



Chapter 12: Environmental Justice Analysis

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Environmental Justice Overview	2
Summary of Wisconsin’s Minority, Low-income, Age 65 and Older and Zero-vehicle Household Populations.....	4
Threshold level establishment	5
Data input and analysis	10
Methodology limitations	11
<i>Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030</i> Public Outreach Activities	12
Recommendations Related to Minority, Low-income, Age 65 and Older and Zero-vehicle Household Populations.....	12
Freight rail.....	13
Intercity passenger rail	19
Commuter rail.....	26
Multimodal connections and livability	27
Rail safety and security.....	28
Summary of Potential System-Level Impacts	28

Chapter 12: Environmental Justice Analysis

Introduction

As stated in *Connections 2030*, Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT's) policy regarding environmental justice is "to incorporate environmental justice in all planning, programming and project decisions." This chapter presents the environmental justice analysis completed for *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030*. Specifically, this chapter:

- Provides a general overview of the locations of Wisconsin's minority, low-income, age 65 years and older and zero-vehicle household populations
- Evaluates the relationship between the plan's recommendations and the state's minority, low-income, age 65 years and older, and zero-vehicle household populations
- Supplements Chapter 11: System-Plan Environmental Evaluation
- Identifies areas for potential consideration by the department during planning and project-level activities

The state rail plan provides a 20 year framework for decisions and investments statewide. This chapter presents a system-level analysis of the potential impacts on minority populations, low-income populations, persons age 65 and older and households with no vehicles if the plan's recommendations are implemented over the next 20 years. At the state level, the analysis is general and offers a starting point for more specific project level analyses. Efforts to identify potential impacts on communities and neighborhoods depend on location-specific design decisions that are evaluated and addressed during the project planning and delivery phases.

The analysis presented in this chapter:

- Builds on the policies and recommendations identified in *Connections 2030* by focusing on potential rail-related impacts
- Focuses on recommendations described in the plan and potential disproportionate impacts to minority, low-income, age 65 years and older and zero-vehicle household populations at the regional and state levels
- Is a state-level, systems analysis and is not intended to replace project-level analyses
- Lays a framework for future planning, programming and project development decisions

Environmental Justice Overview

Presidential Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations, directs each federal agency to "make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies and

activities on minority and low-income populations.” The order reinforced Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin and provides protection to low-income groups.

Executive Order 12898 defined four minority groups for the purposes of environmental justice:

- Black – a person having origins in any of the black racial groups in Africa
- American Indian or Alaskan Native – a person having origins in any of the original people of North America and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition
- Asian American – a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands
- Hispanic – a person having origins in of Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Central America, South America, or other Spanish culture, regardless of race

The order also defines low-income populations as persons whose household income is at or below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines.

Other federal orders and guidelines issued by the U.S. DOT summarize and clarify the executive order and describe processes for incorporating environmental justice principles into the U.S. DOT programs, policies and activities. In addition, the U.S. DOT has identified three fundamental principles that guide environmental justice:

- Avoid, minimize or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority and low-income populations
- Ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process
- Prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations

While not specifically addressed by either the Executive Order or Title VI, other federal laws and regulations protect persons age 65 and older. For example, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 prohibits age discrimination in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. Because of this, WisDOT analyzed the location of people age 65 and older.

Likewise, zero-vehicle households are not specifically addressed by any orders, laws or regulations. However, one of the themes presented in *Connections 2030* focused on providing mobility and transportation choice. Zero-vehicle households benefit from increased transportation options. For the reason given above, WisDOT included these groups in the analysis.

Summary of Wisconsin's Minority, Low-income, Age 65 and Older and Zero-vehicle Household Populations

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Wisconsin's population was 5.36 million persons in the year 2000. Table 12-1 depicts Wisconsin's year 2000 population based on race, ethnicity, age, income and zero-vehicle households. As noted in the table:

- 89 percent of the population is white
- 13 percent of the population is age 65 and older
- Six percent of the population is black; Wisconsin's black population is the state's largest minority group
- Eight percent of the population is in poverty
- Eight percent of households have zero-vehicles

Populations and densities targeted by environmental justice efforts are not evenly distributed across the state. To increase the accuracy of the data, WisDOT used a geospatial analysis to identify environmental justice populations within WisDOT's five transportation regions (Map 12-1). Geospatial analysis included establishing threshold levels, inputting data and analyzing outcomes.

**Map 12-1:
WisDOT transportation region offices**

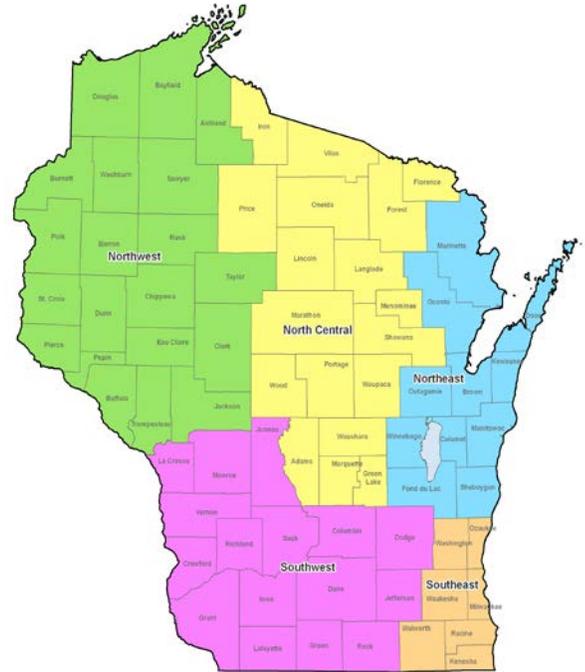


Table 12-1: Wisconsin demographics, 2000

Population group	Number of persons	Percent of total state population
State of Wisconsin	5,363,675	100%
White	4,769,857	89%
Black	304,360	6%
American Indian	47,228	1%
Asian (including Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders)	90,393	2%
Hispanic	192,921	4%
Age 65 and older	702,553	13%
Persons in poverty	451,538	8%
Population group	Number of households	Percent of total state households
Zero-vehicle households*	163,969	8%

*Wisconsin had 2,084,544 households in 2000.

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Threshold level establishment

Using the year 2000 U.S. Census Bureau data, thresholds for each environmental justice demographic group were calculated by dividing the specified population within a WisDOT transportation region by the total population in that same WisDOT region. The threshold is what is typical for the region.

Thresholds shown in the “Percent of Region Population” column in Table 12-2 show that population demographics by WisDOT transportation region and various populations are not distributed equally across the state. For example:

- The Southeast Region has the:
 - Largest concentration of the state’s population
 - Largest percentage of minority populations for all groups except American Indian
 - The North Central Region has the largest American Indian population.)
 - Greatest concentration of blacks, Hispanics, persons in poverty and zero-vehicle household populations
- American Indian, Asian and age 65 and older populations are more equally distributed across the state

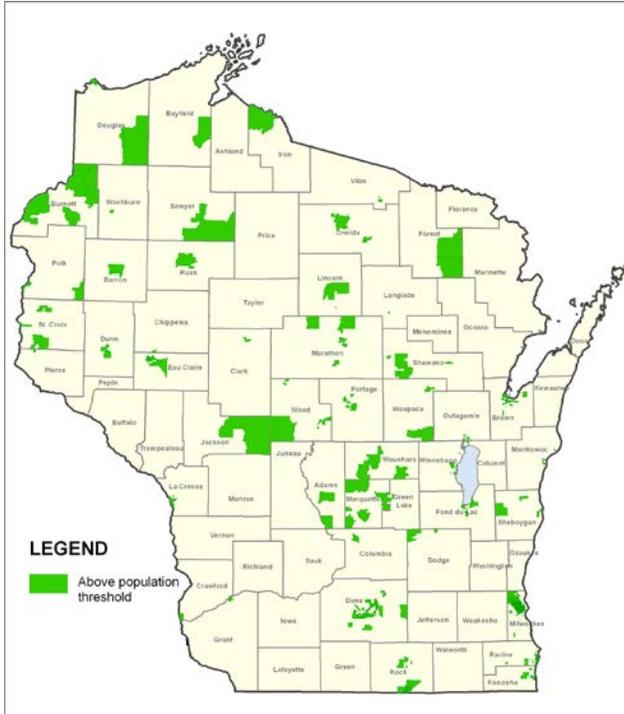
Table 12-2: Wisconsin demographics by WisDOT Region, 2000

