

Memorandum

DATE: January 23, 2024
TO: Victoria MPO
CC:
FROM: ATG|DCCM
RE: Equity Analysis

Introduction

The Victoria 2050 MTP is required to consider equity while planning for future transportation investments by numerous laws and regulations, such as the ones listed below:

- Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations
- Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government (2021)
- Executive Order 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad (2021)
- Age discrimination act of 1975: youth and elderly
- Executive Order 13166: Persons with Limited English Proficiency
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Disabled Individuals
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990: Disabled Individuals
- U.S. DOT Order 1000.12(c): Race, Color, or National Origin (including Limited English Proficiency)
- U.S. DOT Order 5610.2(a): Low-Income and Minority

It is critical to the planning process to establish and ensure fair and equitable transportation policies and funding decisions so that no group of people (by race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status) receives unfair treatment or bears a disproportionate share of negative consequences because of decisions made by the MPO or other levels of government.

There are numerous tools available to analyze variables that relate to equity. This analysis displays the results of the Justice40 Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST).

Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST)

The Justice40 Initiative, through Executive Order 14008, directed the development of the CEJST to identify communities that are disadvantaged, overburdened, and underserved. Census tracts that are at or above set thresholds of a socioeconomic burden *and* at least one additional environmental, climate, or other burden are considered to be disadvantaged and in need of special consideration for program benefits and impacts.

Socioeconomic burdens include the following:

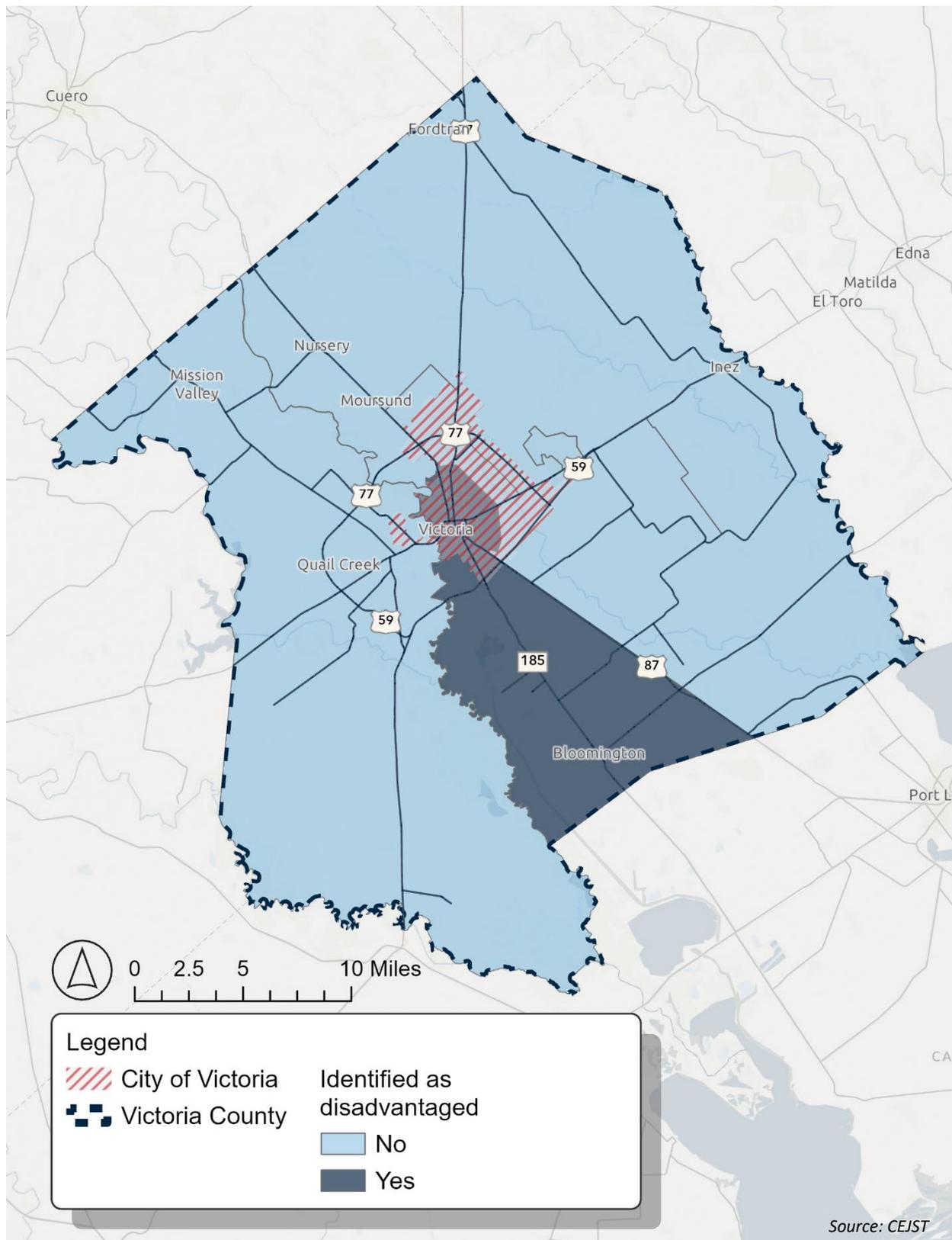
- At or above the 65th percentile for low income, based on the tract’s percentage of households where income is at or below 200% of the Federal poverty level
- For the workforce development burden category: More than 10% of people ages 25 years or older whose high school education is less than a high school diploma

