

Chapter 4: Evaluation of Needs and Policy Direction

Planning for regional transit in the six-county area is vital to the movement of people within and outside the region and requires coordination beyond the Greater Bi-State Region boundaries. Planning will frame strategies to meet future mobility needs and strengthen the urban-rural interface. The Transit Accessibility Analysis found in this chapter is a data-informed examination of need and highlights areas and populations that may face barriers to mobility. Decisions made by individual transportation providers will affect capabilities to provide mobility choices in the region as well as to neighboring areas in eastern Iowa and western Illinois. Coordination will be an important strategy to foster efficient and effective transportation options. Both policy and fiscal decisions will have ramifications on how the region performs at meeting transit demands. This chapter examines these needs, financial limitations, and policy directions that are necessary to optimize resources and provide adequate transportation services.

Review of Efforts

The following is a review of the recent transit efforts in the Greater Bi-State Region, including capital investments, management and personnel efforts, and services that have recently altered transit in the region. Priorities identified in Chapter 5 are evaluated annually for their outcomes based on the categories in this chapter of the plan and whether projects have been completed, delayed, deleted, and/or shifted in priority, either moving ahead or back in project timing.

Equipment and Facilities

The City of Bettendorf houses administrative, operational, and maintenance functions of the Transit Division at their Public Works facility. Bus maintenance is completed by city mechanics, and dispatch functions are handled

by Public Works Operations Coordinators. The facility also includes a fueling island, a vehicle wash, and indoor parking for the fleet of 5 buses that was replaced in July 2024.

Since Davenport CitiBus and MetroLINK have shifted from a shared maintenance and storage facility to individual facilities, the City of Davenport consolidated administrative, operational, and maintenance functions into one facility. Construction was completed on an addition to the Davenport Public Works facility in 2015 that now houses the transit division's administrative offices and driver areas. Construction of a fleet storage facility has also been completed, as are renovations at Public Works for the bus fleet maintenance and repair area.

MetroLINK operates a 110,000-square-foot Operations and Maintenance Center that houses fleet maintenance, operations, and administrative functions in a single integrated facility. The building, which was completed in 2014, was designed to support efficient day-to-day operations and accommodate the needs of a modern transit fleet. The building layout prioritizes workflow and safety, including a counter-clockwise bus circulation pattern that reduces unnecessary vehicle movements and radiant in-floor heating in the maintenance area to maintain consistent working conditions during colder months. The facility also incorporates design features intended to improve long-term operational performance and reduce ongoing facility costs. These include on-site solar generation that offsets a portion of the building's electrical demand, a water reclamation system that reduces potable water use in the bus wash process, and stormwater management infrastructure that helps control runoff on the site. Durable roofing materials, high-efficiency mechanical systems, and thoughtful facility layout were selected to support long-term

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reliability and reduce maintenance needs over the life of the building.

Automated vehicle locator (AVL) technology has been deployed by the three urban Quad Cities fixed-route systems for numerous years. The technology improves service efficiency and quality for riders. Riders are able to obtain arrival and departure times for their routes at any time via numerous different formats, including through apps that can be downloaded on smartphones. Smartphone apps are able to display real-time locations of buses throughout the network, and can offer real-time information on specific routes and runs. The systems have also been linked to Google Transit, allowing online users to view bus routes and estimate travel times in Google Maps.

MuscaBus, although an urban fixed-route system, does not have all the capabilities that the urban Quad Cities fixed-route systems do. MuscaBus' system is equipped with AVL technology, which is used internally for tracking and operational efficiency. However, a public-facing smartphone application for riders to view real-time bus locations is currently under development, but not yet available. As for other equipment and facility items, MuscaBus is located within the Muscatine Public Works building. The facility houses bus storage, a maintenance shop, an administrative office, and the dispatching center.

Management, Training, and Marketing of Services

Bi-State Regional Commission hosts multiple transit summits annually throughout the region. Transit summits were established to gather input from the public, human and social service agencies, demand response, and urban fixed-route transit services found within the region. Region-specific questions were asked in order to identify the extent of service needs and gaps, how to increase regional coordination efforts, create awareness of unmet needs, prioritization strategies, and to address desirable future transportation investments. Notes from each of the meetings listed above may be found in Appendix C.

It is important to note that although the Quad Cities summit was held on the Illinois side, information requested and gathered was in regard to the Quad Cities Region as a whole. Bi-State will hold a Quad Cities transit summit annually, switching between Iowa and Illinois, in an effort to gather public input continuously. Individuals invited are representatives from the human service industry and transportation field, and are listed as part of Bi-State's Regional Transit Interest and Advisory Group (RTIAG). A sample flyer that was distributed to the RTIAG is included in Appendix C.

Bi-State Regional Commission continues to maintain www.qctransit.org, a web portal that allows riders to connect to the individual websites of QC transit systems and informs the public on new services and events. The web portal also complements ongoing efforts by transit systems to promote air quality through transit use.

Bi-State staff also attends and hosts human services coordination meetings to gauge needs from underserved populations. Bi-State Regional Commission's Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) Coordinator will continue to work with both the urban and regional transit systems on public education and outreach efforts. For more information on the HSTP Coordinator's role, refer to Chapter 3.

Services

Whiteside County Public Transportation has established several service contracts for transportation services including with the local Regional Office of Education, CGH Hospital, Northern Illinois Cancer Treatment Center, Sinnissippi Mental Health, Tri-County Foster Grandparents Program, and Sterling Township. Due to the merger of Whiteside County Public Transportation with Reagan Mass Transit, it is uncertain if these service contracts will resume. Expanding transit service to underserved peripheral areas presents inherent tradeoffs, as lower-density development patterns typically result in higher operating costs and lower ridership productivity. As a result, any service expansion must be grounded in a careful evaluation of costs,

anticipated demand, and long-term sustainability. Key considerations include the type and intensity of planned growth, projected population density, and the locations of existing and planned trip generators. MetroLINK has begun to explore flexible service models as one approach to addressing these challenges. Since 2019, the agency has operated a micro-transit service in the Village of Milan, providing an on-demand, shared-ride option that complements the existing fixed-route network. This service allows for more efficient coverage in lower-density areas by dynamically grouping passengers and tailoring service to real-time demand within a defined zone.

Building on this experience, MetroLINK will soon undertake a comprehensive transit system study to evaluate the overall structure and performance of the network. This effort will assess the feasibility of alternative service designs, including grid-based networks and feeder services that connect residential areas to key transfer points and activity centers. The study will identify opportunities to improve connectivity, better align service with existing and future travel patterns, and ensure that any expansion strategies are both operationally efficient and responsive to community needs. Other types of service, such as commuter and “feeder” routes, could be provided through a variety of methods, such as Specialized Transportation Services (STS), taxi services, or volunteer driver services. These services are viable alternatives for connecting residential areas to transfer points. Potential trips could connect to Centre Station, East Pointe, and the Rock Island District Station via major rural-designated corridors.

The implementation of rural medical trip days to the urbanized area could improve the connection to health care facilities for populations that are geographically distant from them. Dependent upon the location, some expanded rural service could include the development of Park and Ride lots and/or new shelter placement. Dispersed medical office locations throughout the region decrease the efficiency of providing medical-specific trips.

The Iowa DOT developed a *Park and Ride System Plan* in 2014 that updated the existing inventory and identified additional suitable locations for park and ride facilities and strategies for implementation. The plan identified two candidate locations for park and ride facilities in Davenport to facilitate cross-river travel. Eventually, the DOT established a facility at Thunder Bay Grill on North Brady Street (U.S. 61).

The Iowa DOT also established the Iowa Ride-share website to match ride seekers with potential drivers. All Iowa public transit providers are in the Iowa Rideshare program, but public transit providers outside of Iowa would need to enroll in the program.

Public Input

Public input for the 2026 *Bi-State Region Transit Development Plan* has been provided through the following activities:

- 2025 Update of the Specialized Transportation Service Inventory
- Ongoing informational meetings in Mercer, Rock Island, and Whiteside Counties
- Monthly meetings of the Urban Transportation Technical and Policy Committees
- Quarterly meetings of the MPA Transit Managers
- Quarterly meetings of the Region 9 Transportation Technical and Policy Committees
- Quarterly meetings of the Region 2 Transit Advisory Committee
- Quarterly meetings of the RICO Rural Transit Advisory Board
- Public input meetings for the 2055 Long Range Transportation Plan
- Regional Transit Summits
- April 25, 2024 – East Moline Public Library
- April 17, 2024 – Muscatine Consortium Group
- June 2, 2025 – Davenport Main Library

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- June 30, 2025 – Virtual
- March 26, 2026 – Centre Station
- June 2026 R9 Summit

The public is always invited to attend the regional and urbanized Transportation Technical and Policy Committee meetings to provide input on any agenda topics or miscellaneous items. Bi-State Regional Commission also welcomes any questions and or comments in regard to public transit in the region to be directed to their offices throughout the year.

Public transit providers and Bi-State staff also have public opportunities through daily business calls, personal contacts, and cyclical or special meetings. A full listing of public input opportunities and data collected through surveys, workshops, and service reports is included in Appendix C.

Whenever requested, staff members also meet with human service agencies offering client-based transportation services to identify particular services and gaps that may be unmet.

Common Transit Issues

The following are common transit issues identified by the various public input opportunities throughout the region:

- 1. Extended hours and days of service**
 - In the Iowa Quad Cities, both fixed-route urban systems operate until 7:00 p.m. on weekdays. Davenport CitiBus and Bettendorf Transit implemented new schedules as a result of route analyses, and concluded that service could be extended to evenings and weekends. Currently, CitiBus operates Saturday service 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., while Bettendorf Transit provides Saturday service from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Neither service operates on Sunday.

In 2013, Whiteside County expanded its service hours from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday to 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. to cater to consumers

occupying a traditional work day ranging from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Henry County has similar hours from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. In the rural areas, weekend service has not currently been identified as in high demand.

Providing service to those who may not work traditional work hours in both the rural and urban areas has been identified as a barrier for users. Those working in the restaurant and or/retail business as well as third shift, may begin or end work well after operating hours. Concern has risen for frequent riders who may be required to work mandatory overtime, exceeding the transit services' normal hours of operation. Suggestions of establishing contracted services with local taxi providers, guaranteeing a ride to or from work under such circumstances, has been suggested to alleviate some higher costs that are associated with taking private transportation.

- 2. Greater geographic coverage** – This item directly correlates with coordination efforts made within the region. In some cases, a greater geographic area can be covered through more extensive coordination between different transit services. There is a gap in service between urban and rural areas where trips are often needed for medical or human service appointments, as well as service to major employment sites. Map 4.1 depicts employers with more than 100 employees with areas of higher concentrations of households with no vehicle, low household income, and population in the labor force. Coordination efforts between the rural and urban parts of the region have significantly increased, allowing riders to commute efficiently from outlying areas into the urban area. Medical visits to larger health facilities in Iowa City, Peoria, or Rockford are difficult for riders due to

the extended services areas of regional transit systems. These services are often only offered weekly or monthly.

Local and state jurisdictional boundaries also serve as a barrier to covering a larger geographic coverage for some transit services. Consumers shared their concern and confusion about not being able to cross state or county borders using one transit service. However, due to state funding, in some instances transit systems are unable to travel into other state's jurisdiction. Davenport Citi-Bus provides a cross-boundary service between Davenport and Bettendorf and Rock Island, allowing riders to go from the origin in one city to a destination in the other city without having to transfer at the city boundaries. Bettendorf Transit also serves Centre Station in Moline.

3. Funding and resources for providers

– Historically, transit agencies noted a lack of sufficient resources to meet the needs of the public. However, federal legislation since 2020 has provided transit providers adequate financial resources to weather the significant uncertainties and drop in ridership caused directly by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through Federal infusions of funding from the CARES Act (2020), CRRSAA (2020), and ARPA (2021), on top of expanded appropriations through IIJA¹, transit agencies have experienced unprecedented support in the form of federal funding.

These funds will help address the backlog of maintenance issues, ensuring a state of good repair for years to come. However, challenges remain due to supply chain issues and inflation. Deliveries of new buses and other equipment can be delayed months or even years. Agencies must continue utilizing ageing vehicles running up against their useful life benchmarks until the

new vehicles are delivered. Inflation, likewise, has had a large impact on rolling stock. The cost of new vehicles has increased dramatically since the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in agencies struggling to afford to replace ageing vehicles. The effect is that the vehicle fleets are running longer and increasing maintenance costs that are imposed by the delayed deliveries and inflation. In a survey of transportation providers conducted for the 2026 TDP, half of the agencies surveyed indicated that a lack of adequate funding, especially for specialized services, was among the biggest issues facing public transportation in the region.

4. Non-emergency medical transportation

– Transportation to medical appointments has been identified as a need at public input meetings and survey responses for numerous iterations of the TDP. In a survey conducted for the 2026 TDP, 38% of total respondents indicated that they are currently unable to take public transit to medical appointments. As mentioned, transit providers are also receiving an increasing number of requests for medical trips outside of the Greater Bi-State Region to hospitals and specialists in Iowa City, Peoria, and Rockford. Trips can be lengthy, and there is added difficulty in coordinating trips for multiple passengers with multiple appointment times, lengths, and locations. Whiteside County Public Transportation provides service to medical facilities in Rockford, Illinois upon request. Henry County Public Transportation also provides periodic trips to the Illinois Quad Cities, Galesburg, and Peoria based on demand. These extended trips were paused during the COVID-19 pandemic, but have since restarted. Riders are sometimes unable to access medical specialists in these extended service

1 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021

areas due to scheduling conflicts between their doctors and the public transit agency.