U.S. Census Year 2000 Population	North Central Region		Northeast Region		Northwest Region		Southeast Region		Southwest Region	
	Total region population	Percent of region population	Total region population	Percent of region population	Total region population	Percent of region population	Total region population	Percent of region population	Total region population	Percent of region population
Total	588,247	100%	1,005,138	100%	633,219	100%	1,932,908	100%	1,204,163	100%
White	557,791	95%	947,990	95%	607,447	96%	1,534,464	79%	1,122,165	93%
Black	2,096	0%	7,965	1%	2,165	0%	263,200	14%	29,034	2%
American Indian	12,018	2%	10,393	1%	10,789	2%	9,510	0%	4,518	0%
Asian	9,537	2%	18,800	2%	5,451	1%	35,154	2%	21,451	2%
Hispanic	6,959	1%	23,509	2%	5,402	1%	126,394	7%	30,657	3%
Persons in poverty	45,552	8%	58,906	6%	57,410	9%	189,548	10%	100,122	8%
Age 65 and older	93,807	16%	129,836	13%	89,780	14%	241,024	12%	148,106	12%
Zero-vehicle households	13,088	2%	22,725	2%	14,471	2%	81,325	4%	32,360	3%

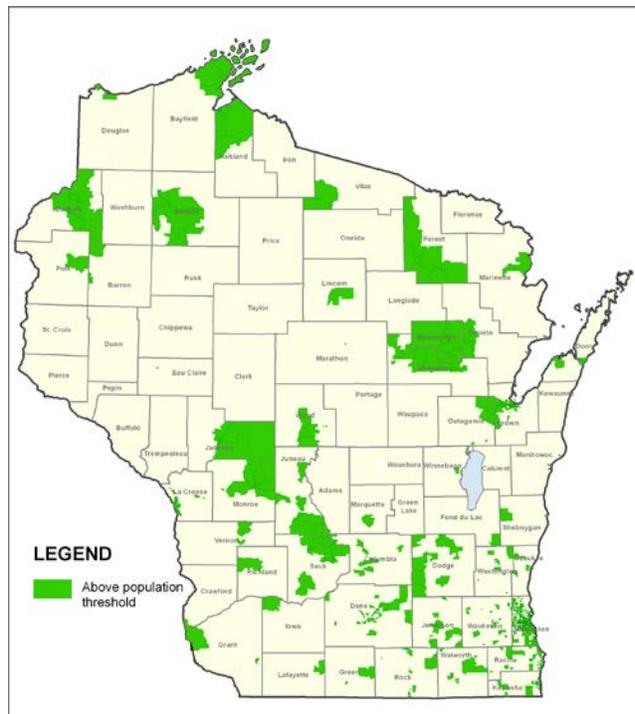
Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Maps 12-2 through 12-8 depict the Census block groups in which the size of the specified population group is equal to or above the region threshold.

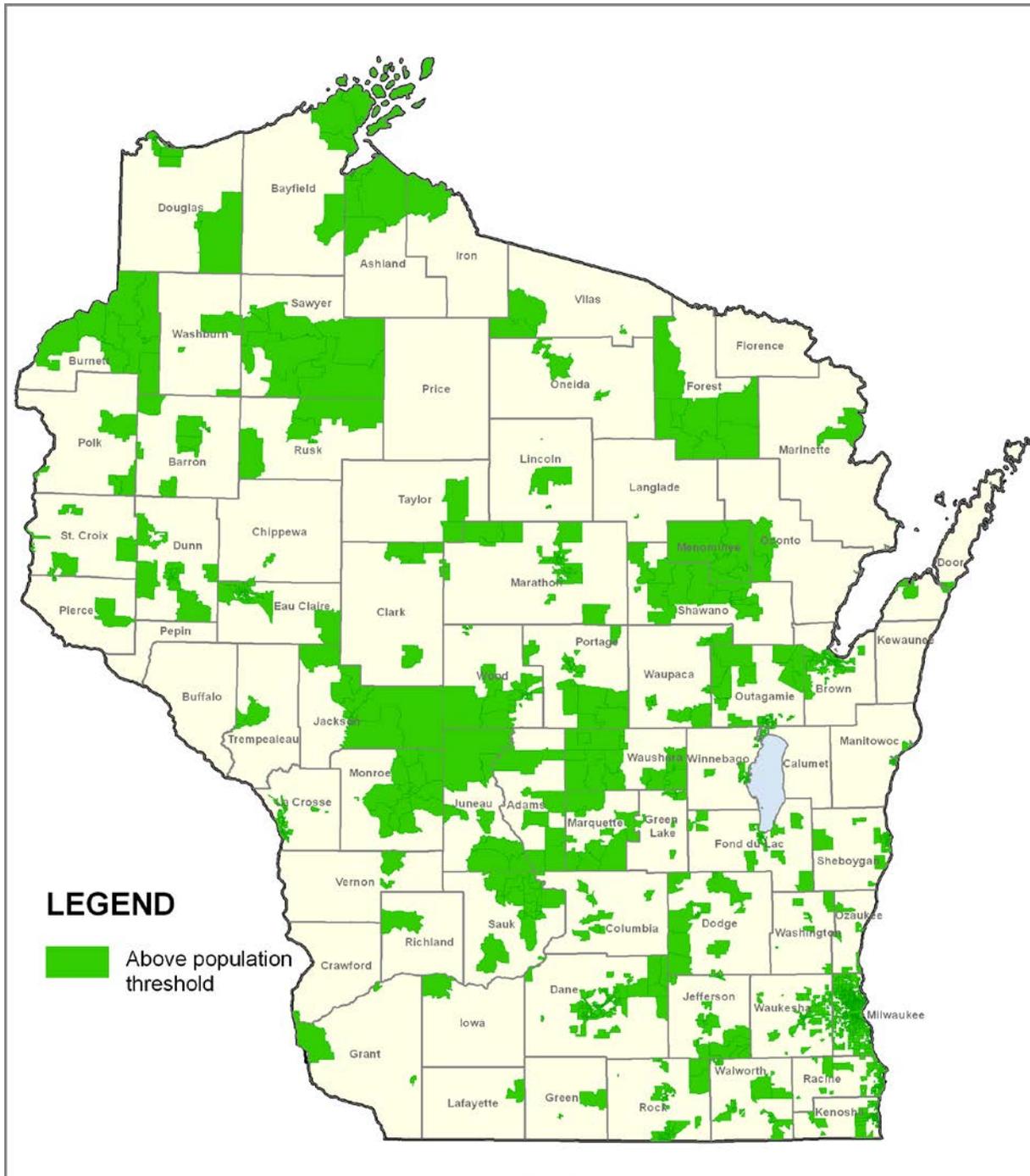
Map 12-2: Census block groups with black population equal to or above region threshold



Map 12-3: Census block groups with American Indian population equal to or above region threshold

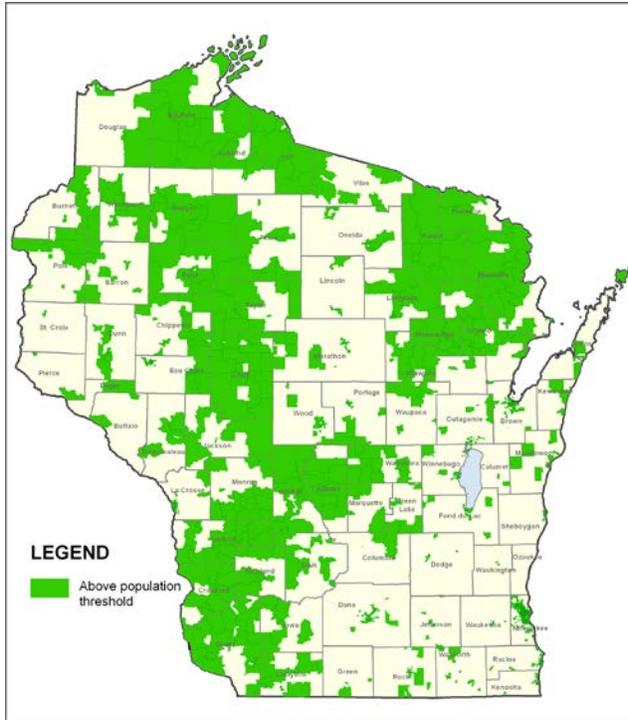


Map 12-6: Census block groups with any minority population equal to or above region threshold

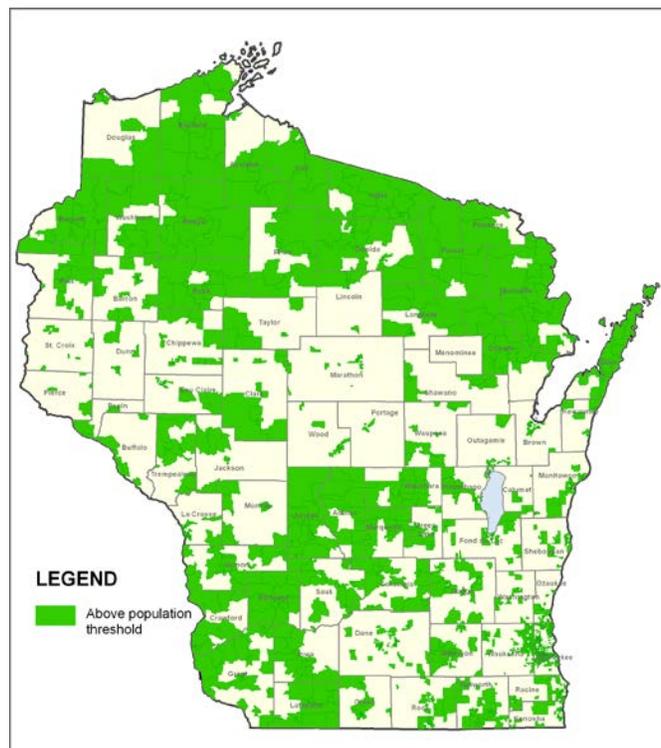


Note: Any census block groups that equal or exceeded a population threshold for black, American Indian, Asian American or Hispanic (as shown in Maps 12-2 through 12-5) are shown on this map.

