Environmental Justice

Overview

Environmental Justice (EJ) at the FHWA means identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse effects of the agency's programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.

Guiding Principles

To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.

To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority or low-income populations.

To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority or low-income populations.
Environmental Justice, Title VI, Non-Discrimination, and Equity

Although Environmental Justice (EJ), Title VI, Non-Discrimination, and Equity are distinct elements, collectively they can contribute to the development of an equitable transportation system. These elements are regularly mistaken and used interchangeably, thus, making it essential to understand their differences.

EJ at FHWA focuses on identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of the agency’s programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations to achieve an equitable distribution of benefits and burdens. This objective is to be achieved, in part, by actively adhering to the principles and practices of both Title VI and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) during the development and implementation of transportation activities. The classes covered by EJ vary slightly from those covered by Title VI and other nondiscrimination statutes, as depicted in Table 1.
Equity in Transportation

Equity in transportation seeks fairness in mobility and accessibility to meet the needs of all community members. Particular focus is given to individuals in one of the following population categories:

- Low Income
- Minority
- Elderly
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
- Persons with Disabilities
Highlighting Transportation Plans and Projects

- Demonstrated Advances in Nondiscrimination, including Environmental Justice: US 26 Outer Powell Transportation Safety Project, Portland, OR (2017)

Source: Oregon DOT

Source: Colorado DOT
EJ Analysis in Transportation Planning and Programming

1. Providing Opportunities for Meaningful Public Involvement
2. Identifying EJ Populations
3. Understanding EJ Needs and Concerns
4. Assessing Benefits and Burdens of Plans and Programs
5. Assessing Whether Adverse Effects Are Disproportionately High
6. Deploying Strategies to Address Disproportionately High and Adverse Effects (Imbalances and Needs)
7. Best Practices

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/environmental_justice/publications/
Addressing Changing Demographics in EJ Analysis

I. Context, Goals and Objectives

II. Changing Demographics: Trends and Forecasts

III. State of the Practice & Notable Practices

IV. Key Takeaways

V. Notable Practice Example Case Studies
   1. Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission
   2. Metropolitan Transportation Commission
   3. Atlanta Regional Commission
   4. Florida Department of Transportation
   5. Metro (Portland, OR)

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/environmental_justice/publications/
Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Reference Guide Update

- New CIA Resources
- Best Practice Examples
- Updated Assessment Techniques/Strategies
- Effective Public Involvement

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/cia/
Active Transportation

Pursuing Equity in Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning

April 2016

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For
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center
www.pedbikeinfo.org

http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/

Historically, many low-income communities and underserved populations have been left out of conversations about transportation planning and this has led to unsafe conditions where pedestrians and bicyclists are over-represented in crashes. An equitable transportation system fosters fairness and helps facilitate access to opportunities for all community members. Equity can be considered both a process and an outcome. To achieve transportation equity, communities must engage in inclusive, authentic outreach to address underlying disparities of mobility and access and prioritize equity during all stages of the planning and implementation process. This involves building an accessible, affordable, and reliable transportation network that effectively serves all people. Discriminatory enforcement of traffic laws is a form of transportation inequity.

Transportation equity requires understanding the unique needs and safety concerns of different populations and providing the appropriate amount of resources to each group. Numerous studies have shown that enhancing the ability of traditionally underserved populations to travel via nonmotorized modes can potentially lead to improved outcomes in public health, safety, and economic development; promote economic development and resource efficiency; strengthen inclusive neighborhood relations; and bolster public transit services. Benefits of an equitable transportation system positively impact the entire community.

Resources

Pursuing Equity in Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning provides an overview of transportation equity, nonmotorized transportation options for traditionally underserved populations, and strategies for improving equity for

Examples

America Walks Social Justice Toolkit provides tools and resources to consider equity and mitigate disparities by working towards healthy, productive walking environments for everybody.

Related Webinars

Pursuing Equity in Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning (6/26/2016)
Transportation Equity: Issues and Approaches to Reduce Disparities in Access to Pedestrian and Bicycle
Tolling and Road Pricing

Impacts of Congestion Pricing on Low-Income Populations
Effects to Measure and Respond to Income-Equity Concerns

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/environmental_justice/publications/
Complete Trip ITS4US Deployment Program

The task of transportation options for all travelers, including those from underserved communities, is a persistent challenge for access to jobs, education, healthcare, and other activities.

As a response to these challenges, the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) is launching its initiatives in innovations that enhance access and mobility for all travelers. The U.S. DOT is launching a new program, the Complete Trip—ITS4US Deployment Program, to improve access to transportation for people with disabilities, older adults, and individuals of low income. The Complete Trip—ITS4US Deployment Program is a model program that provides transportation services for people with disabilities, older adults, and other underserved communities that offer face-to-face challenges in accessing essential services.

As part of the Complete Trip—ITS4US Deployment Program, this program will make up to $80 million over five years available to establish communities to showcase innovative business partnerships, technologies, and practices that promote independent mobility for all.

