As part of this review, planned projects were overlaid with demographic mapping to identify areas where transportation benefits and potential impacts may occur. The evaluation focused on the potential influence of projects on:

- Transportation safety
- Access to employment, education, healthcare, and other destinations
- Multimodal connectivity
- Regional connectivity
- Quality of life
- Accessibility for all users, including individuals with disabilities
- Potential right-of-way or community disruption impacts

This evaluation was conducted at a planning level and is intended to identify broad benefits and potential concerns. Detailed environmental and community impact assessments will occur as individual projects advance through design and implementation.

The fiscally constrained roadway and freight projects included in the LRTP are summarized in **Table 1** and displayed in **Figure 3**.

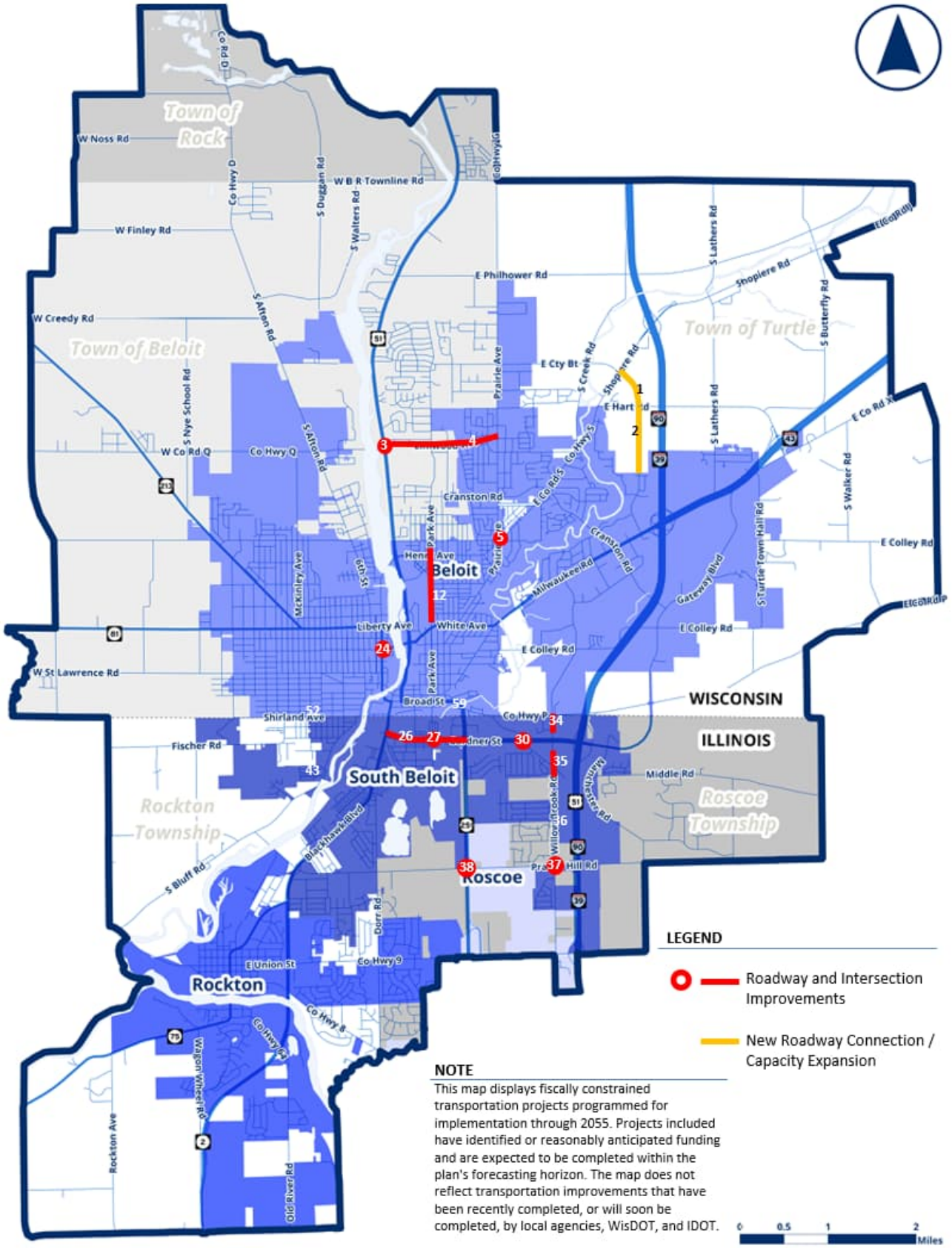
TABLE 1. SLATS 2055 FISCALLY CONSTRAINED ROADWAY/FREIGHT IMPROVEMENTS

Wisconsin portion of the SLATS MPA			
Project ID	Project Description	Program Year [2]	Estimated 2027 Cost
5	Shopiere Road (Prairie Ave / Bayliss Ave / Moccasin Trail) - construct roundabout; improve access and operations by closing Bayliss and realigning Moccasin.	2033	$ 4,750,000
3	US 51 / Newark intersection (Elmwood Avenue Phase 1) – realign/reconfigure to improve access and network connectivity	2035	$ 2,800,000
24	4th Street / Portland Avenue intersection – construct roundabout	2038	$ 3,500,000
1	BT Extension (Shopiere to Hart) Phase 1 – new roadway connection to improve network connectivity and access	2041	$ 3,200,000
12	Park Avenue (Bayliss to White) – rehabilitation and operational improvements; construct bicycle facility consistent with the Active Transportation Plan	2043	$ 2,000,000
2	BT Extension (Hart to Milwaukee, via Winchester Drive) Phase 2 – new roadway connection to improve connectivity and access	2046	$ 2,500,000
4A	Elmwood Avenue (Riverside and Park) Phase 2 – reconfiguration with continuous cross-section	2048	$ 2,500,000
4B	Elmwood Avenue (Park and Prairie) Phase 3 – reconfiguration with continuous cross-section	2052	$ 3,500,000
Illinois portion of the SLATS MPA			
Project ID	Project Description	Program Year [2]	Estimated 2027 Cost
34	Willowbrook Road (Stateline to Gardner) – capacity and operational improvements coordinated with WI improvements	2031	$ 1,800,000
35	Willowbrook Road (Gardner to Bastian) – rehabilitation including pavement and shoulder improvements	2034	$ 2,400,000
27	Gardner Street (IL 75) Park Avenue intersection – geometric improvements to improve truck movements and safety	2041	$ 1,200,000
30	Gardner Street (IL 75) Manchester Road intersection – realignment with geometric, safety, and operational improvements	2045	$ 1,200,000
37	Prairie Hill Road (IL-251 intersection) – operational improvements; potential roundabout	2051	$ 2,000,000
