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# Equity Assessment

FFY 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program

An assessment of the distribution of project funding in the Capitol Region prepared in accordance with CRCOG's policy on Environmental Justice.

*Presented to the CRCOG Transportation Committee (Acting on behalf of the Policy Board) as part of the FFY2018-2021 TIP: July 24, 2017*

July 2017

This equity assessment is prepared in accordance with CRCOG's Environmental Justice Policy. The assessment of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)<sup>1</sup> is just one of several different assessments that CRCOG conducts to determine whether minority and low-income communities are receiving a fair share of funding and/or benefits from our transportation programs. ***The basic conclusion of this assessment is that there does not appear to be any bias in the distribution of transportation funds and projects in the TIP.***

The assessment technique we use for the TIP is a simplified methodology that reflects the short-term nature of the TIP. Because it is a 4-year programming document, the list of projects varies significantly from year to year. Changes occur because new projects are added, old projects are deleted, projects enter new phases (design, right-of-way acquisition, construction), and project schedules are modified. This variability means that any single TIP assessment might not yield a good picture of how benefits will be distributed over the longer term. It excludes many major projects that are planned but not yet programmed. It also excludes projects that are already completed - even if they were completed just one or two years earlier.

***The basic conclusion of this assessment is that there does not appear to be any bias in the distribution of transportation funds and projects in the TIP.***

Given the TIP's variability, the geographic distribution of projects also varies significantly from year to year. Thus, the basic TIP assessment only provides a single 'snap shot' in time of how investments are distributed between target and non-target areas. Since we are more concerned about the distribution of investments over the longer term, we also monitor trends in the TIP over a multi-year period. This monitoring allows us to determine trends in how the balance of funding shifts over time between target and non-target areas.

***... our goal is to ensure an equitable process that does not result in a distribution of benefits that is discriminatory.***

There is a risk that some might see the TIP assessment process as guaranteeing a minimum funding level for target areas. This is not the intention. Our goal in measuring investments is not

to guarantee proportional funding for target areas, nor to create a sense of entitlement to that funding. Rather, our goal is to ensure an equitable process that does not result in a distribution of benefits that is discriminatory.

## Definitions

For this equity assessment, we identified neighborhoods where there are large concentrations of low-income or minority populations. These are referred to as 'target areas' for purposes of the analysis. The criteria for defining the target areas were approved by CRCOG's Environmental Justice Advisory Board (EJAB) in November 2003.<sup>2</sup> The EJAB was formed in 2002 as a steering group for CRCOG's Environmental Justice Challenge Grant. Work undertaken with the grant

<sup>1</sup> The Transportation Improvement Program, or TIP, is the list of projects expected to be funded in the next four years. It is one of several important transportation planning documents such as the long-range Regional Transportation Plan, corridor studies, and major investment studies.

<sup>2</sup> The EJAB was formed in 2002 as a steering group for CRCOG's Environmental Justice Challenge Grant. Work undertaken with the grant included reaching out to minority and low income residents and resulted in the development of an EJ Action Plan to assure that EJ concerns and issues are considered throughout the Capitol Region transportation planning process. The EJAB eventually gave way to similar work with the Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice.

included reaching out to minority and low income residents and resulted in the development of an EJ Action Plan to ensure that EJ concerns and issues are considered throughout the Capitol Region transportation planning process. The target areas are defined below.

***Primary target area:***

The primary target area is composed of neighborhoods (Census Block Groups) where at least 50 percent of the population is a member of a minority group.

***Secondary target area:***

The secondary target area is composed of neighborhoods (Census Tracts) where at least 20 percent of the population is classified as low-income.

Figure 3 shows the map of the target areas. This map is based on 2010 Census data and the American Community Survey (ACS) 2011-2015 estimated data.

***Combined target area:***

For purposes of the TIP assessment, the primary and secondary target areas are combined into a single target area, which is referred to as “the target area”.

***Funding share guideline: 32.3 percent***

Approximately 32.3 percent of the region’s population lives inside the target area. This proportion serves as a general benchmark or guideline for the equity assessment. If 32.3 percent of the region’s population lives in the target area, then we expect that about 32.3 percent of the region’s transportation funds are spent in the target area. While this might not be the case for any single TIP, we expect that over the long term the distribution of funds should be roughly proportionate to the distribution of the population.

## **Assessment Method**

*Highway Projects.* The first step in the assessment is to map the projects in the TIP using the regional GIS or geographic information system. The results of the mapping process are presented in Figure 3 at the end of this report.

