
Equity Assessment

FFY 2021-2024 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.

October 28, 2020

This equity assessment is prepared in accordance with CRCOG's Environmental Justice Policy. The assessment of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)¹ 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 its transportation programs. ***The 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 CRCOG uses 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. The TIP excludes major projects that are planned but not yet programmed. It also excludes projects that are already completed - even if they were completed very recently.

The 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 snapshot in time of how investments are distributed between target and non-target areas. Since the distribution of investments over the longer term are more important, this assessment also looks at trends in the TIP over a multi-year period. This monitoring identifies trends in how the balance of funding shifts over time between target and non-target areas.

CRCOG's 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. CRCOG's goal in measuring investments is not to

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

Definitions

This equity assessment 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 2003.² 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

¹ 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 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and corridor studies.

² The EJAB eventually gave way to similar work with the Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice, which in late 2019 became the Connecticut Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice.

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% 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% 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) 2014-2018 5 year 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: 30.5%

Approximately 30.5% of the region’s population lives inside the target area. This proportion serves as a general benchmark or guideline for the equity assessment. If 30.5% of the region’s population lives in the target area, then about 30.5% of the region’s transportation funds are expected to be spent in the target area. While this might not be the case for any single TIP, 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.

Once the projects are mapped, the GIS system is 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. Based on this, the total funds to be invested in the target area and the total outside the target area are calculated. The finding for highway projects is that **26.7% 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 this distribution is based on the known *service areas* of the different transit systems. For example, about 48% of the CT *transit* Hartford Division services are within the target area, so 48% of the CT *transit* costs in the TIP are attributed to the target area.³ Using a similar methodology for all transit providers

³ Local routes comprise 85.4% of all CT *transit* Hartford Division route miles. About 48% of these local routes are within the target area. Commuter routes comprise the other 14.5% of the CT *transit* route miles. Since the commuter routes *primarily* serve areas outside the target area, no service area is considered inside the target area. The Total Share inside Target Area is calculated by multiplying the local route share of route miles (85.4%) times the share of local routes within the target area (48%). The estimated share of CT *transit* services within the target area is 40.9%.

in the Capitol Region and all transit projects in the TIP, **37.7% of transit funds in this TIP are being spent in the target area.**

Statewide and District Projects. The Capitol Region TIP also contains numerous projects that are multi-district or statewide. These projects represent a total of about \$561.2 million in the FFY2021-2024 TIP, which is about 55.8% of the total. There is no way to assess the distribution of these projects since it is challenging to identify what percentage of a given project falls within the Capitol Region. Therefore, these projects are excluded from the analysis, though their partial location within the Capitol Region does benefit CRCOG's residents.

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 the distribution of transportation funds and projects in CRCOG's FFY2021-2024 TIP. As detailed in Table 1 and illustrated in Figure 1, 26.7% of highway funds and 44.1% of transit funds are being invested in the target area. This equates to 37.7% of total funding, whereas only 30.5% of the region's population lives in the target area. Therefore, CRCOG is investing a higher proportion of transportation funds in the target area than would be expected based on the size of the population in that area.

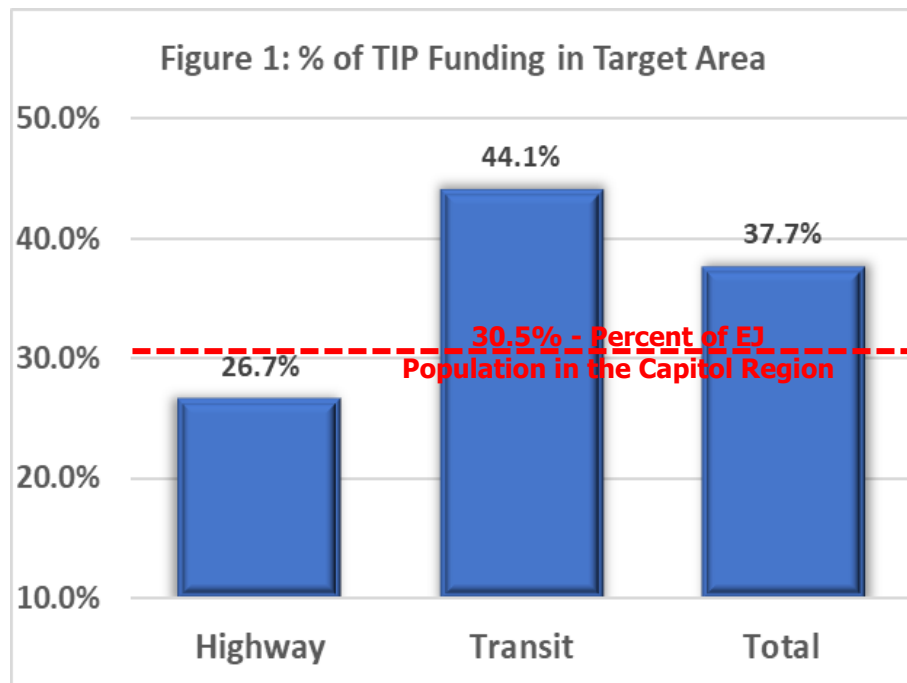


Table 1: Equity Assessment for FFY2021-2024 TIP⁴**A. Highway Projects**

| Funds Committed | % of Funds | % of Population | |
|------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| \$ 29,606,125 | 26.7% | 30.5% | Inside Target Area |
| \$ 81,229,540 | 73.3% | 69.5% | Outside Target Area |
| \$ 110,835,665 | 100.0% | | |