38	Prairie Hill Road (N. 2nd Street (IL 251) intersection) – geometric improvements and access management	2055	$ 1,000,000

NOTES 1) Project 26 is a planned reconstruction of IL 75 (IL 2 to IL 251) by IDOT in FY 2036; estimated cost is $30,000,000.

2) The program years reflect planning assumptions used to demonstrate fiscal constraint and estimate year-of-expenditure costs. They do not establish a required implementation order. As funding availability, project readiness, grant opportunities, and regional priorities change over time, SLATS and its partner agencies may revise project sequencing through future programming and implementation decisions. Any changes to project timing or sequencing will continue to be evaluated to ensure that the LRTP and TIP remain fiscally constrained.

FIGURE 3. SLATS 2055 FISCALLY CONSTRAINED ROADWAY/FREIGHT IMPROVEMENTS



Areas with higher concentrations of minority populations and households experiencing poverty are found throughout the SLATS MPA, with larger concentrations in portions of Beloit, South Beloit, and the northern portion of the MPA. These areas contain a mix of residential neighborhoods, employment centers, schools, healthcare providers, businesses, parks, and community facilities that rely on safe and efficient transportation connections.

During public and stakeholder outreach, several transportation concerns were identified that are particularly relevant to residents who rely on transit, walking, bicycling, ridesharing, or other transportation alternatives. Key themes included:

- Limited awareness of available transportation options and services, including the need for accessible multilingual outreach materials.
- Gaps in bicycle and pedestrian networks, particularly connections used by children and families traveling to schools, parks, and community facilities.
- Safety concerns associated with high traffic volumes and speeds near schools and residential neighborhoods.
- Limited transit service frequency, hours of operation, and regional connections.

Figures 4 and **5** display fiscally constrained projects relative to demographic patterns throughout the planning area. The review considered:

- Whether projects improve access to employment, education, healthcare, shopping, and community services.
- Whether projects improve transportation safety and mobility.
- Whether projects support walking, bicycling, transit use, and accessibility.
- Whether projects address transportation concerns identified through public outreach.
- Whether projects have the potential to create right-of-way, access, or community connectivity impacts.
- Whether transportation benefits are reasonably distributed throughout the planning area.

No projects identified in the fiscally constrained plan are anticipated to result in substantial community disruption at the planning level of analysis. Potential right-of-way acquisition, access changes, and other project-specific impacts will be evaluated during future project development activities.