In 2016, River Bend Transit began offering twice-daily service from Davenport to Iowa City. The route served major medical facilities in Iowa City. In addition, as time allowed, buses remain available to riders at no additional charge for other trips throughout the day. Service was introduced at \$10 per ride, but was reduced to \$5 per ride. However, service was discontinued in 2018 due to grant funds being exhausted and not enough ridership to justify the service.

Privacy rights and passenger health must also be considered when implementing new programs. In 2010, the Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa Medicaid Enterprise (IME), contracted with TMS Management Group, now known as Access2Care. The service offers to arrange free transportation (such as to medical appointments or therapy treatments) to Medicaid recipients within the State of Iowa. Trips may be made out of the state if that is what the patient needs.

- 5. Affordability** – Although fares have been described as reasonably priced on fixed-route systems within the urbanized area, specialized transit or trips outside of current routes can be costly to individuals with low or fixed incomes. Affordability was a major concern in discussions with human service agency staff and on responses to the human service agency and community surveys. Fare increases have a much larger impact among the vulnerable populations that the agencies serve. Some agencies offer tokens or passes to their customers that allow them to ride transit at half the cost of regular fares.

Efforts have been initiated to make services more affordable for a wider range

of demographics. Contracting with local schools and colleges has encouraged more students to use public transit. Davenport CitiBus has contracted with the Davenport Community School District allowing students to utilize the public transit system year-round for free when showing a student ID. Some human service agencies have agreements with the City of Davenport to provide free bus tokens for their clients, allowing them to utilize CitiBus for medical or job training purposes. Some agencies have expressed that they would like to see this kind of service expanded for vulnerable populations.

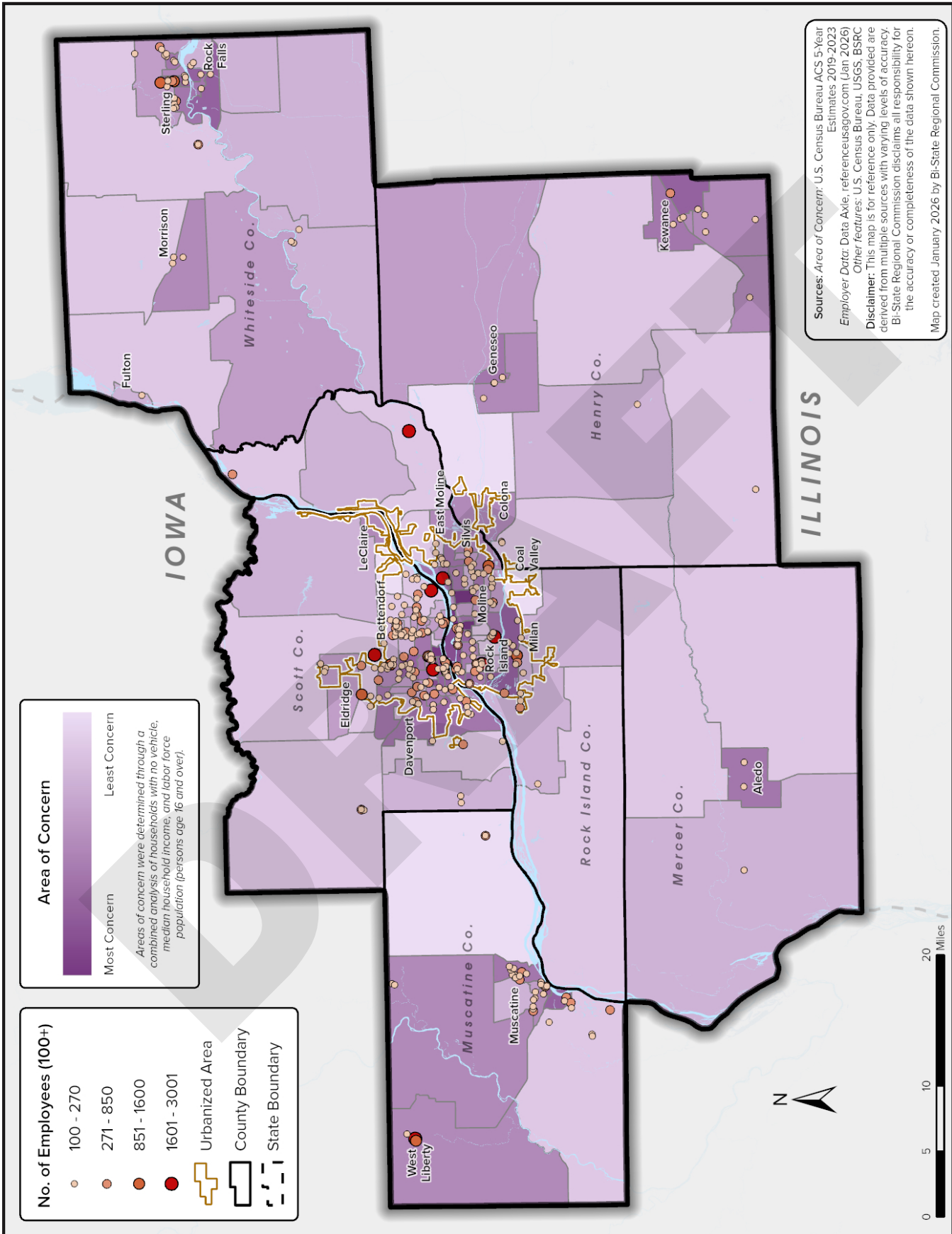
- 6. Transit-friendly infrastructure** – As the built environment is indelibly linked to the efficacy of efficient public transportation, it is imperative that development in the Greater Quad Cities region is done with an eye toward sustainability and with infrastructure that is compatible with transit operations. Infrastructure within the region has long been built with little consideration for public transit. Transit systems have expressed concern that public transportation is often not addressed until after a new development is complete. Transit drivers in these developments may be faced with limited turning radii and, in some cases, are not provided access to private properties. Having minimal sidewalk access leading up to a bus stop may also result in fewer riders due to inaccessibility and inconvenience.
- 7. Issues of jurisdiction when crossing city, county, or state boundaries** – Attendees at public input meetings and respondents on input surveys described an invisible barrier created by state and municipal boundaries in the urbanized area and county boundaries in rural areas throughout the region. In rural areas, residents in outlying towns bordering county boundaries are often underserved. A provider in a

nearby county may have the capability to provide less expensive service, but is unable or unwilling to cross county boundaries to do so, and existing providers within the county may not be able to provide service to outlying areas of the county with less demand for services. Occasionally, issues pertaining to funding and funding sources prohibit certain vehicles from crossing state lines. Often though, rural carriers may service a trip that either begins or ends in the host county. In a two-state region, this can result in coordination issues.

8. Drivers and volunteers – A common barrier for transit providers who are looking to lower operating costs is the difficulty in using volunteer drivers. Providers are constrained by extensive training and insurance issues that may often outweigh the benefit of utilizing volunteers. Immediately following the COVID-19 pandemic, hiring new drivers proved to be difficult and time-consuming in a competitive labor market not conducive to slow-moving hiring and certification processes.

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Table 4.1 – Accessibility to Employment



Sources: Area of Concern: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates 2019-2023
 Employer Data: Data Axle, referenceusagov.com (Jan 2026)
 Other Features: U.S. Census Bureau, USGS, BSRC
 Disclaimer: This map is for reference only. Data provided are derived from multiple sources with varying levels of accuracy. Bi-State Regional Commission disclaims all responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the data shown hereon.
 Map created January 2026 by Bi-State Regional Commission.

Specialized & Regional Service Needs & Strategies

Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities

With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), fixed-route transit providers are required to provide paratransit service for all persons unable to ride the fixed-route system because of a disability. The Cities of Bettendorf and Davenport contract this service with River Bend Transit. Bettendorf offers a dial-a-ride program open to the general public as well as people with disabilities located more than two blocks from a fixed route. The Davenport program requires verification of disability through an application and card identification process. Trips are then requested by reservation once an application is on file. MetroLINK offers similar paratransit service for the Illinois side of the Quad Cities. River Bend Transit upholds the policy not to deny trip requests and will maintain an appropriate number of lift-equipped vehicles to meet the demand. This policy applies to ADA “blue card” holders only; non-ADA rides are accommodated so long as there is “time and space available.” In Muscatine, MuscaBus offers a reservation service for paratransit.

Maps 4.2-4.4 display areas with a higher density of seniors, individuals with a disability, and households without access to a vehicle by census tract, as well as regional service centers, medical providers, and social service centers. Unsurprisingly, the majority of these service centers are located in the urbanized area. However, the maps also indicate that areas such as rural Rock Island County, southwest and eastern Muscatine County, western and northeast Scott County, southern White-side and Henry Counties, and rural areas of Mercer County may be underserved by fixed-route and/or demand-response public transportation. These areas, according to Census data, have a higher density of residents without vehicles, with disabilities, and seniors. In addition, maps included in Appendix B display the most frequently traveled trips of human service agencies and nonprofit organizations by county. Efforts are ongoing to enhance service and/or coordinated services between public transit systems and human service agencies providing client transportation.

