

**NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD**  
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20002

**RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE EQUITY EMPHASIS AREAS  
FOR THE TITLE IV / ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTRAINED  
LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION  
AND OTHER PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

**WHEREAS**, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), which is the metropolitan planning organization for the Washington Region, has the responsibility under the provisions of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act for developing and carrying out a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process for the Metropolitan Area; and

**WHEREAS**, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance on the grounds of race, color, or national origin; and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, directs recipients of Federal funds to identify and avoid disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations; and

**WHEREAS**, U.S. DOT Departmental Order 5610.2(a): Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, reaffirms that a metropolitan planning organization, such as the TPB, must analyze the long-range transportation plan for disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations; and

**WHEREAS**, the TPB's Title VI / Environmental Justice analysis of the Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan is a component of COG's Title VI Plan and Program which outline the nondiscrimination assurances and policies for all COG and TPB programs, ensuring COG and TPB compliance with overall Title VI nondiscrimination requirements; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2014, the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration conducted a joint review of the TPB's planning process and found that the TPB's Title VI / Environmental Justice analysis of the 2010 Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan was typical and compliant; and

**WHEREAS**, in this joint certification of the TPB's planning process, the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration made a recommendation for enhancing the TPB's Title VI / Environmental Justice with additional tools and data as reported in the 2015 Washington, DC-VA-MD Transportation Management Area Certification Review report; and

**WHEREAS**, TPB staff reviewed innovative practices used to conduct Title VI / Environmental Justice analysis of long-range transportation plans from other metropolitan planning organizations; and

**WHEREAS**, based on these innovative practices, the TPB staff developed a methodology to identify small geographic areas with high concentrations of low-income and / or minority populations (“Equity Emphasis Areas”), as a tool to analyze the long-range transportation plan for disproportionately high and adverse impacts on protected populations; and

**WHEREAS**, the TPB Technical Committee was briefed and asked to provide comments on the Equity Emphasis Areas for the proposed enhancements to the Title VI / Environmental Justice analysis of the Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) at its September 9, October 7, December 2, 2016 meetings and its January 6, 2017 meetings; and

**WHEREAS**, the TPB’s Citizens Advisory Committee and the TPB’s Access for All Advisory Committee were briefed on the Equity Emphasis Areas and provided comments on November 10 and December 15, 2016 meetings, respectively; and

**WHEREAS**, the Transportation Planning Board was briefed at its December 21, 2016 and January 18, 2017 meetings on the map and methodology for the proposed enhancements to the Title VI / Environmental Justice analysis of the CLRP which include the methodology and map; and

**WHEREAS**, the Transportation Planning Board at its January 18, 2017 meeting, asked staff to re-examine and refine the Equity Emphasis Areas methodology to account for high concentrations of a single minority population; and

**WHEREAS**, TPB staff modified the methodology for the Equity Emphasis Areas and presented this modification to the COG Planning Directors Technical Advisory Committee on February 17, at a webinar on February 22, to the TPB’s Access for All Advisory Committee on February 23, to the TPB’s Technical Committee on March 3 and to the TPB’s Citizens Advisory Committee at its March 8, 2017 meeting; and

**WHEREAS**, the modified Equity Emphasis areas are described in the attached materials and will be used to analyze the 2016 CLRP amendment for disproportionately high and adverse impacts by comparing accessibility and mobility measures for the Equity Emphasis Areas compared to the rest of the region; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition to the Equity Emphasis Areas use to analyze the CLRP, the map will be used in other TPB work activities such as scenario planning and the Transportation/Land Use Connections (TLC) Program; and

**WHEREAS**, the TPB will make this tool and map available to its member jurisdictions where it could be used to assist with the jurisdictions’ other planning initiatives such as housing, education, public health, green space; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board endorses the Equity Emphasis Areas map and methodology for use in the Title VI / Environmental Justice analysis of the Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan and other planning activities.

**Adopted by the Transportation Planning Board at its rescheduled meeting on March 29, 2017.**



## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Transportation Planning Board  
**FROM:** TPB Transportation Planners  
**SUBJECT:** Modified Equity Emphasis Areas Map for the Title VI/Environmental Justice Analysis of the CLRP  
**DATE:** March 9, 2017

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## **PURPOSE**

This memorandum describes the modifications made to the methodology for identifying Equity Emphasis Areas (EEAs), which are small geographic areas with high concentrations of low-income and/or minority populations.<sup>1</sup> The modifications to the methodology were made in response to feedback from members of the Transportation Planning Board (TPB) at the January 18 meeting that the original method was not including areas with a high concentration of a single minority population. The TPB will be asked to endorse the modified Equity Emphasis Areas map (shown in Figure 1 on page 4) at its March 15 meeting. The EEAs will be used for analyzing the Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) for disproportionately high and adverse impacts on low-income and minority populations as well as in other COG and TPB planning activities.