Additional categories of burdens:

1. **Climate Change** - at or above the 90th percentile for expected agriculture loss rate, expected building loss rate, expected population loss rate, projected flood risk, or projected wildfire risk
2. **Energy** - at or above the 90th percentile for energy cost or PM2.5 in the air
3. **Health** - at or above the 90th percentile for asthma, diabetes, heart disease, or low life expectancy
4. **Housing** - experienced historic underinvestment, or are at or above the 90th percentile for housing cost, lack of green space, lack of indoor plumbing, or lead paint
5. **Legacy Pollution** - have at least one abandoned mine land or formerly used defense sites, or are at or above the 90th percentile for proximity to hazardous waste facilities, proximity to Superfund sites (National Priorities List (NPL)), or proximity to Risk Management Plan (RMP) facilities
6. **Transportation** - at or above the 90th percentile for diesel particulate matter exposure, transportation barriers, or traffic proximity and volume
7. **Water and Wastewater** - at or above the 90th percentile for underground storage tanks and releases or wastewater discharge
8. **Workforce Development** - at or above the 90th percentile for linguistic isolation, low median income, poverty, or unemployment

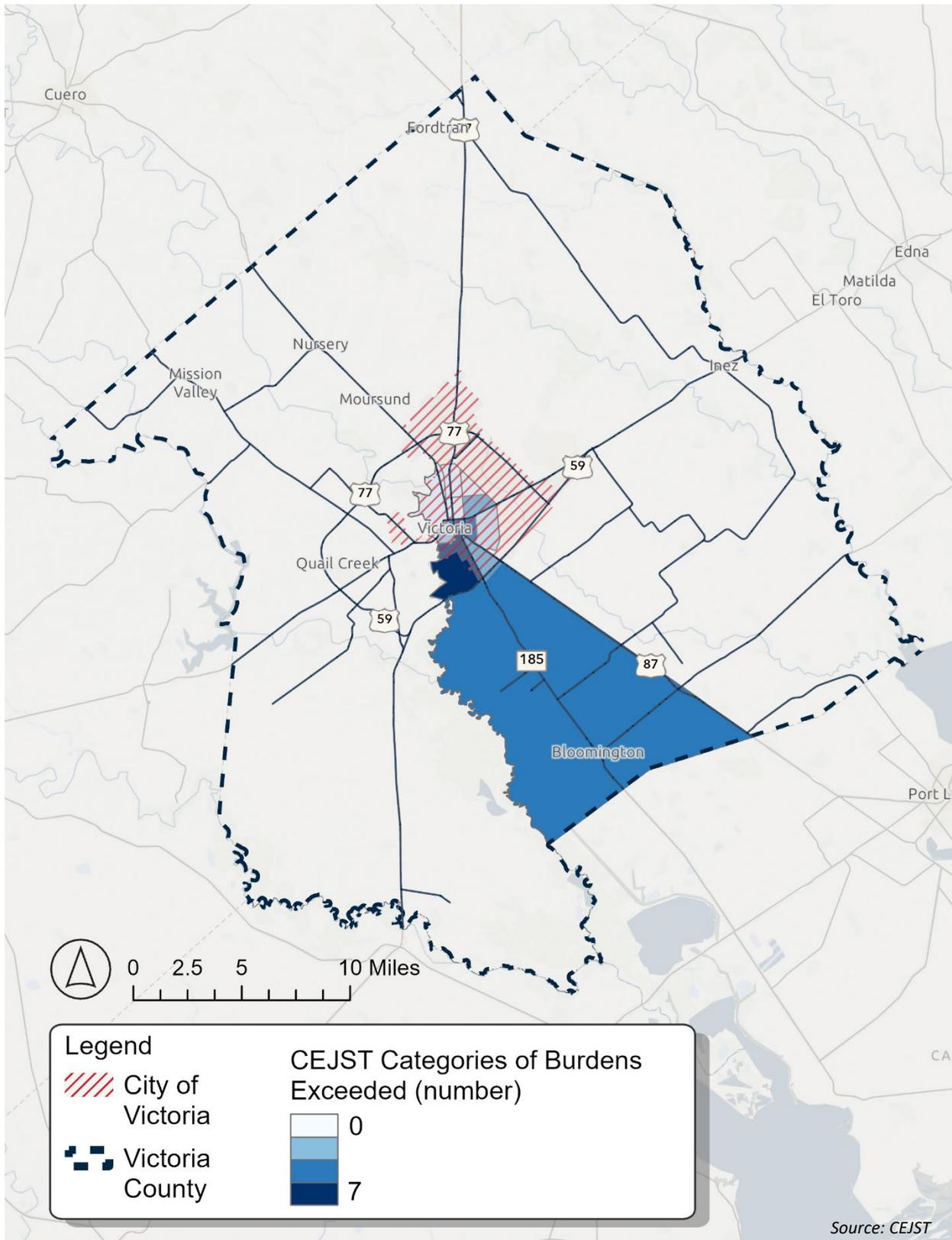
Figure 1 shows the census tracts in the Victoria MPO study area that are identified as disadvantaged by the CEJST. The disadvantaged tracts are located in the south and south-central portions of the study area. Transportation projects, policies, and outreach activities within these tracts should carefully consider all potential impacts and needs.