Table 4.2 – Mobility Options with Regional Service Centers

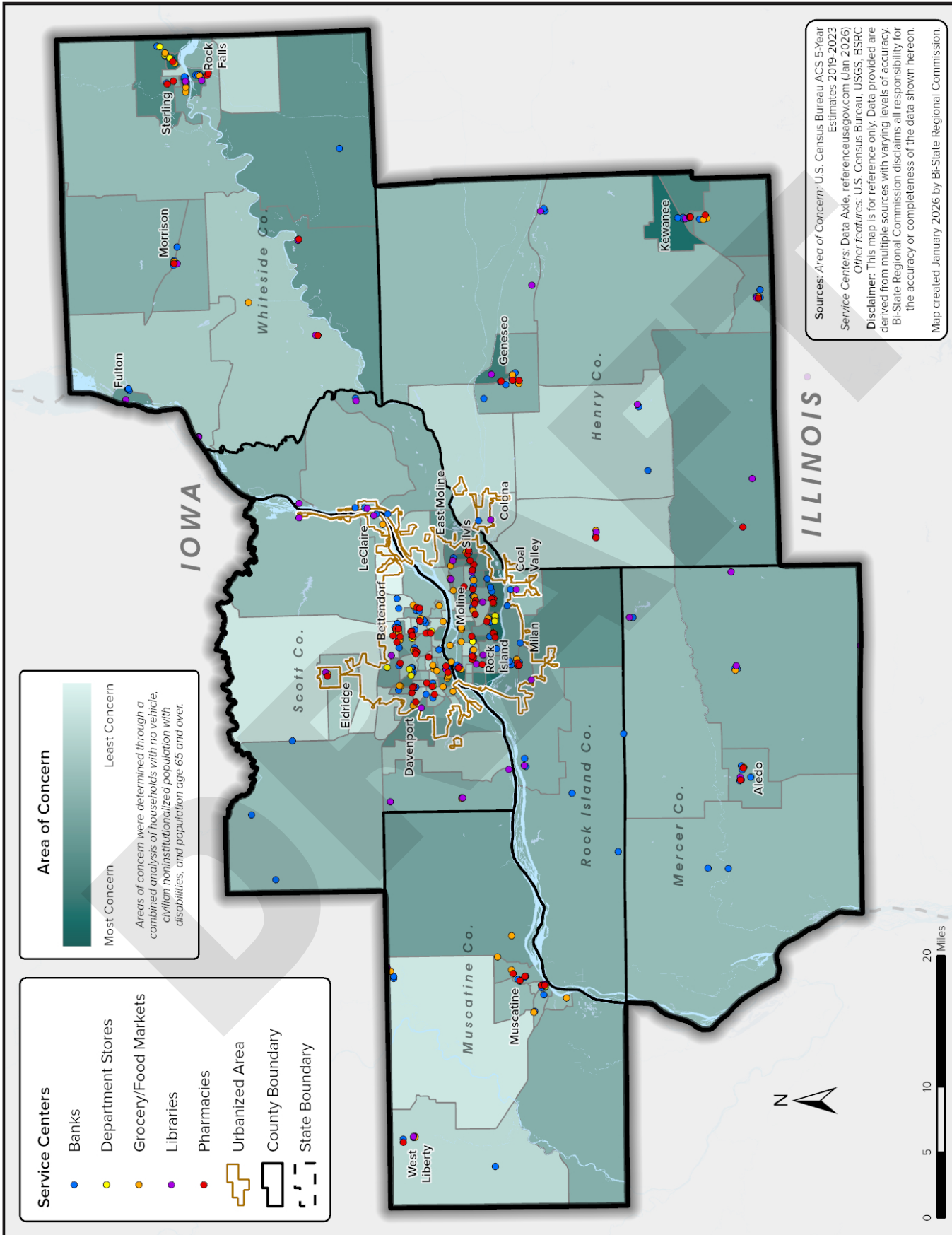


Table 4.3 – Mobility Options with Medical Providers and Services

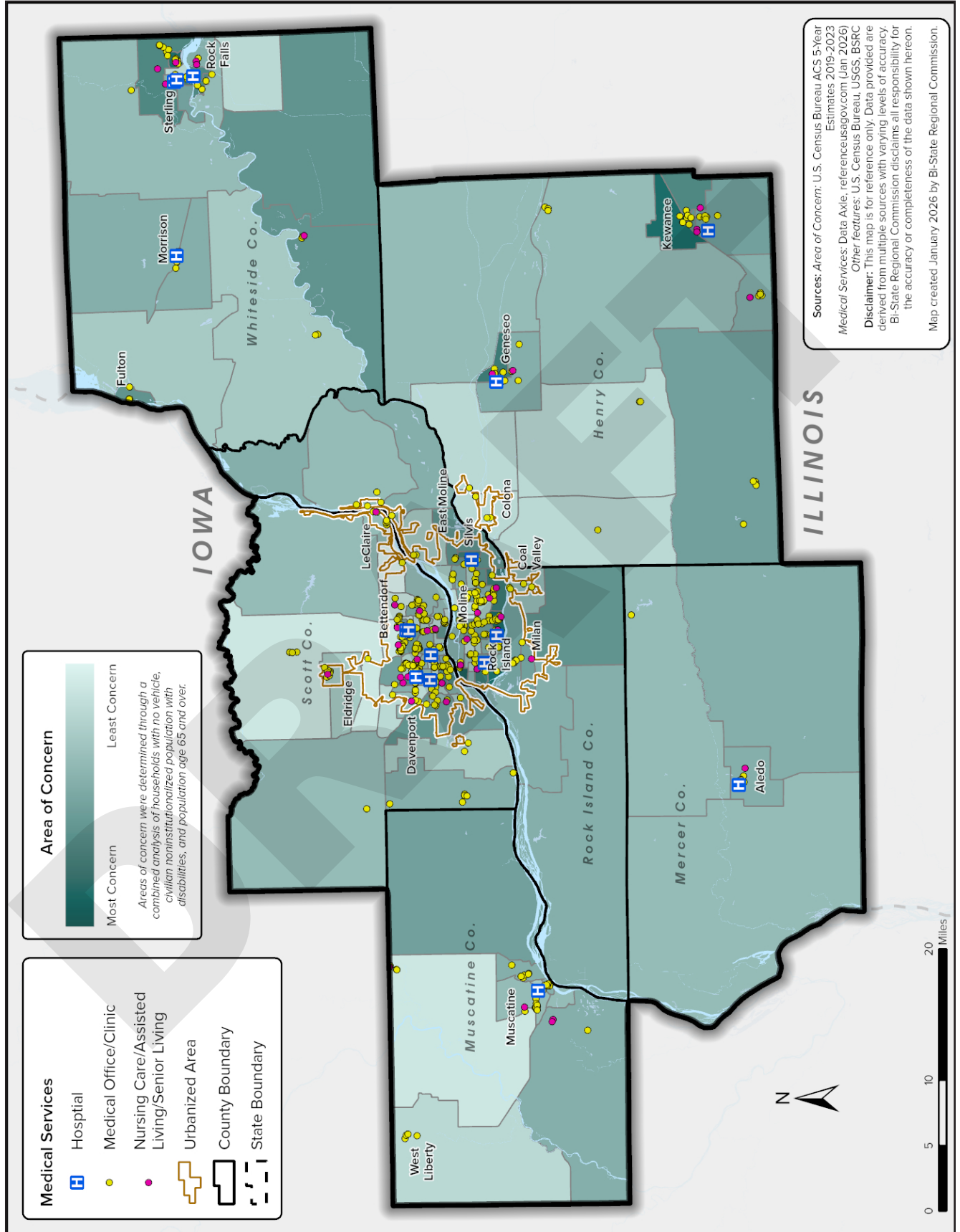
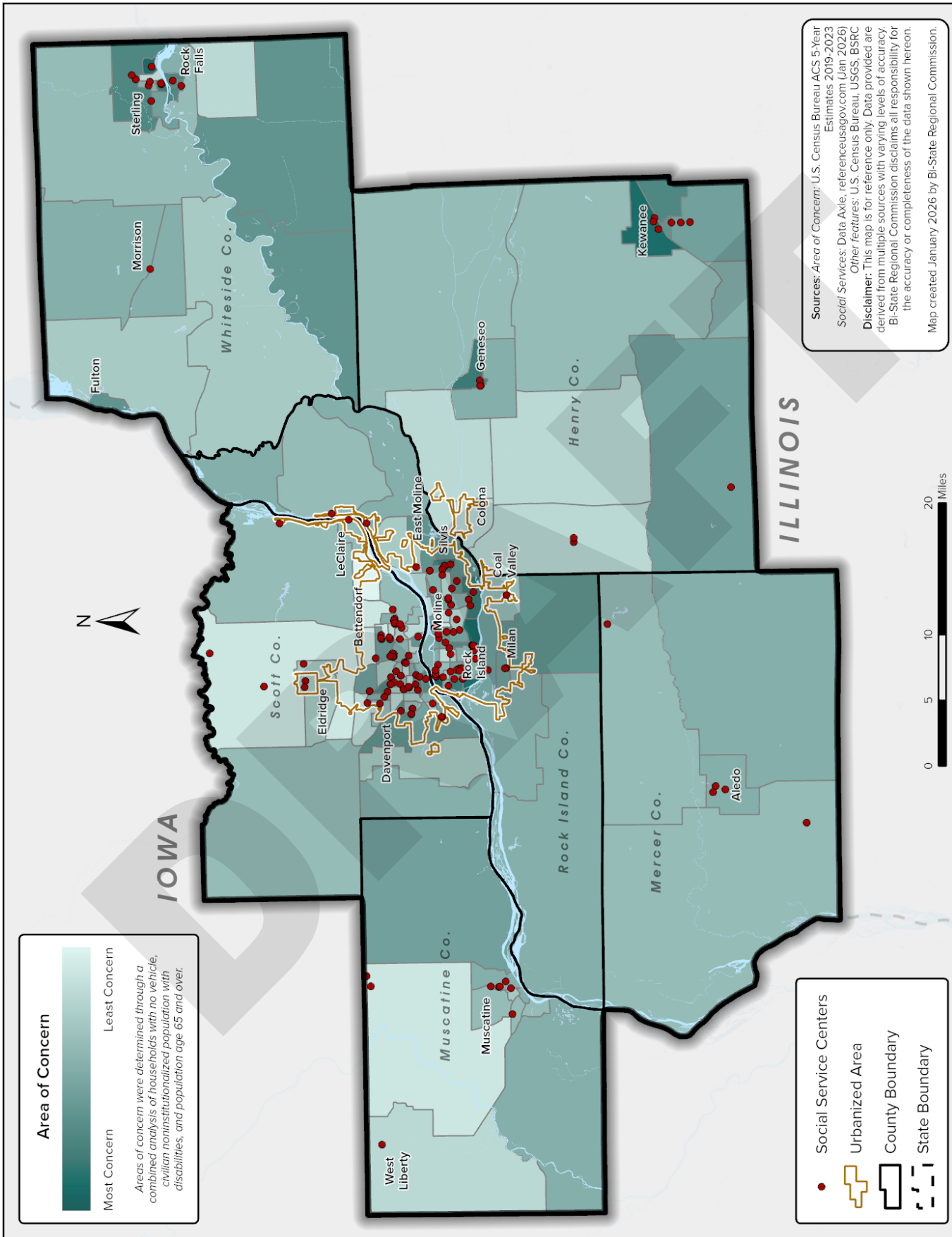


Table 4.4 – Mobility Options with Social Service Centers



Transit Accessibility Analysis

Between 2023-2026, Bi-State Regional Commission staff collected data from myriad sources detailing various transportation, demographic, and economic information on the Greater Bi-State Region for the purposes of analyzing the regional transit network. As noted elsewhere throughout this plan, mobility in the region can seem to riders like a patchwork of different systems that may not interconnect. Transfers between systems may necessitate advanced forethought and logistics to link multiple vehicles for a single, one-way trip. Education on available transit services will help alleviate some issues of familiarity and what transit service in the region does and can offer.

As noted elsewhere, rural and urban public transportation look and function differently, but the purpose is the same: to get people to where they need to go. It is understood that all areas of the Greater Bi-State Region cannot be served by public transportation equally, and that practical and logistical challenges prevent some populations from benefiting from transit service more than others. However, it is the responsibility of the various systems to serve as broad a clientele as possible for the public good.

For purposes of this plan, this transit accessibility analysis provides insight into areas and populations that may or may not be served adequately by public transportation. The GIS (geographic information systems) based analysis evaluates demographic and economic data against transit network realities. Transit routes, bus arrival times, and pedestrian accessibility are included in the transit dataset. All three fixed-route systems in the urban Quad Cities are “flag down service,” meaning that a rider can stand in a safe location anywhere along a bus route and request the bus to stop.

Demographic data were largely retrieved from the 2020 U.S. Census and American Community Survey 5-year estimates from 2019-2023. Demographic analysis was conducted on overall population estimates, along with racial and household income estimates at the

census block group level to highlight populations that may depend on public transportation more than the rest of the general public. Three demographic variables—households below the poverty level, households without access to a vehicle, and households with 1+ persons with disability—are weighted to create the composite index, which provides an indication of areas of higher need. Maps 4.5 – 4.12 show the composite index and the results of the three individual variables for the Muscatine and Quad Cities areas.

This index reveals areas throughout the urban Quad Cities that have populations that may be dependent on transit. Locations include those in and near downtown areas in Davenport, Rock Island, Moline, and East Moline. In addition, numerous census block groups in Davenport south of approximately Central Park Avenue and Locust Street are among the groups with the highest index scores. These areas are characterized by traditional pre-war style development of small lot sizes and an intact street grid network. On the Illinois side, a couple of areas with high index scores outside the downtowns can be seen on the west side of Rock Island and in Moline on top of the hill. The physical characteristics of these neighborhoods are largely similar to those described in Davenport. In Muscatine, no block group was included among groups with the highest index scores. However, much of the urban core fell under the next-highest group. In general, the areas noted with the highest index scores are served by adequate transit service for the region.

Approximately 9.59% of the urban area population, representing approximately 13,732 residents, is identified in the class with the highest route frequency being under 4 minutes. Another 31.49%, approximately 45,048 residents, are included in the next-highest class with the route frequency being 4 minutes to 8 minutes. Map 4.1 shows the number of people living in each zone, reflecting the degree of accessibility to transit service. High frequency service across multiple routes provides residents with the ability to transfer between the routes

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more quickly and conveniently, expanding the number of possible destinations within a certain timeframe. Increased transit frequency is noted under the “Convenience” strategy listed later in this chapter.

Additional Analysis

Other maps in this chapter include additional analysis to focus on different transit aspects.

As illustrated in Map 4.13 and Map 4.14, this analysis looked at five-minute walksheds.

Walksheds indicate areas where a bus stop is within a quarter-mile, or a five-minute walk, of a given point. Walksheds are shaded according to the average number of buses that can be boarded at a given stop during a typical 12-hour period on a weekday. The darker areas have a high bus frequency and a short walk to the bus route, meaning those areas are where residents can catch numerous buses from a given point. The lighter areas are where residents do not have direct access or have infrequent access to transit. The analysis indicates numerous areas that are highly served by transit service. The most highly served areas include most downtown areas in the core Quad Cities and Muscatine. In addition, there are numerous outlying areas in both the urban Quad Cities and Muscatine that are served by frequent bus service. Locations include uptown Moline, SouthPark Mall, and a shopping center in East Moline. In Muscatine, the Mus-

catine Mall area is served by all three routes, resulting in frequent service. Conversely, there are areas of the Iowa Quad Cities that are served by comparatively few buses per hour, typically one per hour or none at all. These areas include large portions in Davenport north of Central Park Avenue and in Bettendorf north of Spruce Hills Drive. These areas are characterized by post-war era suburban-style development, which is often difficult to serve efficiently by transit.

Map 4.15 and Map 4.16 display another analysis, transit route coverage, and access to different land uses in Muscatine and the urban Quad Cities. The primary land uses on these maps are residential and commercial areas. The yellow areas on the map are low-density residential, the orange areas are medium/high-density residential, and the red areas on the map are identified as commercial areas. This analysis shows that transit routes provide service to the commercial areas, but there are still gaps in residential areas and some commercial areas. Southwestern Muscatine has several commercial areas with no direct access to the urban transit fixed-route. Similarly, the northern part of Muscatine’s residential and commercial areas does not have direct access to the urban transit fixed-route. The urban Quad Cities face similar challenges to the outlying areas.

