

Update to Equity Emphasis Area Environmental Justice (EJ) Analysis Phase 1

Transportation Planner

**Transportation Planning Board
July 20, 2022**

Agenda Item #9

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

Presentation Overview

- Update Summary / Takeaways
- Why update?
- What inputs were being updated?
- Details of primary changes
- Next Steps
- Frequently Asked Questions

What are Equity Emphasis Areas (EEA) and how does the TPB use them?

- We identify small geographic areas with higher concentrations of four groups compared to the regional average:
 - Low-Income
 - Black or African American
 - Hispanic or Latino
 - Asian

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

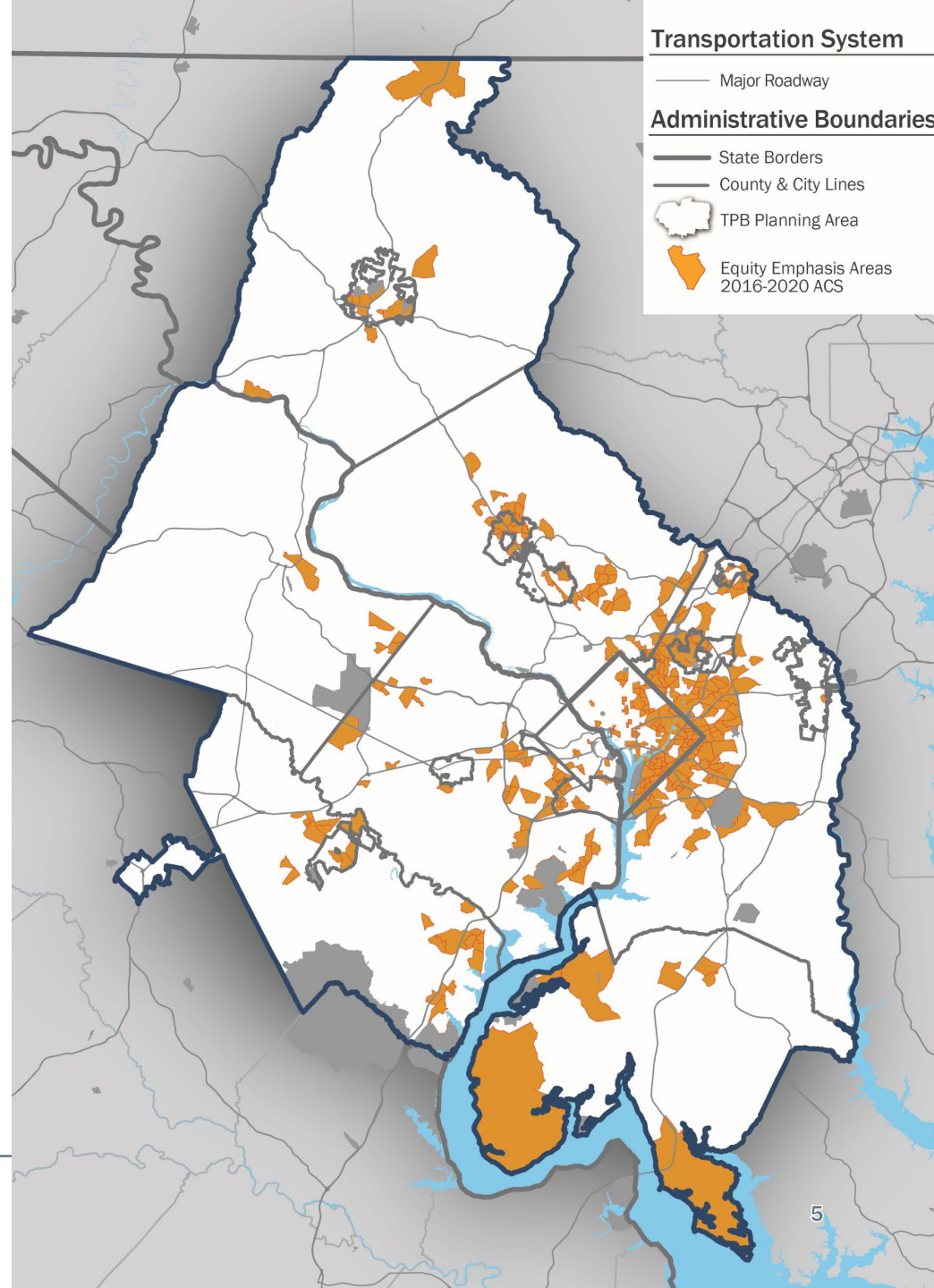
- Helps us understand the impact of transportation improvements on these areas compared to the remainder of the region. COG and TPB also endorsed use of these areas to help highlight areas of the region to consider with additional sensitivity when developing plans, policies, and programs.

