

Environmental Justice Technical Report *Summary*



Environmental Justice Principles

In 1994, an Executive Order (Number 12898) directed every Federal agency including the U.S Department of Transportation (DOT) to identify and address the effects of all programs, policies, and activities on “minority populations and/or low-income populations”. This Order was consistent with Title VI in considering fundamental environmental justice principles affecting low income and minority populations. The three fundamental environmental justice principles are:

- 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 progress.
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

Environmental Justice and Transportation Planning

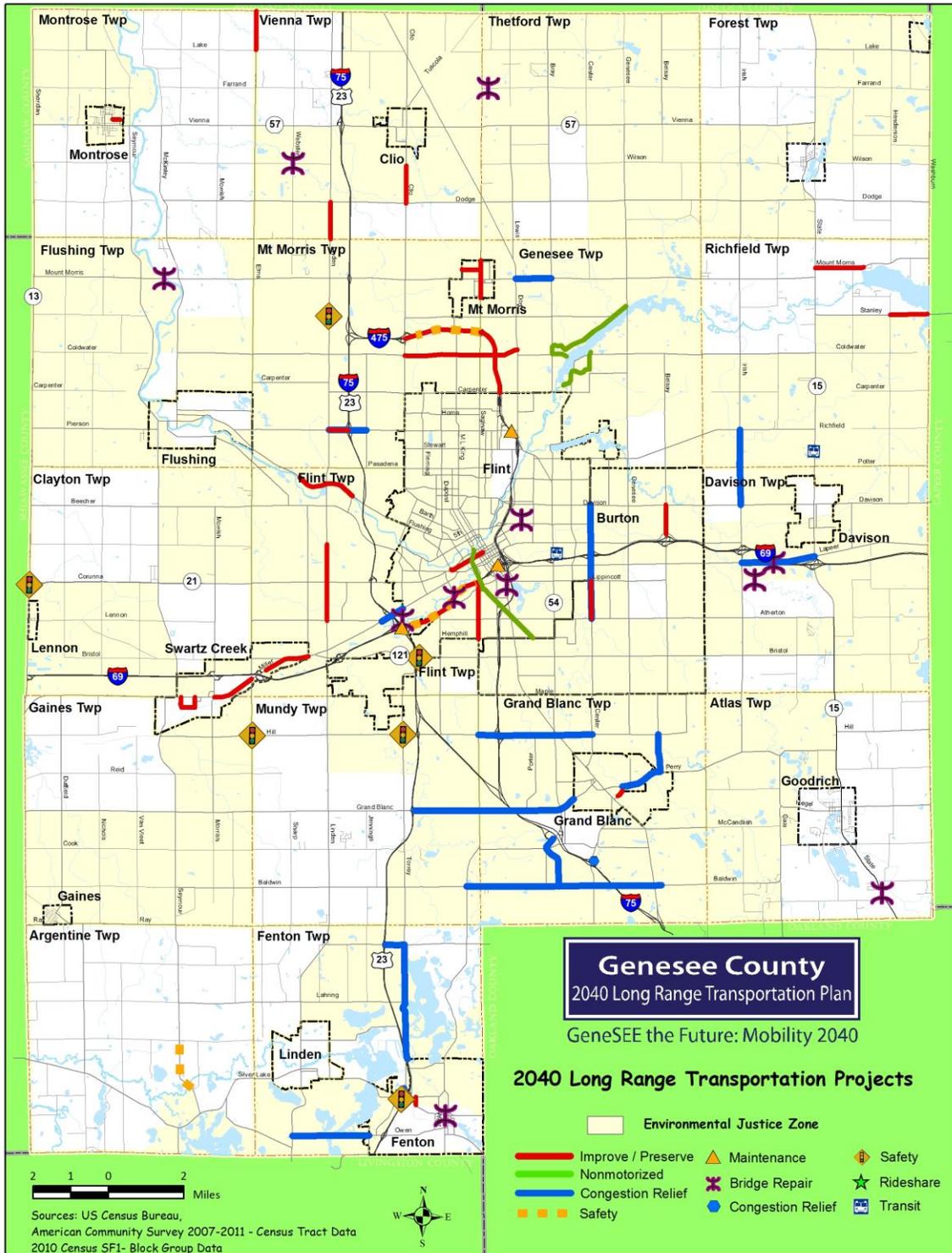
In order to address the three environmental justice principles in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the following summary approach was taken by staff according to guidelines developed by the U.S. DOT, FHWA and FTA:

- Minority populations and low-income populations were identified.
- An extensive public outreach effort was conducted.
- Economic investments in the transportation system were analyzed to assess whether minority and/or low-income populations were adversely affected in the receipt of transportation system benefits.

The Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission conducted an Environmental Justice (EJ) analysis for the proposed projects in the 2040 LRTP. The analysis undertaken by GCMPC supports principles and requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), the Executive Order (E.O.) 12898 and the 1997 and 2012 U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Orders to Address Environmental Justice.

Environmental Justice Zones

An Environmental Justice (EJ) Zone was established wherever the percentages of identified populations per each Census Block Group meet or exceed the average Threshold Percentage for Genesee County, as seen below. Of the total 649 square miles that make up Genesee County, there are 429 square miles (66%) identified as EJ Zones. Each EJ Zone is depicted in beige. Staff utilized this information in order to assess the significance of transportation projects on identified population groups.



GCMPC staff identified environmental justice areas and the projects proposed for those areas. Any property parcel that touches the proposed roadway improvement within an Environmental Justice area is highlighted through the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) technology. From the data, a mailing list is generated and GCMPC staff sends notices to all property owners along the proposed corridors notifying them of the potential project. Public meetings are also held for the purpose of providing citizens the opportunity to learn more about the transportation planning process as a whole. This level of analysis and notification helps to insure that neighborhoods are informed of projects, have the ability to provide input into the transportation planning process, and are minimally impacted by future transportation improvements.

2040 LRTP Projects

Of the 198 2040 LRTP Projects, 72 (*totaling approximately \$665,507,036 in funding*) were successfully mapped. Of those, 67 projects (*totaling approximately \$660,840,909 in funding*) are located within an EJ Zone. For purposes of this analysis, staff makes the assumption that the improvement of the condition of the transportation system through these types of transportation projects also is a direct improvement to the overall well-being of the community.

Projects which are an expansion of the transportation system may have potential adverse impacts to the community through the displacement or relocation of individuals, economic hardship or losing a sense of community. There are a total of 19 expansion projects (*totaling approximately \$110,096,349 in funding*), all of which are located in an EJ Zone. Of these 19 expansion projects, 18 are expected to have a minor impact on the community (*projects that will not displace or relocate residents*). These projects will improve travel time, safety and access for the residents within the EJ zone and provide a measure of congestion relief. However, the Dort Highway Extension Project could potentially result in displacement of residents. Residents often find relocation difficult, especially if persons in the home are elderly, have disabilities, depend upon local networks for social support, or have lived in the home for many years. The Dort Highway Extension Project also potentially impacts near-by wetlands. This project will continue to be monitored as the project develops through the preliminary engineering, environmental assessment reports, and right-of-way acquisition phases. All federal regulations related to the potential displacement of residents and environmental impacts will be followed to minimize the potential impacts.