Key Themes from the SLATS 2055 LRTP Public Open Houses
September 15, 2026

South Beloit City Hall (1:00 PM to 3:00 PM)
Beloit City Hall (4:00 PM to 6:00 PM)

The public open houses provided residents and stakeholders an opportunity to review and comment on the draft SLATS 2055 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), which is currently available for a 30-day public review period. The draft 2027-2030 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was also available for review and discussion. A handful of individuals attended.

Overall Support for the Draft Plan

Attendees agreed that the fiscally constrained project recommendations support the vision, goals, and objectives outlined in the 2055 LRTP. No opposition to the recommended plan was expressed during the open houses. Feedback supported the proposed roadway, safety, preservation, and multimodal investments identified in the draft LRTP.

Attendees confirmed that safety and infrastructure preservation should be the highest transportation priorities within the region, consistent with the draft LRTP. Attendees generally agreed that congestion is not a widespread regional issue and is typically limited to peak travel periods and specific intersections where periodic delays and backups occur. Concerns regarding recent roadway reconfigurations were discussed, and it was felt that the benefits shown by recent data, including declining crash rates following implementation, outweigh some additional delays that motorists may experience during peak times. It was noted that the City has been making recent modifications to address some roadway reconfiguration concerns and that SLATS intends to further study the corridors to determine whether additional improvements or adjustments may be warranted.

Intersection and Operational Improvements

As documented in the draft LRTP, a number of the intersection improvements identified in the fiscally constrained projects were discussed as locations where improvements could enhance safety and operations. These included:

Attendees discussed the **Shopiere Road and Prairie Avenue** intersection and confirmed this is a challenging location. Attendees described recurring operational issues and observed illegal turning movements that contribute to safety concerns. Attendees agreed that the recommended improvement at this location would address both safety and traffic operations and would be a strong candidate for implementation in the near term.

4th Street and Portland Avenue was also confirmed as a location in need of improvement to better accommodate existing, and future, traffic. The discussion referenced recent study findings that confirmed operational concerns in the area and reinforced the need to enhance east-west connectivity. A roundabout concept was discussed, and attendees generally agreed it has the potential to provide safety and operational benefits while minimizing potential right-of-way impacts. It was acknowledged that additional detailed study would be needed to fully understand the impacts.

Elmwood Avenue Projects

The Elmwood Avenue corridor and related intersection improvements generated positive discussion. Attendees viewed the intersection of **Elmwood Avenue and US 51** as the highest priority, confirming that it makes sense to focus first on the intersection improvements followed by future corridor improvements extending to the east. This is consistent with the fiscally constrained programming of projects in the 2055 LRTP.

Attendees also highlighted the opportunity for this project to improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity along the Elmwood corridor, particularly with the addition of bicycle accommodations on the Newark Road bridge that will soon be completed. The segment between Park Avenue and Prairie Avenue was identified as a challenging location for bicyclists and pedestrians and was viewed as a priority area for future multimodal improvements when this project advances to design and construction.

Regional Connectivity and Corridor Preservation

Generally speaking, attendees recognized the long-term vision of the potential projects presented and emphasized the importance of preserving corridors identified in the LRTP to support the development of the region's long-term transportation network and future growth.

The **BT Extension** was recognized as an important future connection that could improve mobility, support future development opportunities, and strengthen overall network connectivity. There was general agreement that this corridor provides an important north-south connection that also can enhance east-west connectivity.

Additionally, there was discussion regarding the BT Extension and how it could support broader regional connectivity by enhancing access to the west side of the river. The need for a new river crossing, while presenting challenges, could connect to an improved north-south arterial corridor on the west side of the SLATS MPA. Attendees emphasized the importance of preserving right-of-way along the respective corridors to maintain flexibility for future transportation needs and regional growth. Attendees noted that the limited

number of current river crossings creates challenges for east-west travel and reinforces the importance of preserving and advancing projects that improve network connectivity.

