

Equity Emphasis Areas Update (2016-2020 ACS)

Environmental Justice Analysis Phase 1

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TPB Technical Committee
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Agenda Item #6

visualize
2045 A long-range
transportation plan
for the National
Capital Region

Purpose

- Advance the TPB's required work to conduct an Environmental Justice (EJ) analysis of its long-range transportation plan (LRTP)
- Present results of phase 1, updating the Equity Emphasis Areas (EEAs)
- Resource for TPB, COG, and stakeholders to advance and consider equity in everything we do and all people we serve

Background

- The TPB adopted the EEA methodology in March 2017 to enhance how the LRTP is analyzed for Title VI and EJ considerations
- Using the TPB-approved methodology, the EEAs were updated with the most recent ACS data
- The EEAs will be used to analyze Visualize 2045 for disproportionate impacts on low-income and historically disadvantaged racial and ethnic population groups
- TPB staff will continue to update the EEAs with the latest data in conjunction with each major plan update

Environmental Justice Overview

Title VI: Civil Rights Act of 1964

Prohibit discrimination based on **race, color, or national origin** under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance

Environmental Justice (EO 12898)

Recipients of Federal funds must identify and avoid disproportionately high and adverse effects on **minority and low-income populations***

*TPB regularly uses the preferred term 'historically disadvantaged populations, while the federal regulations retain use of the term "minority"

Phase 1: EEA Methodology Review

- **Criteria 1:** Low-Income concentration more than 1.5 times the regional average
 - *Low-income is defined as household income less than one-and-a-half times the federal government's poverty threshold which varies by household size (in 2020, \$39,369 per year for a family of four).*
- **Criteria 2:**
High concentrations of 2+ racial and ethnic population groups
OR
High concentrations of 1+ racial and ethnic population groups with low-income at or above the regional average
- ACS data by U.S. Census tract for 4 groups: Low-Income, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, or Asian. For full methodology:
<https://www.mwcog.org/transportation/planning-areas/fairness-and-accessibility/environmental-justice/equity-emphasis-areas/>

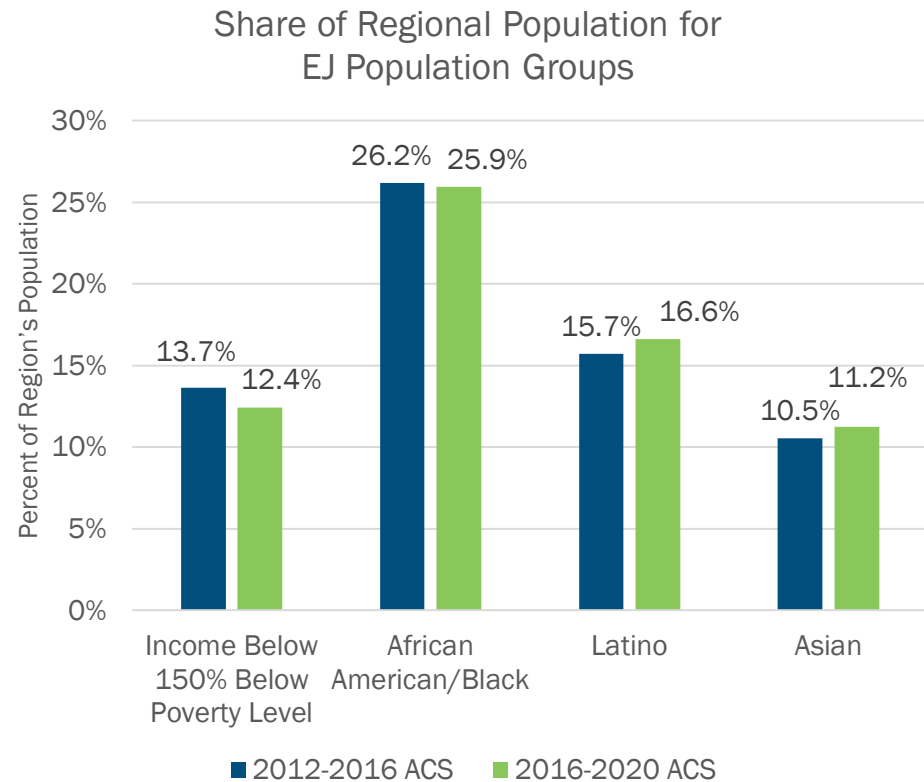
Equity Emphasis Areas, Change in Inputs, U.S. Census Tracts