B. Transit Projects

| Funds Committed | % of Funds | % of Population | |
|------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| \$ 83,317,571 | 44.1% | 30.5% | Inside Target Area |
| \$ 105,616,461 | 55.9% | 69.5% | Outside Target Area |
| \$ 188,934,032 | 100.0% | | |

C. Highway & Transit Projects

| Funds Committed | % of Funds | % of Population | |
|------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| \$ 112,923,697 | 37.7% | 30.5% | Inside Target Area |
| \$ 186,846,001 | 62.3% | 69.5% | Outside Target Area |
| \$ 299,769,697 | 100.0% | | |

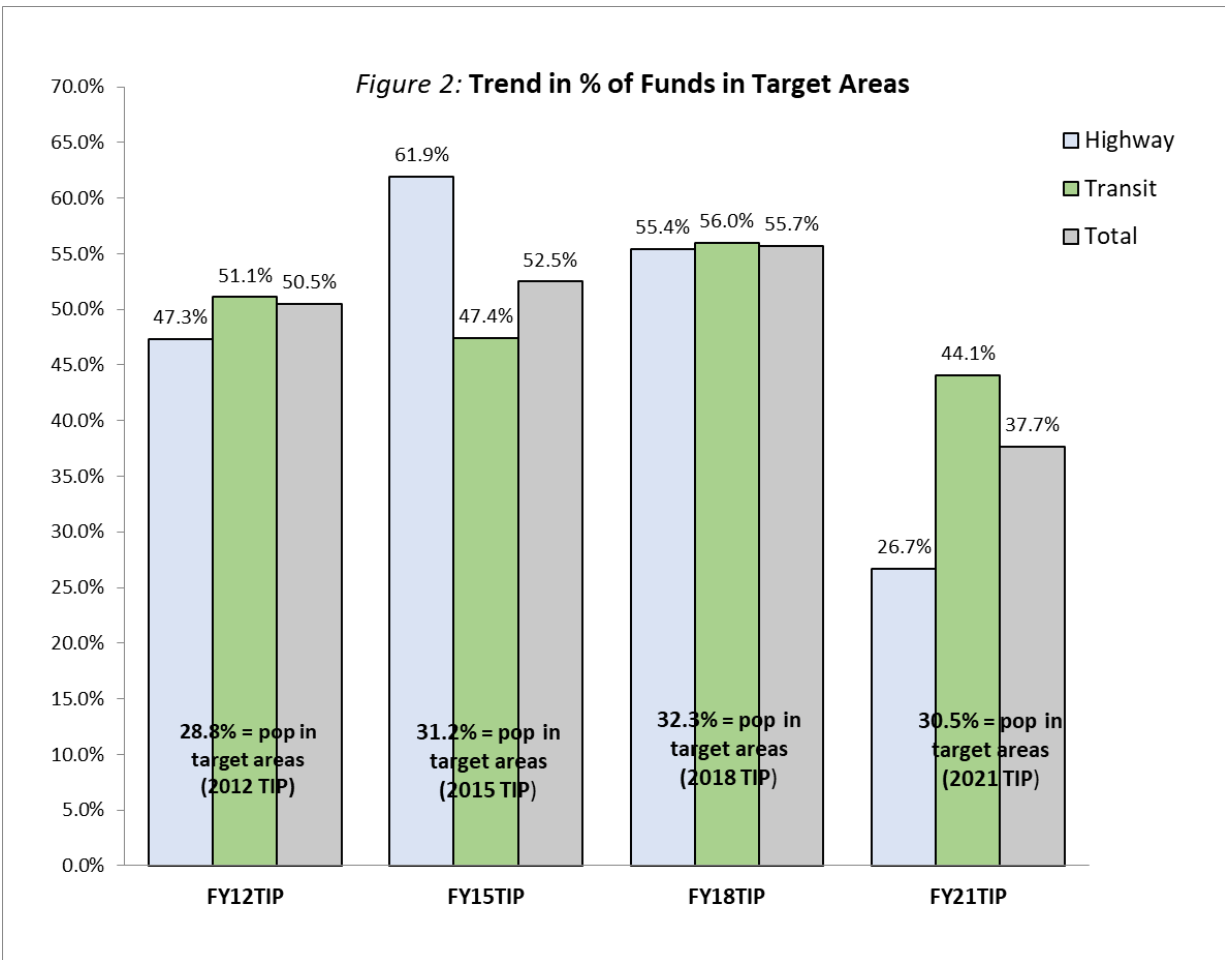
D. District & Statewide Projects

| Funds Committed | % of Funds |
|------------------------|---|
| \$ 561,157,888 | Majority of district level funding in District 1 falls in the Capitol Region. Portion of funding for Statewide and other district level projects also benefit the Capitol Region. |

Conclusion about Longer Term Trend

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

⁴ Note: The funding total identified in this table is less than the total shown in the TIP. The Equity Assessment only considers funding that is applicable to the Capitol Region, not the statewide amounts. For example, transit funds that are for statewide operation are shown in full in the TIP but are only partially considered within the Equity Assessment.



Current analysis shows that 30.5% of residents live within the target area in 2020 versus 32.5% in FY2018. This decrease is mainly due to a lower percentage of poverty reported in the recent American Community Survey data. Although the FFY2021-2024 investment in the region as well as in the target area look smaller when compared to the previous TIP, this is possibly due to not being able to quantify district level projects, the majority of which fall in the Capitol Region. Similarly, large investment capital projects such as CT *fastrak* and CT *rail* Hartford Line have been completed and only received operational funding in the current TIP. Over the long term, there continues to be no bias in the distribution of transportation funds and projects listed in CRCOG's Transportation Improvement Program.

Figure 3: Environmental Justice Target Areas and TIP Projects