FIGURE 4. MINORITY POPULATION – FISCALLY CONSTRAINED PROJECTS

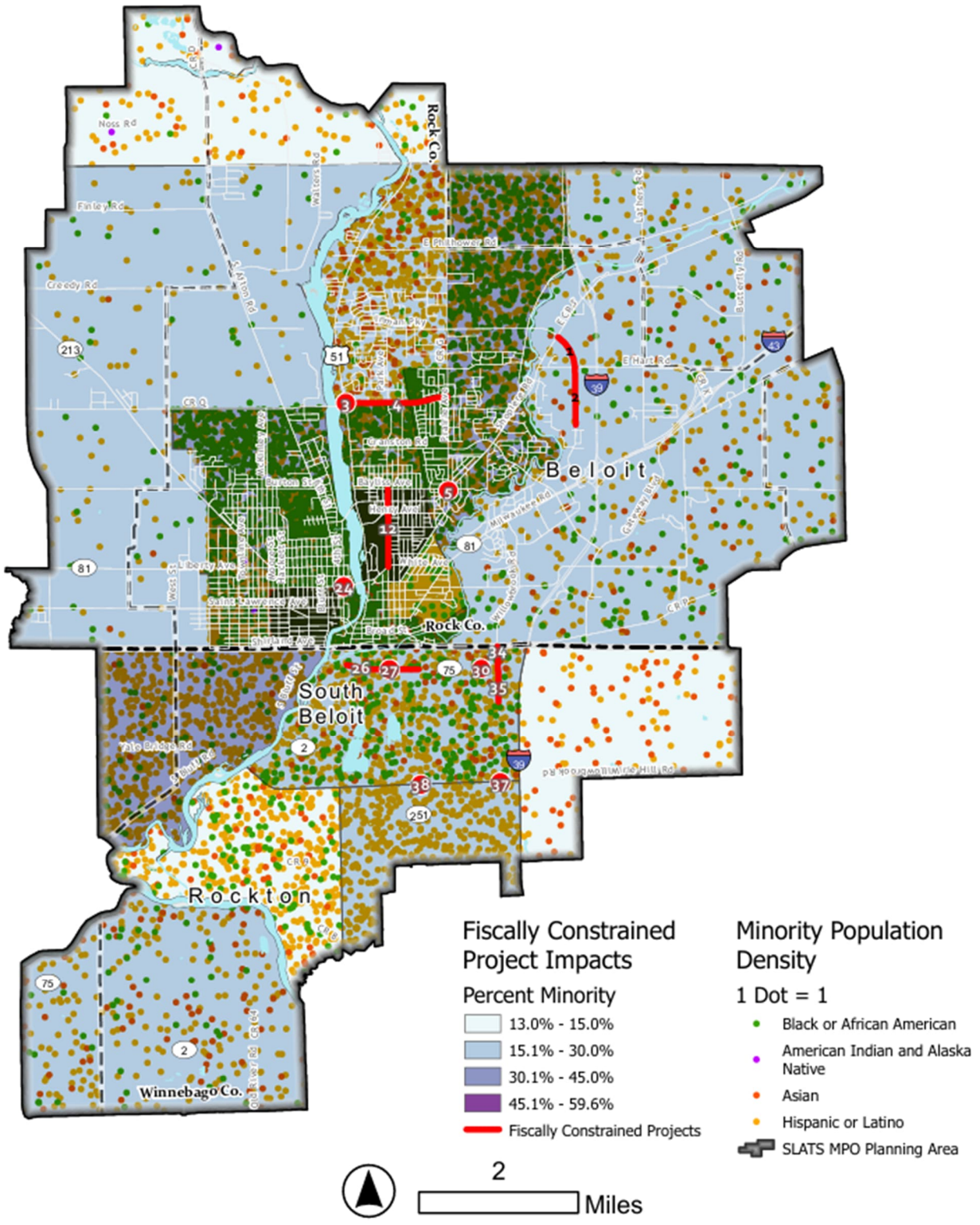
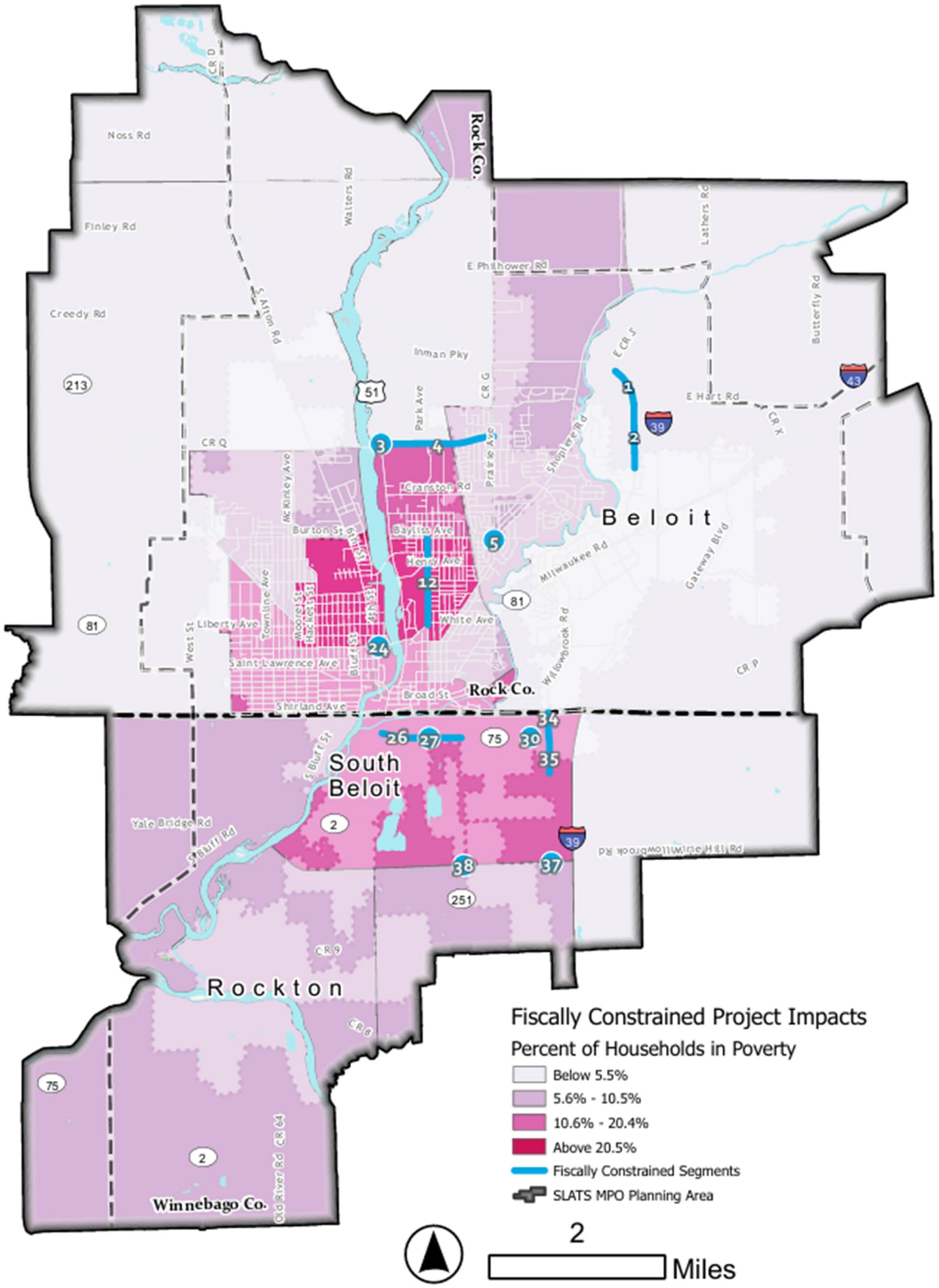