	2018	2022
Small Geographic Areas	1,222 tracts from 2010 TIGER	1,330 tracts from 2020 TIGER

- Updates associated with U.S. Census TIGER/Line boundary evaluation aligned with decennial Census updates.
- An existing tract is split when population grows over 8,000 inhabitants (tract is to have around 4,000 inhabitants).
- A tract is consolidated with another when its population is less than 1,200 inhabitants.

Equity Emphasis Areas, Change in Inputs, Demographic Data

- From 2012-2016 ACS to 2016-2020 ACS
- The region's population grew by over 200,000 between these two datasets
- The share of individuals of the historically disadvantaged racial and ethnic population groups or low-income remained relatively constant



Equity Emphasis Areas, Results

	2018	2022
Equity Emphasis Areas	351 tracts 28.7% of region	364 tracts 27.4% of region
Share of Low-Income	54.8%	55.5%
Share of Black or African American	45.1%	43.2%
Share of Asian	22.1%	20.1%
Share of Hispanic or Latino	46.7%	43.3%

Responses to Frequent Questions

- **Why does the current set of EEAs discontinue some identified in 2018 while identifying others? Could you further explain why we see changes?**
- There are many reasons why a tract in the region may have been discontinued, added, retained, or not considered as an EEA. TPB staff is unable nor feel it is appropriate to make determinations for possible changes because it is unlikely to have the local knowledge or context underpinning those changes. Two possible scenarios are provided below as examples:
 1. TPB-approved methodology relies on thresholds which means that modest changes in the demographic make-up of a tract, particularly in ones that are/were near these thresholds, could cause it to drop or be added as an EEA.
 2. Changes to local land use may impact an area in a myriad of way: displacement, large population growth, contraction in population, or other changes.