Map 12-7: Census block groups with persons in poverty equal to or above region threshold



Map 12-8: Census block groups with age 65 and older population equal to or above region threshold



Example 2:

- The Southwest Region has a calculated three percent threshold for Hispanics
- Southwest Region Census Block Group B has a population of 100 persons
- 2 percent of the population is Hispanic

Example 2 analysis: Census Block Group B would be considered typical for the Southwest Region.

Maps 12-2 through 12-9 identify census block groups that exceed the established thresholds. The maps show:

- Census block groups exceeding the thresholds vary in distribution across the state.
- The largest concentration of blacks is located in the Southeast Region. Over 233,000 blacks live in census block groups that exceed the established threshold. The smallest populations are located in the Northwest and North Central regions.
- The number of American Indians living in census block groups exceeding the established thresholds is fairly consistent across all WisDOT regions except the Southwest Region, which has the fewest. The largest population is located in the North Central Region.
- The number of Asian Americans living in census block groups exceeding the established thresholds is highest in the Southeast Region. The smallest population is located in the Northwest Region.
- The largest concentration of Hispanics is located in the Southeast Region. Over 84,000 Hispanics live in census block groups that exceed the established thresholds. The smallest populations are located in the Northwest and North Central regions.
- The greatest number of persons in poverty living in census block groups exceeding the threshold live in the Southeast Region. The number of persons in poverty is fairly equal across the three northern regions.
- The greatest number of households with no vehicles located in census block groups above the threshold is in the Southeast Region. The smallest number is located in the North Central and Northwest regions.

Methodology limitations

The methodology discussed above includes several limitations. The methodology generates assumptions from year 2000 data, is cumulative for a given transportation region and does not utilize future population projections.

- Even though the year 2000 U.S. Census Bureau data is outdated, it was the only data available at the time of the analysis. The 2010 U.S. Census Bureau data will be used at the five-year update.
- The thresholds are based on what is “typical” for each WisDOT transportation region. In some of the less populous areas of the state, block groups that exceed the threshold may only have a few persons of the specified population residing in that area. On the other hand, in more populous areas of the state, like the Southeast and Southwest regions, some block groups may

be below the threshold but have relatively high numbers of persons of the specified population, compared to the less populous regions.

- Population projections are not available for race, ethnicity, income or number of household vehicles at the census block group level. For this reason, the analysis does not account for changes in environmental justice populations over *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* timeframe.

While there are limitations, the analysis provides a basis for evaluating the plan's recommendations and their relationship to minority and low-income populations, as well as persons age 65 and older and zero-vehicle households. As a system-level plan, the threshold methodology locates concentrations of the specified group based on population density. This method is appropriate for a state-level plan like *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030*. As stated previously, the analysis conducted for the long-range plan is not intended to replace more detailed analyses completed when individual projects are undertaken.

Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030 Public Outreach Activities

WisDOT implemented an inclusive and comprehensive outreach effort to ensure that Wisconsin residents had an opportunity to participate in the development of the *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030*. Chapter 2: Development Process and Outreach, outlines plan development and outreach activities.

Public outreach activities included efforts specifically targeted to minority, low-income and persons age 65 and older populations. In the spring of 2010, WisDOT conducted a web-based survey to gain a better understanding of the public's views of freight, intercity passenger and commuter rail. To ensure representation of specific population groups, WisDOT conducted a separate telephone survey of African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, urban and rural low income (less than \$25,999/year) populations as well as persons age 65 and over. The phone survey identified the fact that service lapses and vehicle availability, when arriving at a destination, prevent people from using trains for travel. The web survey also noted that commuter rail service was not important to most respondents. Only a few respondents indicated concerns with trains, safety and noise. The results of this outreach were reviewed and integrated into the overall plan where appropriate.

As part of the outreach conducted during development of *Connections 2030*, WisDOT specifically targeted to minority, low-income and age 65 and older populations. Rail issues were discussed as part of this outreach. WisDOT used the input from these targeted meetings, as well as input from other public outreach activities, to update the *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* as appropriate. To reach a broader base at the end of the planning process, WisDOT translated the *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* summary into Spanish.

Recommendations Related to Minority, Low-income, Age 65 and Older and Zero-vehicle Household Populations

This environmental justice analysis focuses on disproportionate impacts to indicated populations. As noted previously, the policies and recommendations of the *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* further refine the policies and recommendations identified in *Connections 2030*. In drafting those policies, WisDOT

considered the concerns and needs of minority, low-income, age 65 and older and zero-vehicle household populations.

Proposed activities that may occur as a result of *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* may impact environmental justice populations and, in some instances, will be unavoidable. However, if and when projects are to occur under WisDOT authority, the department will work to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts. In addition, *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* specifies continued efforts to incorporate environmental justice in all planning, programming and project decisions. To achieve this, WisDOT will:

- Conduct environmental justice analyses on all transportation planning and project activities
- Seek input from a wide variety of stakeholders
- Assist metropolitan planning organizations in addressing environmental justice in transportation planning activities

Maps 12-10 through 12-17 provide a comprehensive view of the plan's recommendations in relation to the locations of minority, low-income, age 65 years and older and zero-vehicle household populations. The maps identify areas where these population subgroups are present and provide a system-level tool for project sponsors to identify whether additional public outreach activities or measures should be considered to address the interests of environmental justice populations.

Freight rail

Freight rail plays an important role in Wisconsin's multimodal transportation system and the overall economy. As of 2010, eleven freight railroads operate in Wisconsin and serve 95 intermodal facilities. Railroads move 33 percent of Wisconsin's total freight tons annually.

The *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* identifies several recommendations related to freight rail transportation. Specifically, it states that WisDOT will:

- Monitor railroad activity and create partnerships among businesses and railroads to increase the use of rail
- Investigate new policies and new financing strategies for projects that improve freight service
- Continue to work collaboratively with appropriate stakeholders in support of upgraded and expanded *Hiawatha Service*
- Continue to support freight rail shippers and short line carriers in preserving service to light density rail lines
- Evaluate and support freight shipper investments that permit new or continued local service in high-traffic areas on a case-by-case basis.
- Continue to provide planning support, as requested, in support of developing rail-friendly industrial development sites
- Monitor changes in economic regulation of the rail industry and work with Wisconsin's short line rail partners, as appropriate, to broaden shipper access to freight rail services

Map 11-2 in Chapter 11: System-plan Environmental Evaluation shows Wisconsin rail lines in relation to the state’s communities. The map notes that active rail lines do not serve eight Wisconsin counties, one-third of the county seats and most tribal lands. Maps 12-10 to 12-13 compare the locations of active rail lines with environmental justice populations. The maps show that rail lines randomly reach locations with high minority populations, persons in poverty, persons age 65 and older and households without vehicles.