Figure 1: Disadvantaged Census Tracts



The disadvantaged tracts meet the criteria described above, by exceeding a socioeconomic burden and at least one additional burden category. Figure 2 shows the total number of these additional categories burdens that each tract exceeds, with a possible maximum value of eight. The tract in the study area that exceeded the most categories of burdens is located in the central portion of the county, within and just south of the City of Victoria. This tract, shown in darker blue, exceeds seven of the eight categories of burdens. The large southern census tract between US 87 and the Guadalupe River exceeds five of the eight categories.

Figure 2: Total CEJST Categories of Burden Thresholds Exceeded



Demographics

Population demographics play an important role in the equity analysis, since different groups can face nuanced challenges regarding transportation. Figure 3 shows the percentage of Black individuals for each census tract in the study area. The central Victoria area has the highest percentage of Black individuals, between 10% to 14%. Figure 4 shows the percentage of Hispanic individuals in the study area, with the south and south-central census tracts having the highest percentages of up to 77%. Figure 5 shows the percentage of White individuals. The map shows that all of the census tracts around the county border, except for the south-central tract, have between 55% and 72% White populations.

Figure 3: Percent Black

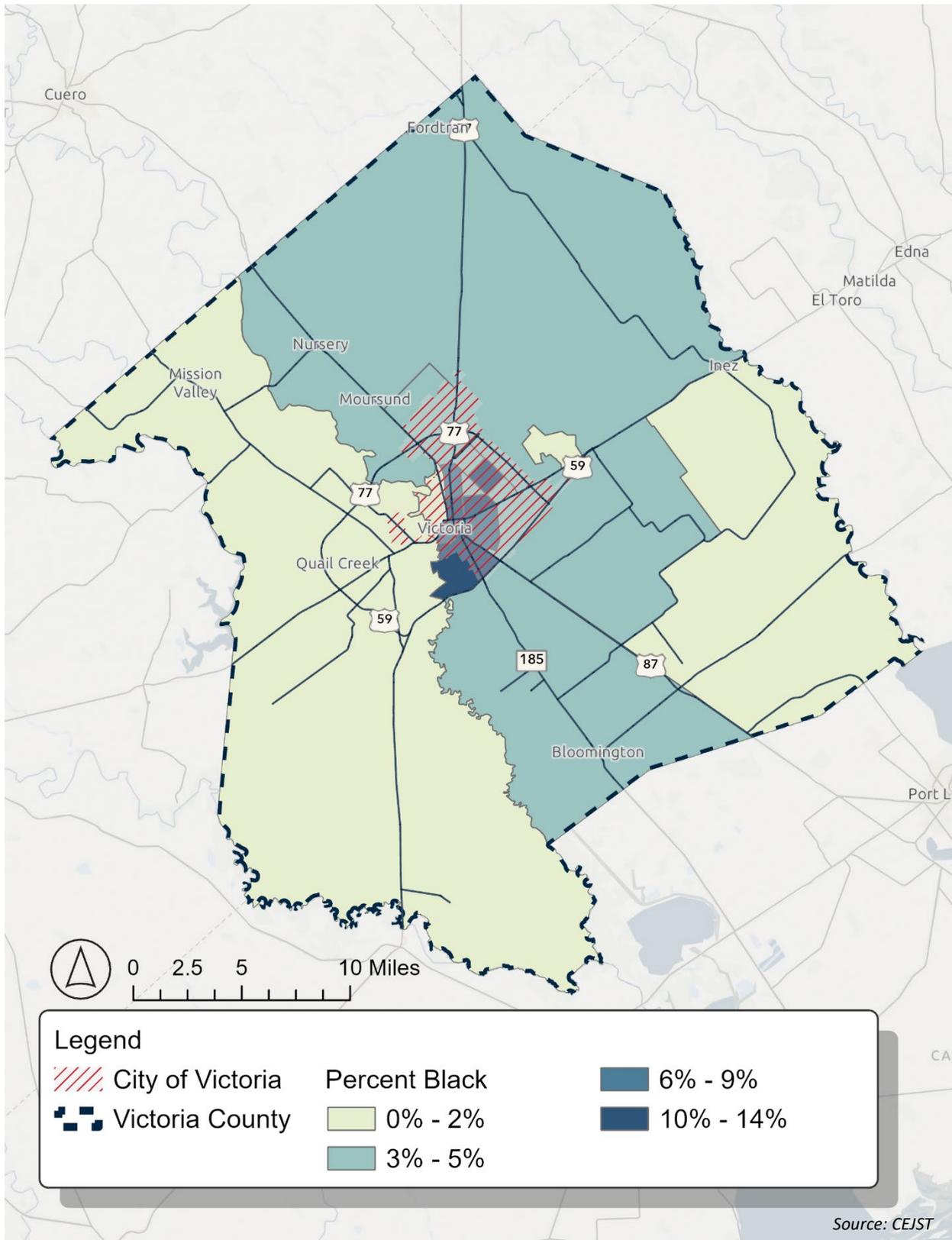


Figure 4: Percent Hispanic

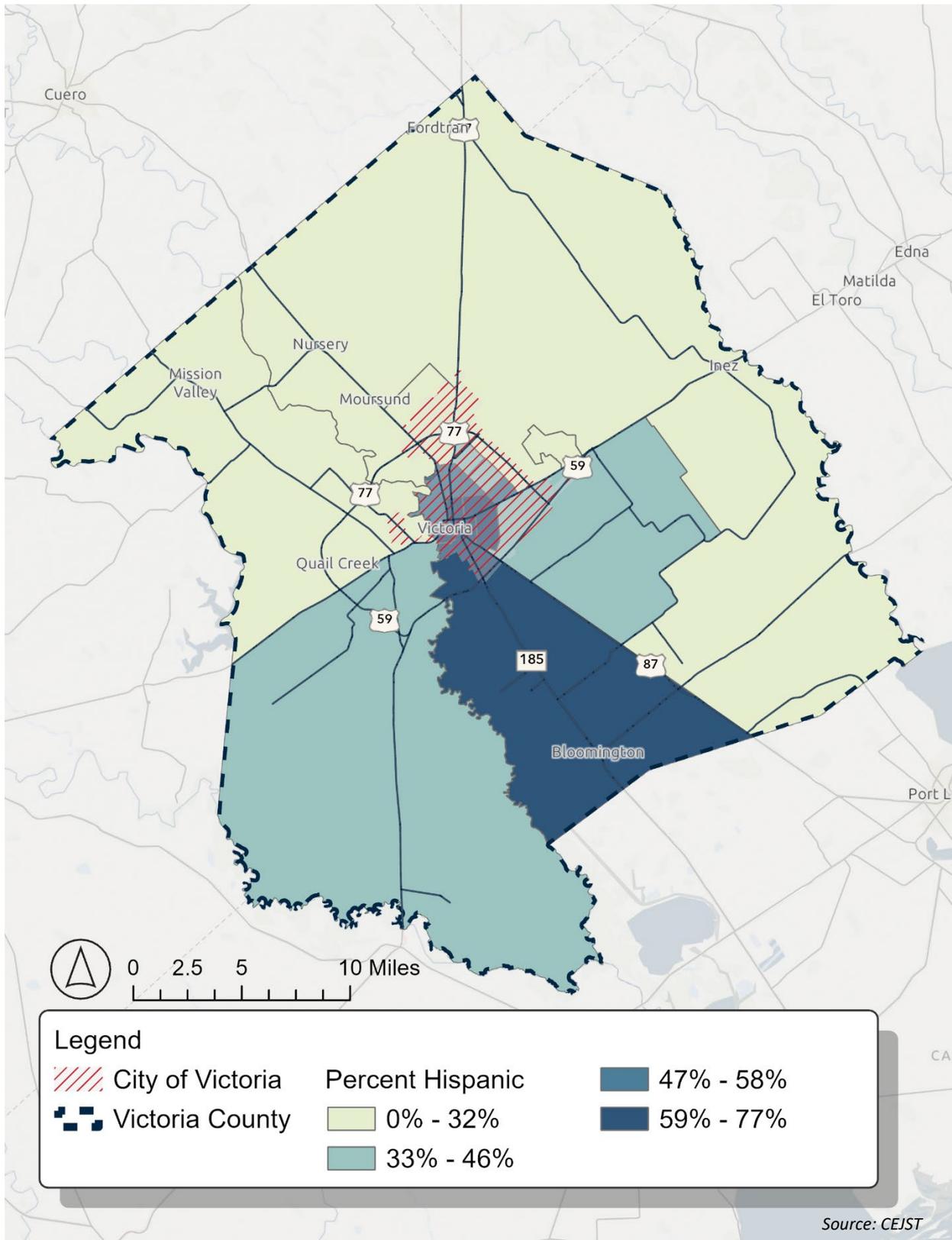
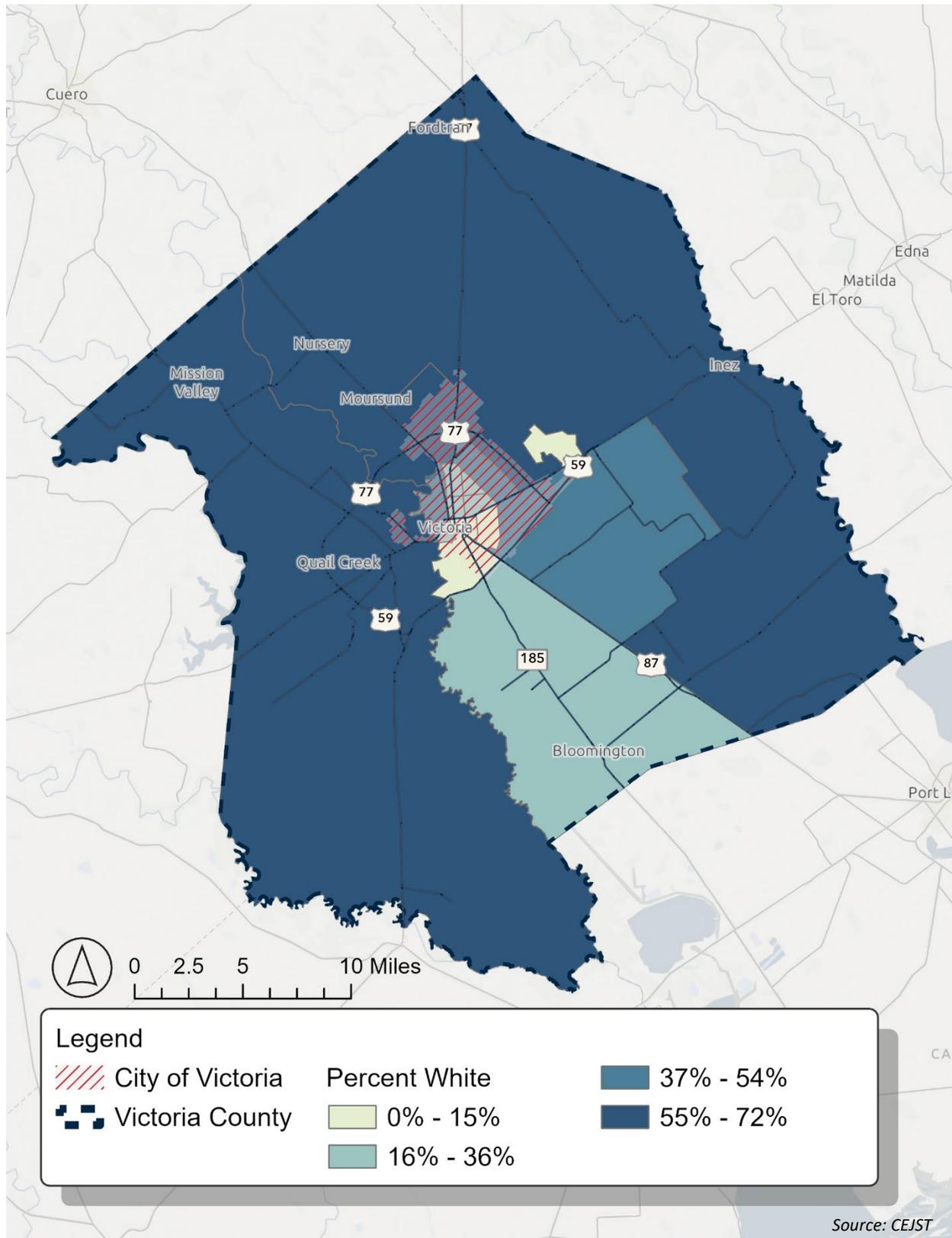