Table 4.1 – Population by Transit Accessibility Zones

Geography	Zone	Route Frequency	2022 Total Population	2022 Total Population: Proportion
Quad Cities	5	under 4 minutes	13,723	9.59%
Quad Cities	4	4 minutes - 8 minutes	45,048	31.49%
Quad Cities	3	9 minutes - 20 minutes	21,405	14.96%
Quad Cities	2	21 minutes - 44 minutes	15,374	10.75%
Quad Cities	1	45 minutes or more	47,516	33.21%
Total			143,066	100.00%

Geography	Zone	Route Frequency	2022 Total Population	2022 Total Population: Proportion
Muscatine	5	under 4 minutes	0	0.00%
Muscatine	4	4 minutes - 8 minutes	0	0.00%
Muscatine	3	9 minutes - 20 minutes	159	1.15%
Muscatine	2	21 minutes - 44 minutes	6,799	49.04%
Muscatine	1	45 minutes or more	6,906	49.81%
Total			13,864	100.00%

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Table 4.5 – Composite Index; Transit Service & Transit Need – Muscatine

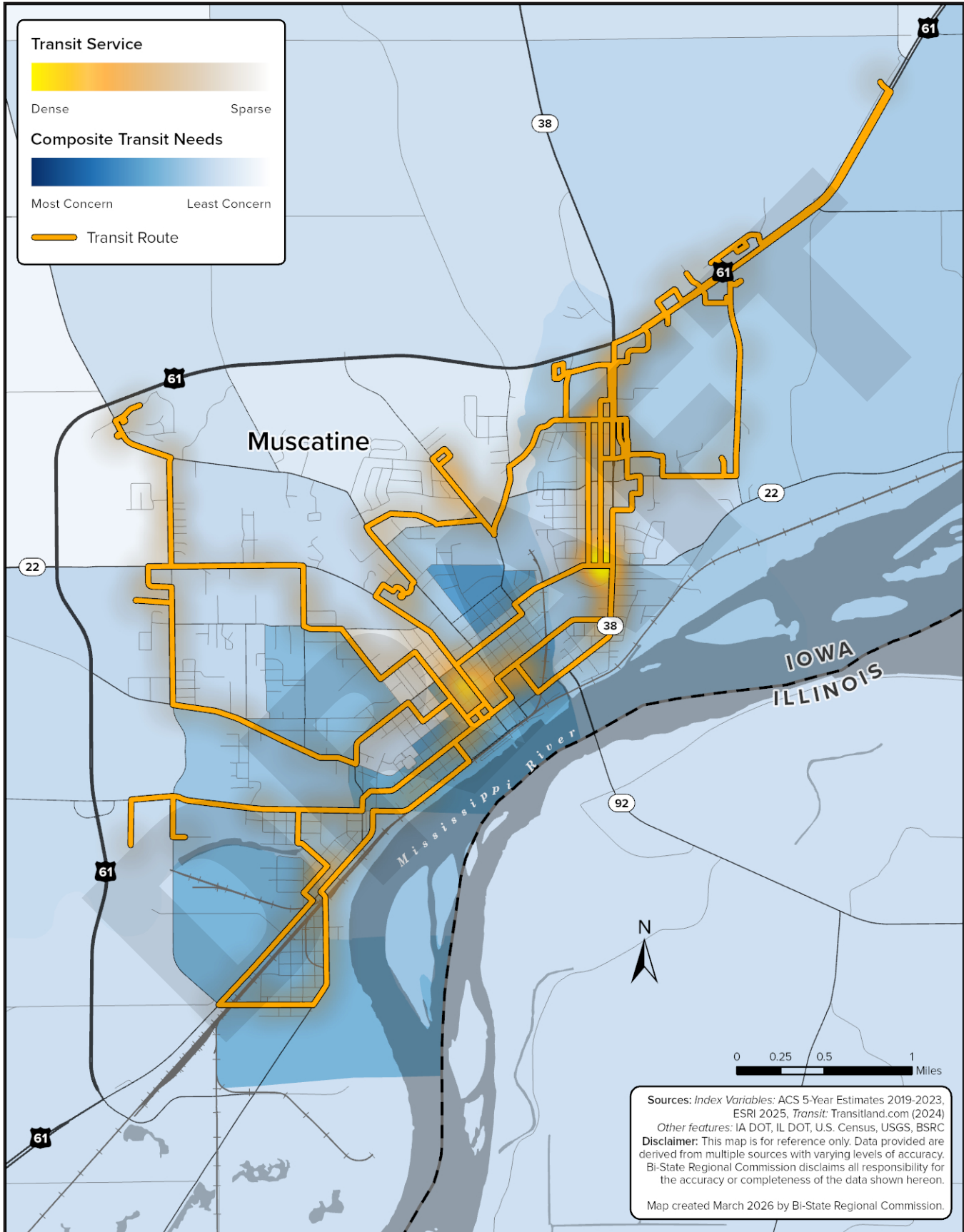


Table 4.6 – Composite Index; Transit Service & Transit Need – QCA

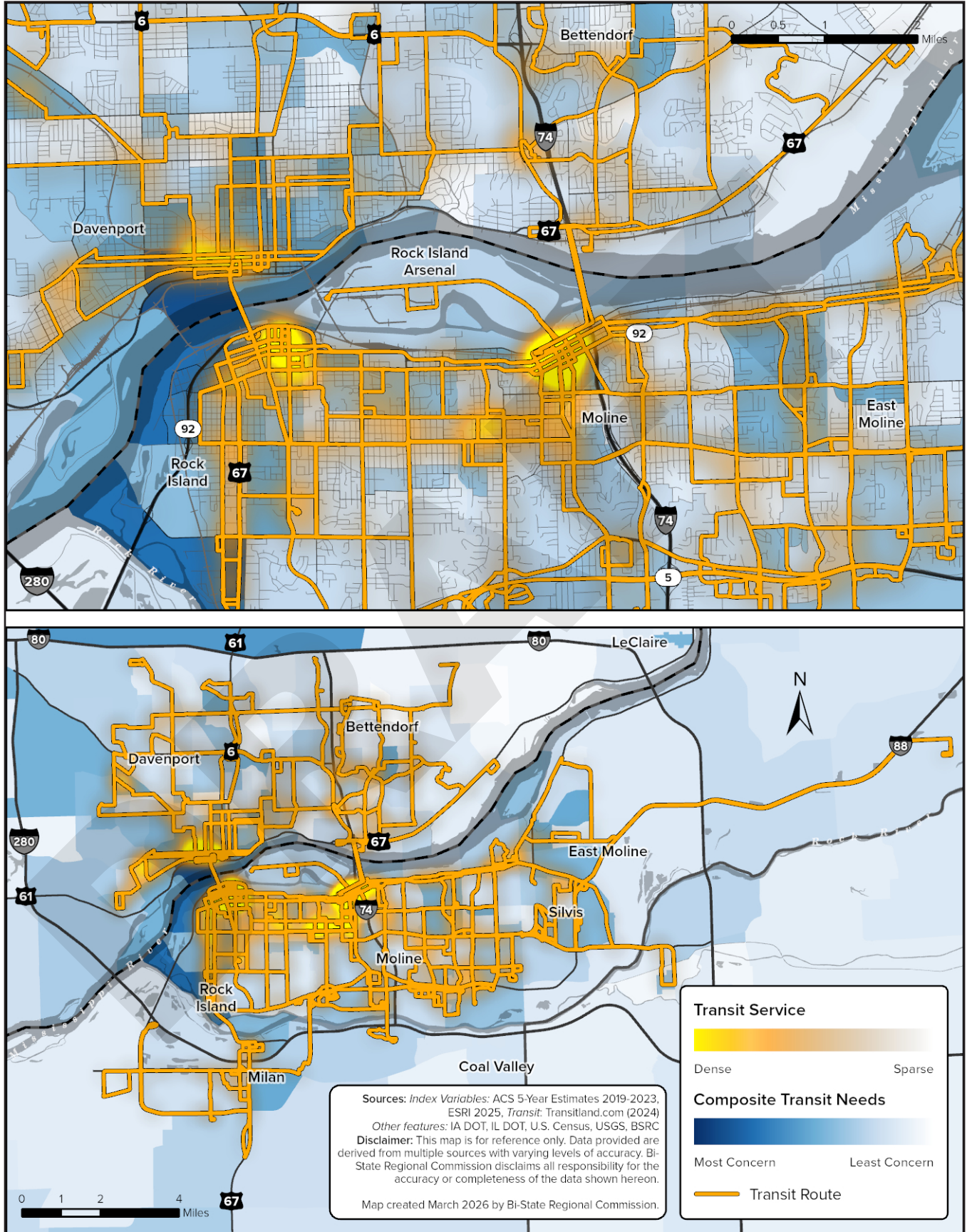


Table 4.7 – Households Below the Poverty Level – Muscatine

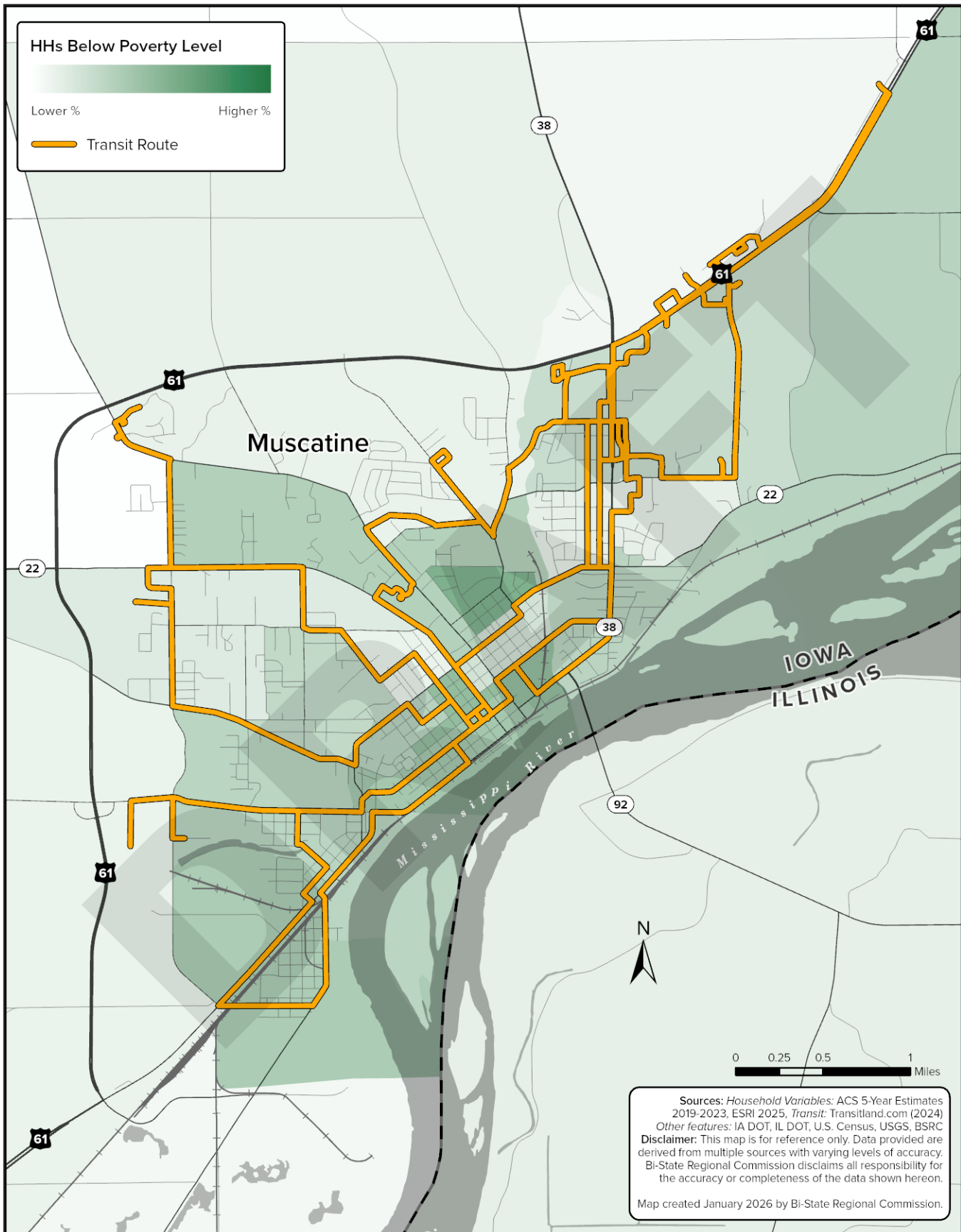


Table 4.8 – Households Below the Poverty Level – QCA

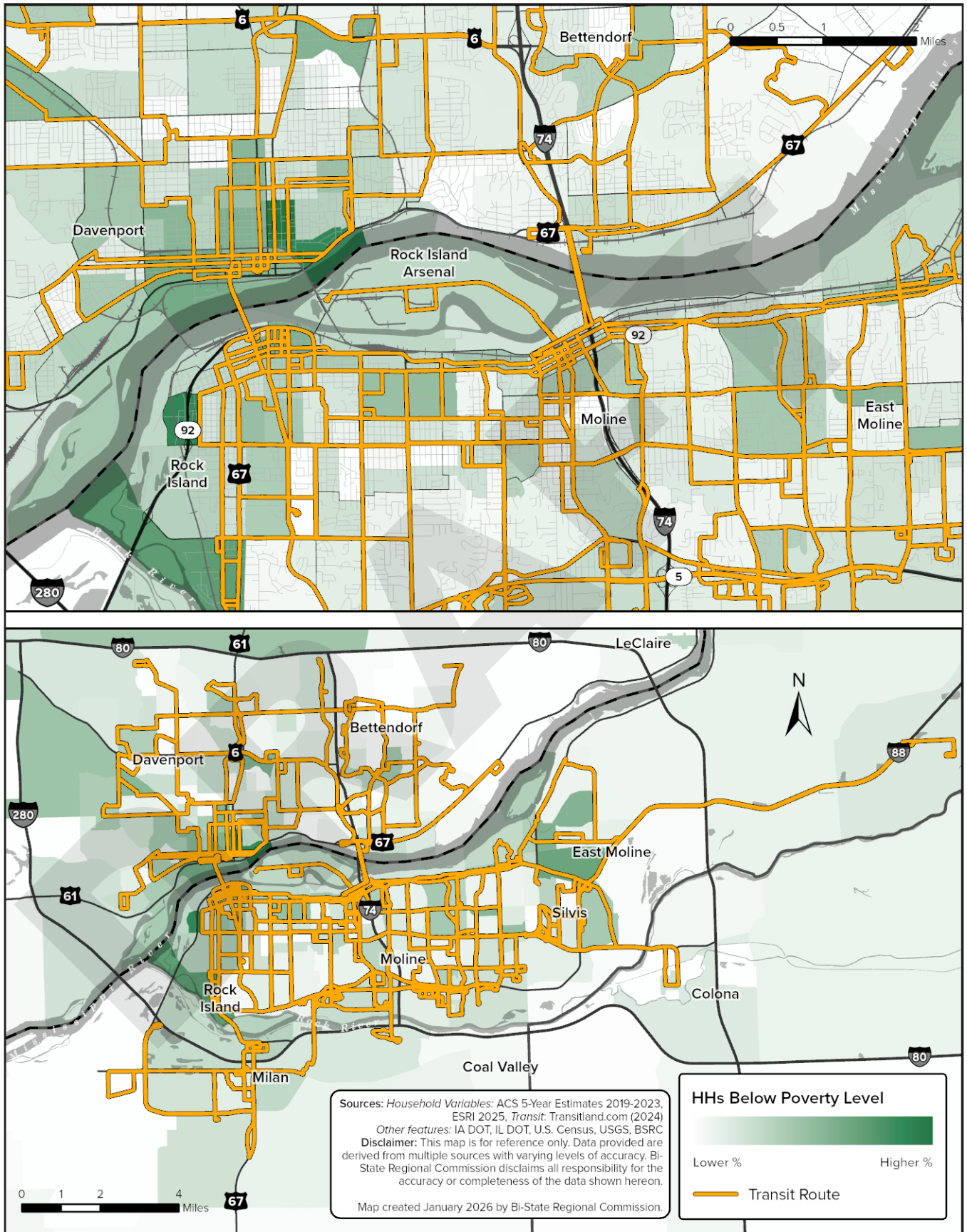


Table 4.9 – Households with 0 Vehicles – Muscatine

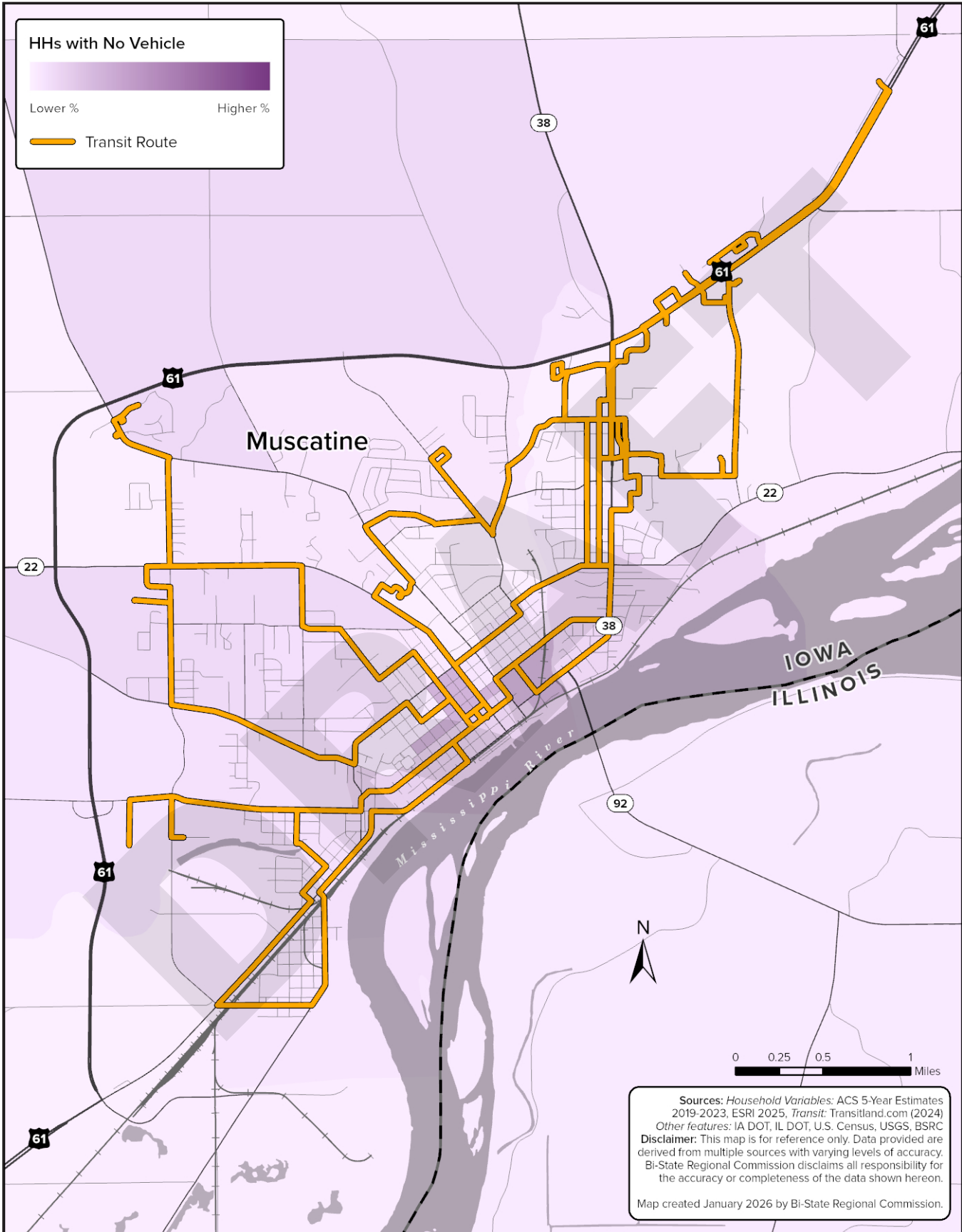


Table 4.10 – Household with 0 Vehicles – QCA

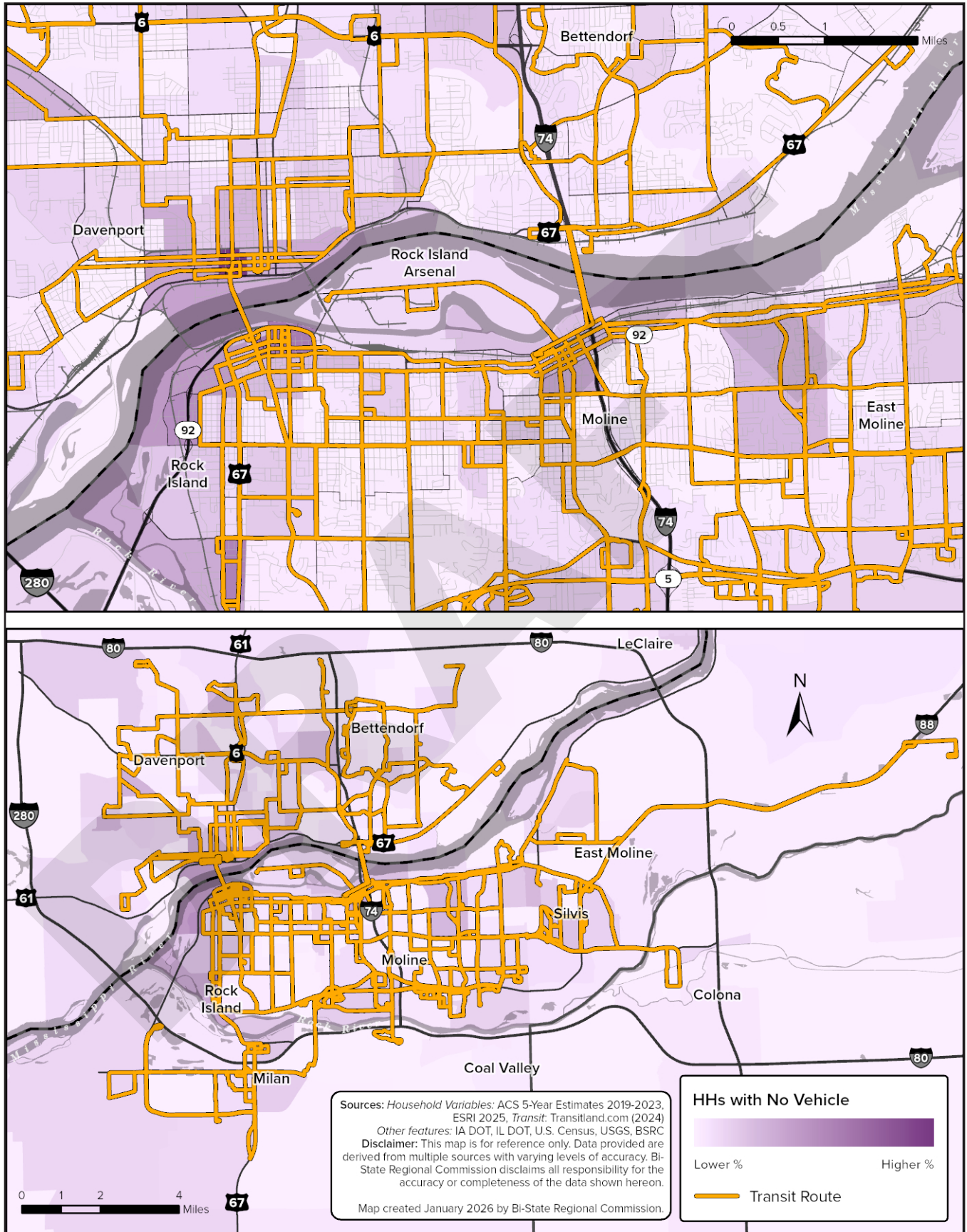


Table 4.11 – Households with a Disability – Muscatine

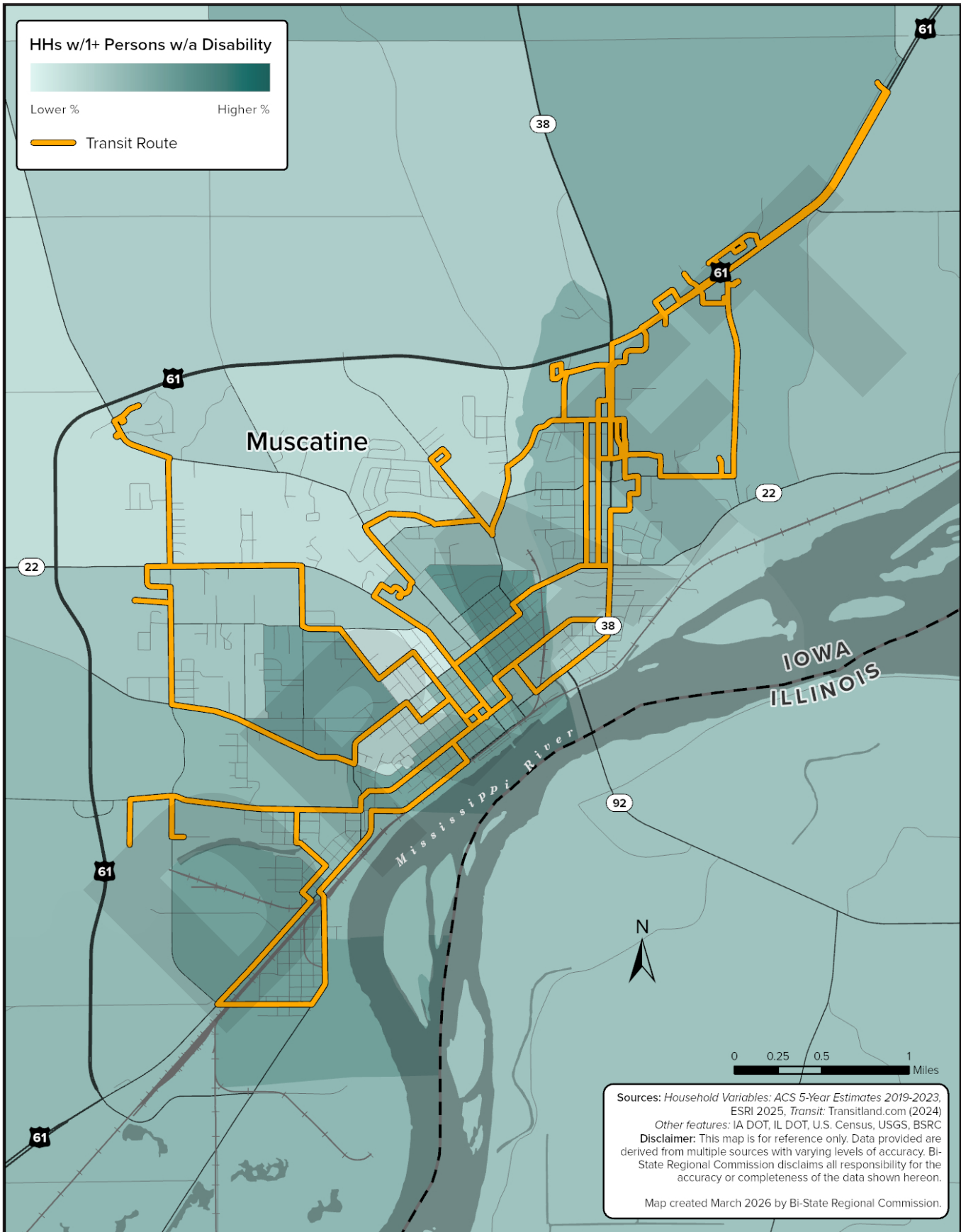


Table 4.12 – Households with a Disability - QCA

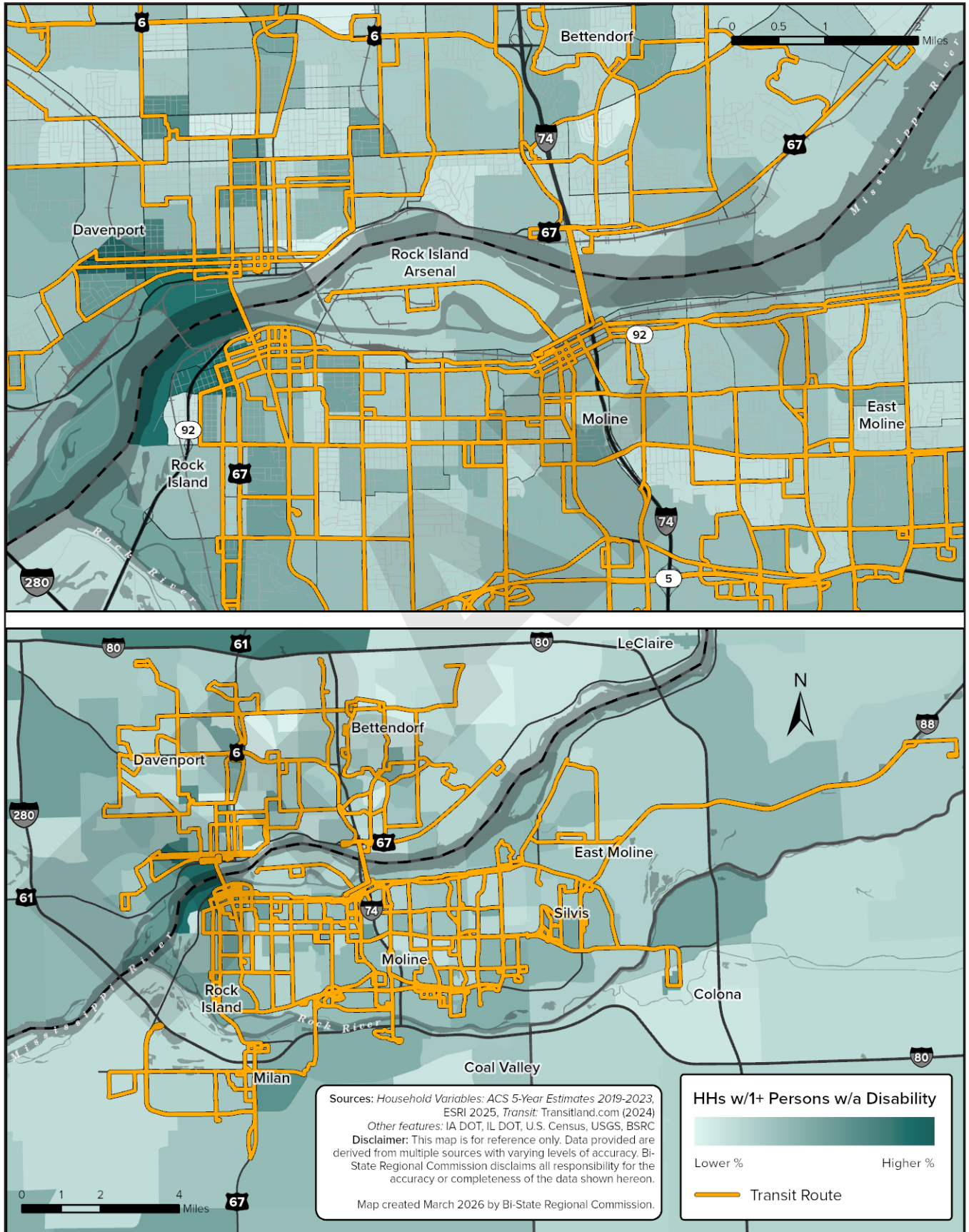


Table 4.13 – Walksheds – Muscatine

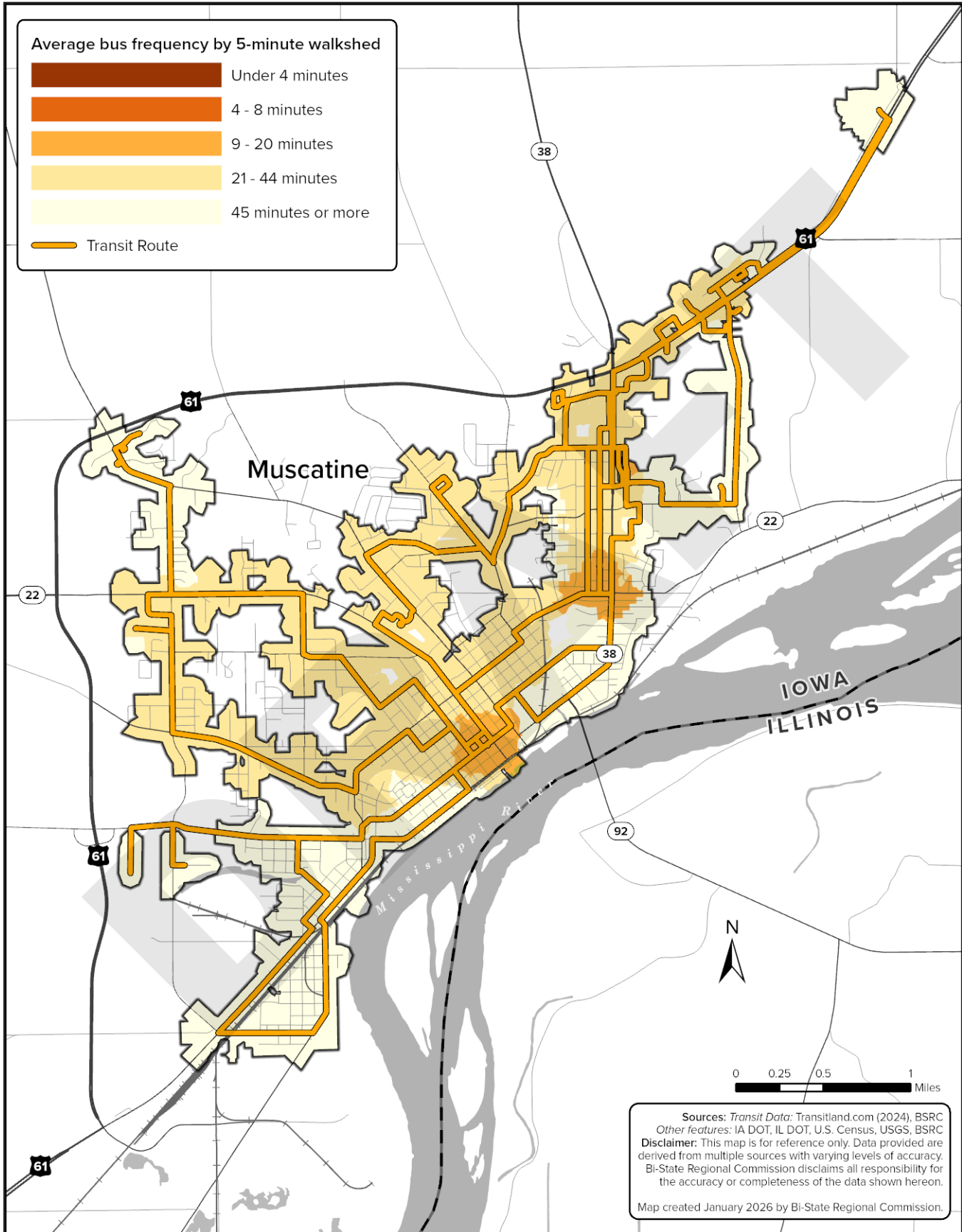


Table 4.14 – Walksheds – QCA

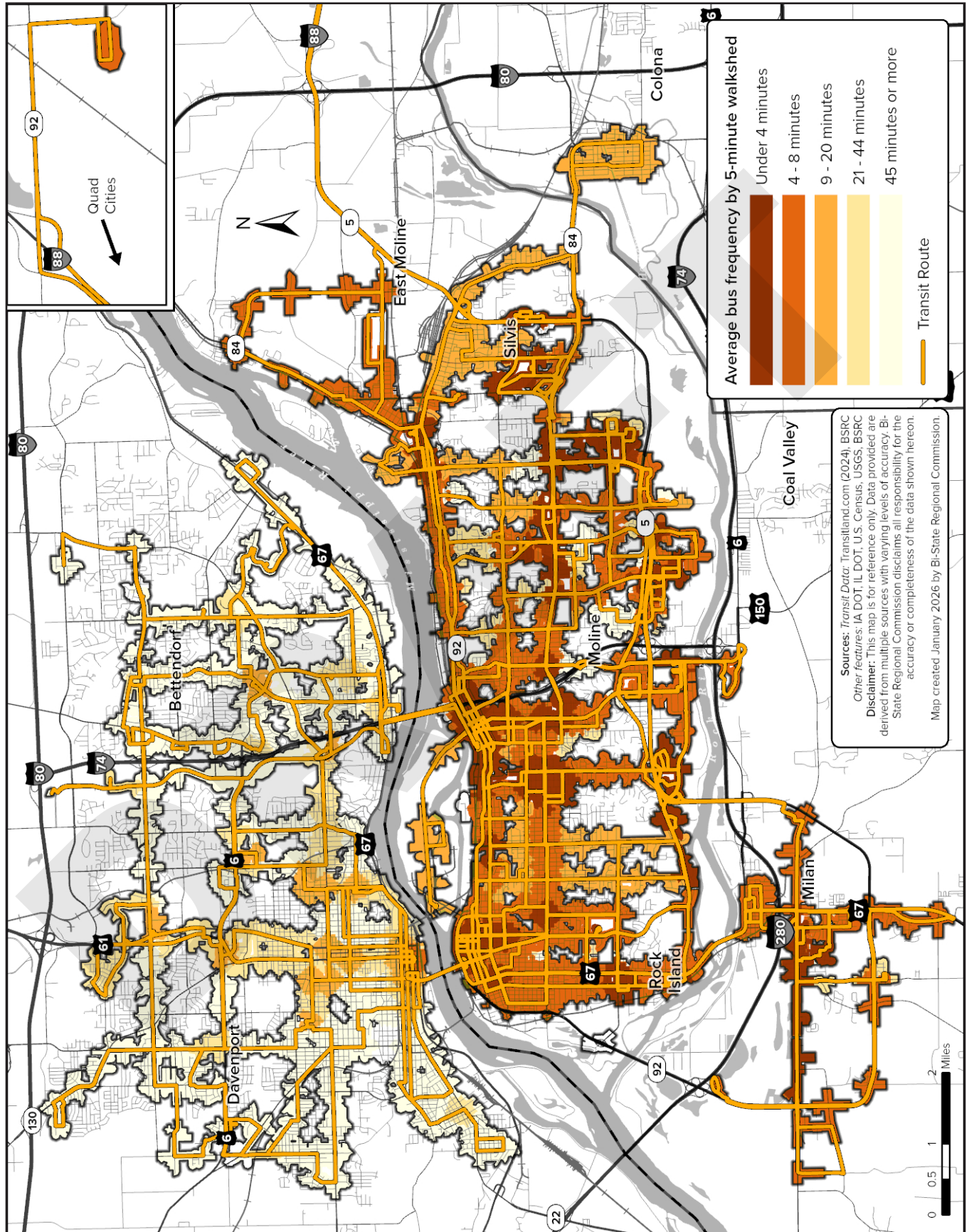


Table 4.15 – Access to Residential and Commercial Land Uses – Muscatine

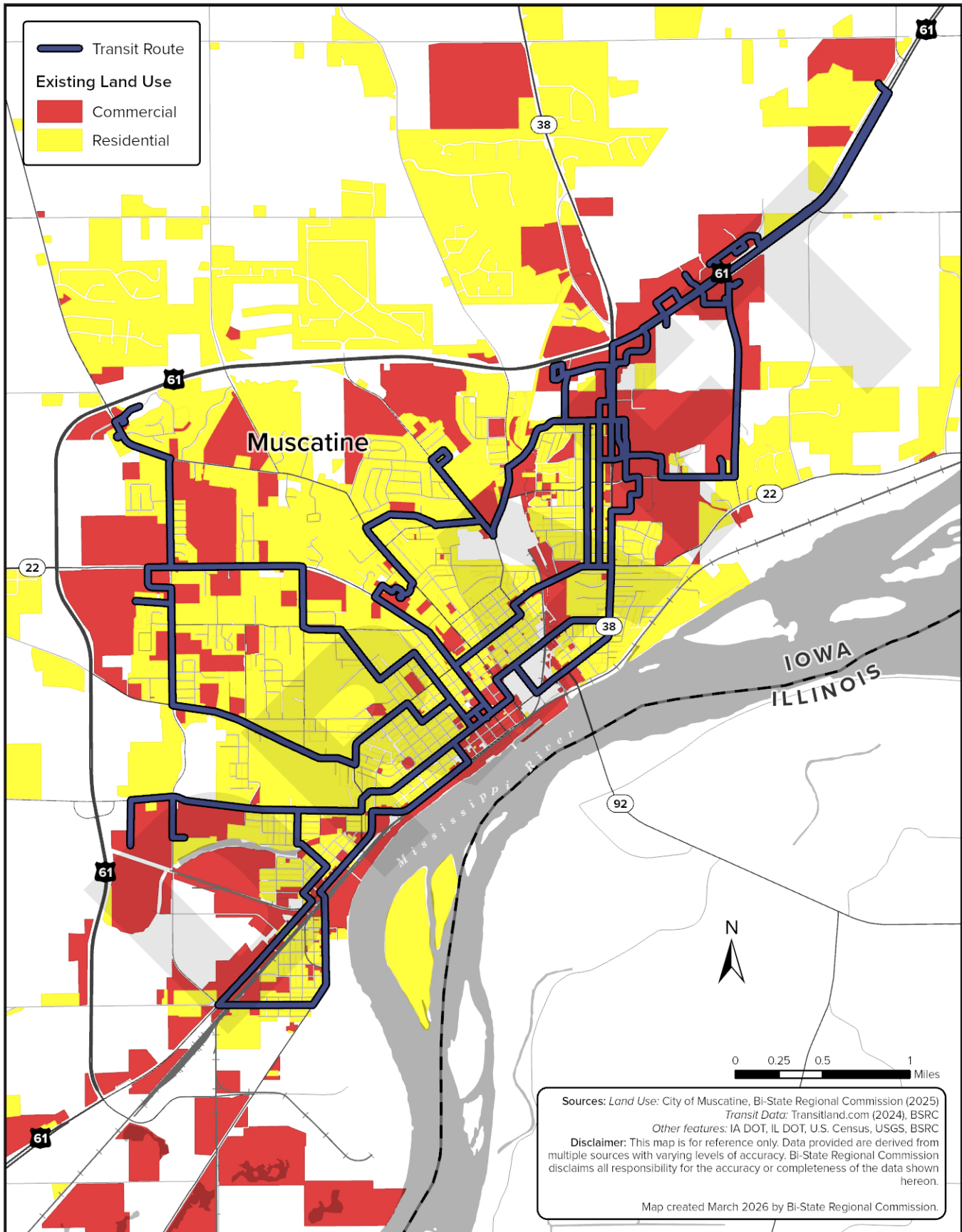
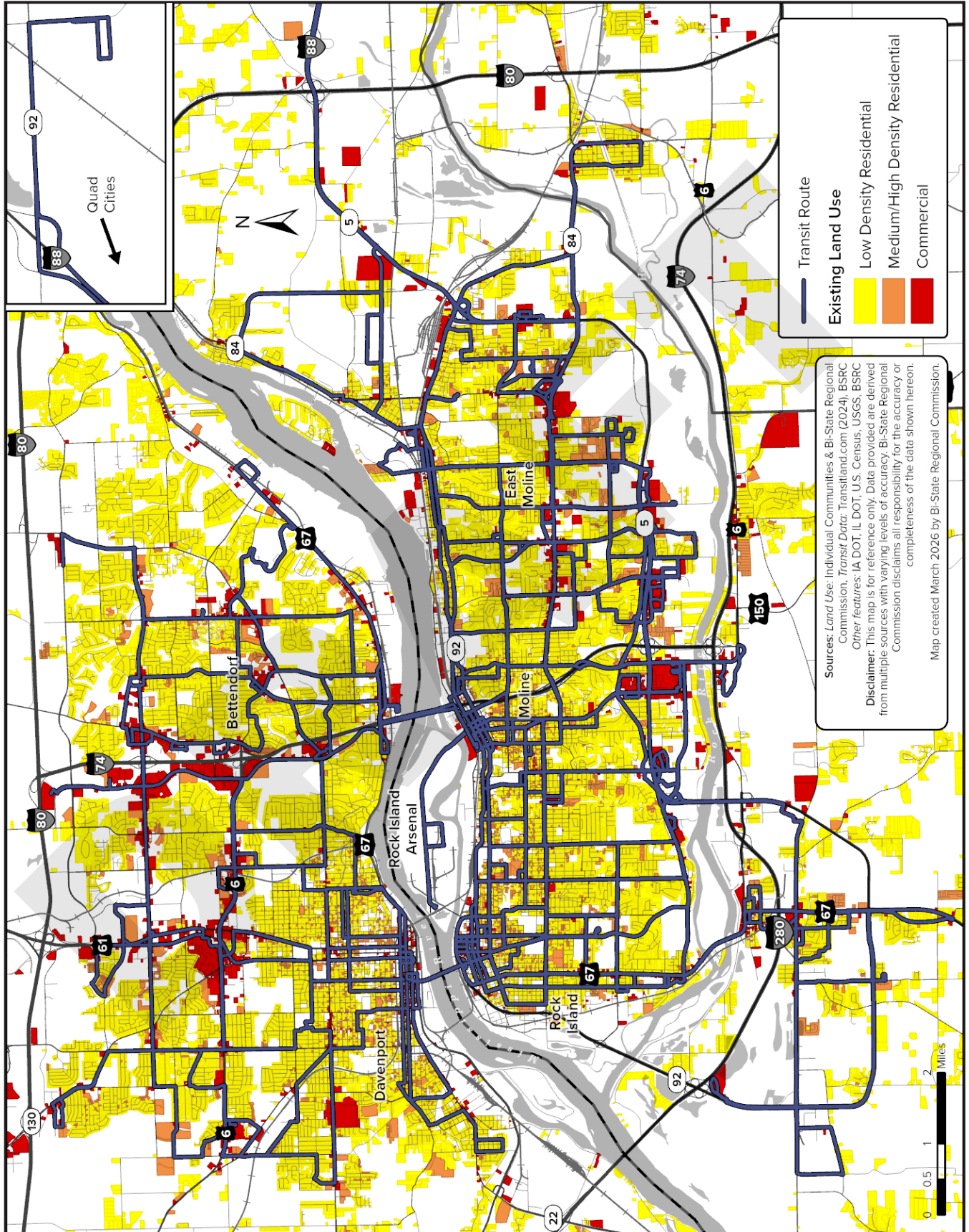


Table 4.16 – Access to Residential and Commercial Land Uses – QCA



Needs & Strategies within the Urbanized Area

In 2026, Bi-State Regional Commission facilitated four surveys seeking feedback on public transportation in the region and input on transportation mobility issues. One survey each was distributed to transportation providers, human service agencies, current users of public transportation, and the general public. The surveys were disseminated between December 2025 and April 2026. The transportation provider survey received 6 responses, the human service agency survey received 15, the existing rider survey 54, and the general public survey received 37 responses. The surveys were slightly modified versions of surveys that had been created by the Rural Transit Assistance Center at the Institute of Rural Affairs and were originally used for the 2023 TDP. Links to the online survey website were shared through established mailing lists, in addition to direct outreach to human service groups and consortia in the urban area and in Region 9.

