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# Equity Assessment

## FFY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program

An assessment of the distribution of project funding in the Capitol Region  
prepared in accordance with CRCOG's Public Participation Plan

**April 3, 2024**

## Introduction

The Equity Assessment of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)<sup>1</sup> is conducted by the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) to determine whether disadvantaged communities are receiving a fair share of funding and/or benefits from CRCOG's transportation program. This assessment is prepared in accordance with CRCOG's Public Participation Plan. ***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 four-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 complete 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 TIP assessment only provides a snapshot in time of how investments are distributed between target and non-target areas. Since the distribution of investments over the longer term is 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.

This assessment is not a guarantee of minimum funding for the target area. CRCOG's goal in measuring investments is not to guarantee proportional funding for target area, 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 utilizes the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool \(CEJST\)](#), an interactive mapping tool developed under the Federal government's Justice40 Initiative to identify disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by historic underinvestment and overburdening. The Justice40 Initiative aims to ensure equitable distribution of benefits from funding programs in these disadvantaged communities. CRCOG has used the CEJST to identify the disadvantaged communities in the region in order to comply with the initiative and understand how CRCOG's programs and projects are benefiting the federally designated disadvantaged communities.

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<sup>1</sup> The Transportation Improvement Program, or TIP, is the list of projects expected to receive federal funding in the next four years. It is one of CRCOG's core transportation planning documents.

Although the mapping methodology for this assessment is different from the previous assessments, the purpose of every assessment is to ensure an equitable process that does not result in a distribution of benefits that is discriminatory.

The CEJST uses datasets as indicators of burdens. The burdens are organized into categories. A community is highlighted as disadvantaged by the CEJST if it is in a Census tract that is (1) at or above the threshold for one or more environmental, climate, or other burdens and (2) at or above the threshold for an associated socioeconomic burden. In addition, a Census tract that is completely surrounded by disadvantaged communities and is at or above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile for low income is also considered disadvantaged.<sup>2</sup>

***Disadvantaged Target Area:***

For purposes of the TIP Equity Assessment, disadvantaged communities are referred to as “the target area.”

***Funding Share Guideline: 19.7%***

Approximately 19.7% of the region’s population lives inside the target area. This proportion serves as a general benchmark or guideline for the Equity Assessment. If 19.7% of the region’s population lives in the target area, then at least 19.7% 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 distribution of funds should be roughly proportionate to the distribution of the population. Although the Justice40 Initiative sets the goal of at least 40% of the benefits from certain federal investments being realized in disadvantaged communities, many states and communities have higher concentrations of disadvantaged communities than are found in the Capitol Region. CROCOG, however, continues to strive to allot a higher proportion of its transportation funding to disadvantaged communities in comparison to the proportion of the population living in those areas.

## **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 2. Once the projects are mapped, analysis is run 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 **34.9% of highway funds in the FFY2025-2028 TIP are being spent in the target area.**

### ***Transit and Bicycle/Pedestrian Projects***

The same methodology that is used for highway projects is applied to bicycle and pedestrian (bike/ped) projects. For most transit projects, a slightly different methodology is used. The method still uses the regional GIS to assess the distribution of funds, but this

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<sup>2</sup> Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool Methodology: <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/methodology>

distribution is based on the known *service areas* of the transit systems that operate in the Capitol Region. For example, about 43% of the CTtransit Hartford Division services are within the target area, so 43% of the CTtransit funding in the TIP is attributed to the target area.<sup>3</sup> Based on these analyses, **37.2% of transit and bike/ped funds in the FFY2025-2028 TIP are being spent in the target area.**

### ***Statewide and District Projects***

The Capitol Region TIP also contains numerous highway and some transit projects that are assigned to a district, multiple districts, or statewide. These projects represent a total of about \$446 million in the FFY2025-2028 TIP, which is about 44.9% 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 CROCOG's residents.