EEA Update: Takeaways

- The 2022 update designates 364 of the region's 1,330 Census tracts as EEA
 - Number of tracts designated EEA increased (+4%): 351 to 364
 - Represents 27% of all tracts in the region – near the 29% from 2018
- Total number of census tracts in the region increased (+9%): 1,222 to 1,330
- No significant change in overall pattern of distribution of EEAs in the region
- No significant change in the overall composition of population groups within the EEAs

Equity Emphasis Areas - Updated Overview Map

- Spatial distribution patterns similar to 2018 designations
 - East-West Divide
 - Inner-Suburban and Outer-Suburban clusters
 - Handful of large tracts in Outer-Suburban areas – artifact of methodology (sampling requirements for statistically significant data)



Why the 2022 Update?

- TPB's analysis is part of federal Environmental Justice (EJ) requirements of its Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
- Analysis conducted with every major update
 - On June 15, 2022, TPB adopted an update to its 2018 LRTP (Visualize 2045)
 - Staff has begun an update of the 2018 EJ analysis using the 2022 edition of Visualize 2045
 - Part 1 is the EEA designation of the census tracts within the TPB's planning area

What inputs are being updated?

- **In Phase 1: Equity Emphasis Areas**

- The number and boundaries of census tracts within the planning area (update from 2020 US Census data)
- The demographics of the population within each census tract (American Community Survey data for 2016-2020 period)

- **In Phase 2: Environmental Justice analysis**

- The above information will be used with updated transportation and land use data from the 2022 update of Visualize 2045
- There are no changes in the methodologies, used to designate EEAs and conduct the EJ analysis of the LRTP, adopted by the TPB in 2017

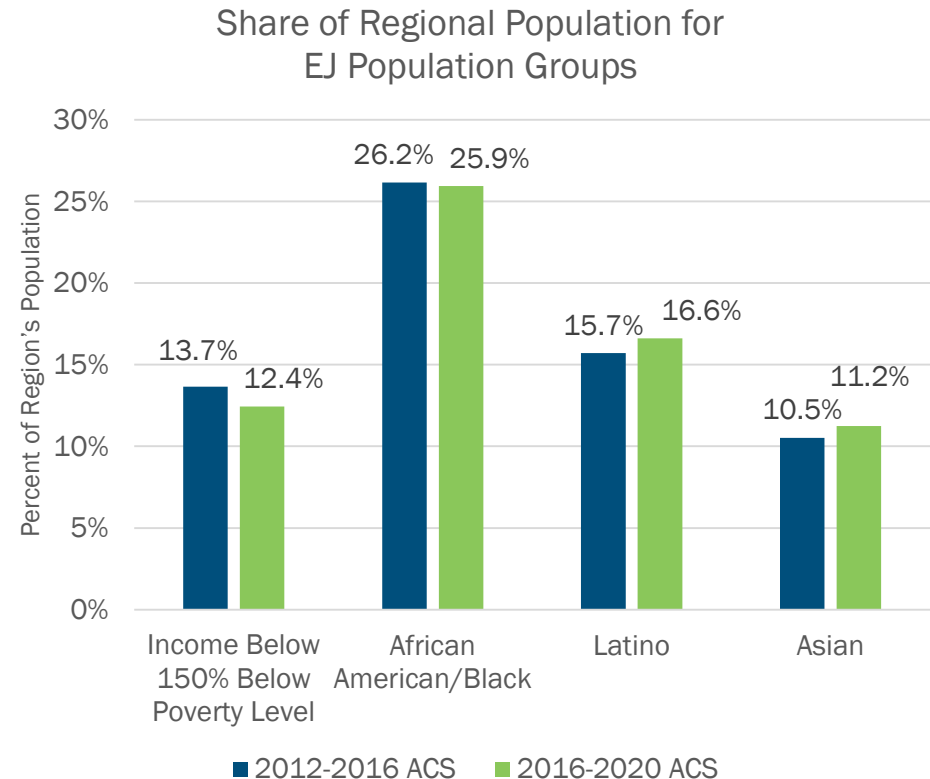
Details of Changes: U.S. Census Tracts

- Average tract population 4,000
 - Minimum 1,200, Maximum 8,000
- Updated once every ten years to go along with the decennial Census
- Tract is split when population grows over 8,000 inhabitants
- Tract is consolidated with an adjoining one when less than 1,200 inhabitants

2018	2022
1,222 tracts	1,330 tracts

Details of changes: Tract Demographics

- From 2012-2016 ACS to 2016-2020 ACS data sets
- Planning area population grew by over 200,000 between these two datasets
- Regionally, the share of individuals of the historically disadvantaged racial and ethnic population groups or low-income remained relatively constant