In previous updates to the TDP, input was received from the public that service times should be extended for a multitude of reasons, especially on the Iowa side of the Quad Cities. In 2016, as a result of a comprehensive route analysis, Davenport CitiBus extended service hours later in the evening and on weekends. Service was introduced on Sundays, but was discontinued in response to the sharp decline in ridership caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Bettendorf, likewise, runs buses on its three routes until 7:00 p.m. on weekdays and 5:30 p.m. on weekends.

Responses to surveys for the 2026 TDP indicated that hours of service are still a barrier to transportation in the region, as 25% of respondents indicated that the extended service hours would be the thing they would most like to change about the current public transportation system.

Another barrier identified by the fixed-route systems in previous TDPs is infrastructure and ongoing development that is inaccessible by public transportation. Fixed-route transit oper-

ators face business owners who have restricted public transit access and newly constructed infrastructure without adequate turning radii. Partnerships between the economic development community and transit providers to eliminate accessibility issues prior to construction are a possible strategy in preventing future barriers.

In 2008, the Transportation Policy Committee of the Bi-State Regional Commission approved a *Quad City Area Complete Streets Policy*. In the future, priority access and mobility options will continue to be addressed at a community level, in coordination with this region-wide policy. In 2017, Bi-State facilitated a Complete Streets Technical Workshop to discuss thoroughfares that are designed or reconstructed to better accommodate pedestrians, transit, and bicyclists. Further work has been facilitated to bring Complete Streets ideas to communities in the Quad Cities. Also, in 2017, another workshop was held for local planners and engineers to explore new roadway treatments to increase safety and quality of life.

Regional Needs and Strategies

Illinois Region 2 – Henry, Mercer, Rural Rock Island, and Whiteside Counties

Barriers in Region 2 include service availability (hours of service and number/location of routes), aging vehicles, vehicle and driver availability, and funding and capacity for service expansion. As noted in previous chapters, all counties in Region 2—Henry, Mercer, Rock Island, and Whiteside—have implemented rural public transit operations. However, system operators in these counties are challenged to acquire additional vehicles and hire transit staff. Unlike Iowa Region 9, FTA Section 5310 vehicles in Illinois Region 2 are open to public and specialized transit providers. It is important that specialized providers wishing to acquire vehicles maintain participation in the coordinated planning process and ensure capital funding is being used as efficiently as possible. Further developing coordination activities, such as resource sharing and service contracts, are priorities for the region.

