



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Equity in Transportation Planning

GAMPO Spring 2024 Meeting

March 25, 2024



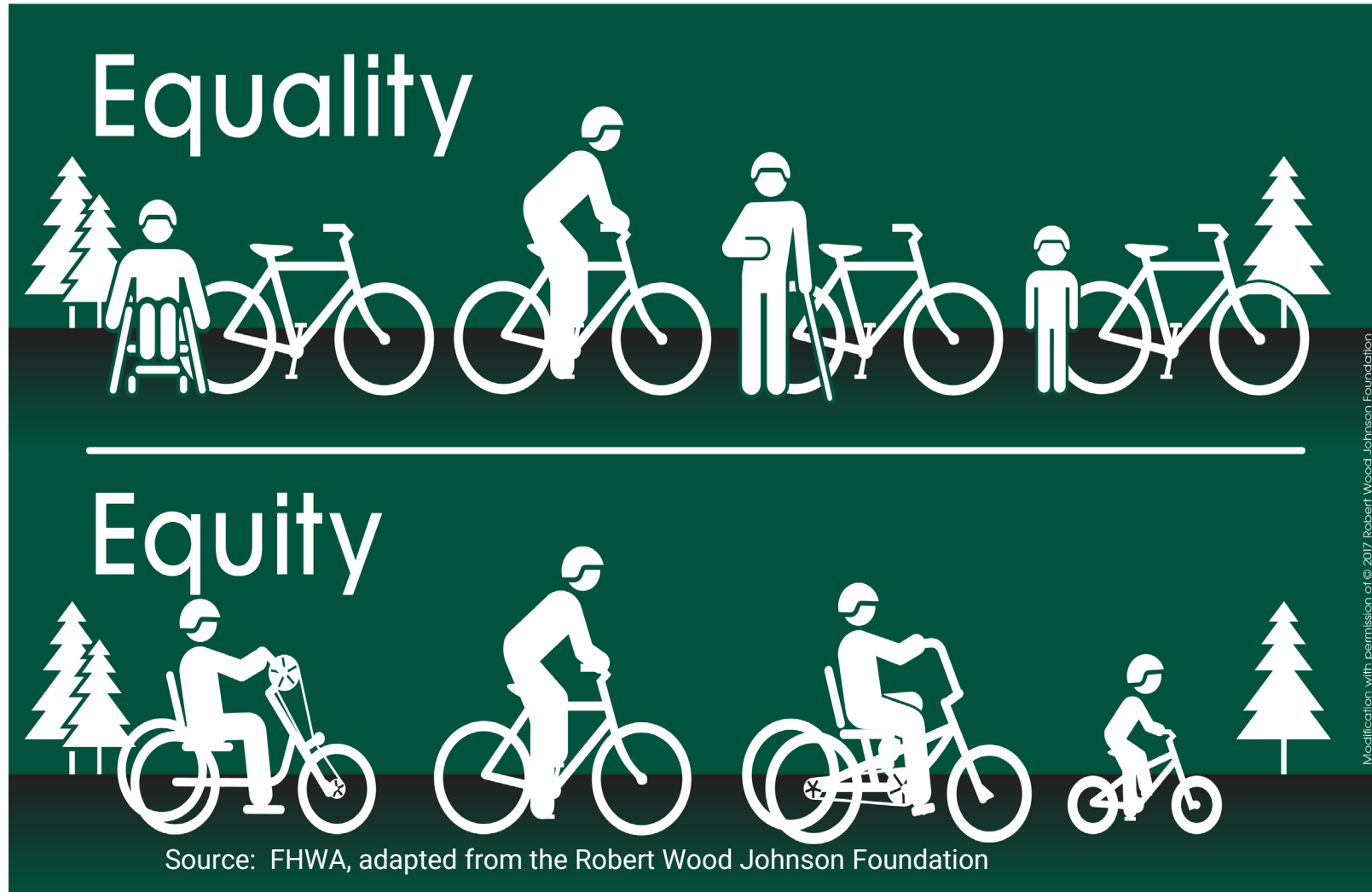
WHAT IS MEANT BY EQUITY?

Equity means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

Sources: [USDOT Equity Action Plan - 2023 Update \(September 2023\)](#) and [Executive Order 14091 \(Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government - February 16, 2023\)](#)

WHAT IS MEANT BY EQUITY (cont'd)?

Equity in transportation seeks fairness in mobility and accessibility to meet the needs of all community members.

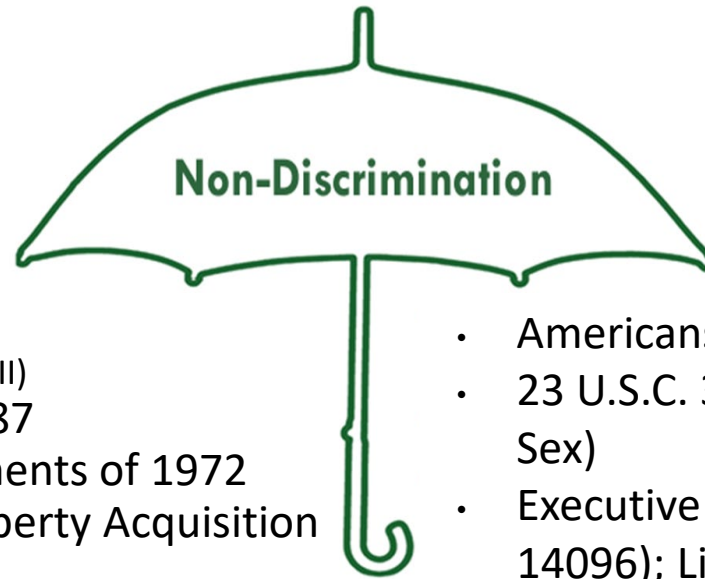


Source: [FHWA/FTA Transportation Capacity Building Program](#)

NONDISCRIMINATION AUTHORITY IS THE BASIS FOR EQUITY

Recipients of federal-aid highway program funds assure nondiscrimination in any transportation program or activity.