## **SUMMARY**

The TPB was briefed on the proposed EEAs map and methodology at its December 21, 2016 and January 18, 2017 meetings. At the January 18 meeting, the TPB asked staff to re-examine and refine the methodology for the EEAs map. Following the January 18 meeting, TPB staff reviewed the approaches of some peer organizations, tested alternative changes to the scoring system, and made a modification to the methodology to address the concern that the prior approach left out areas with high concentrations of a single minority population.

With the modified methodology, the earlier threshold for concentration of the low-income population (greater than 1.5 times the regional average) in the original methodology is preserved; as is the earlier approach of using a high concentration of two or more minority population groups as a criterion to identify the Census tract as an EEA. However, a secondary income threshold was added so that areas with a single minority concentration are now identified as EEAs. Figure 1 (page 4) shows the modified EEAs and Figure 2 (page 5) shows the changes in the map between the original and modified methodology. With the modified methodology, a net 29 additional tracts (for a regional total of 360 tracts or nearly 30 percent) are identified as EEAs.

COG's Planning Directors Technical Advisory Committee was briefed on the modified methodology at its February 17 meeting. In addition, TPB staff sponsored a webinar on the modified EEAs for TPB

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<sup>1</sup> Low-income is defined as a household income less than 1.5 times the Federal poverty level, depending on size. In the current analysis, a household of four people with an annual income less than \$36,346 would be considered low-income. Minority populations refer to African-American, Asian, and Hispanic or Latino populations.

members, the Technical Committee and the Planning Directors on February 22 to provide an opportunity for input on the modified methodology. The TPB's Technical Committee was briefed on March 3. Comments received during this consultation process have been supportive of the modified methodology. In addition, the TPB's two advisory committees were briefed on the modified EEA map, the Access for All Advisory Committee was briefed at its February 23 meeting and the Citizens Advisory Committee was briefed at its March 8 meeting.

For more information on the modified methodology, regional and jurisdictional maps and tables of the modified EEAs, and a link to the online interactive map, please see:

<https://www.mwcog.org/transportation/planning-areas/fairness-and-accessibility/environmental-justice/proposed-equity-emphasis-areas/>.

## **FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS AND THE ENHANCED APPROACH TO THE TITLE VI/ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ANALYSIS**

Per federal requirements, the CLRP must be evaluated for disproportionately high and adverse impacts on low-income and minority populations that may result from the planned transportation improvements as a whole. The legal basis for this requirement comes from Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice (EJ).

Based on a national scan of best practices for conducting these analyses, TPB staff developed an enhanced approach to the TPB's Title VI/EJ analysis. The enhanced approach is twofold, and represents the two phases for this work: (Phase 1) identifying small geographic areas with high concentrations of low-income and/or minority populations; and (Phase 2) examining the CLRP for changes in accessibility between the EEAs and the rest of the region between 2016 and 2040.

In Phase 1, the data and population groups being used in the modified methodology is the U.S. Census Bureau's 2010-2014 American Community Survey tract-level data on low-income, African-American, Asian, and Hispanic or Latino populations in the region. Using an index scoring methodology based on each groups' Ratio of Concentration (or times the regional average) for every tract in the region. A tract is identified as an EEA if one of two criteria are met:

- Criteria 1: Tract concentration of low-income population is greater than or equal to 1.5 times the regional average.
- Criteria 2: Tracts with high concentrations of two or more minority populations, AND tracts with high concentrations of one minority population that also meet a secondary low-income threshold which is at or above the regional average for low-income.

With the modified methodology, a net 29 additional tracts (for a regional total of 360 tracts or nearly 30 percent) are identified as EEAs. The high concentration of low-income population by itself (Criteria 1) accounts for 79 percent of the tracts that make up the EEAs in this modified methodology. Criteria 2 accounts for the remaining 21 percent.

After TPB endorsement of the methodology and map (Phase 1) the EEAs will be primarily used as an analytical tool in the Title VI and EJ analysis of the CLRP, but also in other COG and TPB planning activities. For example, these EEAs will inform the sampling strategy for the regional Household Travel Survey to ensure that low-income and minority populations are fully represented in the survey. The Transportation and Land-Use Connections (TLC) grant program will encourage applications from local governments for projects related to the EEAs. In addition, the EEAs can be used in long-range

planning work, including scenario analysis and could also be used by local jurisdictions to assist with their community planning initiatives in areas such as housing, health care, education and parks or green space.

In Phase 2, staff will examine multiple accessibility and mobility measures including accessibility to all jobs, retail jobs, educational institutions and hospitals by automobile and transit travel forecast for 2040. These measures will be compared for EEAs versus the rest of the region between 2016 and 2040 based on the 2016 CLRP performance as a whole.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Following the TPB's endorsement of the methodology and map, TPB staff can begin Phase 2, in which the CLRP will be analyzed for disproportionately high and adverse impacts on low-income and minority populations over the horizon of the plan. Staff will conduct the analysis between March and April, plan to develop and review draft findings in May to June and brief the TPB with results in June or July 2017.