Once the projects are mapped, the GIS system can be used to determine which projects are located within the target area (and what proportion of a project is within a target area) and which projects are outside the target area. Since we know how much each project costs, we can then calculate the total funds to be invested in the target area and the total outside the target area. Doing this for highway projects, we determined that **55.4 percent of highway funds in this TIP are being spent in the target area.**

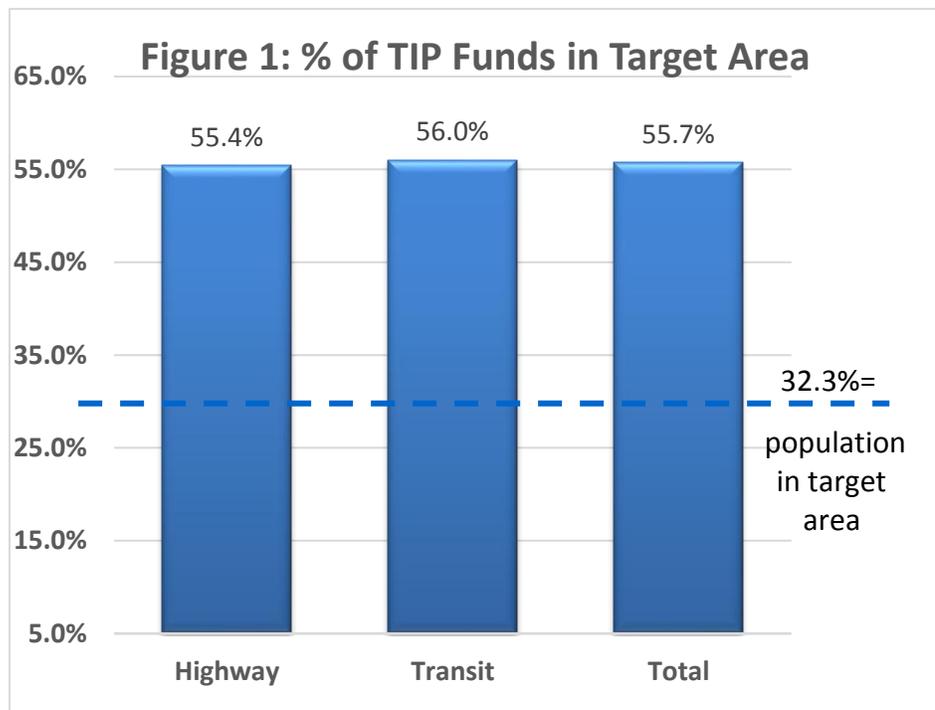
*Transit Projects.* For most transit projects, a slightly different method is used. The method still uses the regional GIS system to assess the distribution of funds, but is based on the known *service areas* of the different transit systems. For example, about 69 percent of the CT *transit* Hartford Division services are within the target area, so we attribute 69 percent of the CT *transit*

costs to the target area.<sup>3</sup> We do a similar estimate for other service providers such as the Greater Hartford Transit District, and apply the respective percentages to the various projects listed in the TIP. Using a similar analysis for all transit projects, we estimate **the percentage of all transit projects and services that fall within the target area is 56.0 percent.**

*Statewide Projects.* The Capitol Region TIP also contains numerous projects that are statewide and largely fall outside our region. These projects represent a total of about \$194.8 million in the FFY2018-2021 TIP, which is about 14.6 percent of the total. There is no way to assess the distribution of these projects since their locations are often unknown and our target area is defined only for our region. Therefore, these projects are excluded from the analysis.

### Conclusion for this TIP: *No bias in distribution of funds*

Based on the results of the equity assessment, there does not appear to be any bias in distribution of transportation funds and projects in the TIP. As detailed in Table 1 and illustrated in Figure 1, about 55.4% of highway and 56.0% of transit funds are being invested in the target area. This equates to 55.77% of total funding, whereas only 32.3% of the region's population live in the target area. Therefore, CRCOG is investing a higher proportion of our transportation funds in the target area than would be expected based on the size of the population in that area.



<sup>3</sup> Local routes: Local routes comprise 83 percent of all CT **transit** Hartford Division route miles. About 69 percent of these *local* routes are within the target area. Commuter routes: Commuter routes comprise the other 17 percent of the CT **transit** route miles. Since the commuter routes *primarily* serve areas outside the target area, only about 10 percent (10%) of the commuter routes are inside the target area. Total Share inside Target Area: To calculate the total share of the CT **transit** system serving the target area, we multiplied the local route share of route miles (85%) times the share of local routes within the target area (69%), and 10 percent of commuter routes (17% of the total) was added to the target area. The estimated share of CT **transit** services within the target area is 58.7 percent.