Through a combination of United States law and Executive Orders, FHWA prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, limited English proficiency, and income, per:



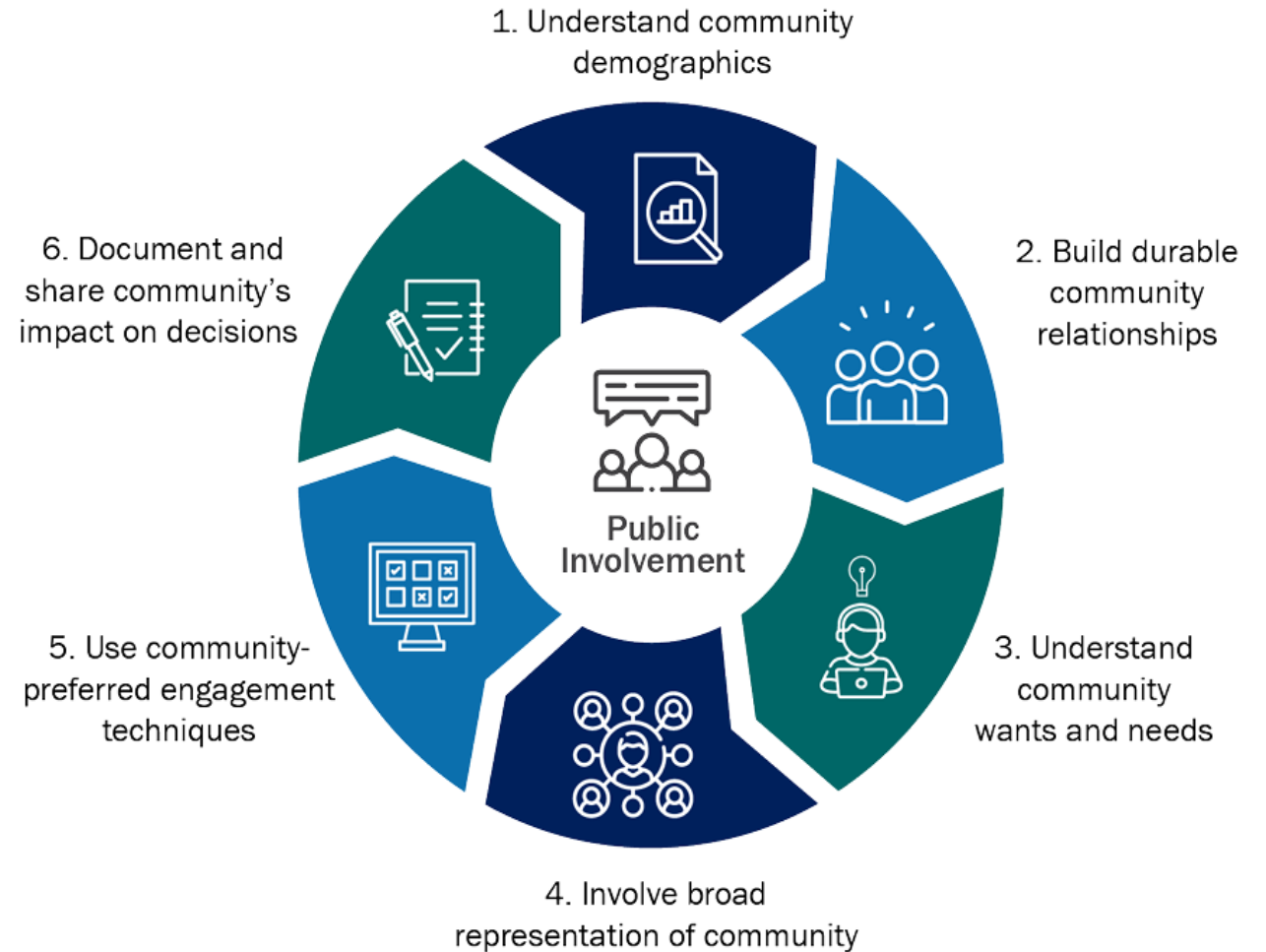
- Civil Rights Act of 1964
 - Title VI and Other Titles (e.g., Title VII)
- Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
- Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970
- Age Discrimination Act of 1975
- Age Discrimination in Employment Act
- Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- 23 U.S.C. 324 (Prohibition of Discrimination Based on Sex)
- Executive Orders: Environmental Justice (12898 and 14096); Limited English Proficiency (13166); Racial Equity (13985 and 14091); Climate Crisis (13990 and 14008); and Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation (13988)

MEANINGFUL PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement

Meaningful public involvement is a process that **proactively** seeks full representation from the community, **considers public comments and feedback**, and **incorporates that feedback** into a project, program, or plan when possible.

The impact of community contributions encourages early and continuous public involvement and brings diverse viewpoints and values into the transportation decision-making process.

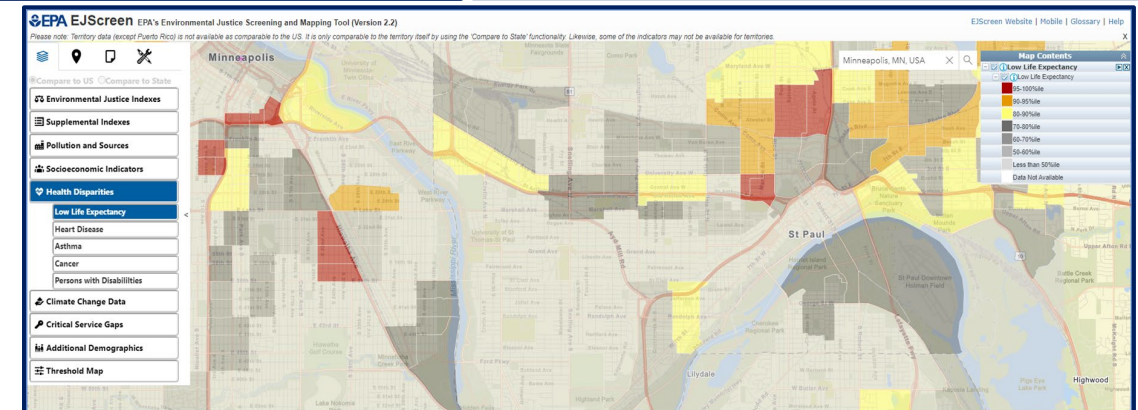
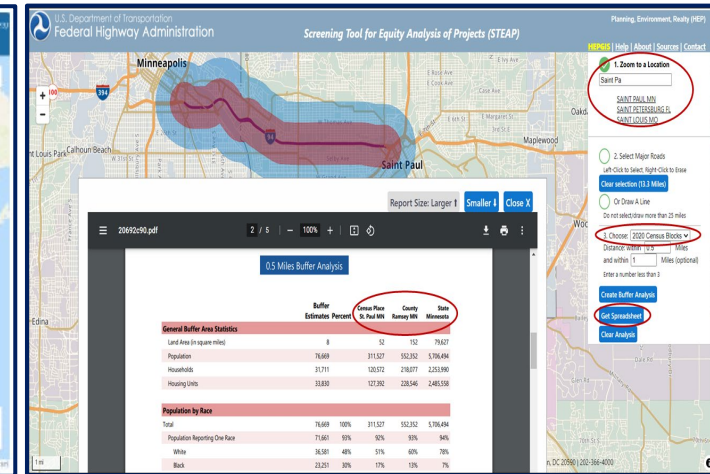
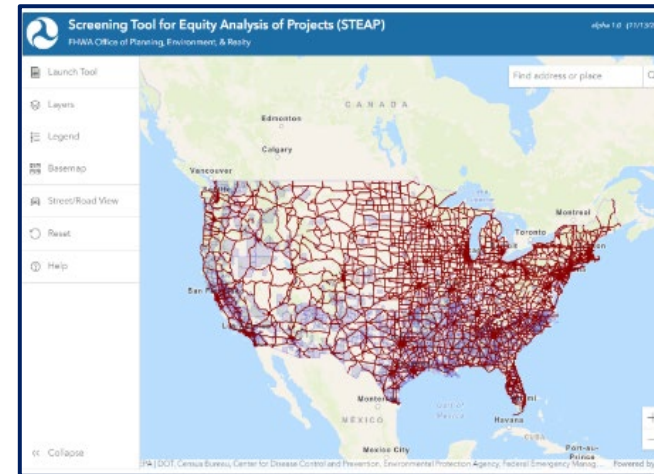
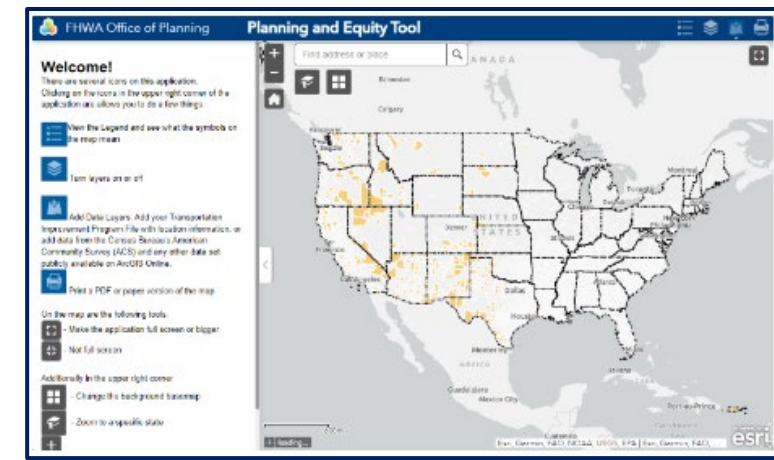