FIGURE 5. POVERTY AREAS – FISCALLY CONSTRAINED PROJECTS



Analysis of Fiscally Constrained Projects

The fiscally constrained projects included in the 2055 LRTP were reviewed to identify their potential transportation, accessibility, and community impacts. These projects represent the priority transportation investments expected to be implemented within reasonably anticipated funding levels over the planning horizon. The approximate implementation year for each project, or project phase, is also identified. However, these years should be considered planning-level estimates, as the SLATS Policy Board regularly reviews project priorities and funding availability and may adjust project schedules, phasing, or implementation timing in response to changing conditions, emerging needs, or funding opportunities.

Collectively, the projects are intended to improve safety, system reliability, mobility, and connectivity while supporting economic development and accommodating future growth. The following summaries provide an overview of each project and its anticipated benefits, including consideration of how transportation investments may influence access to employment, education, healthcare, services, and other key destinations for populations that have historically experienced transportation-related barriers or limited access to opportunity.

Project #5 – Shopiere Road Roundabout (2033)

The Shopiere Road project includes construction of a roundabout and associated access management improvements, including closure of Bayliss Avenue and realignment of Moccasin Trail. The project is expected to improve safety at one of the higher-crash locations in the MPA by reducing conflict points and improving intersection operations. The project also supports access to nearby employment areas, commercial development, and residential growth while improving overall network connectivity for motorists, freight traffic, and other roadway users. Potential right-of-way impacts will need to be reviewed as part of the project planning and development process.

