

Bloomington/ Monroe County Metropolitan Planning Organization Environmental Justice Policy Statement

Introduction to Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all citizens – regardless of race, ethnicity, income or education level – in promoting equitable decision-making on the protection of human health and the environment. The 1994 Presidential Executive Order (EO 12898) directed every Federal agency to make environmental justice a part of its mission by identifying and addressing the effects of all policies, programs and projects on Environmental Justice populations (minority/low income).

Bloomington/Monroe County Metropolitan Planning Organization's Commitment

The Bloomington/Monroe County MPO is committed to the development of equitable programs and policies that avoid disproportionately negative effects on minority and/or low-income populations, as well as expediting the distribution of benefits from these projects. The MPO also works continuously to ensure the full and fair participation of all affected communities in the transportation planning process. The Bloomington/Monroe County MPO is committed to providing an equitable distribution of transportation infrastructure affecting public and environmental health, and to the development of a just public transit system.

Strategic Plan

The Bloomington/Monroe County MPO formally adopts the following key principles to integrate Environmental Justice into the MPO's planning activities.

Making Environmental Justice a Priority

The Bloomington/Monroe County MPO is committed to following the spirit, as well as the letter of EO 12898, throughout all of its planning activities. The MPO will require that all Bloomington/Monroe County transportation planning partners do so as well.

Increasing meaningful Public Participation

The Bloomington/Monroe County MPO will continuously work to develop public participation that is:

- Inclusive - involving the broadest possible cross-section of the community
- Appropriate - tailored to the diverse needs of the community
- Empowering - providing opportunities for stakeholders to have input into the decision making process
- Timely - giving the public opportunities for input at several points in the project development process

Maintaining Project Flexibility

In interacting with communities through Environmental Justice initiatives, the MPO will work to present a broad range of alternatives, and will encourage community input in all planning activities.

Promoting Project Equity

In developing programs and policies, the Bloomington/Monroe County MPO will work continuously to balance the benefits and negative results of transportation projects in all communities.

Utilizing Rigorous Demographic Analysis

In order to address potential Environmental Justice issues, minority/and or low-income populations must be accurately identified. The Bloomington/Monroe County MPO will accomplish this by:

- Using the most current demographic data possible
- Utilizing appropriate software and hardware to gather and analyze community information

Developing Effective Conflict Resolution Methods

If conflicting interests and issues arise during a project, an appropriate resolution process will be developed. This process will be:

- Respectful to the desires and wishes of stakeholders and communities
- Flexible in nature, and designed to address the specific needs of affected communities