QUANTITATIVE SCREENING TOOLS

National Screening Tools:

- [USDOT Equitable Transportation Community \(ETC\) Explorer](#)
- [FHWA - Planning and Equity Tool](#)
- [FHWA - Screening Tool for Equity Analysis of Projects \(STEAP\)](#)
- [EJScreen: Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool \(USEPA\)](#)

State, Regional, and Local Data, Modeling, and Analysis



MPO EXAMPLES

Unified Planning Work Programs

- Boston Regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (BRMPO) - MA

Public Participation Practices/Plans

- Broward MPO - FL
- Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS) - OH
- North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) - NJ
- Greater Madison Metropolitan Planning Organization (GMMPO) - WI

Metropolitan Transportation Plans

- Boston Regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (BRMPO) - MA
- Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RRTPO) - VA
- San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) - CA
- East-West Gateway Council of Governments (EWCOG) - MO/IL
- North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) - NJ
- New Orleans Regional Planning Commission (NORPC) - LA
- Greater Madison Metropolitan Planning Organization (GMMPO) - WI

Transportation Improvement Programs

- Boston Regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (BRMPO) - MA
- Greater Madison Metropolitan Planning Organization (GMMPO) - WI

Other

MPO Vision and Mission Statements:

- Greater Madison Metropolitan Planning Organization (GMMPO) - WI

Overarching Transportation Justice Initiative:

- Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) - DE/MD

Title VI Plans:

- Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) - DE/MD
- North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) - NJ
- New Orleans Regional Planning Commission (NORPC) - LA

Transit and Pedestrian Planning:

- North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) - NJ
- New Orleans Regional Planning Commission (NORPC) - LA
- Lawrence MPO - KS

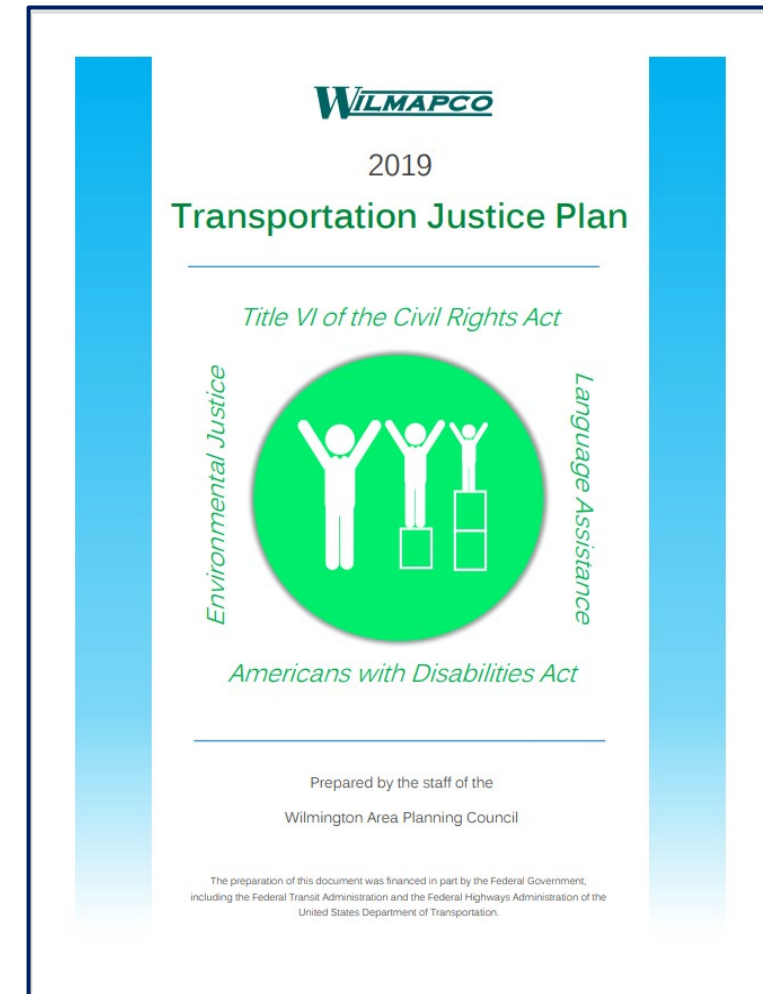
Caveats and Disclaimers:

- These examples came from publicly-accessible information provided by FHWA Subject Matter Expert colleagues and case studies posted on FHWA/FTA Transportation Planning Capacity Building (TPCB) website.
- These examples are merely a representative sampling (i.e., not all-inclusive) and do not constitute FHWA/USDOT endorsement or mandate of these practices as presented (i.e., they are only illustrative).