Responses to Frequent Questions

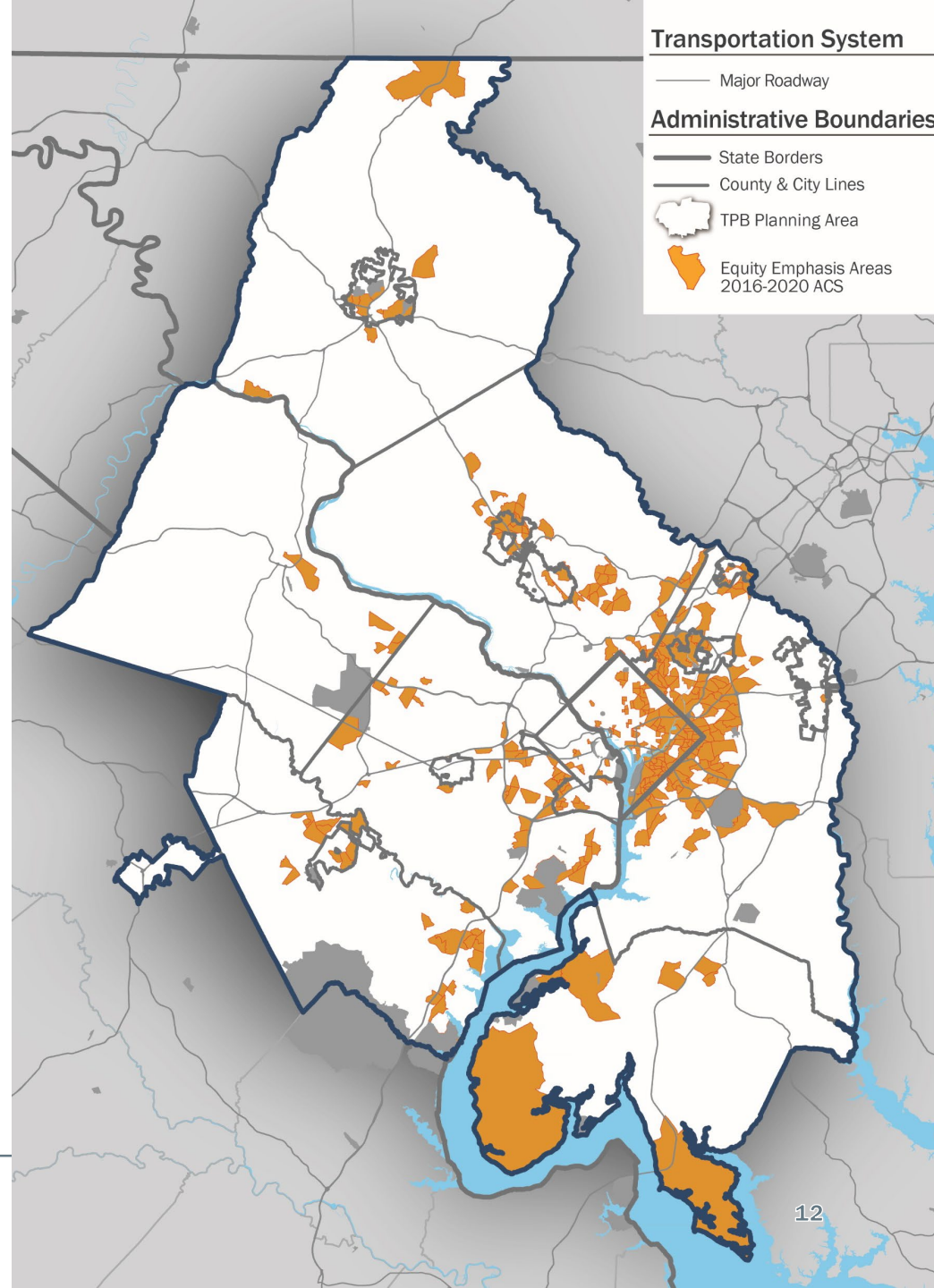
- **What do these changes mean to the EJ analysis of the Visualize 2045 update?**
- Staff will need to complete the EJ analysis of the LRPT to be able to answer this question. The updated EEAs is one of a few inputs into the TPB's EJ analysis methodology, the others being inputs from the TPB's travel demand model (including the constrained element projects of the LRTP). These elements together will produce data on various mobility and accessibility used to analyze the impact of the LRTP on EEAs.

Responses to Frequent Questions

- **How does the demographic make-up of the region compare today to 5 years ago and how may it impact the identification of EEAs?**
- Demographic make-up of the region is very similar to 2012-2016 ACS. Like the region's total population, all historically disadvantaged racial and ethnic EEA population groups similarly increased in total population over the two time periods and their respective percent share within EEAs remained relatively steady.
- **There are an additional net 13 tracts identified as EEAs but the percent share of all tracts in the region has declined (from 28.7% to 27.4%), why is this?**
- With every decennial Census the U.S. Census updates tracts for the country. From the 2020 Census, this region now has an additional 108 tracts. This results in more overall tracts in the region and more tracts identified as EEAs while still being a similar percent share of all tracts in the region.

