Equity and Environmental Justice

• Environmental Justice is fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people

• Fair treatment means no group bears disproportionate share of negative consequences of federal action or investment

• Federal mandate for EJ comes from Executive Order 12898
  • Focus on people of color and with low incomes

• Other federal laws also guide assessment of equity such as the Civil Rights Act or Americans with Disabilities Act
Identifying Equity Emphasis Areas

• Six indicators of potential disadvantage
  • People of Color
  • People in Poverty
  • People with Limited English Proficiency
  • Older Adults (65+)
  • People with Disabilities
  • Zero-Car Households

• Broken into primary and secondary indicators based on regional characteristics and federal environmental justice requirements
Identifying Equity Emphasis Areas

• For each census tract, indicator given a score of 0 – 3
  • 0 –> Indicator measure at or below regional average
  • 1 –> up to 1 standard deviation above regional average
  • 2 –> up to 2 standard deviations above regional average
  • 3 –> 2 or more standard deviations above regional average

• Multiplier applied to weigh primary factors more heavily
  • 1.5 for primary
  • 0.5 for secondary

• Weighted indicator scores summed for overall score, 3 or more indicates community of concern
Measuring Impacts of Plan

• Evaluation for ConnectRVA 2045 is a regionwide analysis
• Individual projects also go through another project-level EJ analysis as part of NEPA process
• Evaluate burdens and benefits of slate of investments for equity emphasis areas (EEA) and non-EEA areas
  • Equity in Planned Investments
  • Equity in Access
Equity in Planned Investments

• Compares number of projects and cost of projects that serve at least one equity emphasis area and those that do not

• Limited to projects in the constrained budget and programmatic bridge rehabilitation projects (excludes committed and private/local projects)

• Uses same standardized tiers and buffers used in project evaluation (Tier 1: 0.5 miles, Tier 2: 1 mile, Tier 3: 2 miles)

• Purpose it to ensure proposed investments are fairly distributed throughout the region
Equity in Planned Investments

Number of Projects Serving EEA

- 117, 56%
- 93, 44%

Value of Projects Serving EEA

- $3.04B, 52%
- $2.78B, 48%
Equity in Access

• On-going evaluation
• Quantifies benefits of entire set of investments with respect to accessibility to destinations for different groups of people
• Multimodal analysis (auto, transit, bike, walk)