EXAMPLE - WILMINGTON (DE-MD)

Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) - Transportation Justice Initiative

- WILMAPCO released its first Environmental Justice (EJ) Report in 2003 and those efforts have evolved into its Transportation Justice (TJ) Initiative.
 - TJ addresses Title VI, EJ, Language Assistance, and ADA under a single umbrella.
 - 2019 TJ Plan analyzes connectivity and social inequities (using robust set of map layers) to identify disproportionately burdened communities, gaps in the transportation system, and opportunities for improvement.
 - WILMAPCO uses a project prioritization process to evaluate transportation projects and awards “points” for projects that advance TJ goals and objectives in the RTP.
 - WILMAPCO stresses importance of public outreach when developing plans and works to ensure that community feedback is representative of the community at-large.

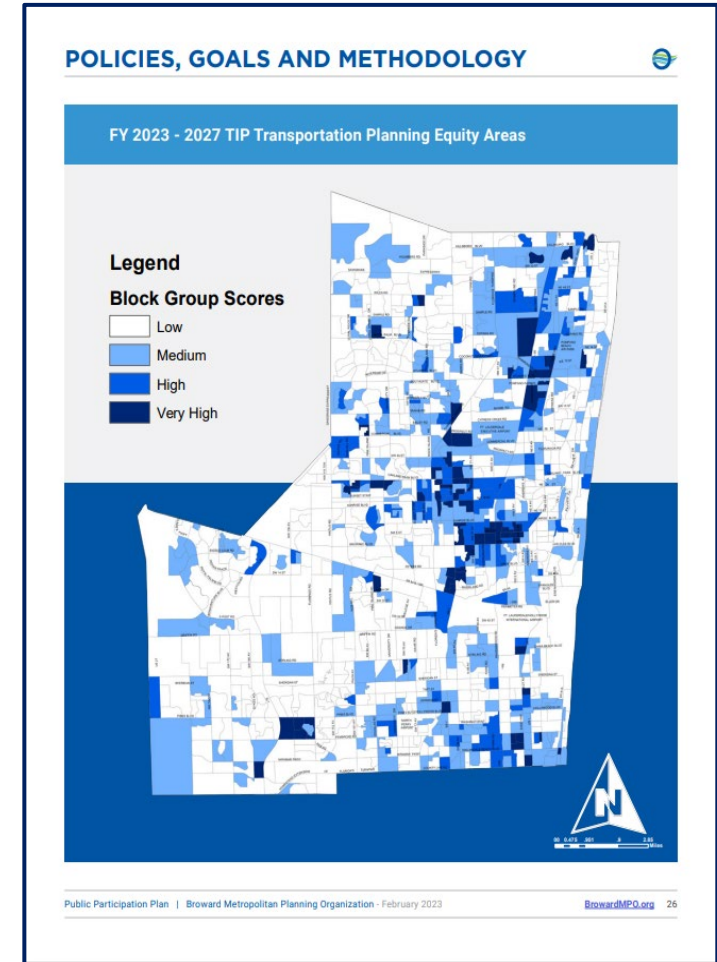


EXAMPLE - FT. LAUDERDALE-HOLLYWOOD (FL)

Broward MPO - Public Outreach Efforts

- MPO uses different engagement methods and approaches to:
 - Teach about the role of the MPO;
 - Receive extensive feedback from residents and businesses to inform its plans, programs, and projects; and
 - Truly engage the communities on their terms, on their turf, and in a way that is most meaningful to them.
- ***Speak Up Broward*** is Broward MPO's grassroots public engagement initiative to establish dialogue with the public to educate South Florida communities about the importance the transportation system has on quality-of-life beyond more traditional meeting place to places where people prefer going (e.g., farmers markets, street fairs, and online).
- Broward MPO's ***Think Like A Planner*** workshops engage middle and high school science, technology, engineering, and mathematics students and graduate students from Florida International University on planning concepts.

Source: browardmpo.org



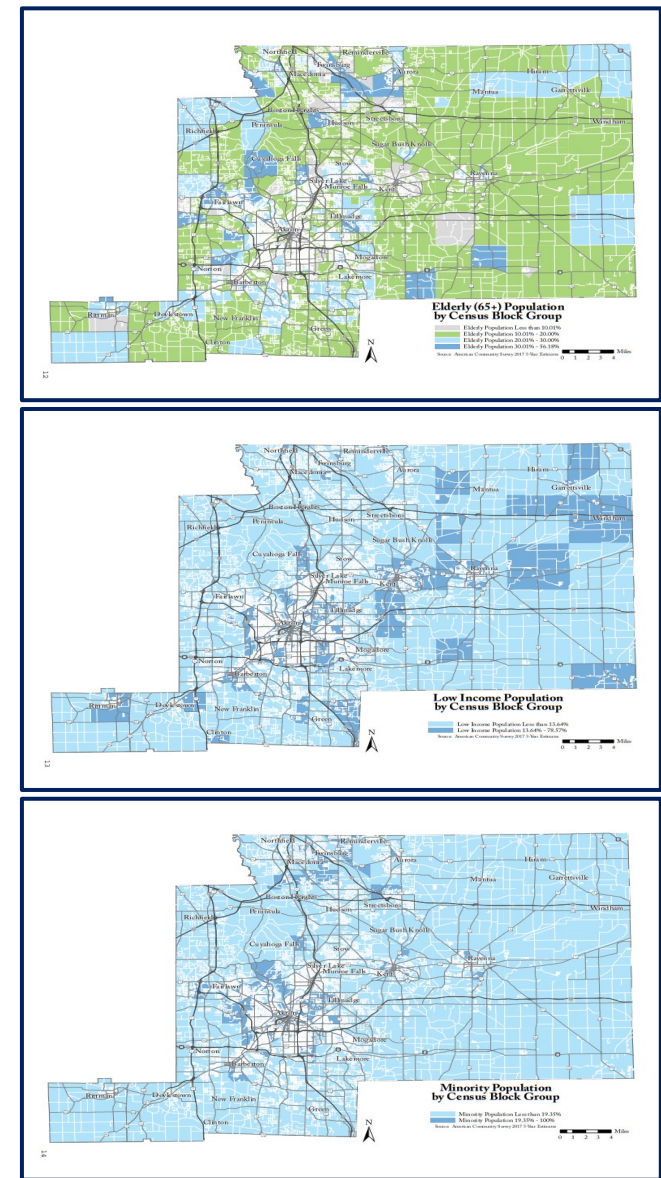
Broward MPO's Public Participation Plan includes a map showing the FY 2023-2027 TIP's Transportation Planning Equity Areas.