Projects #3, 4A, and 4B – US 51 / Newark Road Intersection and Elmwood Avenue Corridor Improvements (2035, 2048, 2052)

These coordinated projects include reconstruction of the US 51/Newark Road intersection and phased improvements along the Elmwood Avenue corridor extending eastward to Prairie Avenue. Collectively, the projects are intended to improve safety, traffic operations, corridor continuity, and multimodal accommodations.

Public and stakeholder input identified a need for improved bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to address gaps in the existing transportation network. The planned improvements provide opportunities to enhance walking and bicycling accommodations while improving access between residential neighborhoods, schools, employment areas, commercial destinations, and community services. By strengthening connections between key destinations, the projects are expected to improve mobility and accessibility for a broad range of users, including households that may have limited transportation options. The improvements will also support regional connectivity, accommodate future growth, and advance long-term land use and development objectives. Depending on the final design, portions of the corridor may require additional right-of-way acquisition, which will be evaluated and addressed during subsequent project development and engineering phases. The corridor is also located near areas with

higher concentrations of households experiencing poverty, and improved multimodal connectivity along the corridor may help reduce transportation barriers while enhancing access to jobs, services, and community destinations.

Project #24 – 4th Street / Portland Avenue Roundabout (2038)

Construction of a roundabout at the 4th Street and Portland Avenue intersection is expected to improve safety, reduce crash severity, and enhance overall traffic operations. The project will benefit motorists, freight operators, bicyclists, and pedestrians while supporting connectivity between neighborhoods and activity centers on both sides of the Rock River. The improvement will help facilitate east-west travel and improve access to the I-39/90 corridor. Given the limited number of river crossings in the region, operational improvements at key locations such as this can improve travel reliability, reduce delays, and enhance the overall efficiency of the transportation network.

The project may also improve access between residential areas west of the river and employment, commercial, and service destinations located east of the river. By improving traffic flow and reducing congestion at a critical crossing point, the project can help strengthen connections to regional job opportunities and other important destinations for residents throughout the corridor.

Projects #1 and 2 – BT Extension Phases 1 and 2 (2041 and 2046)

The BT Extension projects establish a new north-south transportation corridor connecting Shopiere Road, Hart Road, Winchester Drive, and Milwaukee Road. Together, these projects are intended to improve regional mobility, strengthen network resiliency, and provide additional travel options for residents, businesses, and freight movement.

Enhanced east-west connectivity was identified as an important regional transportation priority through stakeholder outreach. Upon completion, the corridor will enhance circulation in the northern portion of the MPA and provide improved connections to major employment, industrial, and commercial areas near the I-39/90 corridor. The project will help distribute traffic across the roadway network, reduce reliance on a limited number of east-west routes, and support efficient movement of people and goods throughout the region.

While the corridor traverses land that is currently agricultural, it is located within a planned transportation corridor identified in the City of Beloit's long-range street network and growth planning efforts. The project is consistent with anticipated development patterns in an area that has experienced significant residential, commercial, and industrial growth and is expected to continue accommodating future development over the planning horizon. By providing transportation infrastructure in advance of projected growth, the corridor will help support orderly development and maintain an efficient and connected transportation network.

Project #12 – Park Avenue (Bayliss Road to White Avenue) (2043)

This project includes roadway rehabilitation, operational improvements, and bicycle facilities consistent with the SLATS Active Transportation Plan. The project will improve pavement conditions, enhance safety, and expand multimodal travel opportunities along an important community corridor. The bicycle improvements will enhance existing facilities and improve network continuity, providing safer

and more convenient connections for individuals traveling to work, schools, commercial areas, and other community destinations.

Because the project primarily involves rehabilitation and operational enhancements within the existing roadway corridor, significant adverse impacts are not anticipated. Improvements are expected to occur largely within the existing right-of-way, with no substantial changes to roadway width or curb locations. As a result, the project is expected to improve corridor conditions and functionality while minimizing impacts to adjacent properties and surrounding neighborhoods.

Projects #34 and 35 – Willowbrook Road (2031 and 2034)

The Willowbrook Road project includes phased improvements to address both near-term operational needs and corridor preservation. Phase 1 focuses on intersection and access improvements intended to accommodate increased traffic associated with the opening and operation of the Ho-Chunk Casino and related development activity in the area. These improvements are expected to enhance safety, improve traffic flow, and provide more reliable access for visitors, employees, freight traffic, and surrounding businesses.

Phase 2 consists primarily of roadway rehabilitation and related operational enhancements designed to preserve the corridor, improve pavement conditions, and maintain safe and efficient travel. The improvements will help support continued growth and development along the corridor while ensuring that the transportation system can accommodate future travel demand. Because much of the work is expected to occur within or adjacent to the existing roadway corridor, no significant community impacts are anticipated at this time.

