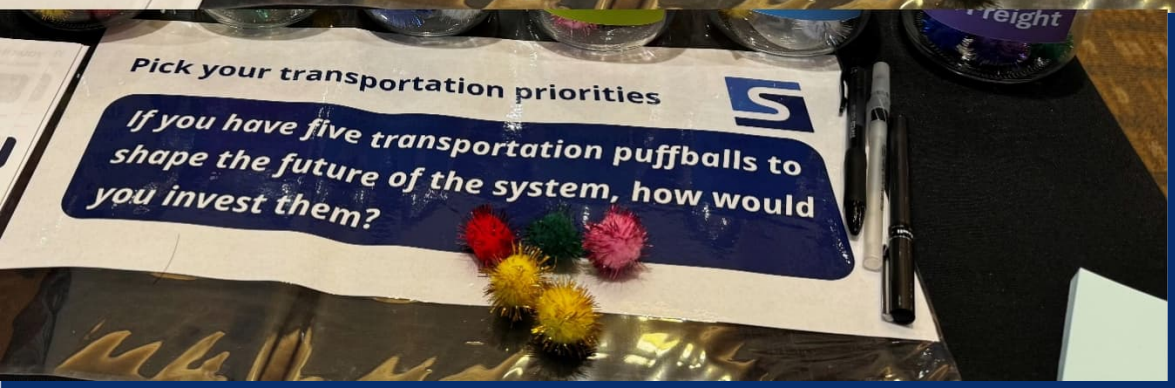




2055 Long Range Transportation Plan

July 2026

Appendix B – Goals and Objectives

slats
STATELINE AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Appendix B

Goals and Objectives

This appendix documents the goals and objectives that guide transportation investment decisions within the Stateline Area Transportation Study (SLATS) Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) through the 2055 planning horizon. The goals establish the long-term outcomes that SLATS seeks to achieve, while the objectives provide direction to inform transportation planning activities, programming, project development, and interagency coordination. The goals and objectives align with federal transportation planning requirements, statewide transportation plans, regional needs, performance trends, and public and stakeholder input.

Development of the SLATS 2055 LRTP Goals and Objectives

The 2055 LRTP goals and objectives establish a policy framework that reflects current transportation challenges and opportunities in the SLATS MPA. The framework recognizes the importance of maintaining an efficient transportation system while addressing safety, accessibility, economic competitiveness, environmental stewardship, system resilience, and transportation access for all residents and users. The goals are also designed to support data-driven decision making and to help prioritize future transportation investments across all modes of travel through the 2055 plan horizon.

Federal Planning Requirements

Federal transportation programs are funded through multi-year surface transportation authorization legislation. The current authorization framework is established under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) which was signed into law in November 2021. The IIJA represented one of the largest federal investments in transportation infrastructure in the nation's history and provided funding for highways, bridges, transit, passenger rail, active transportation facilities, freight transportation, and emerging transportation technologies. The IIJA emphasizes improving safety, maintaining and modernizing existing infrastructure, enhancing system resilience, supporting economic growth, expanding transportation choices, and improving mobility for all users.

Administered jointly by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the metropolitan transportation planning process continues to be guided by federal planning requirements established under 23 U.S.C. §134 and related federal regulations. These requirements provide the framework for a continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative (3-C) transportation planning process (see **Figure 1**). The 3-C process supports ongoing coordination among federal, state, regional, and local transportation partners and provides for the consideration and implementation of projects, strategies, and services throughout the SLATS MPA. Consistent with federal requirements, the metropolitan transportation planning process considers a broad range of factors (summarized in **Figure 2**).

FIGURE 1. 3-C TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS

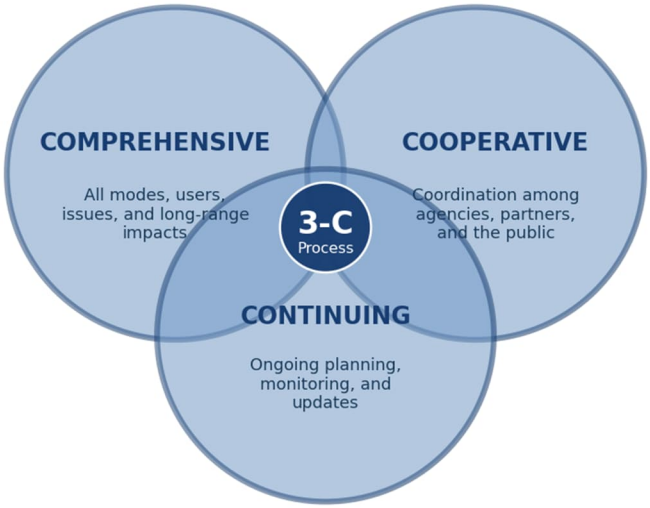


FIGURE 2. FEDERAL METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING REQUIREMENTS

