

Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization Environmental Justice Baseline Data Summary

Introduction

In 1994, a Presidential Executive Order directed every Federal agency to “make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.” There are three environmental justice fundamental principles.

- 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.

What is the MPO’s Role in Environmental Justice?

Based on Federal publication # FHWA-EP-00-0143, the MPO’s serve as “the primary forum where State DOTs, transit providers, local agencies, and the public develop local transportation plans and programs that address a metropolitan area’s needs. MPOs can help local public officials understand how Title VI and environmental justice requirements improve planning and decision making. To certify compliance with Title VI and address environmental justice, MPOs need to:

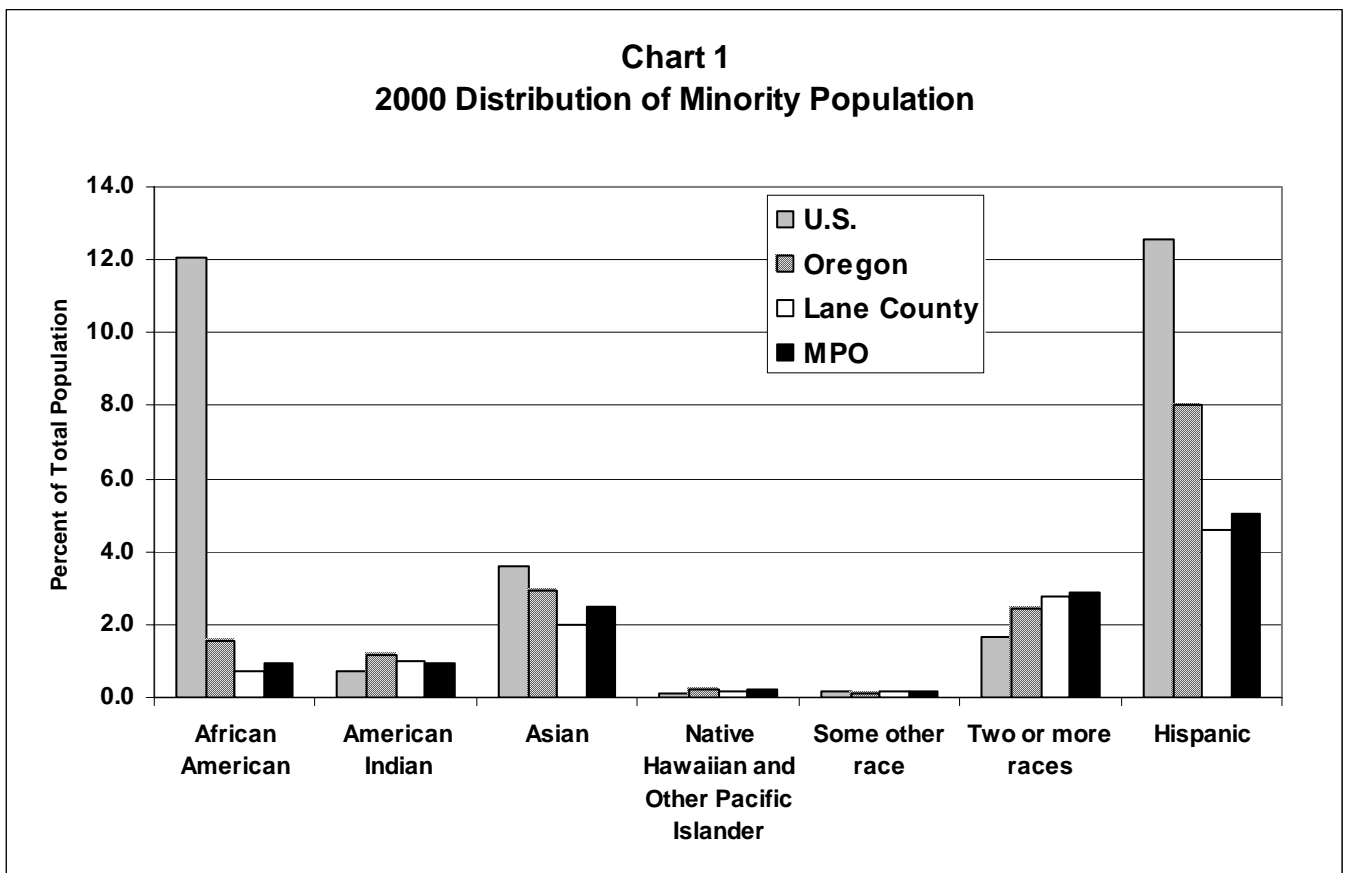
- Enhance their analytical capabilities to ensure that the long-range transportation plan and the transportation improvement program (TIP) comply with Title VI.
- Identify residential, employment, and transportation patterns of low-income and minority populations so that their needs can be identified 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.”