Project #27 – Gardner Street / Park Avenue Intersection (2041)

This project includes geometric and operational improvements designed to improve truck turning movements, reduce vehicle conflicts, and enhance overall intersection safety. The project supports freight mobility while improving pedestrian accommodations, intersection operations, and connections to existing and planned bicycle facilities along this important regional corridor linking Beloit and South Beloit.

The intersection is located within an area that includes higher concentrations of households experiencing economic challenges. Improvements to safety, freight access, and multimodal connectivity may enhance access to nearby employment areas, businesses, and community destinations while supporting ongoing economic activity within the corridor. In addition, SLATS is planning a transportation and land use study for the surrounding area to further evaluate corridor needs, identify redevelopment opportunities, and refine potential transportation improvements. Findings from that effort may help inform the final scope and design of future intersection and corridor enhancements, and may identify additional needs to enhance mobility options for area residents.

Project #30 – Gardner Street / Manchester Road Intersection (2045)

Geometric and operational improvements at this intersection are intended to improve safety, traffic flow, and freight movement while enhancing overall corridor performance. Planned improvements are expected to benefit local businesses, residents, and regional travelers by reducing delays, improving intersection operations, and supporting safer travel for all users.

The project is located within an area that includes higher concentrations of households experiencing economic challenges and serves an important industrial and commercial corridor. By improving access and mobility within the area, the project may help support economic activity, employment access, and future redevelopment opportunities. As with the Gardner Street/Park Avenue intersection, SLATS is planning a transportation and land use study in the vicinity that will provide additional insight into long-term corridor needs and help identify appropriate transportation and community development strategies.

Project #27 – Prairie Hill Road / IL 251 (2051)

Operational improvements, including a potential roundabout, are planned at the Prairie Hill Road and IL 251 intersection. The project is expected to improve safety, reduce congestion, and enhance traffic operations within a growing area of the Illinois portion of the MPA. The improvements will reduce conflict points, improve travel reliability, and support more efficient movement of people and goods through the corridor.

The project will also strengthen east-west connectivity and improve access to nearby employment, commercial, and developing residential areas. The improvement is consistent with anticipated growth patterns in the surrounding area and will help ensure the transportation network can accommodate future travel demand. No significant community impacts have been identified at this planning stage.

Project #38 – Prairie Hill Road / North 2nd Street (2055)

This project includes geometric and access management improvements intended to improve safety, intersection operations, and overall corridor performance. The proposed improvements are expected to improve traffic flow and enhance travel reliability for motorists, freight traffic, and other roadway users.

The project supports continued residential and commercial development along the corridor while improving east-west travel and regional connectivity. By enhancing access and operational efficiency, the project will help accommodate future growth and maintain an effective transportation network in this developing area of the MPA. No significant community impacts have been identified based on the planning-level review conducted for the LRTP.

Analysis of Public Transportation Access

Areas with higher population densities, older neighborhood development patterns, lower household incomes, and greater reliance on transportation alternatives are generally concentrated within portions of Beloit and South Beloit. For some residents, public transportation provides an essential mobility option for accessing employment, education, healthcare, shopping, and community services. Some individuals are transit-dependent and may not have access to a personal vehicle due to income, age, disability, or other circumstances. As a result, maintaining and enhancing transit service remains a critical component of providing access for all users throughout the region.

Public transportation also offers a cost-effective travel option for households seeking to reduce transportation expenses, which often represent one of the largest components of a household budget.

By providing affordable mobility, transit helps connect residents to jobs, services, and community resources while supporting workforce participation and economic vitality. A well-connected transit network can also reduce transportation barriers, improve independence for residents who cannot or choose not to drive, and enhance overall quality of life within the region.

Beloit Transit System (BTS) provides fixed-route transit service within Wisconsin, while Stateline Mass Transit District (SMTD) provides demand-response service within the Illinois portion of the MPA, including limited connections into Wisconsin. **Figures 6** and **7** illustrate the relationship between the BTS fixed-route transit network and areas with higher concentrations of minority populations and households experiencing poverty. The maps demonstrate that much of the existing transit service is located within and serves these areas, providing residents with access to employment, education, healthcare, shopping, and other essential destinations throughout the region.