Equity Emphasis Areas, Overview Map

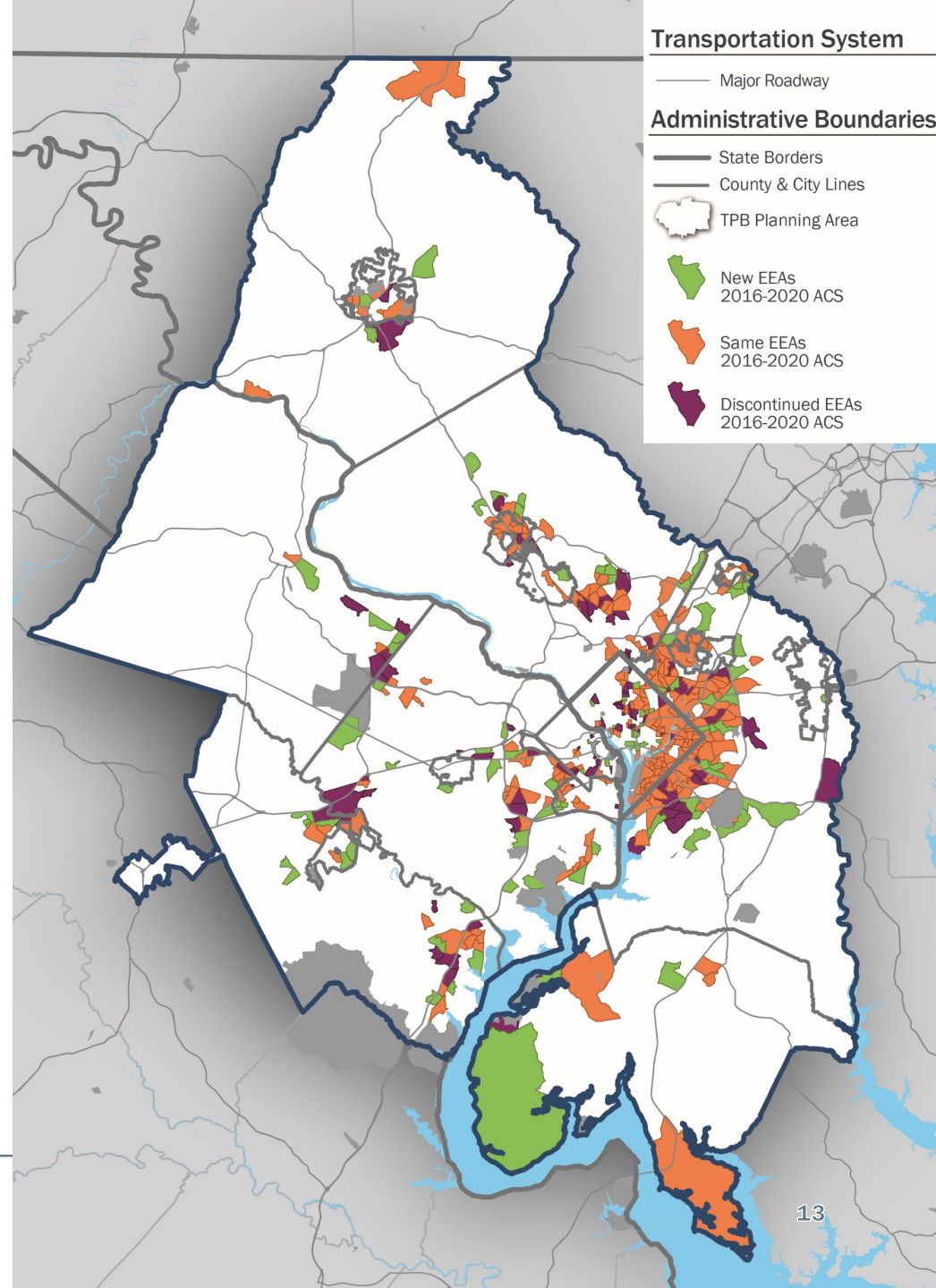
- Spatial patterns similar trends to previous EEAs
 - East-West Divide
 - Inner-Suburban and Outer-Suburban clusters
 - Handful of large tracts in Outer-Suburban areas due to sampling requirements for statistically significant data



Equity Emphasis Areas, Changes from 2012-2016 ACS

- Spatial patterns similar trends to previous EEAs
- Total: 364 tracts
 - Same: 271 tracts
 - New: 93 tracts
 - Discontinued: 98 tracts

Note: Changes between 2012-2016 ACS and 2016-2020 ACS may not nest due to changes in tract boundaries.



Phase 2: Environmental Justice Analysis

Three Steps:

1. Estimate changes in transportation accessibility and mobility due to the planned projects in Visualize 2045
2. Identify benefits and burdens of those changes in Equity Emphasis Areas (EEAs) as-a-whole and in the Rest of the Region
3. Determine if Visualize 2045 (approved June 2022) imposes a disproportionately high and significantly adverse impact on low-income and minority populations

Next Steps

- Conduct Phase 2: Analyzing Visualize 2045 for disproportionately high and significantly adverse impact on low-income and minority populations (Equity Emphasis Areas compared to the rest of the region)
- Staff expect to present the results of the analysis to TPB in early- to late-Fall 2022

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