To address the environmental justice requirement for the Central Lane MPO, baseline data was prepared using 2000 Census data by place of residence. The geographic unit of analysis was census block groups which are aggregations of census blocks. Both minority population and low income population concentrations were identified and maps were created identifying block groups in which there was a concentration.

Minority Population

The data on race were derived from answers to the question on race that was asked of all people. The concept of race, as used by the Census Bureau, reflects self-identification by people according to the race or races with which they most closely identify. The data on the Hispanic or Latino population was also self-identified. A person of Hispanic origin can be of any race.

For this analysis, minority population was defined as persons who identified themselves as Non-White or as Hispanic (including White Hispanic) on the 2000 Census questionnaire. Nationally, 30.9 percent of the population identified themselves as Non-White or Hispanic while statewide this percentage was 16.5 percent. For all Lane County, 11.4 percent of the population fell within the minority population. Within the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), this percentage was estimated at 13 percent.



Source: 2000 Census Data

Chart 1 indicates the following:

- The largest Non-White racial group in the Central Lane MPO was Asian which comprised 2.5 percent of the population.
- The percentage of persons who identified themselves as being of two or more races was higher for Lane County and the MPO than the state and nation.

- The Hispanic population was a larger percentage than any Non-White racial group making up 5 percent of the MPO population.
- Approximately 64 percent of the estimated TMA minority population resided within the City of Eugene while 23 percent resided within the City of Springfield and 0.3 percent within Coburg.

The results of this analysis indicated, there were 50 census block groups in which the minority population was above the regional percentage (14 percent). There were nine block groups where the minority population was 25 percent or more of the total block group population. These block groups tended to be associated with the University of Oregon or within the Whitaker Neighborhood.

Low Income Population

Low income was defined as persons living at or below the 1999 poverty level based on 2000 Census data. To determine a person's poverty status, the person's total family income is compared with the poverty threshold appropriate for that person's family size and composition. If the total income of that person's family is less than the threshold appropriate for that family, then the person is considered poor, together with every member of his or her family. If a person is not living with anyone related by birth, marriage, or adoption, then the person's own income is compared with his or her poverty threshold.

Poverty status was determined for all people except institutionalized people, people in military group quarters, people in college dormitories, and unrelated individuals under 15 years old. These groups also were excluded from the numerator and denominator when calculating poverty rates. Thus, there is no information on poverty for the block group in which the University of Oregon resides.

As shown on Table 1, at the national level, 12.4 percent of the population was living at or below poverty while at the state level the percentage was 11.6. For Lane County, 14.4 percent of the population was living at or below the poverty level. For the Central Lane MPO area, this figure was 15.4 percent. Approximately 64 percent of these persons living at or below poverty lived in Eugene, 26 percent were within Springfield and 0.2 percent within Coburg.

Table 1	
Poverty Status in 1999	
Area	Percentage of Persons Living in Poverty
U.S.	12.4
Oregon	11.6
Lane	14.4
MPO	15.4

Source: 2000 Census Data

There were 66 block groups where the concentration of persons living at or below the poverty level was above the regional percentage (15.4 percent). There were 34 block groups where 25 percent or more of the population was living in poverty. These block groups were generally located in the urban core. Block groups with the highest percentages are associated with the University of Oregon.