EXAMPLE - AKRON (OH)

Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS) - Public Outreach Efforts

- AMATS builds strong relationships with members of its community belonging to underserved populations.
- AMATS reaches-out directly to the social service agencies representing underserved or EJ populations. If efforts to dialogue are unsuccessful, AMATS may hold a neighborhood outreach event or contact public representatives (e.g., City Council members) in that area.
- AMATS has completed many outreach activities in areas with diverse populations.
 - These events include participation elements like surveys and interviews and help not only promote AMATS but allow them to receive feedback on the infrastructure projects that are being planned in those areas.
- In its ***“3P” Public Participation Plan*** (March 2022), AMATS pursues innovative *public empowerment* strategies that present opportunities to challenge the public beyond mere dialogue.
 - These strategies actively urge the public to tackle topic-specific transportation issues directly through participation in unique events.

Source: [AMATS - 3P - Public Participation Plan \(March 2022\)](#)

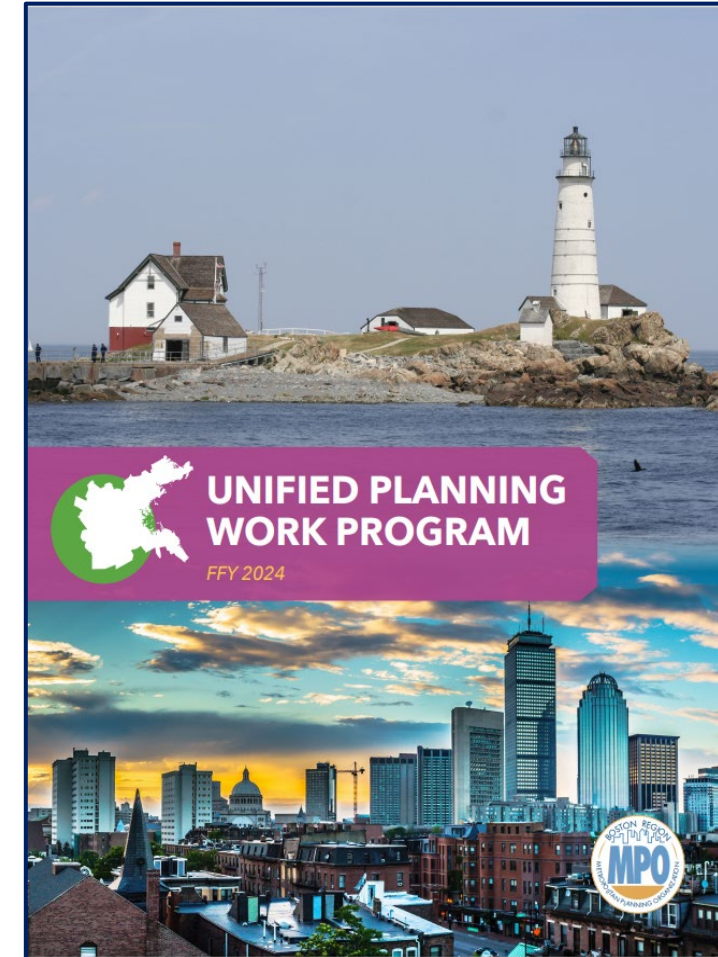


AMATS' ***“3P” Public Participation Plan*** includes maps of elderly, low-income, and minority populations by Census Block Groups.

EXAMPLE - BOSTON (MA)

Boston Regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (BRMPO) - Equity-Focused Transportation Planning Practices

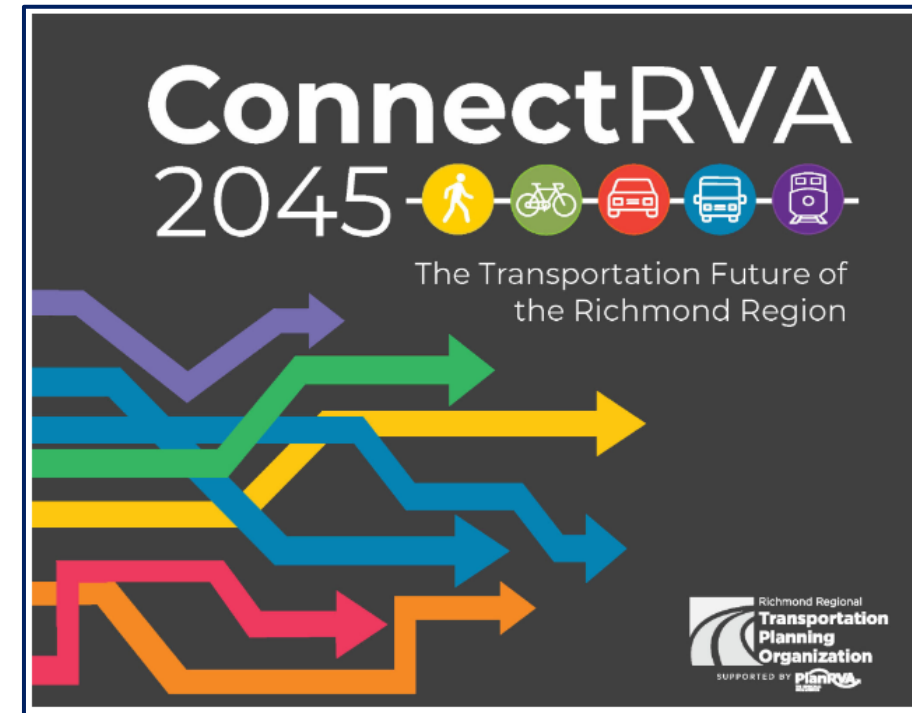
- **UPWP** contains “Transportation Equity Program” task. In FFY 2024, activities/products include:
 - Completing development of equity performance metrics and building a dashboard;
 - Developing approach for identifying disparate impacts and disproportionate burdens (DI/DB) in TIP;
 - Supporting Scenario Planning for MTP;
 - Supporting scoring changes to TIP project selection criteria; and
 - Updating BRMPO’s DI/DB application to reflect DI/DB analysis results from **Destination 2050**.
- **Destination 2050** includes equity-based policies and practices, including DI/DB analysis using 16 metrics to assess project impacts.
- **TIP** development process includes equity criteria in project scoring and selection.
- BRMPO also funded transportation study to improve transit access to Blue Hills Reservation for nearby underserved communities.



