



Aim

To enhance Quality of Life throughout the communities

Concept

The concept of “environmental justice” is derived from the **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, 1964**¹ and other civil rights statutes. As a National policy level goal, Environmental Justice (EJ) is addressed by **Executive Order 12898 1994**², which directs, “each federal agency to make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environment effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.” In response to this directive, the US DOT responded with its **DOT Order to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 1997**³.

FHWA and FTA renewed their commitments to ensure that EJ is carried out in programs and strategies they fund including the activities of metropolitan planning organizations (**MPOs**).⁴ [49 USC – 5303] The following are FHWA Directives to MPO’s:

- Enhance their analytical capabilities to ensure that their long-range transportation plan and their transportation improvement program 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.

In the wake of the above mentioned Federal guidelines on EJ that augment Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, growing attention has been placed on the need to incorporate EJ principles into the processes and products of transportation planning. In response to this important challenge, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) around the country have begun developing methods to assess the impacts of their transportation plans and planning processes on low-income and minority populations. The HCMPO aims to maintain compliance of the transportation planning efforts with the EJ requirements of Title VI. The following analysis is a step forward to integrate EJ into HCMPO’s transportation work program.

¹ “Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states that “no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

² Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, February 1994.

³ DOT Order to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, April 1997.

⁴ FHWA Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, December 1998; and FHWA and FTA Memorandum Implementing Title VI Requirements in Metropolitan and Statewide Planning, October 1999.



Analysis

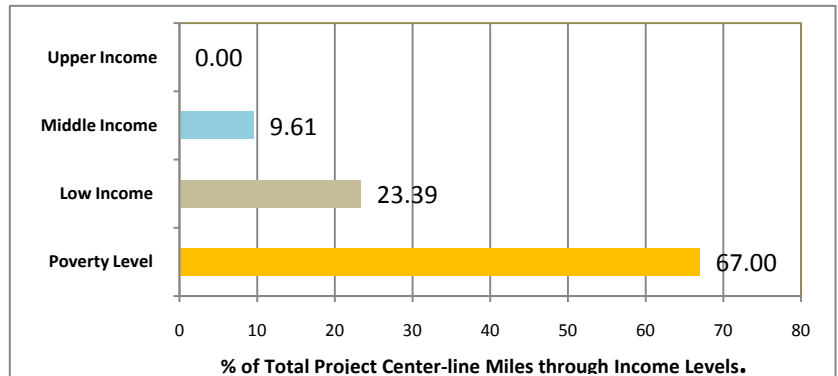
This analysis outlines the considerations for EJ in the Transportation Improvement Program (2011-2014) of HCMPO. The quintessential purpose of this analysis is:

- To compile key demographic data on minority and low-income populations in the Metropolitan Area Boundary (MAB) of HCMPO.
- Identify and create maps of the distribution of low-income / minority communities within the MAB using GIS analysis.

Outcome

Median Income:

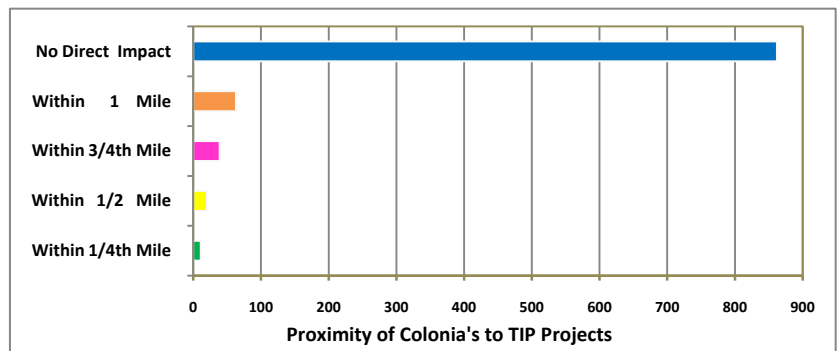
The TIP projects mostly serve low-income populations as much as 90% of the total center lane miles of the projects. The following is the distribution of Center Lane Miles for the TIP projects:



- 67 % of projects in areas below Poverty levels⁵. (\$ 22,000)
- 23 % of projects in areas with Lower Income levels (\$ 22001-\$ 35000)
- 10 % of projects in areas with Middle Income levels (\$ 35001-\$ 55,000)

Colonia's⁶:

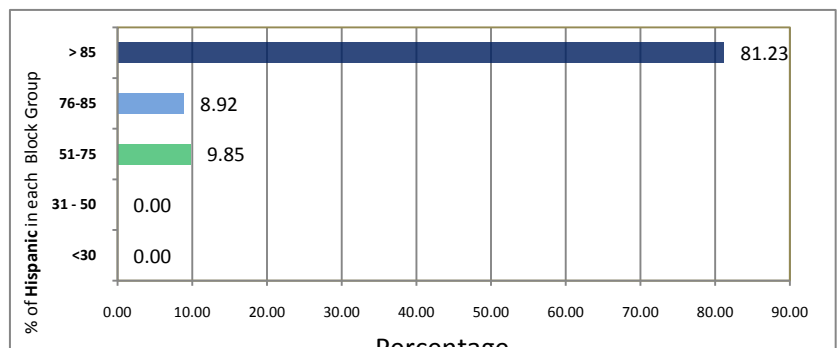
The Office of the Secretary of State defines a "colonia" as a residential area along the Texas-Mexico border that may lack some of the most basic living necessities, such as potable water and sewer systems, electricity, paved roads, and safe and sanitary housing.



The proximity analysis of Colonia's with the TIP projects shows that 93 % of Colonia's have no direct impact. However, 63 Colonia's (7 %) within 1 mile radius are directly impacted.

Minority (Hispanics):

As much as 81 % of the TIP and Earmark projects are located in areas with > 85 % Hispanic population.



⁵ US Dept of Health & Human Services; Poverty 2009 levels

⁶ http://www.sos.state.tx.us/border/colonias/what_colonia.shtml (Refer for Definition of Colonia's)