Figure 5: Percent White



In addition to race and ethnicity, different age groups also have unique transportation needs and concerns. Figure 6 shows the percentage of individuals 65 years old and older, while Figure 7 shows the percentage of individuals under 10. These maps show that the eastern side of the study area has the highest concentrations of individuals that are 65 or older and children under 10. In addition, there is a concentration of children under the age of 10 in the central portion of the study area.

Figure 6: Percent Age 65 and Over

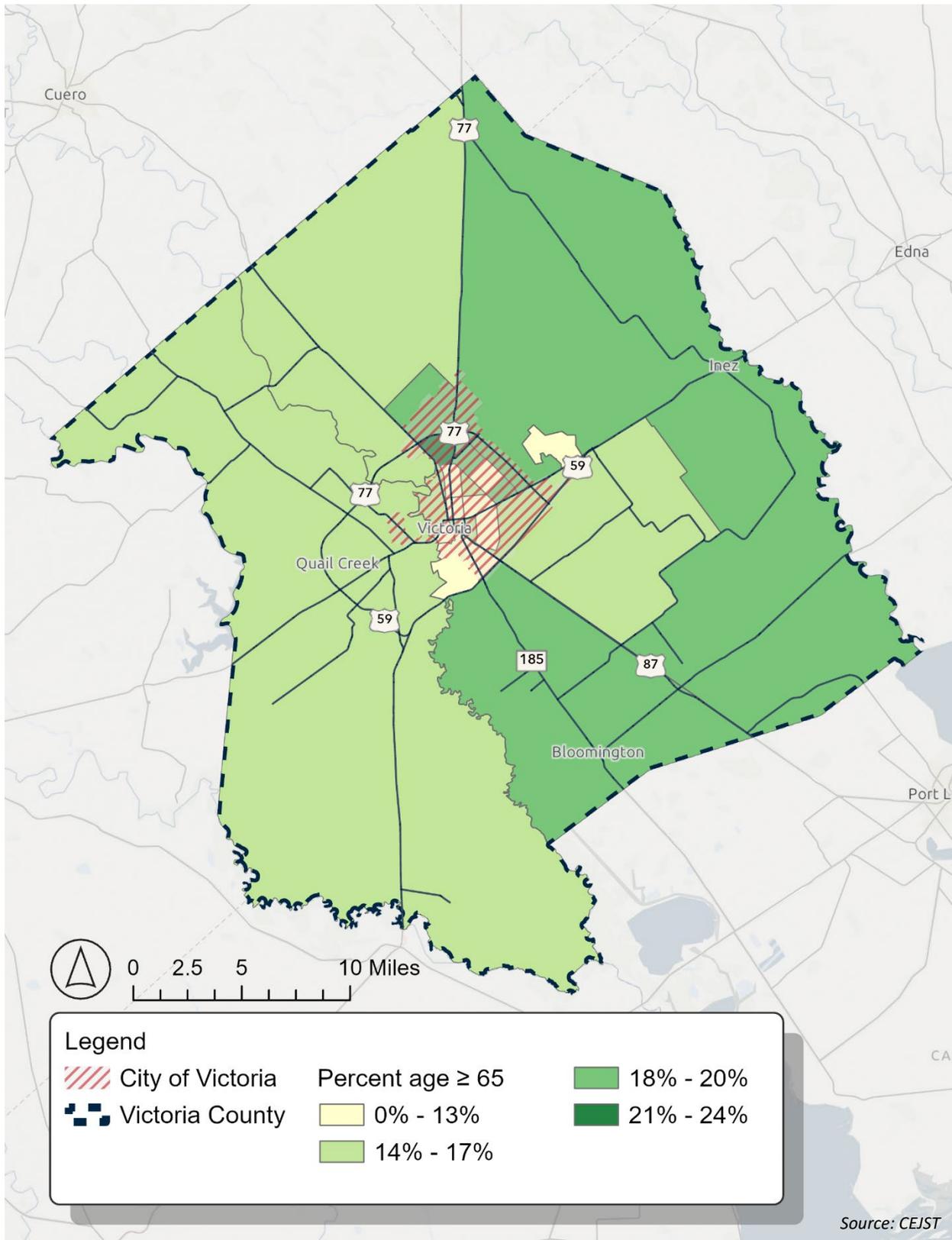
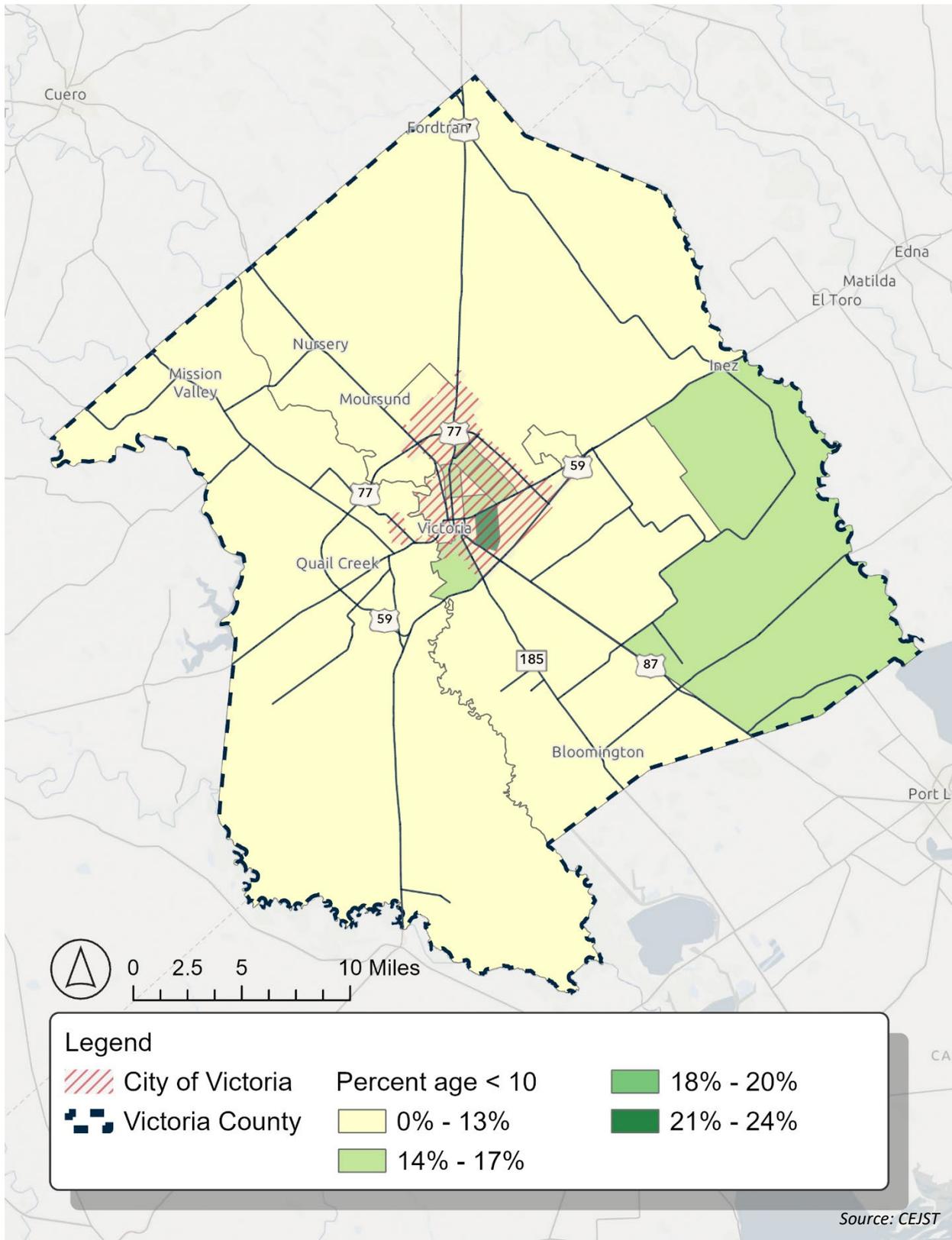


