



## Methodology for Equity Emphasis Areas

As Adopted by the TPB in March 2017

The methodology for the Equity Emphasis Areas was adopted by the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) in March 2017. Tract-level Census data is used to identify communities that have significant concentrations of low-income and / or minority populations. Data from the American Community Survey for each of the following four population groups is used:

- Low-Income<sup>1</sup>
- African American,
- Asian, and
- Hispanic or Latino.

To identify concentration, the tract percent for each group was divided against its respective regional average.<sup>2</sup> This resulted in a tract-level Ratio of Concentration, or the number of times the regional average, for each population group.

To identify tracts with significant concentrations of low-income or minority population groups, as well as to normalize and compare results across the four groups and region, an Index Score is calculated based on each groups' Ratio of Concentration for every tract in the region. Index Scores for each population group is aggregated to reach an uncapped Total Index Score. Total Index Scores greater than or equal to 4.00 are considered Equity Emphasis Areas.

Tract are identified as Equity Emphasis Areas if one of two criteria are met: Tracts must have a concentration of individuals identified as low-income more than one-and-a-half times the regional average (see Table 1 below) or high concentrations of two or more minority population groups and/or high concentrations of one or more minority population groups together with low income concentrations at or above the regional average (see Table 2 on next page). Index scores are used to ensure that these conditions are met.

**Table 1: Scoring for Criteria 1 - Low-Income Population Concentration**

RATIO OF CONCENTRATION (ROC or times the regional average)	INDEX SCORE
	Low-Income*
Between 1.5 and 3.0	4.5 to 9.0
Greater than 3.0	9.0
Index Score	4.5 to 9.0
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Equity Emphasis Area (Total Index $\geq$ 4.00) <input type="checkbox"/> Not an Equity Emphasis Area (Total Index $<$ 4.00)	

<sup>1</sup> A person is considered low-income if their household income is less than one-and-a-half times the federal government's official poverty threshold which varies by household size.

\*The ROC for low-income is multiplied by three to determine the index score but capped at 9.0.

<sup>2</sup> Region is defined as the TPB Planning Area: <http://www.mwcog.org/transportation/tpb/jurisdictions.asp>.

**Table 2: Scoring for Criteria 2 - Minority Population Concentration and Secondary Low-Income Thresholds**

RATIO OF CONCENTRATION (ROC or times the regional average)	INDEX SCORE			
	Low-Income*	African American	Asian	Hispanic or Latino
Less than 1.0	0	0	0	0
Between 1.0 and 1.49	1.0 to 1.49	0	0	0
Between 1.5 and 3.0	See Criteria 1 (4.5 to 9.0)	1.5 to 3.0	1.5 to 3.0	1.5 to 3.0
Greater than 3.0	See Criteria 1 (9.0)	3.0	3.0	3.0
Total Index Score	Index scores are totaled			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Equity Emphasis Area (EEA) (Total Index $\geq$ 4.00) <input type="checkbox"/> Not an Equity Emphasis Areas (EEA) (Total Index $<$ 4.00)				

**PURPOSE AND UPDATE PROCESS**

The TPB is required to analyze the long-range transportation plan for disproportionately high and adverse impacts on low-income and minority populations. The TPB’s primary purpose for the Equity Emphasis Areas map is as an analytical tool to identify regional impacts of the planned transportation projects as whole by comparing accessibility and mobility measures for the Equity Emphasis Areas compared to the rest of the region.

Additionally, the Equity Emphasis Areas will be used in other planning activities and will be made available to local jurisdictions to assist with considering equity in initiatives such as education, health, and green space.

The Equity Emphasis Areas map will be revised with the latest Census data in conjunction with each major long-range transportation plan update.