"The metropolitan planning process for the metropolitan planning area…shall provide for consideration of projects and strategies that will…"

Support Economic Vitality
Prioritize investments that improve access to jobs, education, goods, and regional markets.

Increase Safety
Reduce crashes and serious injuries through targeted roadway, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian strategies.

Increase Security
Plan for a transportation system that is prepared for emergencies and disruptions.

Increase Accessibility
Improve travel options for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes across all modes of transportation.

Protect & Enhance Environment
Minimize impacts to natural and built resources while supporting sustainable transportation choices.

Enhance Integration & Connectivity
Link roadways, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and freight systems into a cohesive network.

Promote System Efficiency
Maximize the performance of existing infrastructure and reduce congestion through cost-effective solutions.

Promote System Preservation
Maintain roadway pavement, bridges, and transit assets in a state of good repair.

Support Resiliency and Reliability
Prepare the transportation system to withstand extreme weather and other disruptions.

Enhance Travel and Tourism
Improve access to destinations by supporting investments that enhance mobility and the visitor experience.

Source: 23 U.S. Code § 134 [(h) (1) (A - J)] – Metropolitan Transportation Planning.

Future Federal Transportation Authorization

The IIJA is set to expire on September 30, 2026, and Congress is considering legislation to establish the next multi-year federal surface transportation authorization. At the time of this memo, the leading reauthorization proposal is the BUILD America 250 Act (Building Unrivaled Infrastructure and Long-term Development for America's 250th Act), a bipartisan five-year surface transportation authorization bill that is advancing through the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. As the SLATS 2055 LRTP is set for adoption in October 2026, the IIJA remains the federal transportation law and planning framework that guides this LRTP update.

The outcome of the federal reauthorization process may influence future transportation funding levels, program eligibility requirements, performance expectations, and planning priorities for state DOTs, MPOs, and local agencies. While the provisions of the future authorization remain uncertain, many of the core principles that have guided recent federal transportation policy are expected to continue, including investments in transportation safety, infrastructure preservation, system resilience, freight mobility, economic competitiveness, multimodal transportation options, and accessibility for users of all ages and abilities.

Consistency with Statewide (WisDOT and IDOT) LRTP Goals

As the SLATS MPA includes communities in both Wisconsin and Illinois, it is important for the SLATS 2055 LRTP to be consistent with the statewide transportation planning priorities established by both WisDOT and IDOT. The SLATS LRTP goals and objectives support statewide priorities related to safety, economic vitality, mobility, quality of life, system preservation, environmental stewardship, resilience, accessibility, and multimodal transportation. Aligning regional priorities with statewide planning frameworks strengthens interagency coordination, supports consistency in project development and programming, and improves opportunities for implementation through future state and federal transportation funding programs. The following sections summarize the statewide long-range transportation planning context for WisDOT and IDOT.

WisDOT Statewide LRTP

WisDOT's current statewide LRTP, *Connect 2050*, was adopted in May 2022 and serves as the state's transportation policy framework through 2050. The plan establishes a long-term vision and a set of goals and objectives to guide transportation investment, policy, and decision-making across all modes. *Connect 2050* is organized around eight goals as summarized in **Table 1**. The *Connect 2050* vision is summarized below:

> *WisDOT envisions an integrated, multimodal transportation system that maximizes the safe and efficient movement of people and products throughout the state in a way that enhances economic productivity, transportation accessibility, and the quality of Wisconsin's communities while minimizing impacts to the natural environment and socioeconomic, historic, and cultural resources.*

IDOT Statewide LRTP

IDOT's current statewide LRTP, *Move Illinois: 2026*, serves as the state's comprehensive transportation policy framework and guides transportation investment and decision-making over the next 20 to 30 years. The plan integrates findings from numerous statewide modal and strategic transportation plans

and was developed through extensive public and stakeholder engagement across Illinois. *Move Illinois: 2026* is organized around six goals as summarized in **Table 1**. While the LRTP does not identify a formal vision statement, the project website states the following:

> *This long-term plan guides infrastructure investments, prioritize projects, and addresses anticipated challenges such as population growth, changing travel patterns, environmental concerns, and evolving transportation needs. Allowing IDOT to make informed decisions and create a sustainable, efficient transportation system that meets the needs of current and future generations.*

TABLE 1. WISDOT AND IDOT STATEWIDE LRTP GOALS

CONNECT 2050	MOVE ILLINOIS LRTP LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN
• **Sustainable Funding** – Ensure long-term transportation funding and fiscal sustainability. • **Partnerships & Collaboration** – Strengthen coordination among agencies, stakeholders, and communities. • **Data-Driven Decision Making** – Support performance-based planning and continuous improvement. • **Mobility & Connectivity** – Expand transportation options and improve movement of people and goods. • **Technology & Innovation** – Leverage technology to improve system performance and service delivery. • **Safety & Security** – Improve transportation safety and reduce fatalities and serious injuries. • **Resilience & Reliability** – Enhance system durability, reliability, and preparedness for disruptions. • **Environmental & Community Stewardship** – Balance transportation investments with environmental, cultural, and community values.	• **Economic Vitality** – Support economic growth through strategic multimodal transportation investments and efficient movement of people and goods. • **Equity & Inclusion** – Promote meaningful engagement and improve transportation outcomes for all residents and communities. • **Resilience** – Improve transportation system reliability and preparedness for climate-related and other disruptions. • **Livability & Accessibility** – Enhance quality of life through safe, efficient, accessible, and environmentally responsible transportation options. • **Mobility & Reliability** – Improve multimodal connectivity and the reliability of travel throughout the transportation system. • **Safety** – Reduce crashes, fatalities, and serious injuries through safer system design and user behavior improvements.

Source: WisDOT Statewide LRTP, https://www.wisdotplans.gov/plan/connect-2050
IDOT Statewide LRTP, https://moveil2024lrtp.com/
NOTE: Links current as of July 11, 2026.

Public Input Informing SLATS 2055 LRTP Goals and Objectives

Public input was an important consideration in establishing the SLATS 2055 LRTP goals and objectives. Throughout the planning process, SLATS conducted a variety of public engagement activities to better understand transportation needs, concerns, and priorities across the MPA. These activities included online surveys, an interactive mapping exercise, and a statistically valid survey. Together, these efforts provided qualitative and quantitative insights into the transportation issues most important to residents, businesses, and system users, helping establish a foundation for the SLATS 2055 LRTP goals and objectives.

Community Survey Input

An open-ended survey was available on the project website during February and early March 2026 to gather input on regional transportation issues and priorities. Forty-seven respondents provided comments in response to the question, "*What do you believe is the most important transportation issue facing the Stateline Area through the year 2055?*" The responses were used to help inform the development of the 2055 LRTP goals and objectives. **Figure 3** summarizes the key themes in a word cloud.

FIGURE 3. KEY THEMES FROM COMMUNITY SURVEY



Source: SLATS 2055 LRTP Community Survey; February/March 2026.

The responses indicate that congestion, roadway capacity, and regional connectivity are among the most significant concerns facing the Stateline Area. Respondents expressed concerns about increasing traffic volumes, travel delays, and the impacts of roadway lane reductions on mobility, while others emphasized the need for stronger connections between communities and improved access to regional destinations. Public transportation was also an important theme, particularly the need for reliable, affordable, and accessible transit services for residents who depend on transit to access jobs, healthcare, education, and other essential destinations.

Survey responses also highlighted the importance of transportation safety, bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, infrastructure maintenance, transportation affordability and accessibility, environmental considerations, and planning for future technologies. Many respondents supported expanding and connecting bicycle and pedestrian facilities, improving safety for all users, maintaining transportation