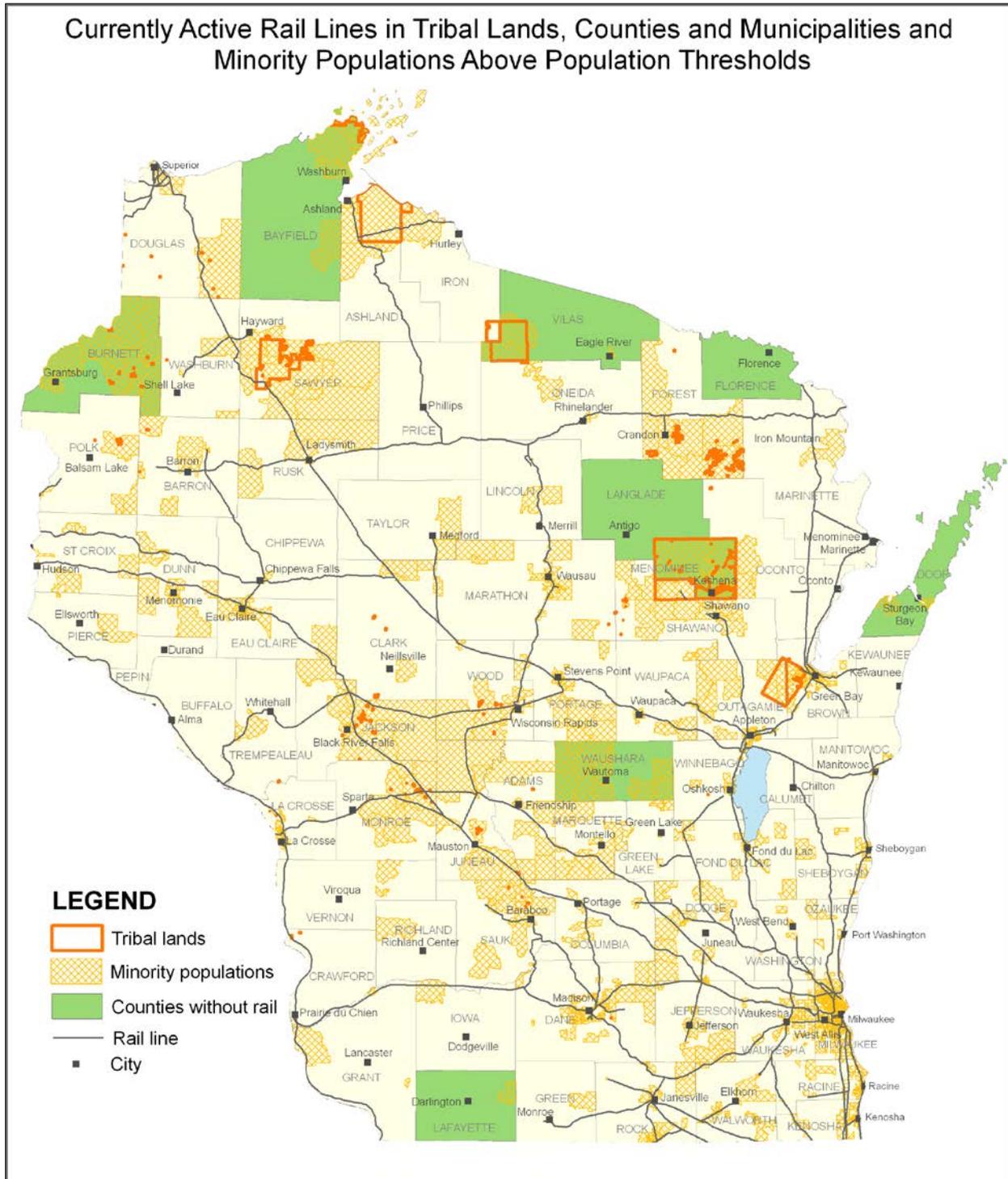
The state rail plan recommends policies that support freight rail service statewide as well as department efforts to work with shippers and businesses to ensure that rail service remains a viable transportation option into the future. As a result, the recommended policies are likely to have a positive impact on the state’s populations. Positive impacts of implementing the plan’s freight rail policies include potential job growth, more economic activity resulting from rail freight service supporting area businesses and improved linkages to global markets. Potential negative impacts include increased frequency of freight trains passing through a community, resulting in safety considerations at crossings, as well as an increase in the level of noise and vibration caused by trains passing through the communities and over the tracks.

Table 12-3: Populations living in census block groups located adjacent to active rail lines

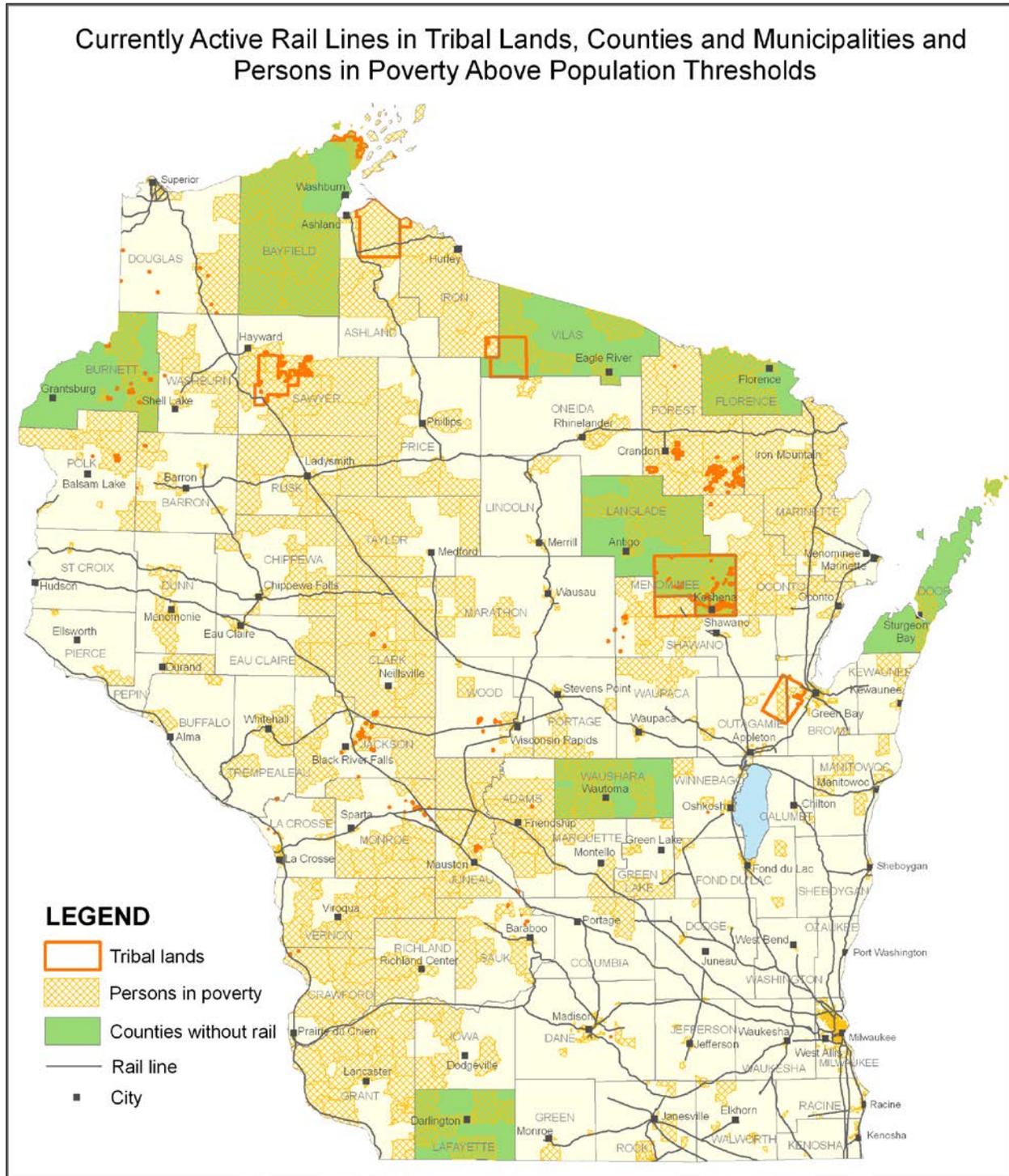
U.S. Census Year 2000 Population	Total	Percent of population subgroup
State of Wisconsin	1,886,849	35.2
Black	61,275	20.1
American Indian	14,615	30.9
Asian	32,506	36.0
Hispanic	55,577	28.8
Age 65 & older	241,039	34.3
Persons in poverty	139,669	30.9
Zero-vehicle households	50,418	30.7

As shown in Table 12-3, 35 percent of the state’s population lives adjacent to active rail lines. The percentage of environmental justice populations living adjacent to active rail lines, with the exception of Asian Americans, is less than that of the state’s total population.