FIGURE 6. FIXED-ROUTE BELOIT TRANSIT SERVICE AND MINORITY POPULATION AREAS

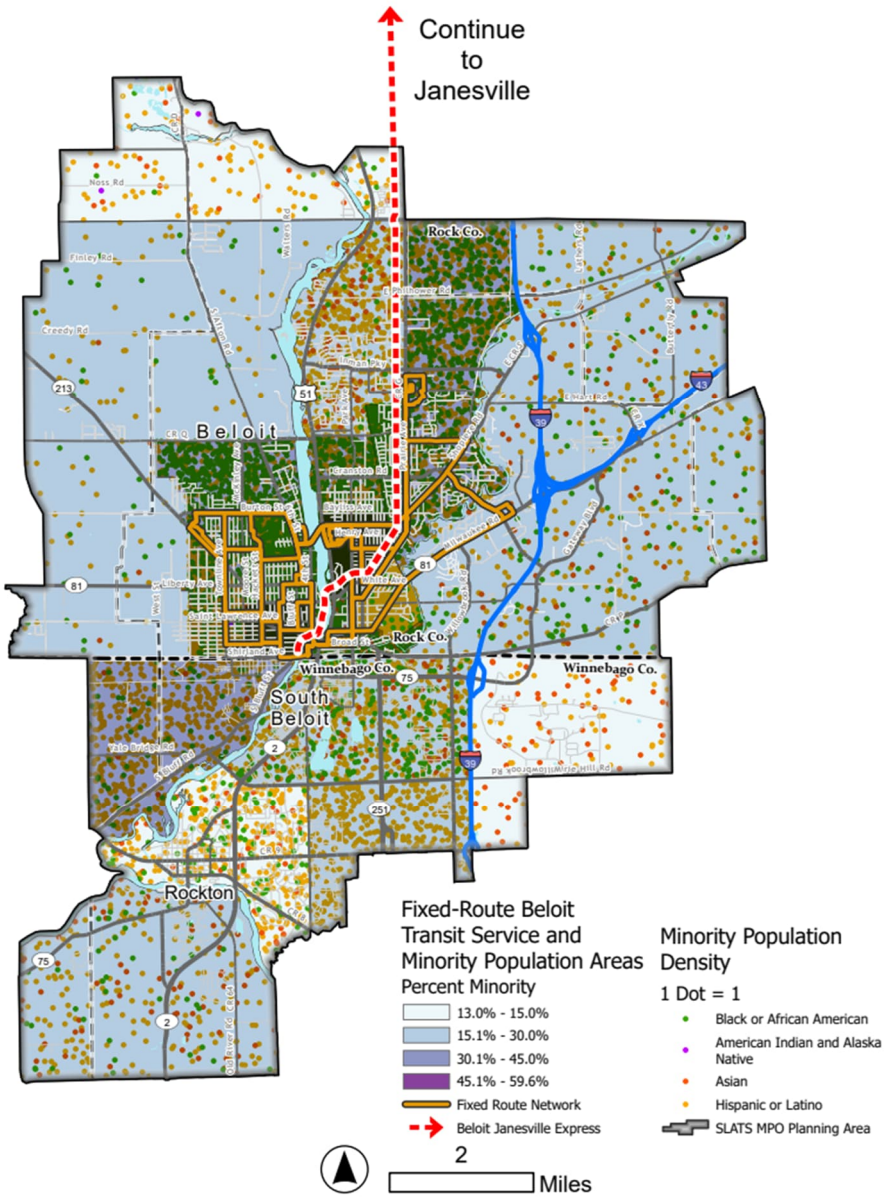
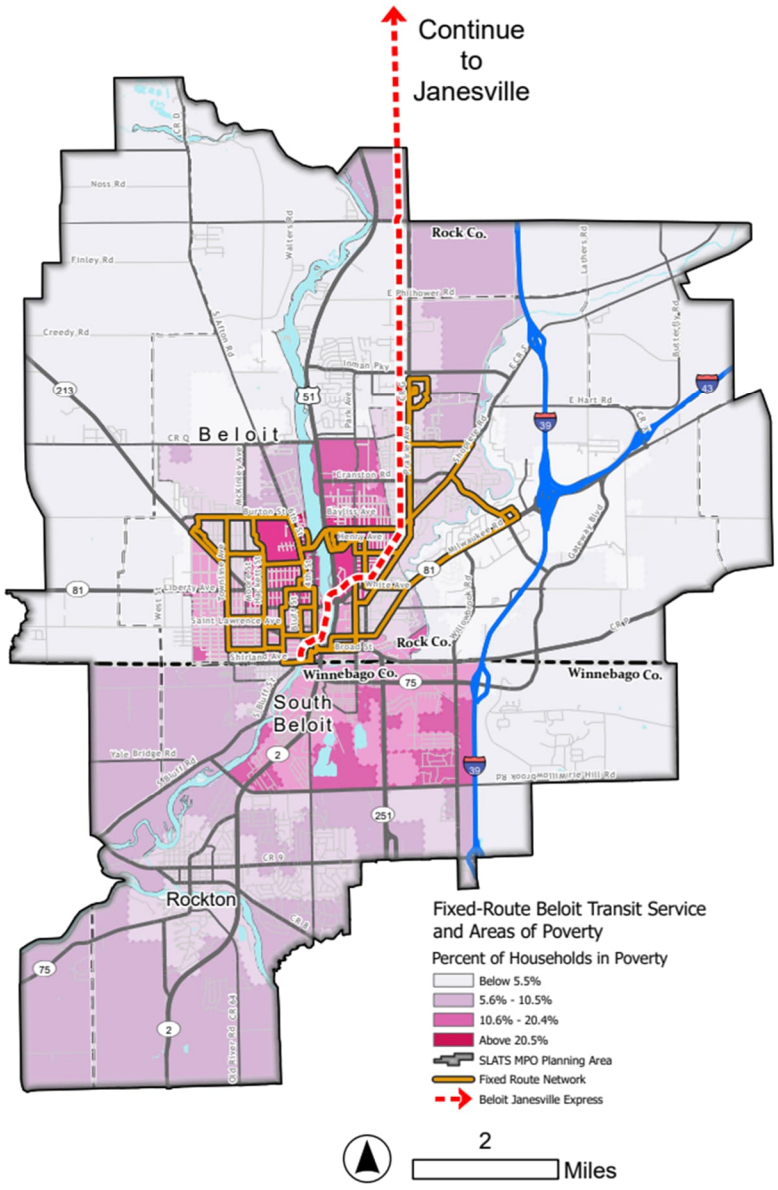