For more information on the modified methodology, regional and jurisdictional maps and tables of the modified EEAs, and a link to the online interactive map, please see:

<https://www.mwcog.org/transportation/planning-areas/fairness-and-accessibility/environmental-justice/proposed-equity-emphasis-areas/>.

Attachments:

Figure 1: Modified Equity Emphasis Areas in the National Capital Region

Figure 2: Changes to the Equity Emphasis Areas Between the Original and Modified Methodology

**Figure 1: Modified Equity Emphasis Areas in the National Capital Region**

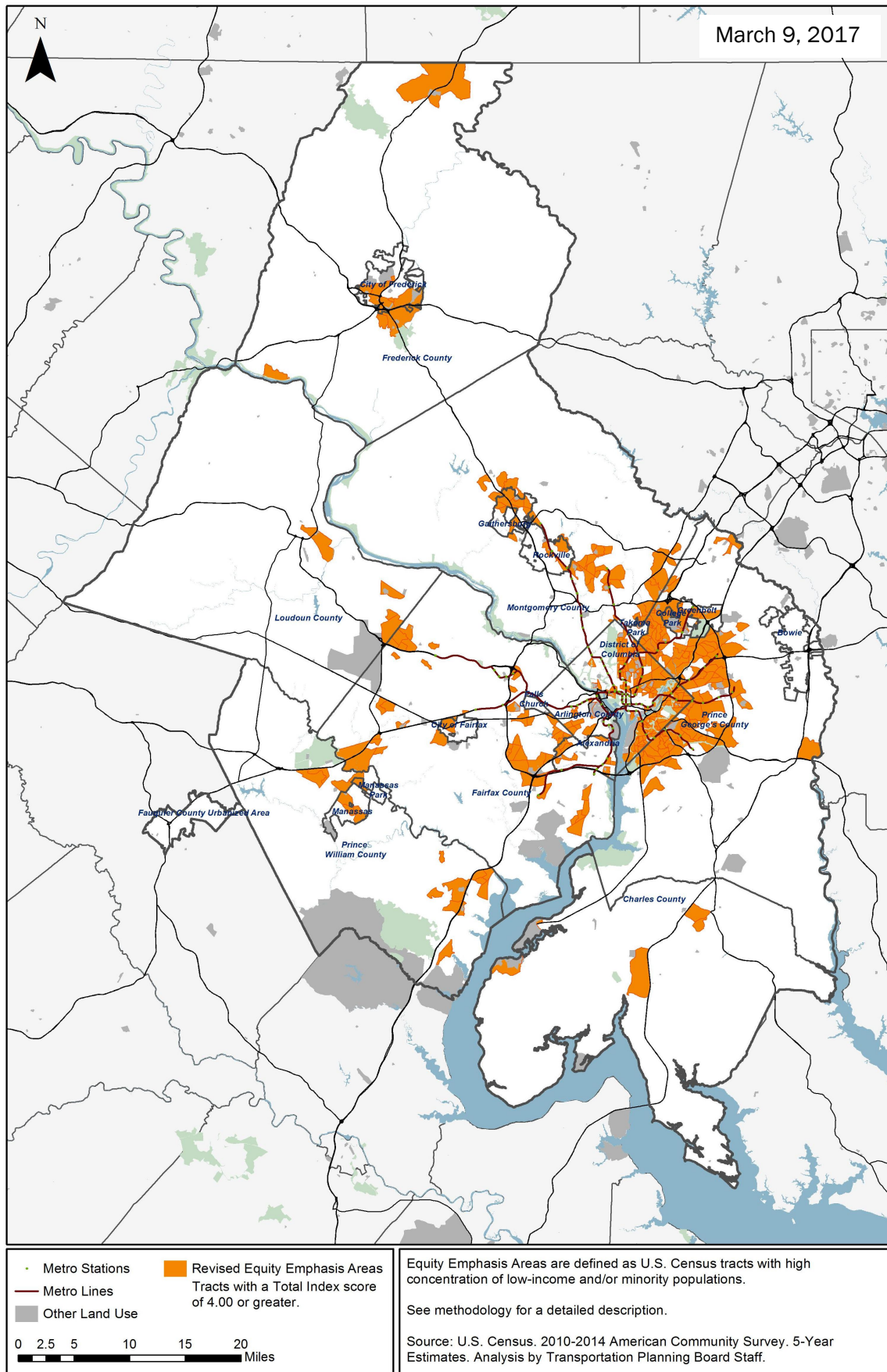




Figure 2: Changes to the Equity Emphasis Areas Between the Original and Modified Methodology