As noted in Chapter 3, Henry County Public Transportation (Abilities Plus) is the longest running public transportation operator in Region 2, but continues to face challenges in educating the public on its services. Past input has indicated a lack of understanding among the general public that transportation services are available for more than just seniors or people with disabilities. In response to this, the websites of Abilities Plus and Henry County Public Transportation were linked and contain complementary information. In order to allow better affordability for customers, one suggested strategy would be to educate assisted living and senior living facilities on the ability to organize group trips where the higher cost of demand-response service would be split among multiple passengers.

An additional substantial need in Region 2 is for transportation to local community colleges. Henry, Rock Island, and Whiteside Counties have colleges that are seen as essential in helping individuals with low incomes, and transportation is often needed either from rural residences to urban schools, or vice versa. To cover a larger service area, possible solutions could include a partnership between RICO Rural Transit and Black Hawk College, and the continuation or expansion of the partnership between Whiteside County Public Transportation and Sauk Valley Community College. Multiple funding sources among these agencies could help provide more efficient trips to an increased number of low-income students within the region.

Starting in July 2025, Mercer County partnered with Western Community Public Transportation (WCPT), formerly known as Warren County Public Transit, to provide rural transit for the county. WCPT is planning to expand to Henderson County as well. With their expansions, WCPT had tripled in ridership and went from 15 to 31 vehicles. WCPT has requested 18 expansion vehicles that will serve the expanded services. Furthermore, WCPT plans to expand services to cover premium loops to both Iowa City and Peoria when budget and vehicle availability allows.

Iowa Region 9 – Muscatine and Rural Scott Counties