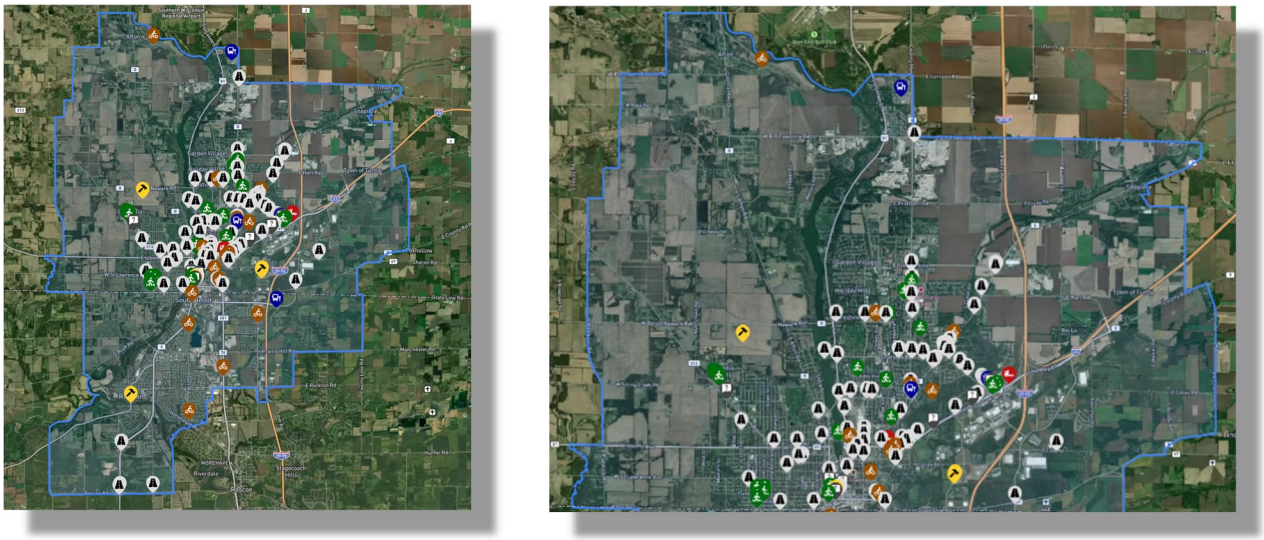
infrastructure in a state of good repair, and ensuring that residents have a variety of travel options. Collectively, these themes helped shape the LRTP goals and objectives by identifying opportunities to improve mobility, safety, accessibility, connectivity, system preservation, and overall quality of life throughout the region. A complete listing of responses is included in **Appendix A – Public & Stakeholder Engagement Summary**.

Online Mapping

The SLATSLRTP.com project website hosted an interactive online mapping exercise that allowed participants to place 'pins' on the map to identify and geographically locate transportation issues and concerns throughout the SLATS MPA. Participants placed a total of 154 markers and provided feedback across several transportation categories, with most markers related to roadway conditions and operations, followed by comments related to bicycling, walking, freight movement, transit, and growth and development issues.

The mapping exercise served two important purposes. First, it identified location-specific issues that informed technical analyses and project development efforts. Second, when reviewed collectively, the comments provided a regional perspective on the transportation issues and priorities most important to the public. These broader themes played an important role in informing the development of the SLATS 2055 LRTP goals and objectives. **Figure 4** displays the geographic distribution of comments submitted through the exercise (a zoomed in inset of the markers on the Wisconsin side of the MPA is provided for clarity). Additional details on the results can be found in **Appendix A – Public & Stakeholder Engagement Summary**.

FIGURE 4. SLATS 2055 LRTP ONLINE MAPPING RESULTS



Source: SLATS 2055 LRTP Online Mapping Exercise; February/March 2026.

Review of the comments identified several recurring themes. Concerns regarding roadway condition were the most frequently cited issue on both the Wisconsin and Illinois sides of the MPA, indicating a strong public preference for maintaining and preserving existing infrastructure. Participants also frequently identified traffic operations concerns, including signal timing, intersection performance, turning movements, and localized bottlenecks. These comments tend to support a preference for the efficient management of the existing transportation system assets.

Safety-related concerns were another common theme. Although not always identified directly, many comments referenced speeding, deteriorated pavement conditions, difficult driving conditions, and stressful intersections, all of which point to broader concerns related to transportation safety and more efficient traffic operations. Respondents also expressed a strong preference for maintaining and improving existing facilities before pursuing major system expansion projects.

In addition, the mapping exercise highlighted the importance of coordination across jurisdictional and state boundaries. Comments related to travel between Illinois and Wisconsin emphasized the need for a connected and well-coordinated transportation system throughout the Stateline region. This theme is particularly important within the SLATS MPA and supports goals related to regional connectivity, collaboration, and improving overall system performance.