The Complete Trip—ITS4US Deployment Program expands on and builds upon the successful deployment of innovative, innovative, and emerging technologies to address the challenges of planning and executing complete trips.

Vision
Innovative and integrated complete trip deployments support seamless travel for all users across all modes, regardless of location, income, or disability.

Missions
- Facilitate the integration and deployment of emerging technologies, along with innovative and replicable transport-oriented partnerships, business models, and practices to foster walkable, accessible, independent, safe, affordable, accessible, and efficient mobility options for all travelers.

Guiding Principles
- Integrated, Innovative, and Emerging Technologies
- Technical Design
- Long-Term Viability and Partnerships
- Open and Secured Data and Standards

Complete Trip Concept
The success of a complete trip can be defined in series of an individual’s ability to go from origin to destination without gaps in the travel chain.

A complete trip may include multiple links or trip segments such as trip planning, outdoor navigation, pedestrian crossing, boarding and use of vehicles, transfers between vehicles, modes, and payment services; stop and station use; indoor and outdoor transitions; indoor navigation; and completion of travel-related activities. If one segment of the trip is inaccessible, unreliable, or inefficient, access to subsequent segments is broken, and the trip cannot be completed.

https://www.its.dot.gov/its4us/index.htm
Improving Access to Opportunity


Mobility Innovation

- Shared Mobility
- Automated and Connected Vehicles
- Micromobility
- Curbspace Management
Public Involvement/Public Participation

Public participation is an integral part of the transportation process which helps to ensure that decisions are made in consideration of and to benefit public needs and preferences. Early and continuous public involvement brings diverse viewpoints and values into the decision-making process. This process enables agencies to make better informed decisions through collaborative efforts and builds mutual understanding and trust between the agencies and the public they serve. Successful public participation is a continuous process, consisting of a series of activities and actions to both inform the public and stakeholders and to obtain input from them which influence decisions that affect their lives.

The public, in any one area or jurisdiction, may hold a diverse array of views and concerns on issues pertaining to their own specific transportation needs. Conducting meaningful public participation involves seeking public input at specific and key points in the decision-making process issues where such input has a real potential to help shape the final decision or set of actions.

Public participation activities provide more value when they are open, relevant, timely, and appropriate for the intended goal of the public involvement process. Providing a balanced approach with representation of all stakeholders and including measures to seek out and consider the needs of all stakeholders, especially those that are traditionally underserved by past and current transportation programs, facilities, or services.

To assist those who would like to improve public participation processes and strategies, this site provides links to relevant information and exemplary case studies and examples.

Information for the Public on Transportation Decision Making

Have you ever wondered how decisions are made about transportation projects that affect your life? How do government officials decide where to put a bus stop, road, or bridge? How are these and other transportation projects planned? And how can you make sure your opinions are heard and considered by the planners, road designers, elected officials, and other citizens? The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) wrote a guide to give you the answers to these and other transportation-related questions.

www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/public_involvement/
https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/public_involvement/vpi/
Public Involvement Resources

Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decisionmaking

Virtual Public Involvement

Virtual public involvement supports agencies' efforts to engage the public more effectively by supplementing face-to-face information sharing with technology.

Encouraging Public Engagement

Public involvement is a critical component in the transportation decision-making process, allowing for meaningful collaboration and input from all stakeholders. To enhance public involvement, transportation agencies can leverage technology to improve communications and make the planning process more accessible.

Transportation Planning Capacity Building

Transportation Planning Capacity Building (TPCB) is a program that focuses on enhancing the skills and knowledge of transportation professionals. It provides training and resources to improve the public involvement process and make it more effective.

Every Place Counts Leadership Academy

The Every Place Counts Leadership Academy is a program designed to support leaders in creating more equitable and accessible transportation systems. It includes training, workshops, and resources to promote better public involvement.

How to Engage Low-Literacy and Limited-English-Proficiency Populations

Engaging low-literacy and limited-English-proficiency populations in transportation decision-making is crucial for ensuring that all communities are represented. Strategies include using visual aids, simplifying language, and providing interpretation services.
National Highway Institute
Training Resources

Environmental Justice and Public Involvement

• Fundamentals of EJ, WBT (Course #142074)

• EJ Analysis, Instructor-led (Course #142075)

• Basics of Public Involvement in Transportation Decision Making, WBT (Course #142077)

• Title VI Analysis, Instructor-led (Under Development)

www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov
Additional Training Resources

FHWA Resource Center Technical Assistance
www.fhwa.dot.gov/resourcecenter

FTA/NTI EJ Courses
http://www.ntionline.com/courses/
EJ/Equity Collaboration

- Federal: USDOT, FHWA, Interagency EJ Working Group, National Science Foundation
- Partnering Organizations: TRB, AASHTO, APA

Upcoming Event

- TRB Transportation Equity Conference, Sept. 7-9, 2021 Washington, D.C.,
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