Rural Scott and Muscatine Counties are home to many of the industrial and large employment centers within the Greater Bi-State Region. Therefore, transportation to and from jobs has long been a need within the region. The need to have access to a greater number of employees is expected to increase in the long term as Baby Boomers leave the workforce and employers continue to compete for the same pool of employees throughout the region. An increase in employment shuttles to rural employment centers as well as trips from outlying areas, such as Walcott, LeClaire, and Eldridge into the metropolitan Quad Cities will help increase geographic coverage and provide employment trips for individuals with low or fixed incomes.

The aging population of the region was cited by one transportation provider as a potential future public transit issue. The increased demand for public transit as a result of an increasingly older population who are no longer able to drive may outpace current funding levels and fleet capacity

Non-emergency medical transportation within Muscatine County was also cited as a significant need, which was a common theme across the Greater Bi-State Region. Seventy-five percent of respondents for the community survey from Muscatine and rural Scott County indicated that they are currently unable to take public transportation to medical appointments.

Multiple human service agencies indicated that there is a need for transportation to Iowa City hospitals for their clients due to a lack of specialized health providers in rural areas. These trips can be very costly and difficult to coordinate, especially for individuals that need transportation to Iowa City from Illinois. Coordination with existing and future Iowa City trips through River Bend Transit may be a possible strategy for lowering costs, and communication among the transit and human services agencies will help to alleviate some of the issues.

Management Needs

Management needs include those related to staffing levels, office equipment, policy board arrangements, and marketing. Education, communication, and marketing of available services were identified as a priority in the Greater Bi-State Region. Education of policy makers on transit needs was another aspect of marketing. In numerous Regional and Urbanized Transit Mobility Summits over the past decade, participants singled out public awareness of transit service and public relations as opportunities for improvement. In surveys conducted in 2026, multiple human service agencies and one transportation provider identified the lack of public awareness regarding transportation options as a barrier to transportation. Transit providers, local government officials, and local residents have all mentioned that marketing and education of existing services was a need throughout the region. Attendees of transit summits felt that a large number of those needing public transportation were unaware or uninformed on the availability of services within their communities. Other consumers may be aware of the services offered, but may feel uncomfortable never having used the service.

