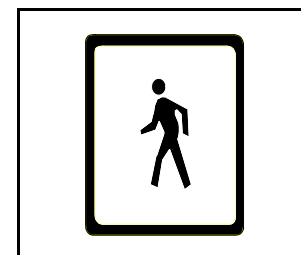
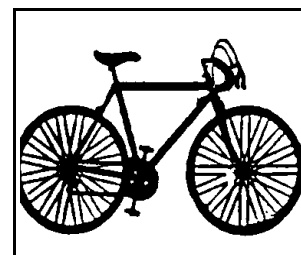
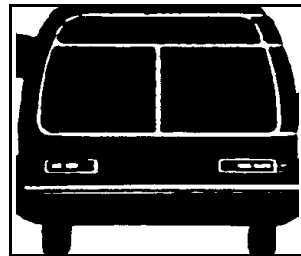
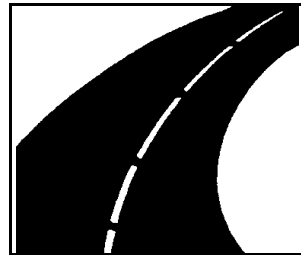


JANESVILLE AREA 2005 - 2035 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

May 10, 2006

Section VI

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I. INTRODUCTION

Environmental justice is the fair treatment of all groups within the community. More specifically, it is the assurance that no one group, regardless of race or income, will have an unfair share of negative impacts imposed upon them. There are three main principals associated with environmental justice. They are as follows:

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

To certify compliance with Title VI and address environmental justice, FHWA states that MPOs need to do the following:

- Enhance their analytical capabilities to ensure that the long-range transportation plan and the transportation improvement program (TIP) comply with Title VI.
- Identify residential, employment, and transportation patterns of low-income and minority populations so that their needs can be identified and addressed, and the benefits and burdens of transportation investments can be fairly distributed.
- Evaluate and - where necessary - improve their public involvement processes to eliminate participation barriers and engage minority and low-income populations in transportation decision making.

The public is an important element of environmental justice compliance. Transportation agencies cannot fully meet community needs without the active participation of well-informed, empowered individuals. The public is responsible for the following:

- Participate in public involvement activities (meetings, hearings, advisory groups, and task forces) to help responsible State and local agencies understand community needs, perceptions, and goals.
- Get involved with State and local agencies to link TEA-21 programs with other Federal, State, and local resources to fund projects that support community goals

In addressing environmental justice, the MPO has identified areas within the planning boundary with a significant low-income or minority population, and then analyzed, and addressed, when appropriate, the impact of the recommended projects on the target groups. This is the first time that the MPO has been required to address environmental justice within its long range plan. Consequently, the technical

data needed to do much of the analysis was gathered specifically for this project. In the future, as conditions change, technology improves, and more data becomes available, the analysis itself will also evolve and become more comprehensive. In addition, the MPO will develop the ability to reflect back on changes over time, and to evaluate and monitor trends within the community. This chapter evaluates the potential environmental impact of recommendations contained in the long-range transportation plan. The assessment of potential environmental effects is addressed through evaluating the impacts to economic, social, and natural resources.

II. METHOD OF ANALYSIS

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The definitions used within this section were adopted from the Environmental Protection Agency's *Toolkit for Assessing Potential Allegations of Environmental Injustice* and the Council on Environmental Quality's *Environmental Justice Guidance Under the National Environmental Policy Act*.

- Affected area or community of concern: The affected area or community of concern is the geographic area of analysis that the proposed project or action will or may have an effect on.
 - In this analysis, the affected areas are those block groups that the project in question abuts.
- Adverse effect or impact: Adverse effect or impact is a term used to describe the entire compendium of “significant” (as defined under the National Environmental Policy Act) individual or cumulative human health or environmental effects or impacts which may result from a proposed project or action.

Examples of adverse effects or impacts considered in this plan are:

- Access and mobility
 - Economic and social impacts;
 - Land use impacts;
 - Community and neighborhood impacts; and
 - Impacts on natural resources.
- Disproportionately high and adverse effects or impacts: Means an adverse effect or impact that; (1) is predominately borne by an environmental justice population, (2) will be suffered by a minority population and/or low-income population and is appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude than the adverse effects or impact than will be suffered by a non-minority population and/or non-low-income population.
 - Low-Income: Means a person whose median household income is at or below the U.S Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines. For the purposes of this analysis 2000 Decennial Census data on poverty level within the MPO area was used.