Completion of the **Prairie Hill Road bridge** connection was noted as a particularly important investment due to its role in improving regional connectivity and travel options. Additionally, preserving ROW extending north from the river crossing to the state line is important to accommodate a future roadway extension. Related to this discussion, attendees discussed the long-term role of **Prairie Hill Road** as an enhanced east-west transportation corridor within the SLATS MPA. Discussion included its potential future function as a possible three-lane facility and its connection to other planned network improvements. Attendees also noted plans for the segment between Boone County and IL 251 to eventually serve as a designated truck route.

It was also noted that an interchange at I-39/90 would align well with this corridor being a major east-west route; however, the current interchange spacing would likely prohibit such an improvement to be made in the future.

Willowbrook Road Corridor

Attendees strongly supported completion of the **Willowbrook Road improvements between the state line and Gardner Street**, citing the importance of improving safety, operations, and multimodal accommodations. While attendees recognized existing funding challenges on the Illinois side of the corridor, it was clear that this project is needed as soon as possible to align with the planned improvements on the Wisconsin side and accommodate anticipated growth in corridor traffic related to the casino opening.

Recent improvements at the **Prairie Hill Road and Willowbrook Road** intersection were also discussed, and attendees agreed the location could potentially benefit from a future roundabout, consistent with the fiscally constrained project recommendations. Attendees noted that traffic generated by the soon-to-be-completed casino development could increase demand along the Willowbrook corridor and at this intersection, making future operational and safety improvements increasingly important.

Gardner Street Corridor

The condition of **Gardner Street** was identified as a significant concern. Attendees noted that pavement conditions, maintenance needs, and safety considerations indicate the corridor requires improvements in the near term. While a future major rehabilitation project has been tentatively identified by IDOT for FY2036, attendees expressed concern that improvements will be needed much sooner due to the corridor's current condition and anticipated traffic growth.

The project team discussed how the draft LRTP seeks to improve intersections along the corridor through the fiscally constrained improvements identified in the plan. Attendees agreed with this approach and emphasized the importance of continued coordination with IDOT as future improvements are planned and programmed.

Truck Traffic

Heavy truck traffic continues to be a concern in portions of the SLATS MPA. Attendees at the South Beloit open house discussed frequent truck traffic along **IL 2** and confirmed that heavy truck movements remain a regular occurrence. Attendees supported SLATS plans to conduct additional study and analysis of regional truck travel patterns to better understand existing conditions and future freight transportation needs.

Rockton Area Projects

Attendees discussed ongoing transportation projects in the Rockton area, including improvements along **Old River Road** and **IL 2**. The discussion also highlighted the importance of continuing investments in side paths and other bicycle and pedestrian facilities to improve connectivity and provide safe transportation options throughout the area.

Transportation and Land Use Planning

Attendees expressed support for conducting a future transportation and land use study in the vicinity of the state line, as identified in the LRTP's potential projects list. Attendees indicated that such a study could help guide future corridor improvements, support economic development planning, identify multimodal opportunities, and inform long-term transportation investments, particularly along the Gardner Street corridor.

Active Transportation and Multimodal Connectivity

A recurring theme throughout both open houses was the importance of implementing recommendations from the regional Active Transportation Plan, which is referenced in the LRTP as the primary document for planned and priority bicycle and pedestrian projects within the region. Attendees supported continued investments in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure as a means of improving mobility, safety, and accessibility for users of all ages and abilities.

Attendees emphasized the importance of filling gaps in the existing bicycle and pedestrian network and identifying opportunities to strengthen connections between neighborhoods, employment centers, schools, parks, and commercial areas. Attendees noted that future corridor and land use studies could help identify additional multimodal connection opportunities. The importance of connecting to regional trails was also mentioned.

Specific discussion occurred regarding potential bicycle and pedestrian accommodations along **IL 251**, including the feasibility of a side path facility. Attendees also highlighted the need for continued improvements along **Park Avenue**, consistent with the fiscally constrained projects identified in the LRTP.

Summary

Overall, feedback received at the public open houses was supportive of the draft 2055 LRTP and the fiscally constrained project recommendations. Attendees emphasized the importance of maintaining a focus on safety, preservation, intersection improvements, regional connectivity, corridor preservation, freight mobility, and expanded bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Attendees agreed that the proposed projects and recommendations align with the region's transportation needs and provide a reasonable framework for addressing future growth and mobility challenges through 2055.