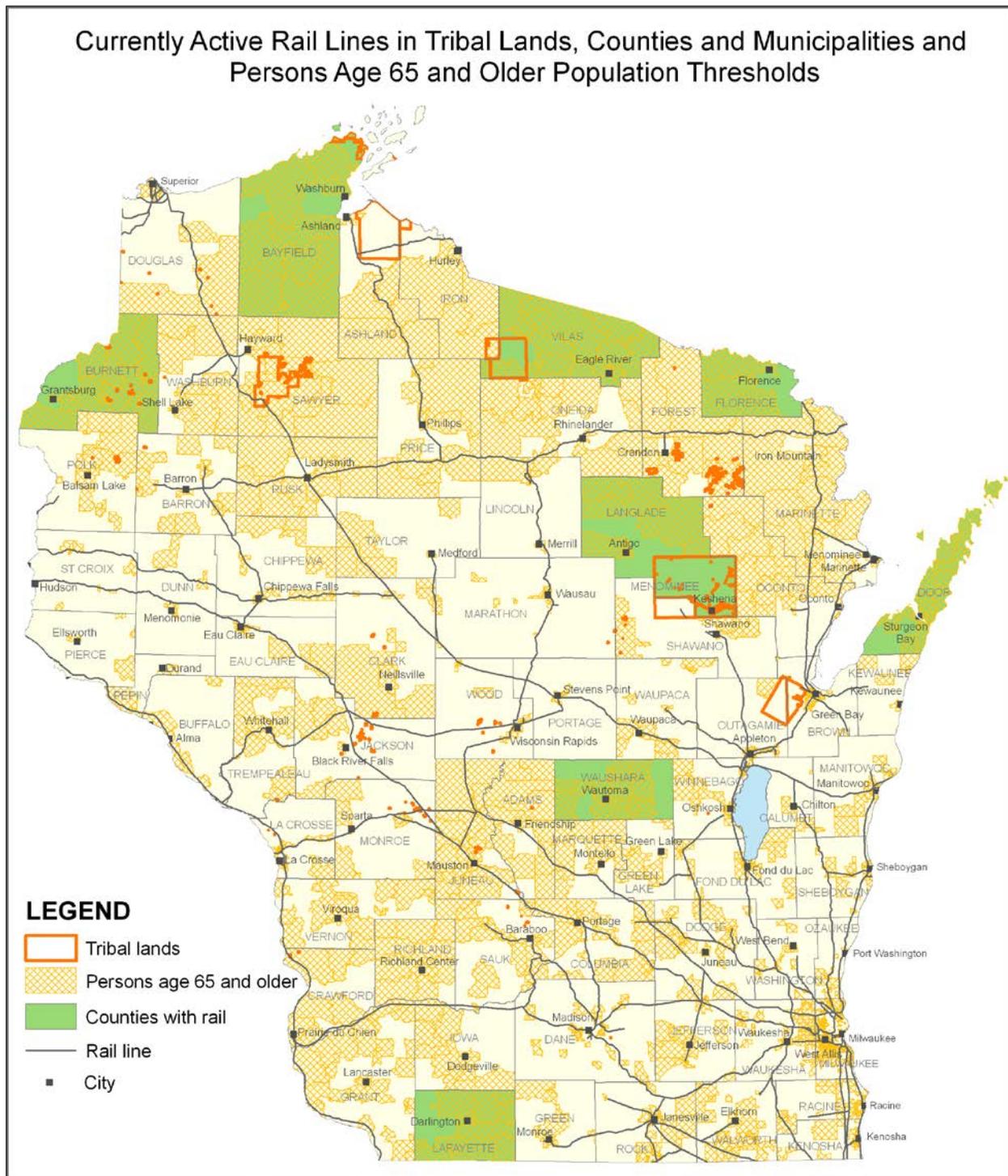
Map 12-10: Wisconsin's Rail Lines Relative to Communities and Minority Populations



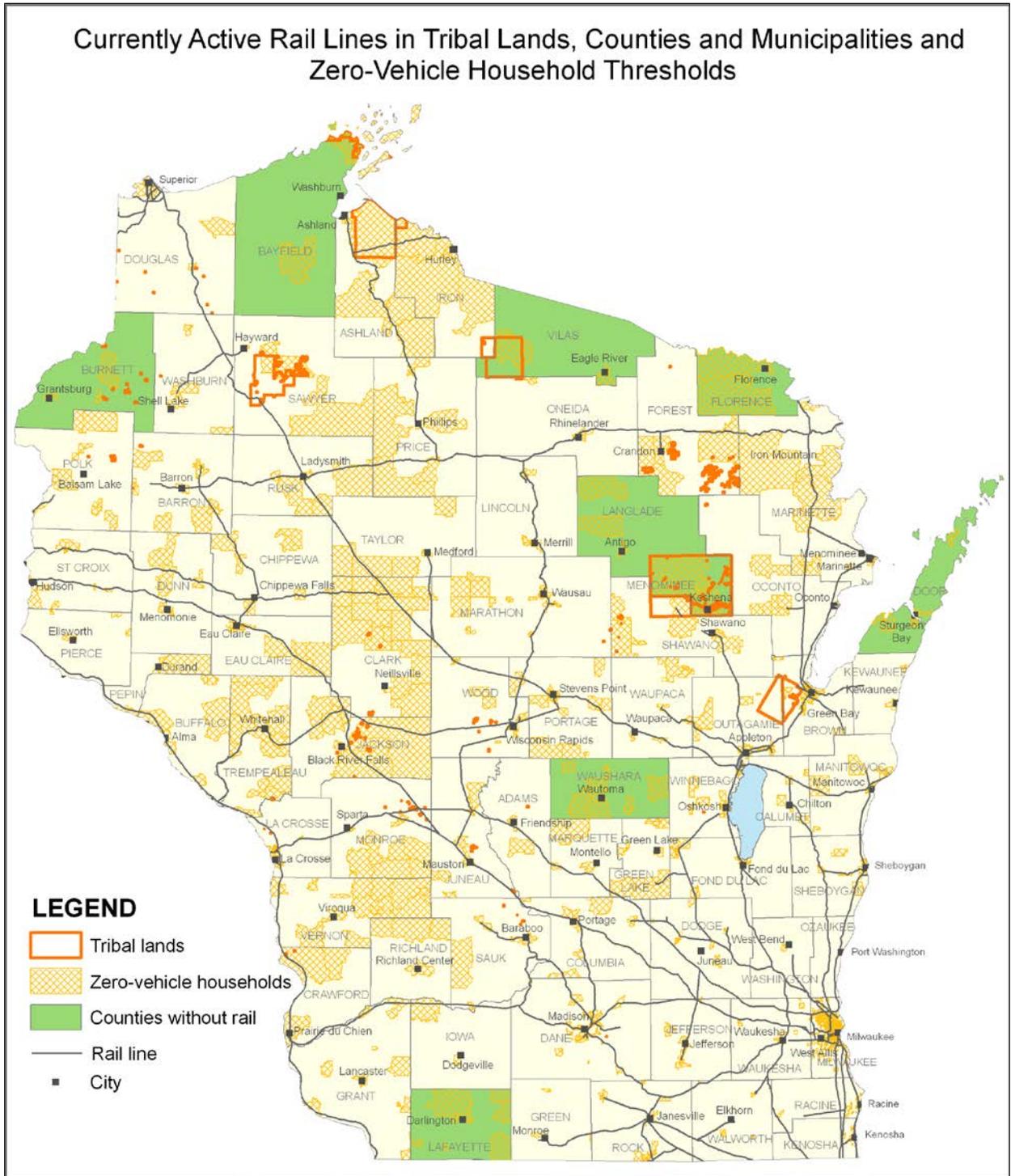
Map 12-11: Wisconsin's Rail Lines Relative to Communities and Persons in Poverty



Map 12-12: Wisconsin's Rail Lines Relative to Communities and Age 65 and Older Populations



Map 12-13: Wisconsin's Rail Lines Relative to Communities and Zero-Vehicle Households



Intercity passenger rail

Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030 addresses intercity passenger rail and provides a set of recommended actions to be undertaken over the next 20 years. These include WisDOT's commitment to:

- Continue to support, implement and enhance existing intercity passenger rail service
- Facilitate intermodal connections and promote livable communities
- Continue to assist and/or coordinate with neighboring states on intercity passenger rail studies and projects that impact Wisconsin
- Consider opportunities to expand intercity passenger rail service to other Wisconsin regions
- Continue to partner with freight railroads when planning and implementing passenger rail service
- Continue with the implementation of improved intercity passenger rail service

Analysis of the potential impacts – either positive or negative – to communities statewide includes consideration of access to intercity passenger rail stations and intercity bus stations.

To measure access to intercity passenger rail stations and intercity bus stations, the analysis identified populations located within 10 miles of an intercity bus station and 20 miles of an intercity passenger rail station. The intercity bus distance was identified in a paper entitled “Access to Intercity Public Transportation Services from Small Communities” in Transportation Research Record 1666, while the intercity passenger rail distance was used by the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative.

Amtrak currently provides the state's only intercity passenger rail service. As shown in Table 12-4, approximately 39 percent of the state's population is located within 20 miles of an existing intercity passenger rail station. Amtrak also provides intercity bus service as part of its Thruway program. There are 25 Thruway bus stations in Wisconsin that connect to Amtrak intercity passenger rail service in Milwaukee. Currently, 50.9 percent of the state's population is located within 10 miles of an Amtrak Thruway bus station (Table 12-5). Maps 12-14 through 12-17 show the locations of recommended intercity passenger rail stations and Census block groups that exceed a threshold for a specified population. Under this recommended system of expanded passenger rail and intercity bus service, service could potentially expand to 14 Wisconsin communities that currently have no intercity passenger rail service: Hudson, Menomonie, Eau Claire, Green Bay, Appleton, Neenah, Oshkosh, Fond du Lac, West Bend, Madison, Watertown, Oconomowoc, Brookfield and Granville (northwest Milwaukee). In addition, Minnesota is analyzing the potential to extend intercity passenger rail service from Duluth to St. Paul. The service may include a stop in Superior.

Implementation of the Wisconsin component of the Midwest Regional Rail System, as well as service between Duluth and St. Paul with a stop in Superior, would result in up to 68 percent of the state's population (based on U.S. Census year 2000 population figures) being located within 20 miles of an intercity passenger rail station (Table 12-4). This is an increase of up to approximately 29 percent compared to existing intercity passenger rail service. With the exception of the state's black population,

a high percentage of which already has access due to existing stations in Milwaukee and Racine, all the other population subgroups would experience substantial increases in the population served.

