

2019 – 2022
NORTHWEST
RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Northwest Rural Planning Organization Environmental Justice Analysis

The public involvement efforts for the Department of Transportation are guided by several federal mandates to ensure nondiscrimination in federally funded activities. These mandates are designed so that planning and public involvement activities are conducted equitably and in consideration of all citizens, regardless of race, nationality, sex, age, ability, language spoken, or economic status. These mandates include:

- **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964** – Title VI of the Civil Rights Act states that “No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” PennDOT and its partners are committed to providing open and inclusive access to the transportation decision-making process for all persons, regardless of race, color or national origin.
- **Executive Order on Environmental Justice (Executive Order 12898 February 11, 1994)** – Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. PennDOT and its partners are committed to providing opportunities for full and fair participation by minority and low-income communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** – The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 stipulates involving persons with disabilities in the development and improvement of services. Sites of public involvement activities as well as the information presented must be accessible to persons with disabilities. PennDOT and its partners are committed to providing full access to public involvement programs and information for persons with disabilities. All public meetings are held in ADA-accessible locations. With advance notice, special provisions can be made for hearing-impaired or visually-impaired participants.
- **Executive Order on Limited English Proficiency** – Executive Order 13166, “Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency,” was signed on August 11, 2000. Recipients of federal funding “are required to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to programs and activities by LEP person.” PennDOT and its partners will make special arrangements for the provision of interpretative services upon request.

A statistical analysis of Clarion, Crawford, Forest, Venango, and Warren Counties, which make up the Northwest Rural Planning Organization (RPO), was performed to determine thresholds of population, minority population, and low-income population. Varying resources will be utilized to provide information about proposed projects to all residents including those identified target audiences and to receive input from them. If necessary, project alternatives will be developed to prevent disproportionately high or adverse effects on any identified minority or low-income populations. An anomaly, the 2009 construction of a state correctional institution in Forest County was identified and should be considered in the analysis of the statistics for the RPO.

The total estimated population in the Northwest five county RPO area decreased by nearly 3.5% which is opposite of the 3.7% growth experienced in the Commonwealth. (Appendix A)

Within the Northwest, the share of the dependent population of those under age 18 declined by 3.5% while those older than 65 increased by 2.1%. It is important to note that the population between the ages of 45 and 64 grew by 5.1%. Over the next twenty years this population group will be shifting to the over 65 demographic. Proper planning needs to occur to effectively serve the growing demands that the increase in the dependent population over 65 will place on the transportation system. (Appendix B)

Minority population is defined as any readily identifiable group of Black, Hispanic, Asian American, American Indian, and Alaskan Native who live in geographic proximity and who would be similarly affected by a proposed FHWA program, policy, or activity. Based on the 2010-2014 American Community Survey (ACS) Data, the average minority population rate in the Northwest RPO counties is 4.8%. This average has increased over the last ten years largely due to the construction of the state correctional institution in Forest County where the minority population has grown from 4.6% to 31%. To reflect an average that would be more relevant to the five county region, Forest County was removed from the calculation to arrive at an average of 3.65% for the remaining four counties. (Appendix B)

Those municipalities with a minority population of 3.65% or greater will receive either an electronic or hard copy draft of the 2019-2022 Transportation Improvement Program for public display in their municipality. Those municipalities include: Clarion Borough, Clarion Township, Knox Borough, Monroe Township, Paint Township, Piney Township, Richland Township, St. Petersburg Borough, Shippenville Borough, and Strattanville Borough in Clarion County; Cambridge Springs Borough, Centerville Borough, Cochranon Borough, Conneaut Lake Borough, East Mead Township, the City of Meadville, Randolph Township, Rome Township, Saegertown Borough, Spartansburg Borough, Springboro Borough, the City of Titusville, Union Township, Venango Township, Vernon Township, West Fallowfield Township, and West Mead Township in Crawford County; Green

Township, Howe Township, Jenks Township, Tionesta Borough, and Tionesta Township in Forest County; Barkeyville Borough, Emlenton Borough, the City of Franklin, Oakland Township, the City of Oil City, Pleasantville Borough, Polk Borough, Rockland Township, Sandycreek Township, and Utica Borough in Venango County; and Bear Lake Borough, Brokenstraw Township, Cherry Grove Township, Columbus Township, Limestone Township, Sugar Creek Township, Sugar Grove Borough, Triumph Township, Watson Township and Youngsville Borough in Warren County. (Appendix C)

Native American Tribes who maintain cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition are considered an identified minority population. The Absentee-Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, the Delaware Tribe, the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, the Seneca Nation of Indians, the Seneca-Cayuga Tribe of Oklahoma, the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, the Shawnee Tribe, and the Tonawanda Seneca Nation all having interests in any and/or all of the RPO five county geographic area, will receive either an electronic or hard copy draft of the 2019-2022 Transportation Improvement Program for review and comment.

The low-income population is defined as any readily identifiable group of persons at or below the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines who live in a geographic proximity who would be similarly affected by a proposed FHWA program, policy, or activity. The average poverty rate based on the status of all ages in the 2010-2014 ACS Data for the RPO counties is 15.8% but the commonwealths statewide rate is 13.5%. Therefore, municipalities with a poverty rate of 13.5% or greater are identified as a target audience. Those municipalities include: Brady Township, Callensburg Borough, Clarion Borough, Clarion Township, East Brady Borough, Hawthorn Borough, Monroe Township, New Bethlehem Borough, Paint Township, Redbank Township, Salem Township, Sligo Borough, Strattanville Borough, and Washington Township in Clarion County; Beaver Township, Centerville Borough, Conneaut Township, Conneautville Borough, East Fairfield Township, East Fallowfield Township, the City of Meadville, North Shenango Township, Randolph Township, Rockdale Township, Rome Township, South Shenango Township, Sparta Township, Springboro Borough, Steuben Township, the City of Titusville, West Shenango Township, and Woodcock Borough in Crawford County; Green Township, Harmony Township, Howe Township, Jenks Township, Kingsley Township, and Tionesta Township in Forest County; Allegheny Township, Barkeyville Borough, Clinton Township, Clintonville Borough, Emlenton Borough, the City of Franklin, Frenchcreek Township, the City of Oil City, Pleasantville Borough, Polk Borough, Rouseville Borough, and Sugarcreek Borough in Venango County; Brokenstraw Township, Cherry Grove Township, Clarendon Borough, Columbus Township, Deerfield Township, Freehold Township, Limestone Township, Sheffield Township, Southwest Township, Spring Creek Township, Sugar Grove Township, Triumph Township, and the City of Warren in Warren County. (Appendix D)

In addition to the afore mentioned municipalities, the 2019-2022 draft TIP will be on public display at the RPO's five counties planning and human services offices, the Northwest Commission office, and on the Northwest Commission website. This availability will be published via legal notices in the Derrick, the Allied News, and the Warren Times Observer, the Northwest Commission Newsletter, an email blast to all municipalities in the RPO coverage area, and Facebook.