EXAMPLE - RICHMOND (VA)

Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RRTPO) - Metropolitan Transportation Plan Development

- Equity Components of **Connect RVA 2045** (October 2021):
 - One of the three major focus areas is to *“Ensure plan components are equitable and accessible.”*
 - GOAL C (Equity/Accessibility) - *“Improve equitable access through greater availability of mode choices that are affordable and efficient.”*
 - Six indicators of disadvantaged populations drawing from federal nondiscrimination law and regional experience, which were combined into overall index to identify communities of concern (Equity Emphasis Areas (EEAs)) and served as focus for equity and EJ analysis.
 - **Connect RVA 2045** focuses on systematically evaluating the performance of the plan through quantitative metrics in five broad performance areas/categories, including EJ Analysis/EEAs.

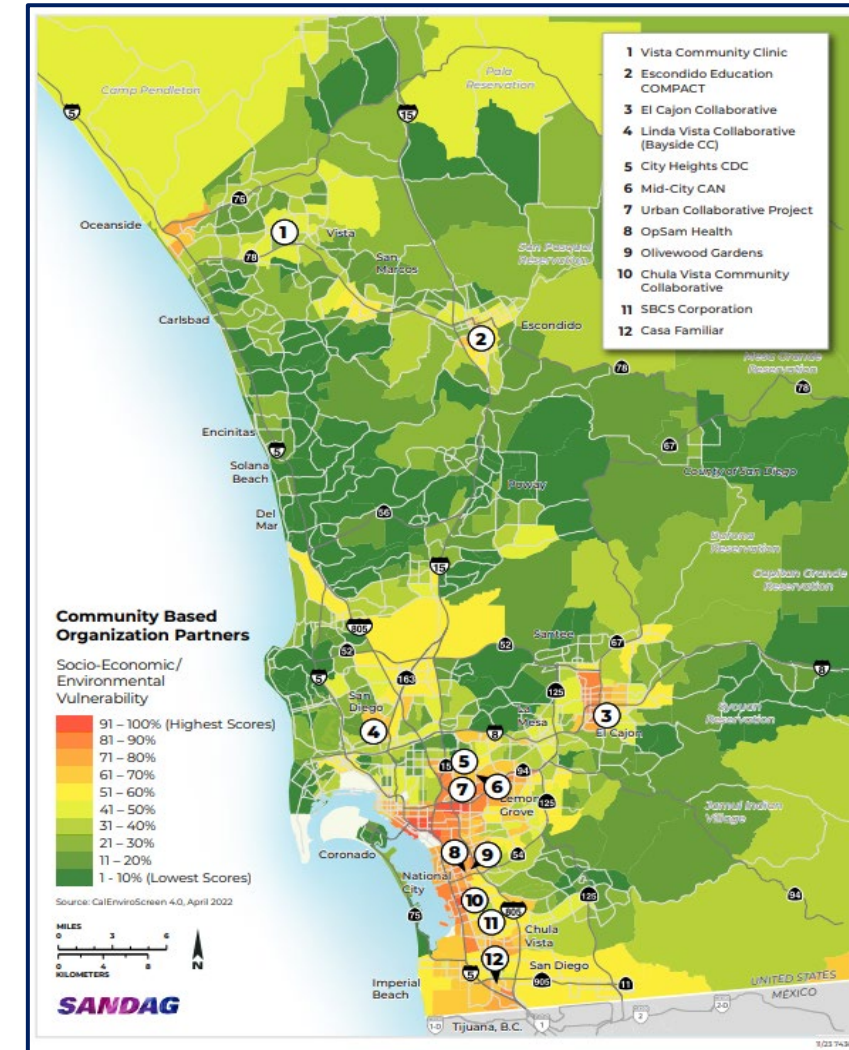


Source: [Connect RVA 2045](#)

EXAMPLE - SAN DIEGO (CA)

San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) - Metropolitan Transportation Plan Development

- SANDAG first began incorporating social equity analyses within its transportation planning practices in developing **2015 Regional Plan**.
- In developing **2021 Regional Plan**, SANDAG identified social equity as one of its most important guiding principles and the plan employs a new set of tools, strategies, and analyses to achieve that vision.
 - One key strategy was co-developing and implementing a **Mobility Needs Assessment** as part of a broader **Social Equity Engagement and Analysis** process with 11 contracted community-based organizations (CBOs) that work with underserved communities that are geographically and demographically representative of the region.
 - As an implementation action of the 2021 Regional Plan, SANDAG has begun developing the **Housing Acceleration Program (HAP)** to support local jurisdictions as they develop and adopt policies and process improvements that help advance the region's housing goals.

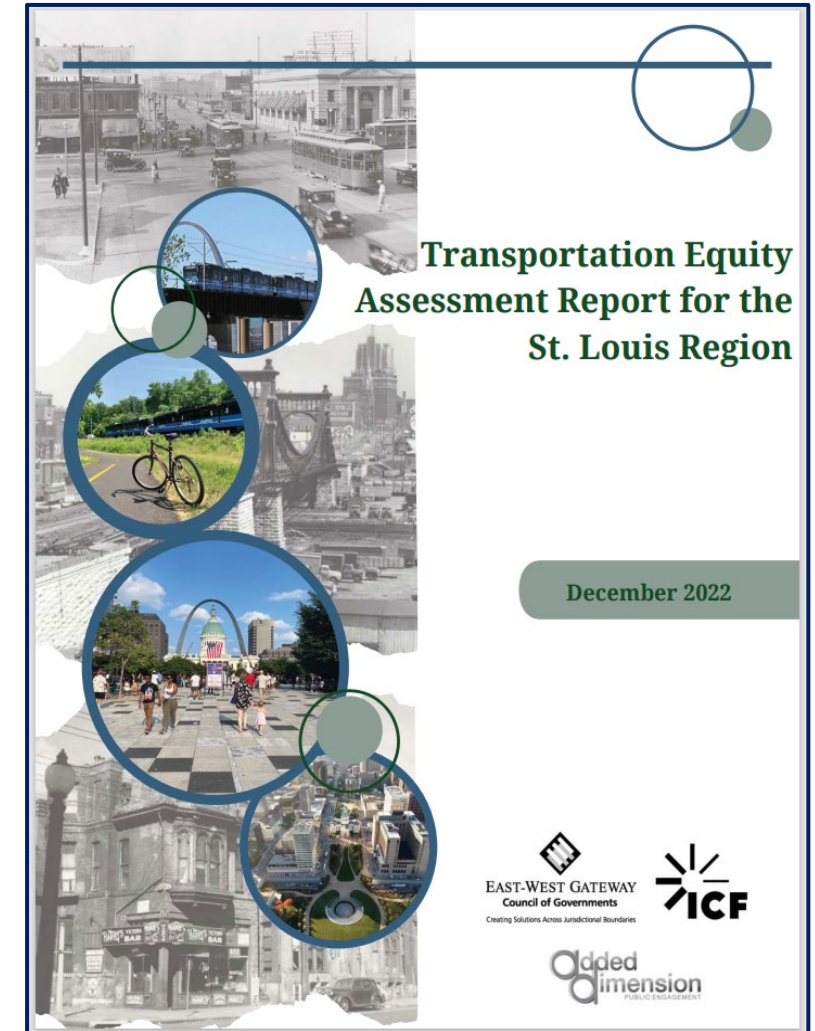


Sources: [SANDAG - Final 2021 Regional Plan](#) and [SANDAG - Social Equity in Planning](#)