Table 12-4: Population located within 20 miles of an intercity passenger rail station

U.S. Census Year 2000 Population	Existing intercity passenger rail service		Proposed intercity passenger rail service*	
	Total	% of population subgroup	Total	% of population subgroup
State of Wisconsin	2,115,552	39.4	3,498,711 – 3,648,477	65.2 – 68.0
Black	266,649	87.6	290,436 – 291,291	95.4 – 95.7
American Indian	11,990	25.4	22,605 – 23,829	47.9 – 50.5
Asian	38,934	43.1	67,465 – 68,375	74.6 – 75.6
Hispanic	126,377	65.5	162,093 – 162,642	84.0 – 84.3
Age 65 & older	270,334	38.5	422,762 – 438,479	60.2 – 62.4
Persons in poverty	210,823	46.7	299,281 – 308,636	66.3 – 68.4
Zero-vehicle households	87,241	53.2	120,038 – 122,189	73.2 – 74.5

*Includes route options through La Crosse or Eau Claire; includes proposed Northern Lights Express service in Superior

The Midwest Regional Rail Initiative also includes an intercity bus component. Many of these stops are already part of Amtrak’s Thruway bus service. The addition of seven stops to the existing Thruway bus network would reflect the vision presented in the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative. These seven stops are Sturgeon Bay, Peshtigo, Mosinee, Beloit, Eau Claire, Black River Falls and Tomah. A few other changes would also occur. Existing Thruway bus stops in Oshkosh and Fond du Lac would be replaced with intercity passenger rail stops. Existing Thruway stops in Appleton, Green Bay and Madison would serve as both intercity bus and intercity passenger rail stops. As a result, 53.4 percent of the state’s population would be located within 10 miles of an intercity bus station connecting to an intercity passenger rail station (Table 12-5). Since only seven additional stops are added to the current Amtrak Thruway system, there is only a small increase in the population served.

Table 12-5: Populations located within 10 miles of an existing Amtrak Thruway intercity bus station or a proposed Midwest Regional Rail Initiative intercity bus station*

U.S. Census Year 2000 Population	Existing Amtrak Thruway intercity bus service		Proposed Midwest Regional Rail Initiative intercity bus service*	
	Total	% of population subgroup	Total	% of population subgroup
State of Wisconsin	2,729,611	50.9	2,862,632	53.4
Black	250,895	82.4	256,063	84.1
American Indian	24,267	51.4	25,965	55.0
Asian	70,177	77.6	69,655	77.1
Hispanic	124,452	64.5	128,301	66.5
Age 65 & older	335,634	47.8	352,998	50.2
Persons in poverty	270,050	59.8	278,238	61.6
Zero-vehicle households	105,667	64.4	107,815	65.8

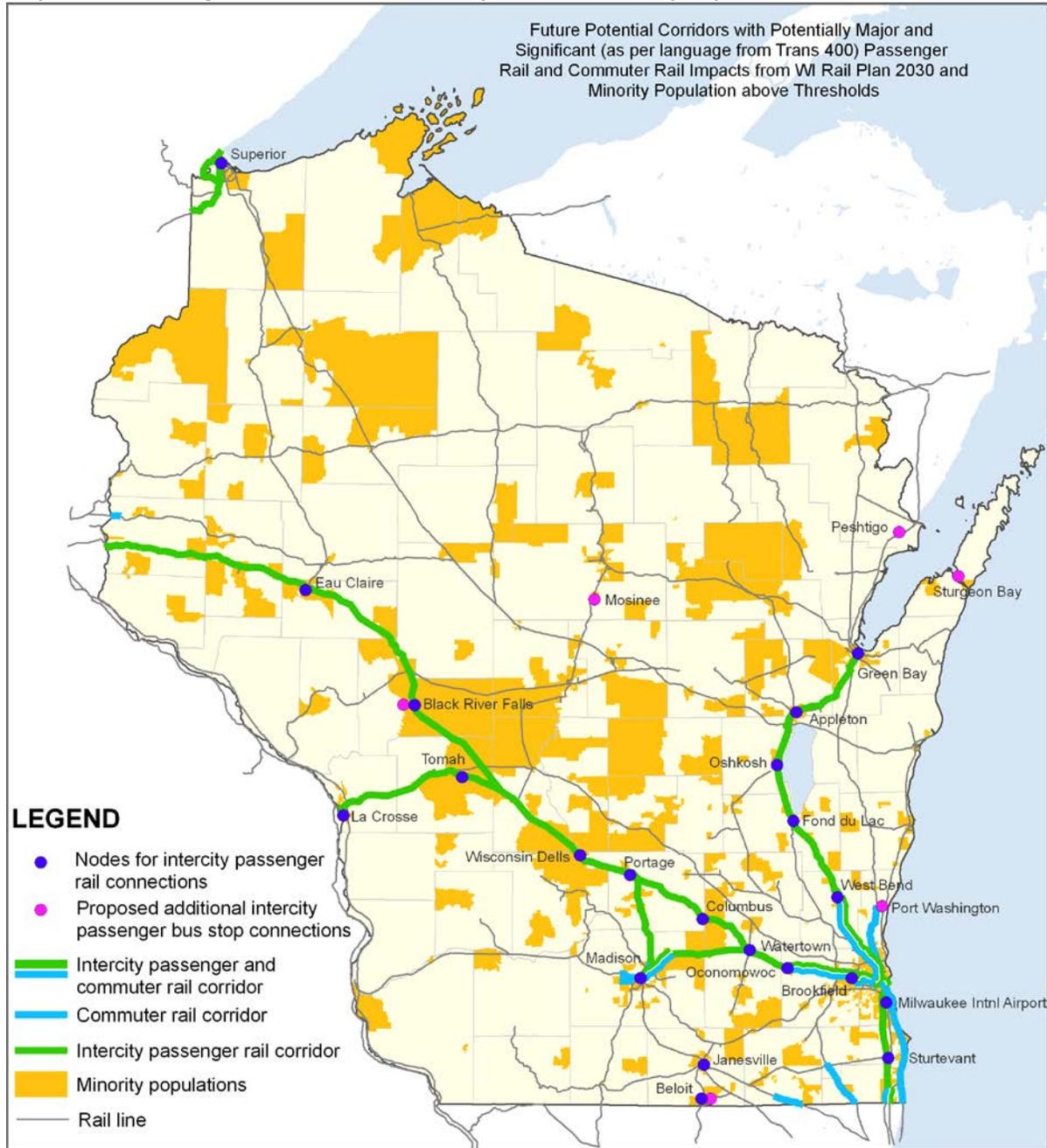
*Includes existing stops currently served by Amtrak Thruway service

The Northeast Region will experience the greatest level of intercity passenger rail service expansion since five new stations are recommended within the region. The intercity passenger rail recommendations also expand service to the state’s second largest metropolitan area – Madison. The Milwaukee area will also experience expanded intercity passenger rail service due to a wider range of travel times.