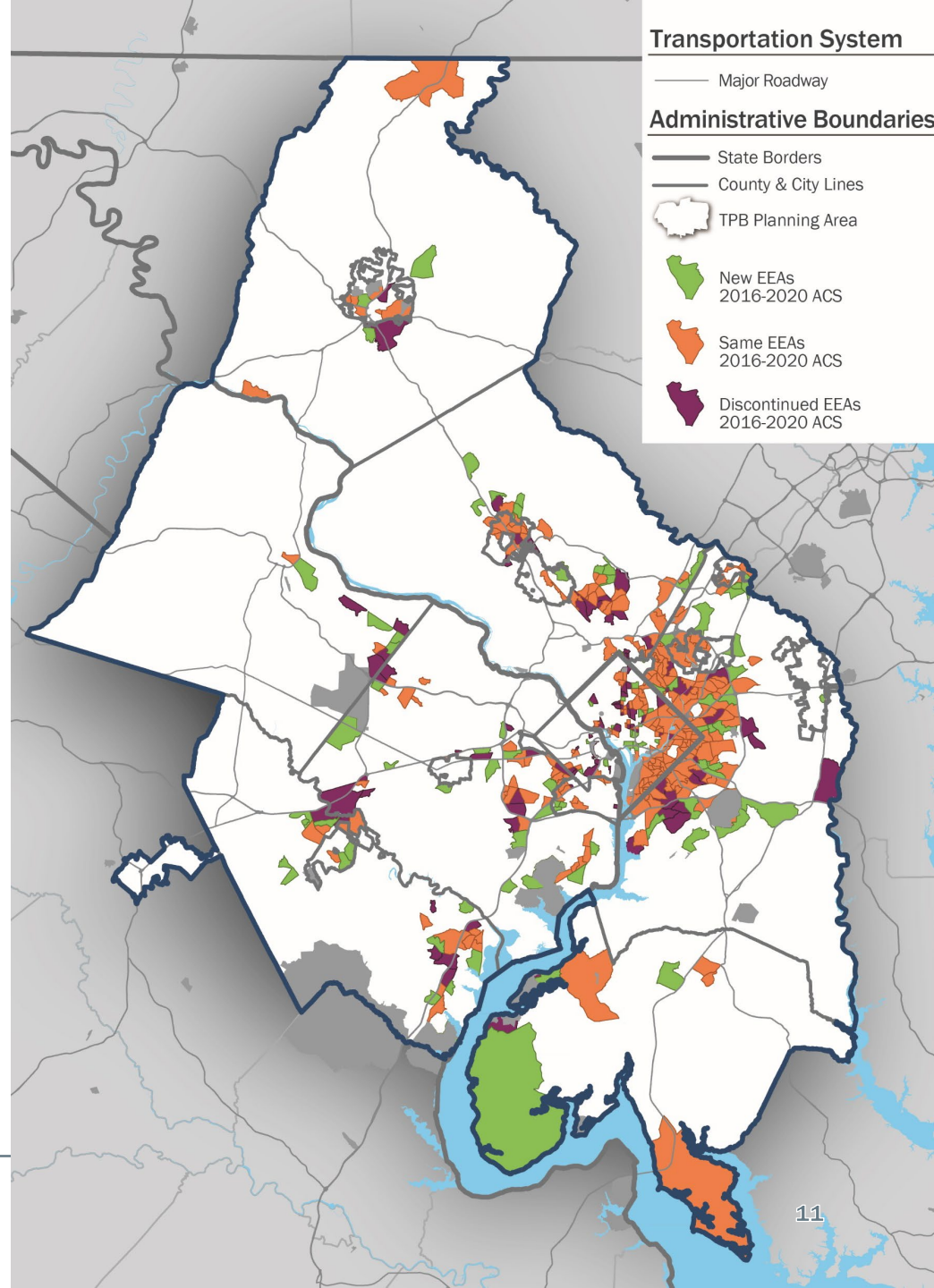
Details of changes: Overall Representation

	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%

Details of changes: Number and Location of EEAs

- 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.



FAQs and response

- **Are the 271 EEAs from 2018 that are unchanged in 2022 the exact same geographic spaces?**

In most cases and to the average eye, yes. Updated tract boundaries might have caused minor boundary changes or no changes at all.

- **Could you further explain why some 2018 EEAs are not identified in 2022 while new ones appear?**

There are many reasons why a tract in the region may or may not be identified as an EEA:

1. TPB methodology relies on index scoring with thresholds. This 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 impacting an area in a myriad of ways, including, displacement, increase or decrease in the tract's population, or other changes that impacts the concentration of low-income and traditionally disadvantaged racial and ethnic population groups.

FAQs and responses

- **My jurisdiction/agency is using the 2018 EEAs to advance our own equity considerations, how are we to use these newly defined EEAs? What will happen to the existing data?**

TPB staff is supportive of the use of the 2018 EEAs by its member jurisdictions to inform local decision making in efforts to address equity. Updating the 2018 EEAs to match with the 2022 designations should be informed by a review of how the EEA and its data is being used in local efforts.

Data for the 2022 EEAs will be made available to member jurisdictions while the 2018 EEAs will remain available to member jurisdictions in the TPB's Regional Transportation Database Clearinghouse.

The TPB's EEA designations are a regional product and not explicitly approved by the FHWA, FTA, or any other federal agency. There is no requirement for TPB member to use the TPB's EEAs in any other federal program and/or grants.

FAQs and responses

- **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.

EJ Analysis: Next Steps

- Conduct Phase 2: Analyze the 2022 update to Visualize 2045 for disproportionately high and significantly adverse impact on low-income and traditionally disadvantage racial and ethnic populations. If found, develop mitigation measures.
- Staff expect to present the results of the analysis to TPB in early- to late-Fall 2022

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