EXAMPLE - ST. LOUIS (MO-IL)

East-West Gateway Council of Governments (EWGCOG) - Transportation Equity Assessment Report for the St. Louis Region

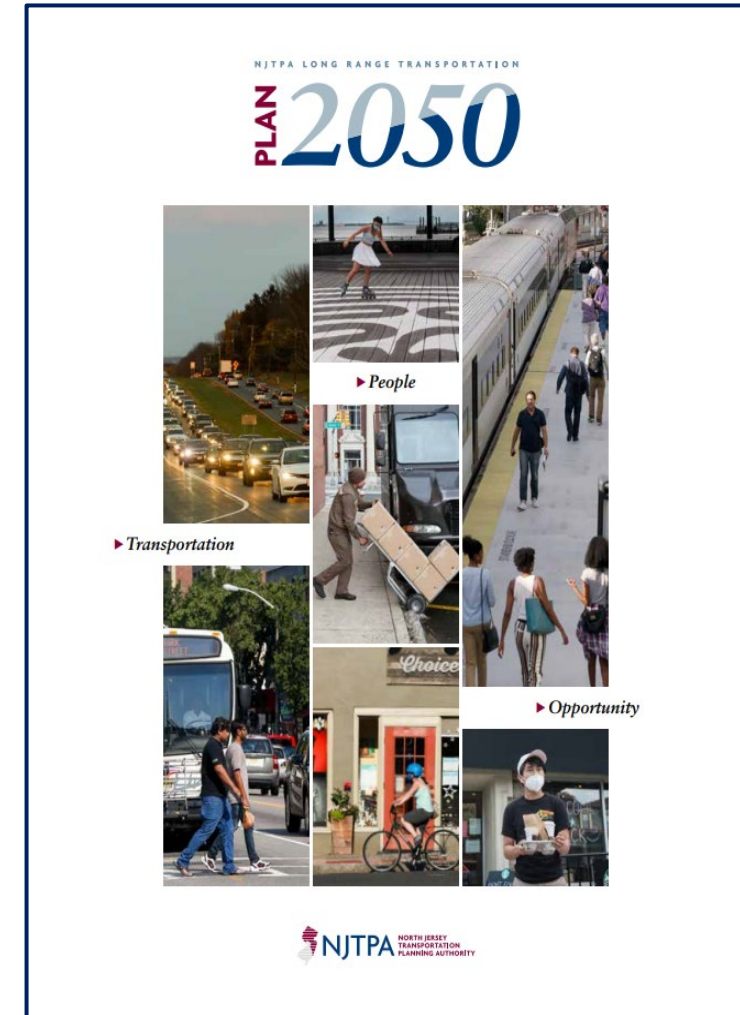
- Developed as a key input to the development of its **Connected2050** MTP update.
- Study Components:
 - Historical analysis of changes in regional demographics, federal and local policies, and transportation investments since the early 20th century;
 - Analysis of current safety, access, mobility, and environmental issues facing different population groups within the region;
 - Detailed exploration of the distribution of transportation investments over the past 20 years; and
 - Recommendations for ways to strengthen and support an equitable planning and decision-making process for the St. Louis region.



EXAMPLE - NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) - Equity-Focused Transportation Planning Practices

- ***Title VI Implementation Plan (2019)*** brought together NJTPA's various equity efforts (Title VI, ADA, EJ, and LEP), with latest update (November 2021) providing a more cohesive strategy.
- Development of ***Plan 2050: Transportation. People. Opportunity.*** moved beyond focusing on travel time optimization to emphasizing transportation as moving people to where they want to be, providing opportunity and access equitably across the system.
- Project prioritization process awards points to projects that benefit EJ communities or reduce their burden, incentivizing equity-oriented projects to move forward.
- ***Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan*** focuses on the travel needs of seniors, low-income people, and individuals with disabilities.
- ***Public Engagement Plan*** provides tools and methods to capture diverse perspectives by focusing on breaking down barriers for traditionally marginalized groups.



EXAMPLE - NEW ORLEANS (LA)

New Orleans Regional Planning Commission (NORPC) - Data-Driven Approach to Transportation Equity

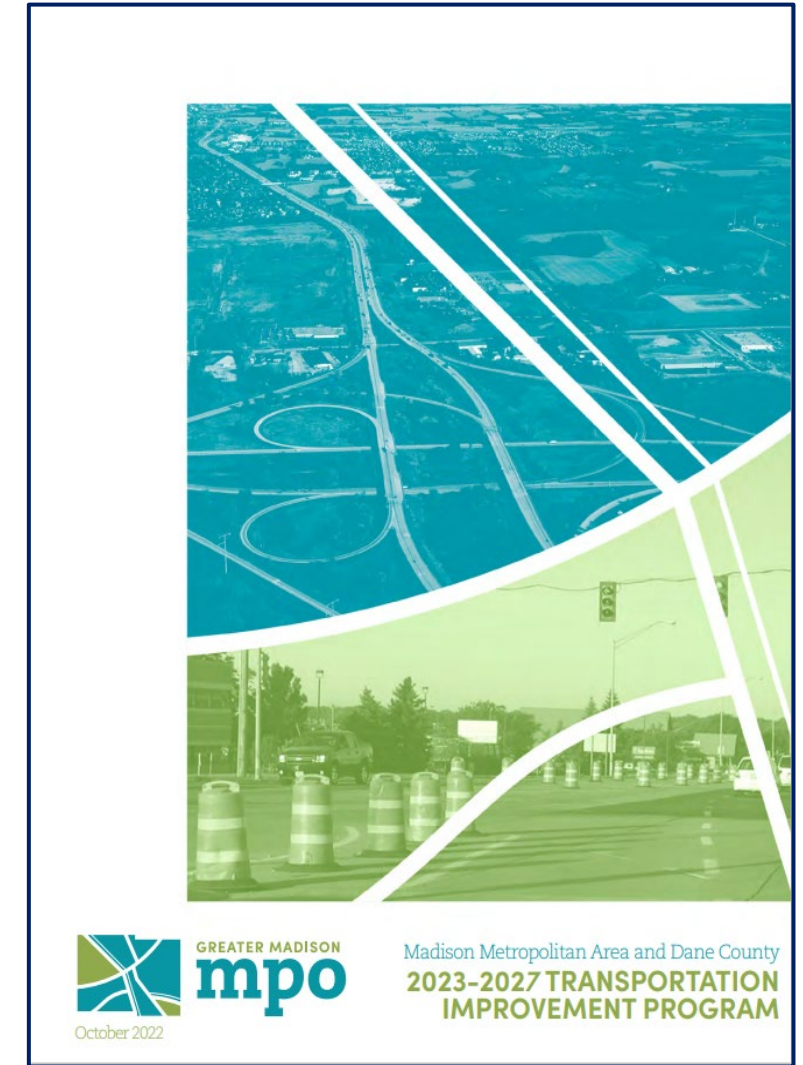
- ***NORPC Title VI Plan*** outlines a methodology for identifying vulnerable populations.
- NORPC established a definition of EJ based on demographic data from American Community Survey (ACS).
- To assess underserved areas, NORPC produced a metric combining CDC's Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) with in-house calculations.
- ***Greater New Orleans 2048 and 2052 Metropolitan Transportation Plans (MTPs)*** include equity as one of six primary goals, and equity is an MTP project prioritization element.
- NORPC developed the ***New Links Transit Plan*** to “reimagine how public transit connects Orleans, Jefferson, and St. Bernard parishes” and guide long-term planning and evaluation of the transit network.