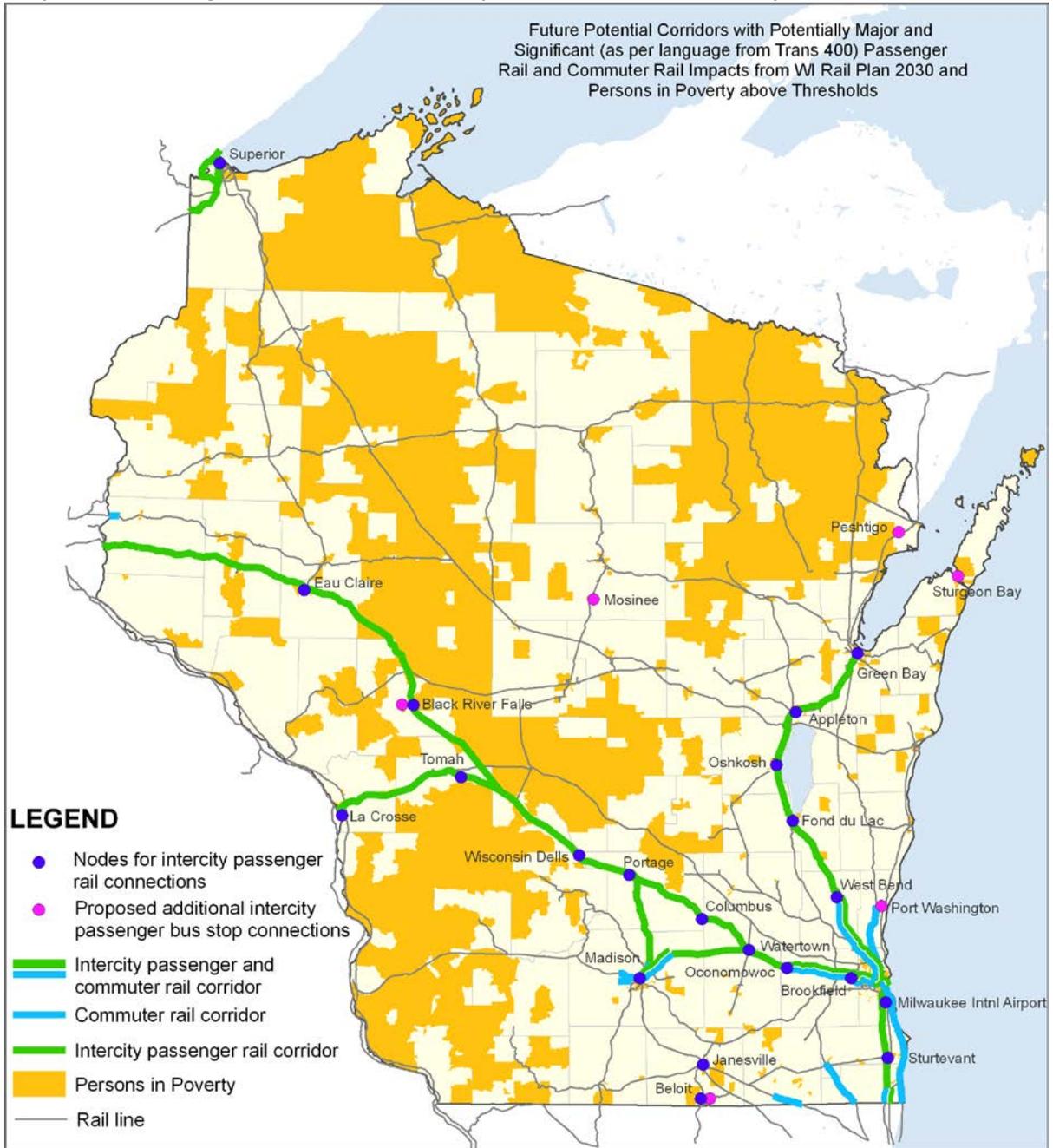
For intercity bus, all regions except the Southeast Region will gain additional stops. Overall, increased intercity bus service will increase mobility options for individuals statewide.

Implementation of intercity passenger rail and intercity bus service will expand the transportation options for a large percentage of the state’s population. In addition, the rail stations will likely encourage community development that is transit oriented and attracts businesses into the area. Negative implications of increased passenger rail service resulting from implementation of the plan’s recommendations may include increased traffic around stations, which could affect congestion levels and increase safety concerns for pedestrians or other travelers. Other possible impacts may include increases in the amount of noise, vibration and emissions resulting from idling vehicles and more trains passing through the area. The increase in the number of trains passing through a community may impact vehicle traffic crossing the railroad tracks.

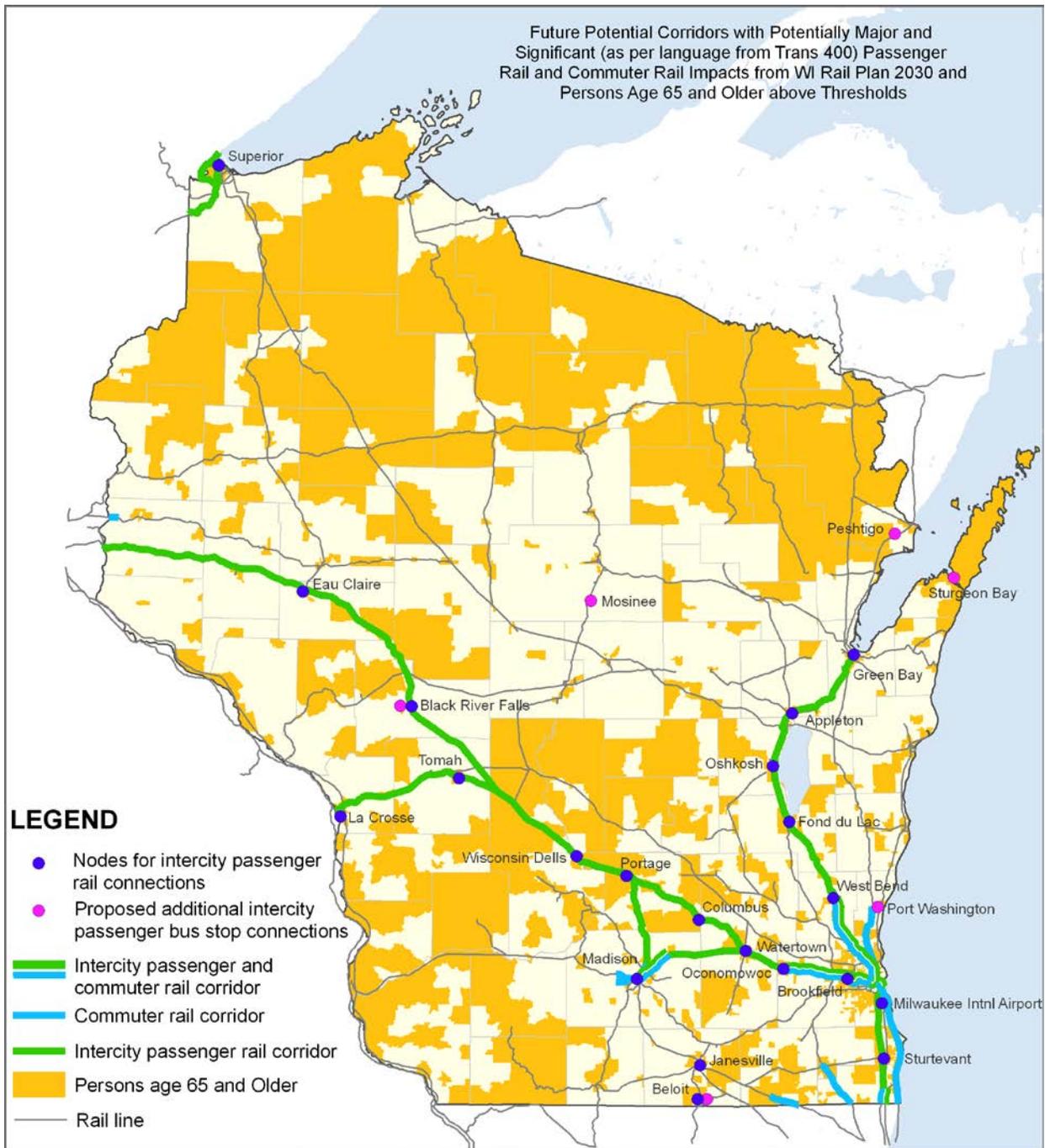
Map 12-14: Passenger and Commuter Rail Impacts and Minority Populations



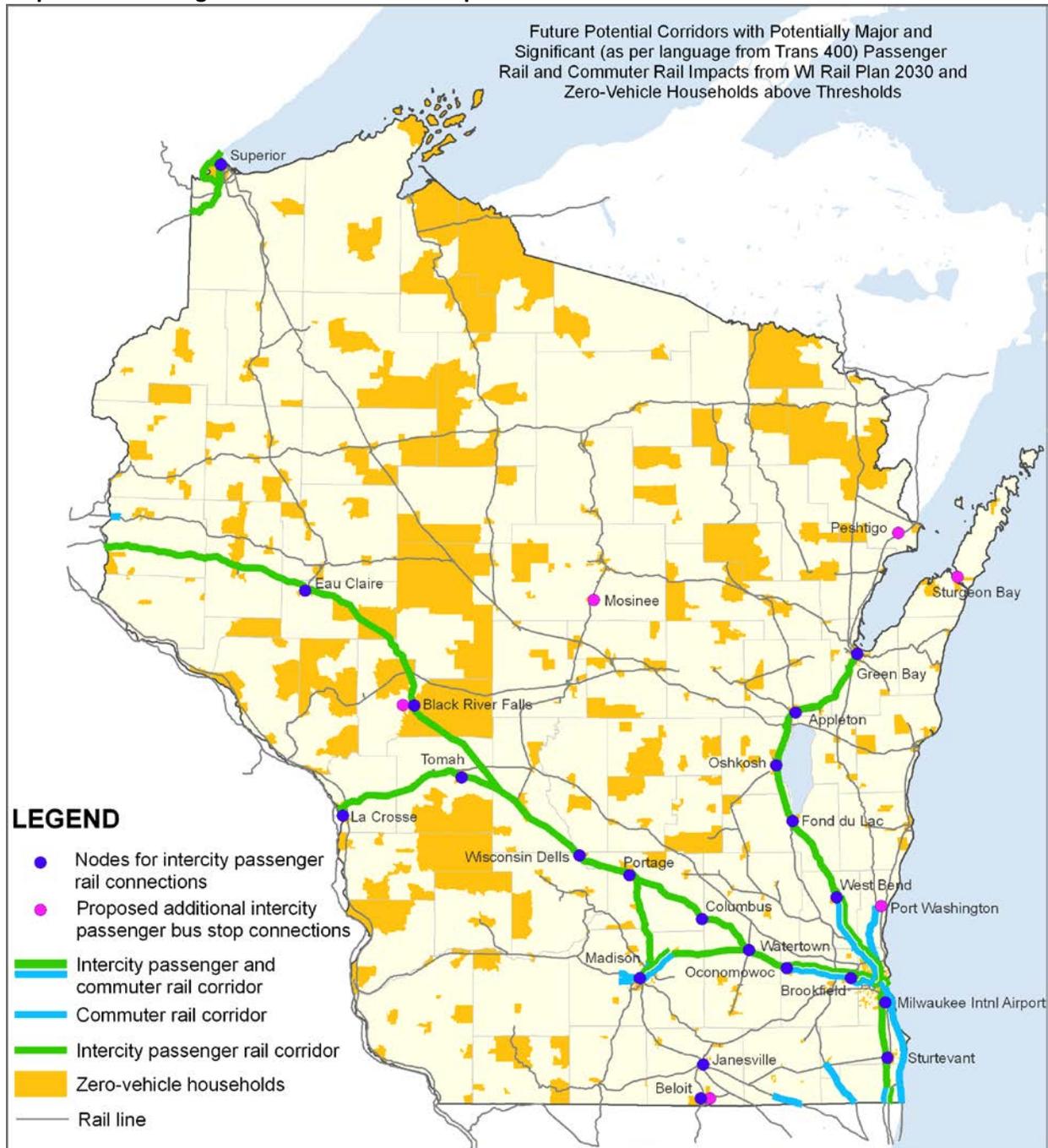
Map 12-15: Passenger and Commuter Rail Impacts and Persons in Poverty