- Minority: Means a person, as defined by the U.S. Bureau of Census, who is a: (1) Black American (a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa); (2) Hispanic person (a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race); (3) Asian American or Pacific Islander(a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands); or (4) American Indian or Alaskan Native (a person having origins in any of the original people of North America and maintaining cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition).
- Environmental justice communities or target populations: Areas where any readily identifiable group of minority or low-income persons reside at a higher percentage than the state average. An alternate definition is an area where the percentage of the minority population is meaningfully greater than the minority population percentage in the general population or other appropriate unit of geographic analysis.

METHODOLOGY

Identifying Environmental Justice Populations

All analysis was done at the block group level, using data from the 2000 Decennial Census, unless otherwise specified.

The first step in the analysis looked at the MPO planning area as a whole to evaluate whether the minority and low-income populations were greater than the rest of the state. A minority or low-income population higher than the state would indicate that the MPO planning area has a concentration, which would mean that the target populations in general would carry a greater portion of the recommended projects collective impacts than the rest of the population. In the MPO planning area the minority population makes up 4.4 % of the population, in Wisconsin 12% of the population is minority. The US Census Bureau considers 6.1 % of the population within the MPO planning area to be below the poverty level, compared to 8.7 % of Wisconsin's total population. The initial analysis indicates that the MPO does not have a disproportionate number minority or low-income persons.

Realizing that the Janesville Area MPO contains a unique set of communities, local benchmarks were used to analyze the data. The percentage of the population within each census block group identified as low-income or minority was compared to the MPO average, using a normal range of one-standard deviation above and below the average; 68% of all measurements fall within one standard deviation of the average. Those block groups with a score greater than one standard deviation above the average, have a minority or low income population greater than 68% of the MPO, and are considered concentrated.

FACTORS EVALUATED

The location of concentrations of minority and low-income persons were examined in conjunction with the distribution of significant community services and the projects recommended within the plan. The community factors evaluated are as follows:

- Parks and open space;
- Employment centers;
- Entertainment;
- Government;
- Health Care;
- Libraries;
- Recreation;
- Retail;
- Schools, and;
- Transportation hubs.

The planned projects were added to the analysis to evaluate the Plan's impact on the community factors listed above.

To provide a simplified picture of the projects examined, the second step of the analysis compared the target areas to the planned projects. The planned projects were grouped by mode; transit projects made up one group, and bike and pedestrian another. The target areas were examined in conjunction with each group of planned projects to better show the location of each project, relative to the target areas.

III. FINDINGS

The analysis showed that nine block groups had a significant minority population and eight had a significant low-income population, four block groups had both a high minority and low-income population, see Figure VI-1. Janesville's downtown had the highest concentrations of both low-income and minority persons. Census tract 3 was the only area to have both a minority population over 7.8% and a low-income population over 12%. Census tract 1, block group 3 (1.3) also had significant poverty and minority population. Block groups with concentrations of both environmental justice populations are considered, by the MPO, to be focus areas. The block groups that qualify as focus areas are: 1.3, 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3. The majority of the environmental justice target areas are located within the City of Janesville. One block group with a concentration of minority persons is partially within the Town of Janesville, 12.1. In general, this very low-density area is not significantly different from the rest of the MPO. The high proportion of minority persons is likely due to the correctional facility located at HWY 51 and 14.

The projects recommended in the long range transportation plan are distributed throughout the community. They are intended to preserve the existing transportation system, support a multimodal network and provide the connectivity necessary to maintain the current levels-of-service (as discussed in the Streets and Highways Element). The majority of planned preservation projects are in close proximity to environmental justice target areas. The expansion projects planned for environmental justice areas are intended to alleviate congestion or convert rural roadways into urban roadways. The

majority of the new roadways are on the eastside of the MPO planning area where the greatest demand for development has historically occurred. As better access is provided to the target areas and they further develop and experience the economic benefits derived from capital investments the populations are expected to increase or change, decreasing the concentrations.

The combination of projects recommended within this plan are intended to work together to benefit the entire planning area, especially the environmental justice areas. As projects move into the TIP and receive committed funding there will be the opportunity to reexamine them and mitigate any unforeseen impacts on the environmental justice populations.