Overall, the online mapping exercise reinforced the importance of infrastructure preservation, safety, operational efficiency, and regional connectivity, all of which were key considerations in establishing the 2055 LRTP goals and objectives. A complete listing of the online mapping responses is included in **Appendix A – Public & Stakeholder Engagement Summary**.

Statistically Valid SLATS MPA Survey



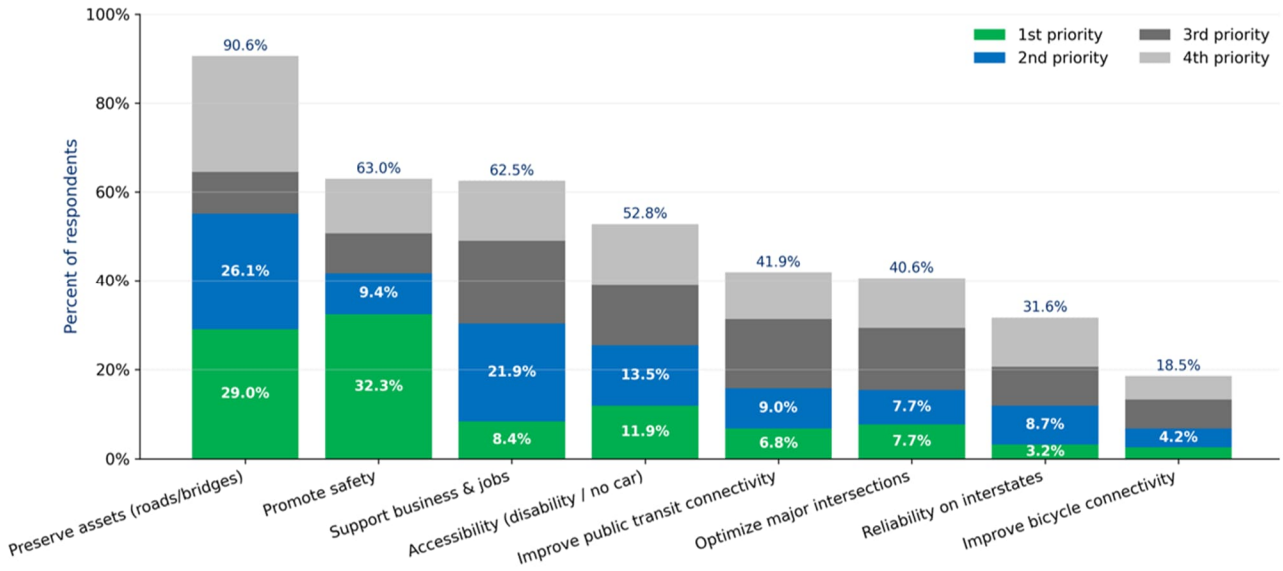
To support the development of the 2055 LRTP, SLATS conducted a statistically valid public opinion survey in March 2026 to better understand regional transportation priorities and investment preferences. A total of 310 completed surveys were collected, exceeding the target of 300 responses and providing a representative assessment of transportation priorities across the SLATS MPA. The survey results were used to help inform the development of the 2055 LRTP goals and objectives by identifying the transportation issues residents believe should receive the greatest emphasis over the next 25 years.

Survey respondents were asked to identify the transportation issues that should be the highest priorities for the Stateline Area. The results indicate strong support for maintaining and improving the existing transportation system, enhancing safety, and supporting economic development. As shown in **Figure 5**, preserving transportation assets, such as roads and bridges, was identified as a top-four priority by 90.6 percent of respondents. Promoting safety (63.0 percent) and supporting business and job growth (62.5 percent) ranked as the next highest priorities, followed by improving accessibility for individuals with disabilities and those without access to a vehicle (52.8 percent).

The survey findings demonstrate a clear preference for preserving existing infrastructure before expanding the transportation system. Preservation of transportation assets was identified by more than nine out of ten respondents and ranked substantially higher than any other priority area. Safety also emerged as a major focus area, with 32.3 percent of respondents selecting it as their single highest transportation priority, the highest share of any category.

Overall, the survey results suggest that residents place the greatest importance on maintaining transportation infrastructure, improving safety, supporting economic vitality, and ensuring transportation accessibility for all users. These priorities provided important direction for the development of the SLATS 2055 LRTP goals and objectives.