Table 1: Equity Assessment for FY2018-2021 TIP

**A. Highway Projects**

<b>Fund Committed</b>	<b>% of Funds</b>	<b>% of Population</b>	
\$ 265,519,519	<b>55.4%</b>	<b>32.3%</b>	<b>Inside Target Area</b>
\$ 213,526,563	44.6%	<b>67.7%</b>	<b>Outside Target Area</b>
<b>\$ 479,046,082</b>	<b>100.0%</b>		

**B. Transit Projects**

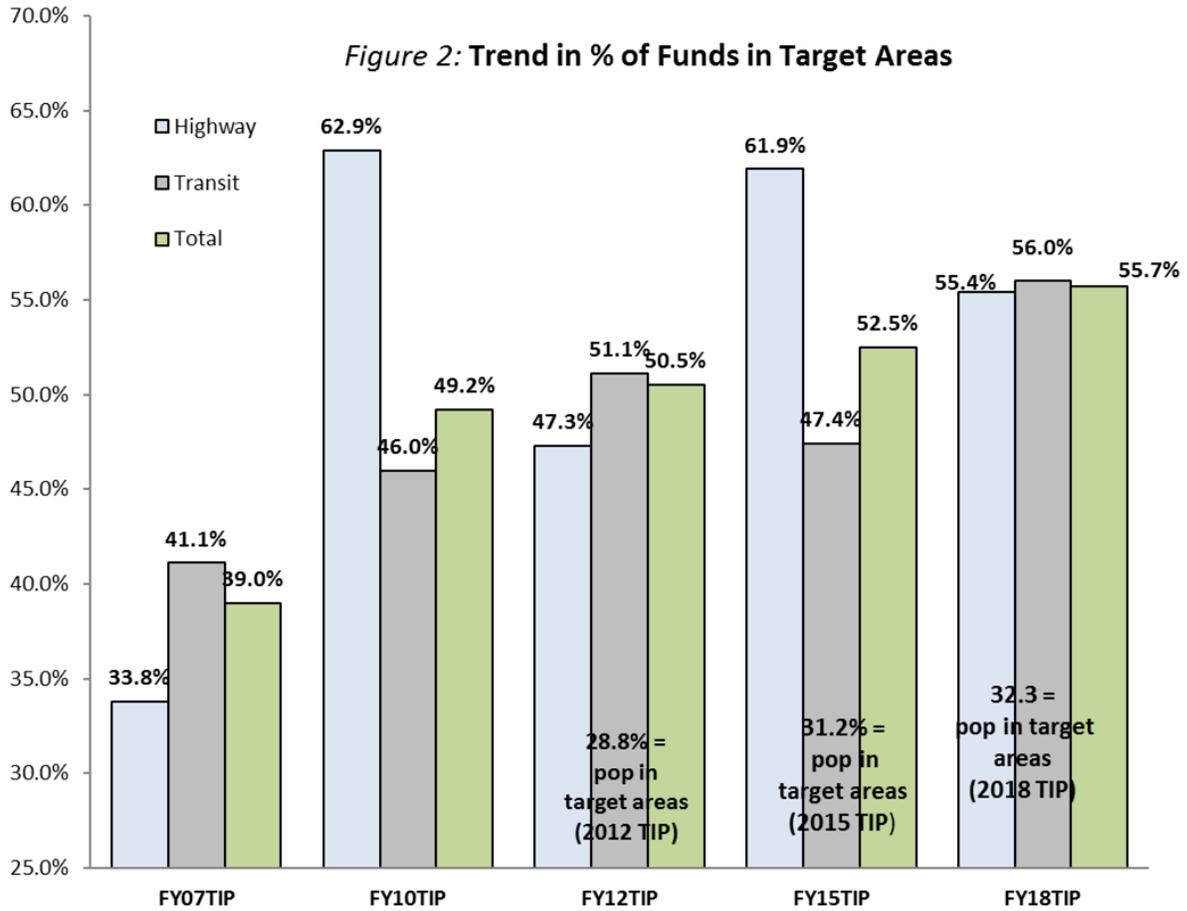
<b>Fund Committed</b>	<b>% of Funds</b>	<b>% of Population</b>	
\$ 258,381,055	<b>56.0%</b>	<b>32.3%</b>	<b>Inside Target Area</b>
\$ 203,091,404	44.0%	<b>67.7%</b>	<b>Outside Target Area</b>
<b>\$ 461,472,459</b>	<b>100.0%</b>		

**C. Highway & Transit Projects**

<b>Fund Committed</b>	<b>% of Funds</b>	<b>% of Population</b>	
\$ 523,900,574	<b>55.7%</b>	<b>32.3%</b>	<b>Inside Target Area</b>
\$ 416,617,967	44.3%	<b>67.7%</b>	<b>Outside Target Area</b>
<b>\$ 940,518,541</b>	<b>100.0%</b>		

**Conclusion about Longer Term Trend**

As mentioned previously, the four-year TIP is only a snap shot of projects programmed for a specific time period. Figure 2 shows a consistent trend of equitable investment in the target area when compared to the percentage of people living in that area.



Current analysis shows that 32.3 percent of residents live within the target area in 2017 vs 31.2 percent in FY2015. This increase can be attributed to changes in demographic and socio-economic conditions as well as the change in CROG’s regional boundary that was implemented in 2015. When compared to the previous TIP and the new TIP, the highway “share” slightly dropped to 55.4 percent while the transit “share” rose to 56.0 percent. Over the long term, there continues to be no bias in the distribution of transportation funds and projects listed in the TIP.

Figure 3: Environmental Justice Target Areas and TIP Projects