Map 12-16: Passenger and Commuter Rail Impacts and Persons Age 65 and Older



Map 12-17: Passenger and Commuter Rail Impacts and Zero-Vehicle Households



Commuter rail

Transit is often people's only transportation option and it is an alternative option for others. Robust transit service helps attract and retain businesses and jobs. In Wisconsin's largest urban areas, fixed-guideway transit systems, such as commuter rail, can provide a robust and environmentally friendly alternative to congested roadways; can increase transportation options; and can promote economic development. Commuter rail service faces many challenges including coordination between different rail providers, sufficiency of intermodal connections and funding, and governance structures.

Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030 includes recommendations to address commuter rail in the state over the next 20 years. These include WisDOT's commitment to:

- Support existing and expanded urban and rural transit systems with new governance structures, funding sources and increased coordination
- Support development of fixed-guideway transit systems
- Facilitate intermodal connections

Commuter rail projects are typically located in urban areas. Similar to decision regarding other transit services, decisions regarding commuter rail systems are local ones; WisDOT does not decide whether commuter rail service will be implemented. In *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030*, fixed-guideway transit systems (which include commuter rail) are identified in Wisconsin's largest urban areas consistent with Metropolitan Planning Organizations' long-range plans. Several stages of the planning process have been completed for the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee commuter rail project in southeastern Wisconsin and the Transport 2020 project in Dane County. If implemented, these projects would establish commuter rail service in the state's two largest urban areas.

Table 12-6 identifies populations within three miles of existing and proposed commuter rail lines. This summary assumes all of the commuter rail studies – discussed in Chapter 7: Commuter Rail – are implemented. Additional analysis of each commuter rail recommendation may reveal that implementation of commuter rail is not feasible.

A little over two percent of the state's population is located within three miles of existing commuter rail lines. This result is not surprising since the only existing commuter rail service in Wisconsin is located in Kenosha. If all the studies are implemented, over 30 percent of the state's population would live within three miles of a commuter rail line. The Southeast and Southwest regions would experience the greatest increase in access to commuter rail service. If implemented, commuter rail will improve transportation options within and between cities. In addition, station development will likely encourage transit oriented development and attract businesses into communities. Similar to the potential impacts of implementing the passenger rail recommendations, increases in the number of trains traveling on a rail corridor may impact a community through increased noise and vibration, vehicle traffic delays at crossings, as well as potential increases in air emissions from idling trains or vehicles.

Table 12-6: Population located within three miles of existing and proposed commuter rail line

U.S. Census Year 2000 Population	Existing commuter rail service		Potential commuter rail service*	
	Total	% of population subgroup	Total	% of population subgroup
State of Wisconsin	115,175	2.1	1,747,460	32.6
Black	7,147	2.3	262,116	86.1
American Indian	473	1.0	9,006	19.1
Asian	1,171	1.3	44,878	49.6
Hispanic	9,797	5.1	110,978	57.5
Age 65 & older	13,683	1.9	205,269	29.2
Persons in poverty	9,359	2.1	204,091	45.2
Zero-vehicle households	3,383	2.1	82,523	50.3

*Assumes all studies discussed in Chapter 7: Commuter Rail, are implemented.

Multimodal connections and livability

Livable communities are those that typically include clean air, clean water, safe streets, positive race relations, affordable homes, quality public schools, greenery, open space, uncongested roadways and low taxes. Rail-related transportation can play a role in creating livable communities. Transportation efficiency, smart growth development, multimodal connectivity (including integration of modes, station access and habitual auto-oriented travel behaviors), environmental impacts and economic growth and development provide both challenges and opportunities in supporting livable communities.

Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030 discusses multimodal transportation and livability considerations and offers a set of recommended actions through 2030. Specifically, it states that WisDOT will:

- Improve coordination among transportation modes and facilitate intermodal connections
- Encourage transportation demand management strategies aimed at creating viable travel alternatives to the single occupant vehicle and increase the availability of alternative modes
- Coordinate community sensitive solutions efforts with local stakeholders and encourage transportation projects that minimize negative community impacts while supporting and preserving local character
- Coordinate state transportation efforts with local comprehensive plans, land use and transit agency activities
- Emphasize air quality improvement
- Continue to work with local jurisdictions to designate truck routes on appropriate state roads, support new truck route designations, and work with others to identify solutions to address roadway issues for port areas
- Continue to improve street design and connectivity at crossings for all modes of transportation

The department will continue working with key stakeholders statewide to implement the plan’s recommendations regarding livability and sustainability. Overall, it is expected that this will provide

benefits statewide and ensure that consideration of actions and their potential impacts are considered early in the decision making process.

Rail safety and security

Safety is a fundamental mission for WisDOT and will continue to be one of the department's top priorities for all modes of transportation. The following objectives guide WisDOT's planning and policy development for safety across all transportation modes:

- Reduce crashes, injuries and fatalities
- Educate people regarding safety strategies
- Design and construct safe transportation facilities
- Identify and build partnerships between federal, state, and local agencies and advocates to achieve safety improvements

Like safety, security considerations have been part of WisDOT's policies for many years. WisDOT's vision is to be able to prevent, prepare for or coordinate response to any incident, whether caused by natural or human events.

To address safety and security, *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* states that WisDOT will:

- Support a comprehensive vision of homeland security and defense mobilization
- Improve emergency response to make the transportation system more resilient
- Work with the Office of the Commissioner of Railroads and private companies to identify potential rail crossing safety improvements, discourage trespassing and continue to support the Operation Lifesaver program that teaches safe behavior while crossing railroad tracks
- Enhance the security of the transportation system by reducing vulnerability and continue to work with the Office of Wisconsin Emergency Management, railroad companies and other agencies to discuss rail-related security issues
- Seek federal security funding to install and operate flat-panel displays and remote audio announcement technology at all Amtrak stations in Wisconsin
- Take an active role in the oversight of security for new commuter rail systems in Wisconsin

Safety and security continue to be department priorities. Implementing the plan's recommendations will benefit all users of the transportation system.

Summary of Potential System-Level Impacts

All of the maps and tables in this chapter depict the relationship between the plan's recommendations and the state's minority, low-income, age 65 years and older and zero-vehicle household populations. As noted earlier, this chapter serves as the starting point for a more detailed analysis at the project level. Project decisions are made after consideration of environmental and community impacts and may be

influenced by decisions of the legislature or the governor and through coordination with local units of government and public involvement opportunities.

Table 11-1 in Chapter 11: System-Plan Environmental Evaluation, outlines in-depth rail-related land use impacts of a more cumulative or indirect nature. It also outlines potential mitigation strategies. For more information, refer to Chapter 11: System-Plan Environmental Evaluation.

The system-level analysis presented in this environmental justice chapter of the state rail plan is only one step in WisDOT's commitment to ensuring that its plans and projects do not result in disproportionate impacts. The plan's environmental justice analysis demonstrates that minority and low-income populations, as well as persons age 65 and older and zero-vehicle households, are found in all WisDOT regions and are impacted by *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* activities.

The *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* environmental justice analysis concludes:

At the system-level, policy recommendations outlined in *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* offer a balanced framework for specific rail and other multimodal investment strategies and do not include any inherent disproportionate negative impacts on minority and low-income populations, or on persons age 65 and older and zero-vehicle households.