FIGURE 5. STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY RESULTS: TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT 25 YEARS



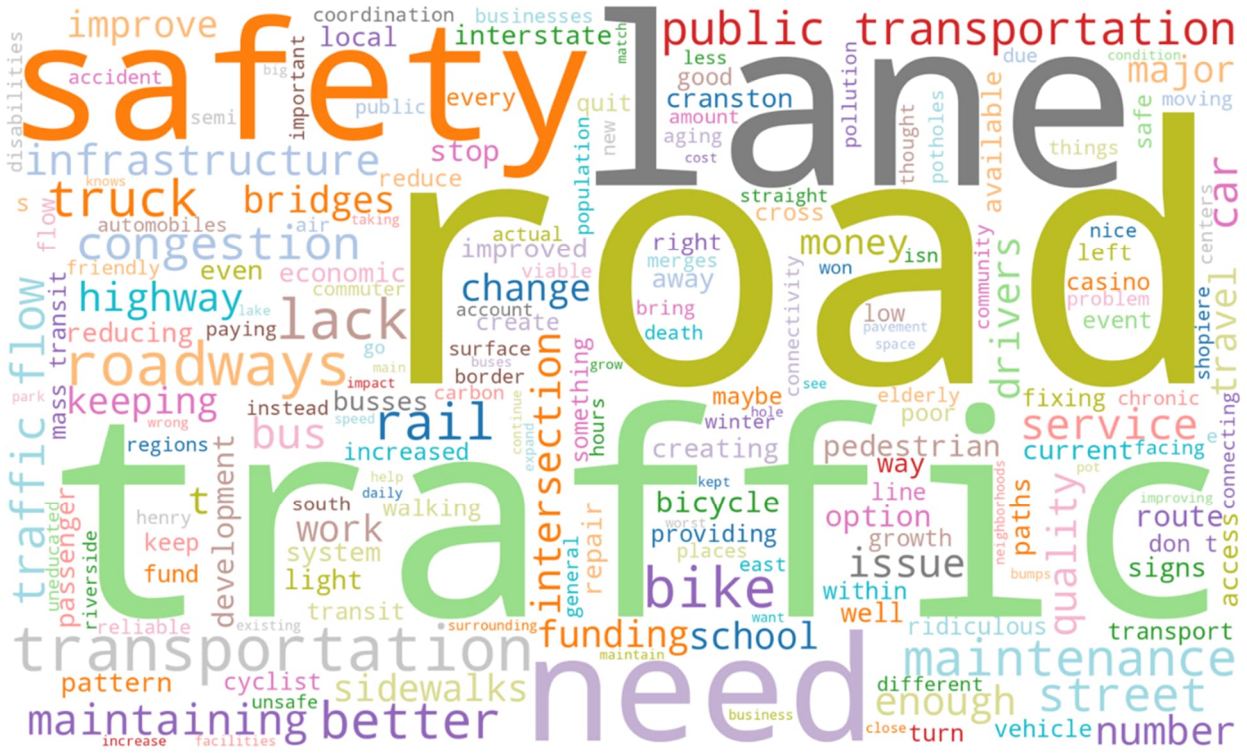
Source: SLATS 2055 LRTP Statically Valid Survey, ETC Institute – March 2026.

In addition to the priority-ranking questions, the statistically valid survey included an open-ended question asking respondents, "What is the most important transportation issue or challenge facing the area through 2055?" A total of 183 respondents provided comments. Review of these responses identified several recurring themes, including aging and deteriorating roads and bridges, growing traffic congestion, transportation safety concerns, uncertainty regarding future transportation funding, and gaps in transit service and regional connectivity. Many respondents also noted that these challenges affect the reliability of the transportation system and limit access to employment, healthcare, education, and other essential destinations. **Figure 6** presents a word cloud summarizing the most frequently cited themes from the open-ended responses.

The statistically valid survey findings reinforced many of the priorities identified through other public engagement activities and planning efforts. Infrastructure preservation, transportation safety, accessibility and mobility, economic vitality, regional connectivity, and sustainable transportation funding consistently emerged as key themes. Together, the survey results provided a strong, data-driven foundation for the development of the SLATS 2055 LRTP goals and objectives and helped ensure that the plan reflects the transportation needs and priorities of the region's residents.

A complete summary of the responses to the open-ended survey question is provided in ***SLATS 2026 Transportation Survey Findings Report*** **(March 2026)**.

FIGURE 6. FREQUENTLY IDENTIFIED TRANSPORTATION ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FROM OPEN-ENDED SURVEY RESPONSES



Source: SLATS 2055 LRTP Statically Valid Survey, ETC Institute – March 2026. Summary of open-ended comments.