EXAMPLE - MADISON (WI)

Greater Madison Metropolitan Planning Organization (GMMPO) - Equity-Focused Transportation Planning Practices

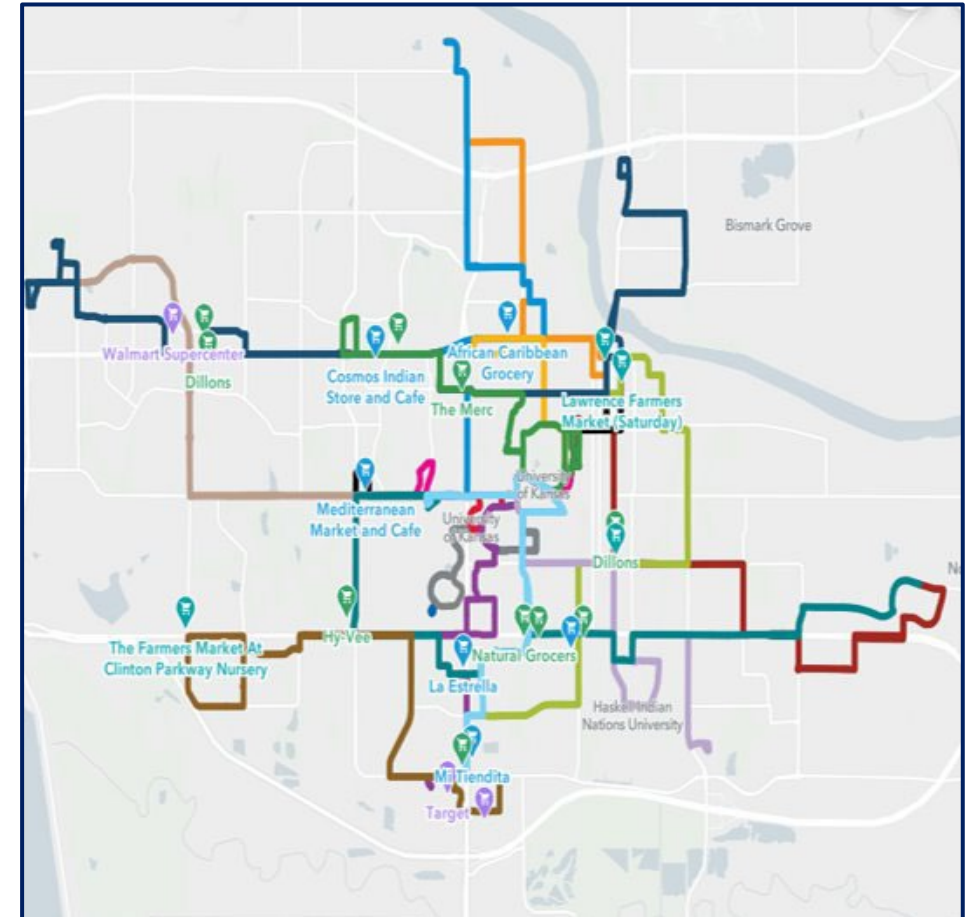
- In 2020, GMMPO updated its vision and mission statements to focus on a sustainable and equitable transportation system that connects people, places, and opportunities to achieve an exceptional quality of life for all.
- GMMPO uses socioeconomic spatial data to identify EJ areas of concern to inform its planning processes and uses real-time travel data to pinpoint service benefits and deficiencies.
- GMMPO's ***Connect Greater Madison 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)*** identifies equity as a primary goal (e.g., activities that create travel accessibility for people of all abilities, backgrounds, and travel needs with special attention to EJ populations).
- In development of 2023-2027 TIP, GMMPO project prioritization process allocated 10-15% of a project's points toward equity.
- To bolster public participation and stakeholder collaboration, GMMPO uses focus groups and online interactive maps.



EXAMPLE - LAWRENCE (KS)

Lawrence MPO - Emphasis on Food Deserts

- Public input has identified grocery stores as important community destinations and locations that some residents struggle to reach.
- Lawrence Pedestrian Plan: Identifying food access as one of priority destinations for sidewalk gap prioritization.
- Transit policy updated to allow small grocery carts on buses and ensuring grocery accessibility on all buses for folding seats.



Lawrence Transit 2024 Proposed Routes to cover grocery stores, farmers markets, and special focus on smaller ethnic grocery stores

USDOT/FHWA EQUITY RESOURCES

USDOT Websites:

- [Equity](#)
- [Equitable Transportation Community Explorer](#)
- [Public Involvement](#)

FHWA Websites:

- [Equity in Roadway Safety](#)
- [Transportation Planning Capacity Building](#)
- [Environmental Justice](#)
- [Equity Tools/Applications](#)

Guides:

- [Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making](#)
- [Practical Measures for Advancing Public Transit Equity and Access](#)

Storytelling:

- [Justice40 at USDOT](#)
- [Past, Present, and Future of Reconnecting Communities](#)
- [Understanding the Transportation Experience of Underserved Communities](#)