Multiple transportation providers also identified lack of effective inter-agency communication and coordination, as well as lack of communication between transportation providers and human service agencies, as a barrier to public transportation in the region. On-going operating support of existing programs is also important to the existing public transit providers. The results of the service reports for both the Urbanized and Regional Mobility Summits can be found in Appendix C.

Fleet Needs – Utilization & Replacement

Fleet needs include the rehabilitation and replacement of vehicles tentatively scheduled for the coming year. Replacement of accessory equipment (cameras, wheelchair lifts, etc.) is included under this category as well. Fleet utilization is based on a vehicle utilization analysis to indicate whether the need is currently being

met by each transit provider. Fleet replacement cycles for the fixed-route and regional providers range from 5 to 15 years, depending on the system. Since 2020, deliveries of regularly scheduled vehicle replacements have been delayed due to numerous issues, such as supply chain problems and high demand nationwide.

Bi-State maintains a *Specialized Transportation Service Inventory*, which is updated regularly. It does not address fleet needs, but is a simple assessment of whether or not organizations provided transportation services. An inventory of vehicles was also requested and updated by all identified providers receiving FTA funds. An attempt was made to obtain information from state or privately-funded providers, but in many cases, responses were not received. As the document evolves, Bi-State will continue to encourage additional participation from these agencies.

River Bend Transit has reported a need for additional funding in order to meet a 10-year replacement cycle for its entire fleet. Discretionary capital funding appropriated to Iowa is inadequate to meet this replacement schedule. The recent influx of federal funds has alleviated some of the financial issues; however, the delivery of the new vehicles has been significantly delayed, as noted above. The federal threshold for useful life of its types of vehicles is 4 years or 100,000 miles. Typically, RBT is unable to replace its vehicles until they are averaging 10-12 years of age and have accumulated upwards of 190,000 miles. This results in higher maintenance and repair costs over the years as the wear and tear on vehicles is magnified by the rural conditions in which it operates. In addition to a need for additional funding for fleet replacement, an increased demand for employment shuttles throughout RBT's four-county service area may create a need for larger vehicles with higher seating capacities.

Davenport CitiBus has downsized its fleet in recent years, reducing its fleet from 25 buses in FY23 to 21 buses in FY26.

In addition to the fixed-route and regional transit systems, several private and county-operated not-for-profit agencies have expressed a need for replacement vehicles for their current fleets. Henry County Public Transportation and RICO Rural Transit have each expressed a need to replace one or more vehicles in order to continue meeting service demands of individuals with disabilities, seniors, or the general public. It is important that these agencies maintain involvement in the coordinated planning process and utilize existing transit services when possible.

Facility Needs

MetroLINK's Operations and Maintenance Center (OMC) provides maintenance, administrative, and operational functions. On-site fueling options, both natural gas and electric bus charging stations, along with vehicle cleaning and separate lubrication stations for preventative maintenance provide added cost savings over the life of the facility. The facility incorporates energy efficiencies, including LEED Certification, improved air quality, resource conservation, pollution prevention, and modern diagnostic equipment for the maintenance of digital video recording security systems, automated vehicle locator systems, and multiplex electrical systems that are now standard on MetroLINK vehicles. MetroLINK plans to expand the OMC on the east side of the building to increase capacity. Included in the renovations will be measures for increased fire mitigation for MetroLINK's electric bus fleet.

In the Illinois Quad Cities MPA, MetroLINK completed work on the Rock Island District Station in 2013. The station is located at the corner of 2nd Avenue and 20th Street in downtown Rock Island. The site had been an underutilized parking lot just west of a 199-unit residential tower. To the north of the facility are Schwiebert Park, the Mississippi River, and access to the 62-mile-long Great River Trail. The facility offers patrons a heated lobby, restrooms, and the potential for retail space. The facility accommodates up to ten coaches at a

time. MetroLINK worked with the City of Rock Island and Rock Island Economic Growth Corporation (or GROWTH) to promote transit-oriented development in the area surrounding the Transfer Station. The new development, called The Locks, provides 34 units of rental housing, some of which is targeted to short-term corporate rentals.

In 2025, MetroLINK completed renovations at Centre Station, funded through the Rebuild Illinois Capital Program. These renovations included a new café for riders, more indoor seating, improved ADA accessibility, and improved surveillance systems. MetroLINK also has plans to renovate its East Pointe terminal, located in East Moline, with a focus on upgrading the HVAC, electrical, and security/safety systems. Also included in the East Pointe renovations will be the installation for overhead electric bus chargers, and design for overhead chargers at Centre Station and District Station are underway.

MetroLINK was the grantee for funding for the Moline Multi-Modal Station (MMS), dubbed The Q. The facility was constructed to serve as a functional station for passenger rail service from Chicago, Illinois to the Quad Cities and proposed service ultimately to Iowa City, Iowa and Omaha, Nebraska. The MMS was completed in 2018 and includes a 95-room hotel as well as retail space. Once passenger rail service is reestablished, it will also complete the vision of using MetroLINK's existing Centre Station to provide intermodal access to all forms of transportation – including buses, personal vehicles, bicycles, passenger rail, taxis, passenger ferryboats, pedestrian traffic, and access to the Quad Cities International Airport. The site of the MMS is located south of the railroad tracks and east of 12th Street along 4th Avenue in Moline, Illinois. The facility is connected to Centre Station via a skywalk over the railroad tracks. The renovation and adaptive reuse of the historic O'Rourke Building will allow the structure to accommodate passenger amenities, such as ticketing, information kiosks, and other related retail or

Evaluation of Needs and Policy Direction

commercial space. Surrounding development using Transit Oriented Development (TOD) principles will create a unique community focal point in Downtown Moline. A Downtown Connector Service to Western Illinois University Riverfront Campus has also been established with Centre Station as one terminus of the route.

MetroLINK also maintains two Mega Stop locations at SouthPark Mall and the Quad Cities International Airport. Mega Stops feature lighting, seating, and passenger amenities, but don't typically have an indoor space maintained by Metro. The airport location is served by Route 20, while the mall location is served by Routes 20 and 60.

In addition to bus facilities, MetroLINK also currently maintains four docks for its Channel Cat ferry service, located at River Bend Commons and John Deere Commons in Moline, the Isle Casino Hotel in Bettendorf, and the Village of East Davenport. The dock located at the Village of East Davenport is currently being replaced, with completion expected in 2026. In 2027, construction will begin on a new dock at the Bend complex in East Moline. Interest has also been expressed by the Rock Island Arsenal in the possibility of constructing a dock on the island, but further study will be required.

In Davenport, the Ground Transportation Center (GTC) is ageing, and the city must conduct further study to determine the best solution to determine if the facility requires rehabilitation or replacement. The Iowa DOT developed its Park and Ride System Plan in 2014 to address facilities to promote carpooling, vanpooling, or taking public transit. Scott-to-Rock Island County was among the top 25 county pairs in regard to residence-to-workplace commuter flows in Iowa. The DOT recommended two possible candidate locations for park and ride facilities in Davenport, namely U.S. 61 and Kimberly Road near North Park Mall, and U.S. 61 and Iowa 22 near Interstate 280. In 2017, a Park and Ride facility was established near

Thunder Bay Grille restaurant near U.S. 61/Brady Street and Veterans Memorial Parkway. The facility is signed with approximately 60 parking spaces and easy access to Interstate 80.

In 2016, Bettendorf shifted its focus away from a central hub to a service that offers numerous transfer points throughout the network. There are multiple hubs throughout the city where riders may transfer from one route to another, or to another transit provider, namely CitiBus and MetroLINK. Vehicle maintenance is performed at the Bettendorf Public Works facility.

RICO Rural Transit intends to construct a secure location to store its vehicle fleet. Currently, RICO buses are stored outside in a fenced area and have been significantly damaged by wildlife in the past.

In 2026, River Bend began construction on a new bus storage facility that will allow RBT to store the entirety of its 67-vehicle fleet inside. The building will also include solar panels that will provide 100% of the power needed for the facility.

Transit Security/Safety Needs

Beginning with provisions under ISTEA² and continuing through the most recent transportation bill, the IIJA, the need to improve safety and security for individuals who use public transportation is to be included in the planning process.

In an effort to provide a safe and secure environment for their passengers and employees, each of the fixed-route systems has installed video surveillance equipment on their revenue vehicles. River Bend Transit has also equipped all of its vehicles with video surveillance and is currently in the process of updating their cameras. Fifty-three of River Bend's 67 vehicles now have upgraded security cameras. MetroLink is also updating their video surveillance system for both on-vehicle and facility systems. These updates are expected to be

2 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991

completed in 2027.

Davenport provides security personnel to monitor the GTC transfer facility during evening hours, and MetroLINK works with the Rock Island County Sheriff's department and has assigned two officers under a Community Oriented Policing Services (C.O.P.S.) program.

Policy Direction & Strategies

Based on the public input and discussions with existing transit providers, there will be challenges in meeting the future mobility needs in the Greater Bi-State Region. Finite resources require prioritization, which may mean that some residents will not be able to get rides on public transportation. However, the solutions suggested relate to the need for greater cooperation through agreements, partnerships, resource sharing, and improved public relations and education to change the face of transit for the better.

As noted in the Executive Summary, the plan sets forth a policy direction through a vision statement of:

“Transit service in the region is envisioned to be convenient, adequately financed to maximize coverage and diversity of customers, affordable, geographically distributed, considered as part of land use decisions, and safe.”

The following proposed strategies frame the future direction for transit in the Greater Bi-State Region. It is important to note that some strategies may be more focused toward an urban issue rather than a rural issue, and vice versa. Furthermore, all strategies proposed for urban systems may not be necessary for all of the urban systems. The same idea is prevalent for the rural transit systems.

Convenience – Transit service delivery that addresses customer convenience will be given priority in the Greater Bi-State Region. Service can be enhanced through strategies such as:

1. Extending hours, days, and frequency of service to meet basic travel needs, either for essential services, medical appointments, work or school trips, or other needs identified by existing or future customers
2. Increasing marketing efforts through sources like fact sheets, websites and/or website links, and maps
3. Broadening educational programs such as Senior Ambassador activities within assisted-living facilities and nursing homes to increase awareness of services
4. Exploring the formation of a centralized dispatching service to provide service information for multiple transit operators in the region
5. Improving rider experience through new technology to attract new customers

**This strategy can be recognized as one for both urban and rural transit services. Extending hours of service in both areas has been identified as an issue.*

Investment – Greater consideration will be given to investing in projects that are adequately financed and sustainable. Sustainable investment can be strengthened by strategies such as:

1. Informing legislative leaders of funding solutions to resolve inadequacies, gaps, silos, and liability
2. Advocating long-term funding streams when implementing service

Evaluation of Needs and Policy Direction

3. Increasing coordination between human service agencies that may have available local match dollars from other non-DOT federal or state funding streams

**This strategy can be recognized as one for both urban and rural transit systems.*

Affordability – Fares for transit service need to be affordable for all customers, particularly for those with fixed or low incomes. Possible strategies include:

1. Developing partnerships and coordination between public and private transit service providers to reduce trip costs
2. Creating voucher systems for service provided after hours, eliminating the need for low-income individuals to pay a higher price for private service

**This strategy would be identified as primarily a rural transit issue. The urban systems have set fares at \$1.00 per ride. Also, the QC Monthly Pass allows unlimited rides for the calendar month on all fixed transit systems in the Quad Cities for \$30.00.*

Land Use – Land use patterns that support mobility choices and encourage proximity to services are preferred. Land use patterns may be improved by:

1. Incorporating transit operators in economic development discussions prior to construction or final plan approval
2. Strengthening relationships between private developers and transit operators
3. Increasing public input opportunities throughout the economic development process
4. Communicating changes in location or operation of human services transportation agencies to transit systems

Geographic Coverage – Broad geographic coverage to serve travel needs and enhance mobility within the Greater Bi-State Region remains a priority. Geographic coverage needs

to examine both regional and inter-regional travel needs. Possible strategies include:

1. Implementing and expanding connections between existing urban and rural transit systems
2. Creating satellite locations for medical and human service agency appointments in rural areas, eliminating the need for distant travel
3. Analyzing and understanding the travel patterns of individuals within the region and how current and future commuting patterns affect travel

**Issues of connectivity seem to be more prevalent in the urban areas because the geographic area is much broader. However, with the aging population, the need for transportation to specialized medical appointments in locations, such as Iowa City and Peoria, continues to increase.*

Safety – Passenger and vehicle safety will be prioritized to ensure customer transportation is comfortable and injury-free. Possible strategies include:

1. Continuing training on suspicious behaviors and emergency procedures
2. Increasing projects that fund specialized transportation service with rider escorts and door-to-door and/or door-through-door service
3. Coordinating between local law enforcement officials and transit operators
4. Training drivers on how to interact with elderly riders and those who may suffer from mental health issues

Performance Measures

Beginning with MAP-21 and continuing through subsequent federal transportation legislation, performance measurement of transportation facilities and project delivery has become an increasingly important focal point for state and federal transportation agencies. Agencies are required to adopt measurable targets, set

to benchmark their performance and progress toward stated targets. Bi-State Regional Commission will continue to work in collaboration with the area's transit managers and systems to support each other's respective performance targets for transit assets, safety, facilities' state of good repair, and rolling stock state of good repair. As part of this cooperation among Bi-State Regional Commission, the respective transit systems, and the Illinois and Iowa Departments of Transportation, Bi-State will retain the systems' performance targets on file for official record.

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