SLATS Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Policy Board Review

The SLATS TAC and Policy Board reviewed draft 2055 LRTP goals and objectives at a joint meeting on April 7, 2026. During the meeting, the project team presented the proposed goals and objectives and provided committee members with an opportunity to discuss and comment. The presentation included a discussion of recent FHWA guidance related to key planning factors and how the proposed goals and objectives were updated to reflect current federal priorities. These updates included the incorporation of housing-related considerations and minor refinements to ensure consistency with current planning guidance. The TAC and Policy Board expressed support for the proposed goals and objectives, and no questions or concerns were raised regarding proposed revisions to respond to the FHWA-related updates.

Following the meeting, TAC and Policy Board members were provided with an additional one-week review period to submit comments, questions, or recommended modifications for consideration in finalizing the goals and objectives. No additional comments were received during the review period.

SLATS 2055 LRTP Goals and Objectives

Table 2 summarizes the SLATS 2055 LRTP goals and objectives.

TABLE 2. SLATS 2055 LRTP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals	Objectives
1) Economic Vitality – Prioritize transportation investments that foster regional economic development opportunities.	a) Coordinate transportation, land use, and economic development planning across the state line. b) Develop a transportation system to enhance access to local and regional employment centers. c) Maintain and improve existing transportation links to central business districts within the MPA. d) Improve access to major tourist destinations, including roadways, bicycling, and public transportation.
2) System Preservation – Strategically support and strengthen existing local and regional transportation assets.	a) Strive for sufficient budgetary resources to maintain the existing transportation infrastructure. b) Where possible, enhance the system efficiency of existing travel corridors as opposed to adding new roadway capacity. c) Utilize emerging technology to increase the efficiency of the existing regional transportation system. d) Improve the resilience of the regional transportation system to minimize service disruptions and to quickly recover when they occur.
3) Mobility and Accessibility – Develop a comprehensive, multimodal system that enhances mobility and accessibility for all transportation users.	a) Enhance connectivity and access in the regional roadway network to facilitate reliable travel conditions. b) Enhance transit connectivity and accessibility within the Stateline Area. c) Expand the bicycle and pedestrian system to improve regional connectivity with a particular focus on enhancements to the multi-use trail system. d) Support the development of complete streets which incorporate appropriate transit, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations into roadway improvements. e) Advance regional transit planning, including passenger rail service, to identify opportunities to connect to Rockford, Janesville, Madison, Chicago and Milwaukee.
4) Safety and Security – Improve transportation safety and security throughout the region.	a) Minimize crash exposure within the Stateline Area with an emphasis on reducing fatalities and serious injuries. b) Consider all system users (cyclists, transit users, pedestrians, motorists, freight carriers) when planning, designing and constructing transportation facilities. c) Support public education to promote safe transportation behavior.
5) Environmentally Friendly – Promote transportation investments that preserve and protect the environment.	a) Support transportation system investments that preserve open space and natural amenities, adequately accommodate stormwater runoff, and enhance connections to these regional assets. b) Proactively evaluate, and minimize, the environmental impacts of proposed transportation improvements within the region. c) Identify and expand transportation options that reduce automobile travel and/or promote energy conservation.
6) Healthy Neighborhoods – Provide well-connected, sustainable neighborhoods that enhance quality of life.	a) Facilitate the efficient, effective movement of freight through the region to minimize the negative impacts on residential neighborhoods. b) Support mixed-use, transit-oriented developments that encourage walkable, connected neighborhoods that provide an alternative to driving.
7) Land Use Integration – Strengthen the integration between land use and transportation initiatives to promote transportation system efficiency.	a) Integrate transportation planning with regional land use and housing strategies to improve access to housing, reduce transportation cost burdens, and support sustainable community development. b) When appropriate, identify and plan for corridor preservation to accommodate future year capacity needs. c) Plan the transportation system to encourage contiguous development consistent with smart growth principles.
8) Access and Opportunity – Enhance access to jobs, services, education, healthcare, housing, and other important destinations for all residents, workers, and visitors.	a) Engage residents, workers, businesses, and community organizations throughout the transportation planning process to identify and address barriers to accessing jobs, services, and essential destinations. b) Prioritize multimodal transportation investments that improve access to jobs, healthcare, education, housing, and other essential destinations, particularly for traditionally underserved populations.