Figure 7: Percent Age Under 10



Other factors, such as poverty and language are also important to understand as part of an equity analysis. These have implications for transportation and also for public engagement for the development of the MTP. Any future development and transit project should not only address inequities but also actively engage and empower populations with varying language abilities and socioeconomic backgrounds to participate in the decision-making processes. Public engagement materials and meetings should take into account community needs for translation and meeting times. Figure 8 shows that tracts in central Victoria rank in the top 75th to 91st percentile of nationwide census tracts for individuals in poverty. In general, the western side of the study area ranks higher for poverty than the eastern side.

Figure 9 shows tract percentile for linguistic isolation, or the share of households where no one over the age of 14 speaks English very well. Compared to all other census tracts in the nation, the tracts in southern and central Victoria County rank highest for linguistic isolation.

Figure 8: Tract Poverty Percentile

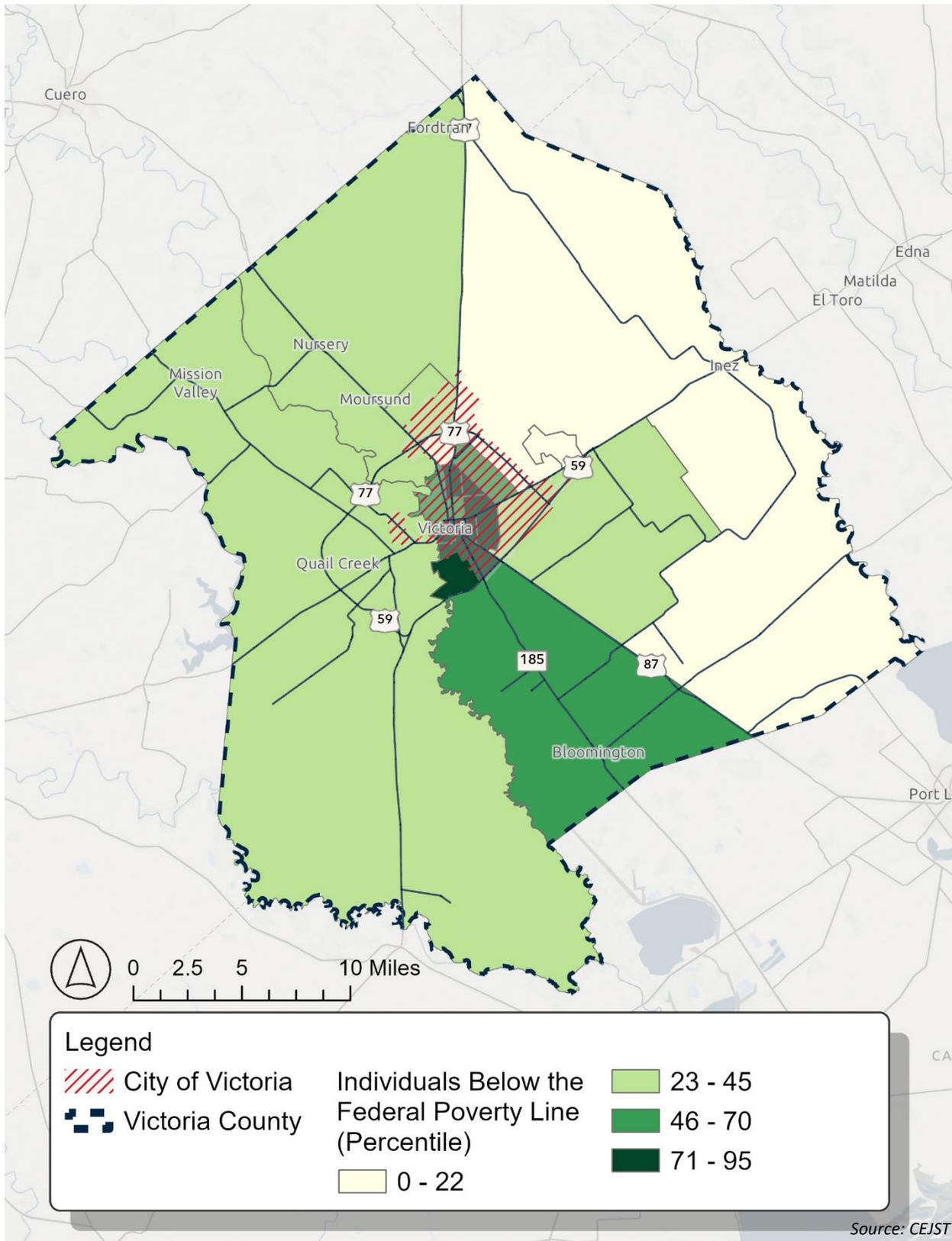
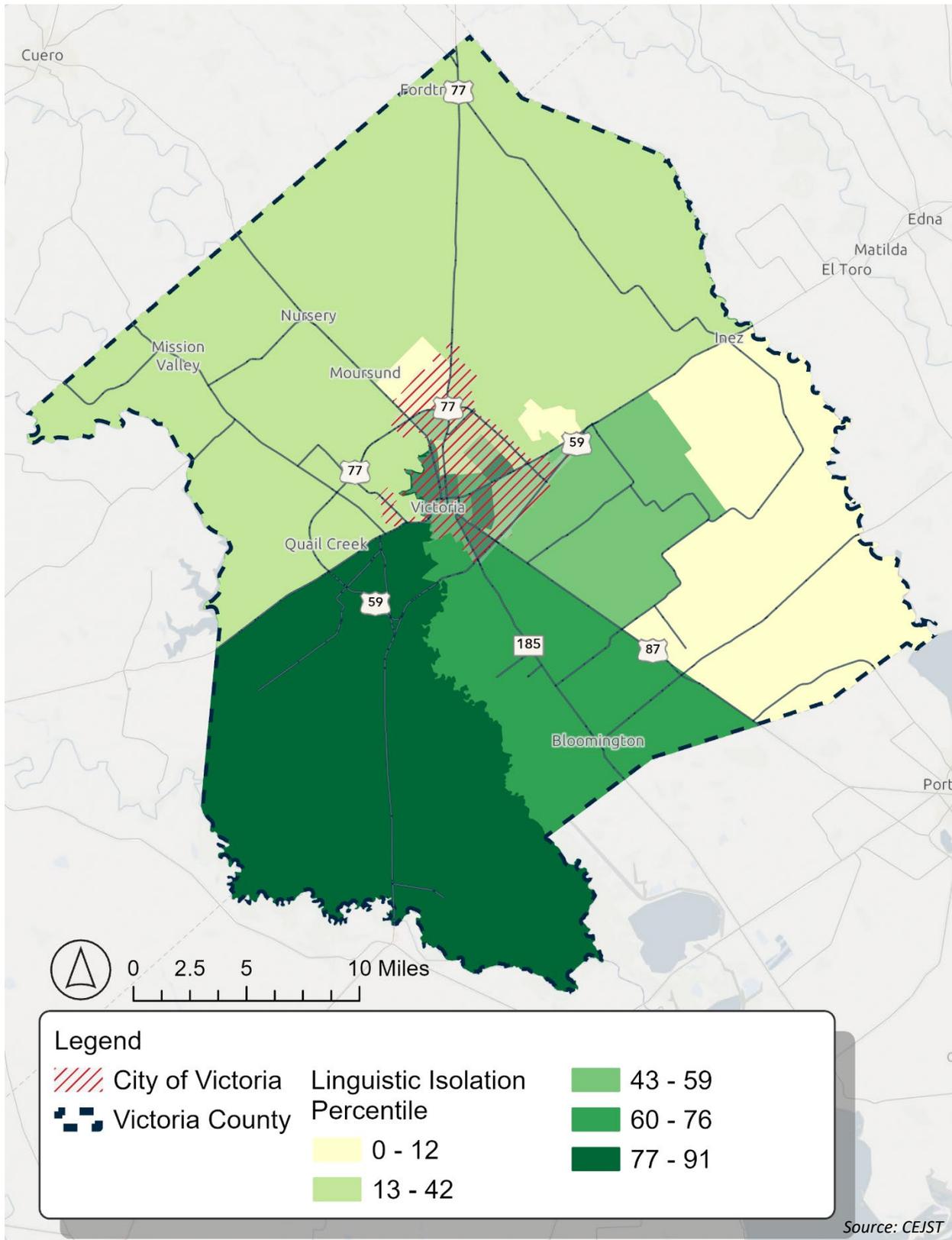


Figure 9: Tract Linguistic Isolation Percentile



Conclusion

Transportation projects have lasting impacts on communities, making it crucial to integrate fair and equitable policies and funding decisions into the planning process. This ensures that no demographic group, defined by race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, faces unjust treatment or disproportionately shoulders negative environmental consequences resulting from transportation decisions made by all levels of government. This equity analysis provides a reference to inform the project prioritization process and public engagement efforts so that the transportation system in the Victoria MPA is beneficial for all.