



**U.S. Department of Transportation
National Capital Region TMA Certification Review – March 8, 2023
Environmental Justice Analysis of Visualize 2045 (2022 Update)**

WHAT IS THE TPB PROCESS AND COMMITTEES?

The 2022 update to Visualize 2045 (herein Visualize 2045), the long-range transportation plan for the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), must be analyzed at the regional level for compliance with Executive Order 12898: “Federal Actions To Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations” (Federal Register, Vol. 59, No. 32.).

TPB staff developed an Environmental Justice analysis methodology which reflects two key elements:

- Element 1: Identifying small geographic areas with higher-than-average concentrations of “low-income” populations, “minority” populations, or both. Labelled as Equity Emphasis Areas (EEA) to denote an emphasis to place on these areas while making transportation investment decisions. The TPB approved this methodology in March 2017 and the EEAs for this analysis were identified using this methodology and the most recent U.S. Census data in July 2022.
- Element 2: Examining the projects in Visualize 2045 for changes in accessibility and mobility, using several different model-based measures; determining if the changes were benefits or burdens; comparing benefits and burdens within EEAs relative to the rest of the region and determine if a disproportionately high and adverse impact on “low-income” and “minority” populations exists.

The TPB analysis of Visualize 2045 determined that the planned projects in the 2022 update of the plan would not have a disproportionately high and adverse impact on “low-income” and “minority” populations. This determination is based on the finding that the identified benefits and burdens in Equity Emphasis Areas (EEAs) would not be predominately borne nor appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude than the burdens experienced by persons in non-EEA portions of the region. This analysis is conducted by TPB staff using the TPB-approved methodology which included consultation and input from TPB’s Access for All Advisory Committee and MWCOG’s Planning Directors Technical Advisory Committee.

WHAT’S NEW SINCE 2018?

Since the previous U.S. DOT certification review, EEAs and the EJ analysis of Visualize 2045 have been updated and optimized to more accurately represent land use conditions and assumptions in region travel trends. EEAs were updated with the latest available U.S. Census data for income and racial and ethnic population groups in July 2022 using 2016-2020 5-year American Community Survey estimates. The EJ analysis uses output from the TPB’s travel demand model which forecasts where, when, and how people will travel around the region throughout the future years covered by the Visualize 2045. To make its predictions, the model relies on the latest regional population, household, and job growth forecasts prepared by COG and its member jurisdictions, information on

existing travel patterns from the TPB's 2017/2018 Regional Household Travel Survey, and the future transportation system laid out in Visualize 2045.

In addition to its use in the EJ analysis of Visualize 2045, since 2018 EEAs have now been more fully integrated in various other equity analyses within TPB and its members, including safety, access to high-capacity transit, and transit service. Further, in 2021 the MWCOC Board of Directors endorsed EEAs as a key planning concept to use in its activities, including, environment and land use planning topics. To support the enhanced use and application of EEAs throughout the region, TPB developed an interactive online tool for regional planning to provide users with background descriptions, visualizations, and access to underlying spatial and demographic data that can be filtered in scope and geography. These tools explore the relationship between EEAs, High-Capacity Transit (HCT) Station Areas, and Regional Activity Centers. The tool is accessible from this link: <https://hct-eea-mwcog.hub.arcgis.com/>.

WHAT'S NEXT? (TIM)

EEAs initially were developed to enable Environmental Justice (EJ) analysis described previously. However, it was recognized that EEAs could be a significant tool that can be used to examine equity in regional transportation much more broadly than as a compliance activity only. To that end, plans are under way to develop a work plan for a project in FY 2024 (starting July 1, 2023) to conduct in-depth research and analysis to identify unmet mobility and accessibility needs of disadvantaged populations in the national capital region. Using EEAs and the associated tools TPB has developed to examine the relationships between EEAs and the rest of the region, this research will build off the EJ analysis that has been completed and will entail a deep dive into socioeconomic, demographic, and transportation/mobility data sets related to disadvantaged communities in comparison to the region as a whole. It will examine transportation accessibility and mobility disparities in individual communities and clusters of communities to identify unmet needs of disadvantaged populations and provide recommendations to address these needs. The purpose of this study will be to provide TPB partner state departments of transportation (DOTs), local governments, and transit agencies with the findings and recommendations of this study for their consideration as they identify projects, programs, and policies for their stakeholders as part of their transportation planning activities.