FIGURE 7. FIXED-ROUTE BELOIT TRANSIT SERVICE AND AREAS OF POVERTY



The recently completed SLATS Transit Development Plan (TDP) evaluated opportunities to enhance both north-south and east-west transit connectivity throughout the region. Although the bi-state nature of the planning area presents coordination challenges, improved regional transit connections remain an important consideration, particularly for enhancing access to major employment centers east of the I-39/90 corridor and emerging destinations such as the Ho-Chunk Casino.

BTS is exploring the implementation of microtransit service in eastern portions of the metropolitan area, including the Gateway industrial area. Microtransit service may improve access to employment opportunities within lower-density areas that are difficult to serve efficiently through traditional fixed-route transit. Expanding access to major employment centers remains a priority identified in the LRTP and TDP.

In addition, BTS and Janesville Transit recently evaluated the Beloit-Janesville Express (BJE) service. Stakeholder discussions with major employers identified interest in expanded service hours to better

accommodate second- and third-shift workers. While expanded service could improve access to employment opportunities and help address workforce transportation needs, implementation would require additional funding, vehicles, and operating resources. Public feedback also supported a desire for expanded service hours and weekend service to enhance regional mobility and greater access to employment opportunities.

Overall, the existing BTS fixed-route network serves many of the area's highest concentrations of minority populations and households experiencing poverty. The system provides important connections to employment centers, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, shopping areas, and other community destinations. As future transit investments are considered, maintaining and enhancing service within these areas will remain important to ensuring that residents have reliable access to essential services and economic opportunities throughout the MPA.

Community Impact Summary

Following a review of the fiscally constrained projects included in the 2055 LRTP and the analysis of public transportation service coverage, the proposed transportation investments are expected to provide overall positive community benefits throughout the MPA. The projects and transit initiatives identified in the LRTP collectively support a multimodal transportation system that improves mobility and access for residents, businesses, and visitors. Overall, the planned investments are expected to enhance safety, strengthen regional connectivity, improve access to employment and community destinations, support efficient freight movement, preserve critical transportation infrastructure, and expand opportunities for walking, bicycling, and public transportation consistent with the Active Transportation Plan and the TDP.

The public transportation analysis indicates that the existing BTS fixed-route network serves many areas with higher concentrations of minority populations and households experiencing poverty, providing important connections to jobs, education, healthcare, shopping, and other essential destinations. Future transit initiatives identified through the LRTP and TDP, including expanded regional connections and potential microtransit service, have the potential to further improve access to opportunity and reduce transportation barriers for residents throughout the region.

Because the LRTP identifies projects at a conceptual level, detailed environmental, right-of-way, accessibility, and community impact evaluations will occur during subsequent planning, design, and programming activities. As individual projects advance through the TIP and project development process, they will continue to be evaluated for compliance with applicable federal and state requirements, including Title VI and ADA.

Community impact assessment remains an ongoing component of the metropolitan transportation planning process. Through future updates to the LRTP, development of the TIP, transit planning efforts, and project-level studies, SLATS will continue to work with member agencies, stakeholders, transit providers, and the public to ensure transportation investments address evolving regional needs while supporting a safe, efficient, reliable, and accessible transportation system for all users.