## **Funding Trends**

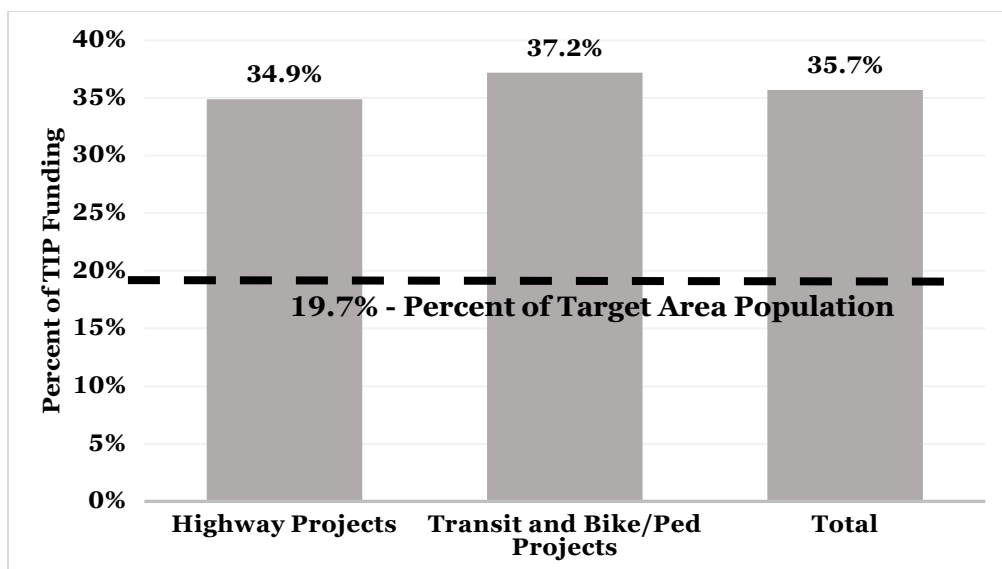
Historically, CROCOG developed and used its own methodology to define target areas and assess the equity in investment in those areas. Based on the last four TIP cycles that utilized CROCOG's methodology, investment in the target areas ranged from 37.7% to 55.7%, consistently higher than the proportion of the target area population which ranged from 28.8% to 32.3% during this period. With the launch of the federal Justice40 Initiative, CROCOG has transitioned to using the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) to assess transportation funding investment in the disadvantaged communities identified in this tool. As noted previously, the FFY2025-2028 TIP allocated 35.7% of funding to the target area when 19.7% of the region's population lives within the target area. Over the long term, there continues to be no bias in the distribution of transportation funds and projects in CROCOG's Transportation Improvement Program.

## **Conclusion**

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 CROCOG's FFY2025-2028 TIP. As illustrated in Figure 1 and detailed in Table 1, 34.9% of highway funds and 37.2% of transit and bike/ped funds are being invested in the target area. This equates to 35.7% of total funding, whereas only 19.7% of the region's population lives in the target area. Therefore, CROCOG 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. Based on this analysis, the FFY2025-2028 TIP is close to meeting the goal set forth in the Justice40 Initiative despite having a considerably lower percentage of disadvantaged populations than the national average. CROCOG will continue to work with CTDOT to ensure that funding is allocated to transportation projects that benefit disadvantaged communities with the goal of achieving 40% of federal funding dedicated to these populations.

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<sup>3</sup> Local routes comprise 92% of all CTtransit Hartford Division route miles. About 43% of these local route stops are within the quarter mile target area. Commuter routes comprise the other 8% of the CTtransit 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 (92%) times the share of local routes within the target area (43%).



**Figure 1: Proportion of Funding in Target Area**

**Table 1: Equity Assessment for FFY2021-2024 TIP<sup>4</sup>**

<b>Highway Projects</b>			
<b>Funds Committed</b>	<b>% of Funds</b>	<b>% of Population</b>	
\$ 118,978,000	34.9%	19.7%	<b>Inside Target Area</b>
\$ 221,508,800	65.1%	79.3%	<b>Outside Target Area</b>
<b>\$ 340,486,800</b>	<b>100.0%</b>		
<b>Transit and Bike/Ped Projects</b>			
<b>Funds Committed</b>	<b>% of Funds</b>	<b>% of Population</b>	
\$ 60,190,826	37.2%	19.7%	<b>Inside Target Area</b>
\$ 101,712,485	62.8%	79.3%	<b>Outside Target Area</b>
<b>\$ 161,903,312</b>	<b>100.0%</b>		
<b>Highway, Transit, and Bike/Ped Projects Combined</b>			
<b>Funds Committed</b>	<b>% of Funds</b>	<b>% of Population</b>	
\$ 179,168,826	35.7%	19.7%	<b>Inside Target Area</b>
\$ 323,221,285	64.3%	79.3%	<b>Outside Target Area</b>
<b>\$ 502,390,112</b>	<b>100.0%</b>		
<b>District &amp; Statewide Projects</b>			
<b>Funds Committed</b>	<b>% of Funds</b>		
<b>\$ 446,005,781</b>		The majority of district-level funding in District 1 falls in the Capitol Region. A portion of funding for Statewide and other district-level projects also benefit the Capitol Region.	

<sup>4</sup> 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.



Figure 2: Disadvantaged Communities (Target Area) in the Capitol Region

