



How environmental justice affects you and your community

Concern for environmental justice should be integrated into every transportation decision – from the first thought about a transportation plan to post-construction operations and maintenance. The U.S. Department of Transportation document, “*Order to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*,” applies to all policies, programs and other activities that are undertaken, funded or approved by the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, or other U.S. DOT components, including:

- Policy decisions
- Systems planning
- Metropolitan and statewide planning
- Project development and environmental review under NEPA
- Preliminary design
- Final design engineering
- Right of way
- Construction
- Operations and maintenance

Get involved! For information on resources, technical assistance, publications, or if you would like to get involved, voice a concern or idea, visit ODOT’s Office of Civil Right Title VI website: www.oregon.gov/ODOT/CS/CIVILRIGHTS/titlevi/title_vi.shtml.

Your voice is important!

Transportation agencies cannot fully understand the needs of the community without active and informed community members, groups, associations, organizations, businesses and academic institutions getting involved and participating in the transportation development process.

For more information:

ODOT Office of Civil Rights
www.oregon.gov/ODOT/CS/civilrights
Title VI Program Manager
(503) 986-4350
ODOT.TITLEVI@odot.state.or.us

Federal Highway Administration
Office of Human Environment
400 Seventh St., SW, HEPH-40
Washington, DC 20590
(202) 366-0106

www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/index.htm



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Environmental Justice: Improving Transportation Decisions



Understanding Environmental Justice

Effective transportation decisions require that the unique needs of different socioeconomic groups are understood and addressed, and that happens when an agency has a responsive environmental justice program. The Oregon Department of Transportation is committed to integrating environmental justice in every program, project and effort we undertake.

Because we receive federal funds for transportation projects, ODOT is required to perform reviews of how our projects impact communities, both negatively and positively. The goal is to ensure an equitable distribution of positive developments, as well as an effort to minimize or mitigate any disproportionately high and adverse effects to any individual or groups of people in the community. In particular, environmental justice focuses on how transportation projects affect minority, elderly, disabled and low-income members of a community.

Addressing environmental justice

Environmental justice has three key principles:

1. Avoid, minimize or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
2. Ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process
3. Prevent the denial of, reduction in or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and/or low-income populations.



The results of environmental justice

Environmental justice is more than a set of legal and regulatory obligations. Properly implemented, environmental justice principles and procedures improve all levels of transportation decision making. This approach:

- Makes better transportation decisions that meet the needs of all people.
- Designs transportation facilities that fit more harmoniously into communities.
- Enhances the public-involvement process, strengthen community-based partnerships, and provide minority and low-income populations with opportunities to learn about and improve the quality and usefulness of transportation in their lives.
- Improves data collection, monitoring, and analysis tools that assess the needs of, and analyze the potential impacts on, minority and low-income populations.
- Partners with other public and private programs to leverage transportation-agency resources to achieve a common vision for communities.
- Avoid disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations.
- Minimize and/or mitigate unavoidable impacts by identifying concerns early in the planning phase and providing offsetting initiatives and enhancement measures to benefit affected communities and neighborhoods.



In 1994, a Presidential Executive Order directed every federal agency to make Environmental Justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing the effects of all programs, policies, and activities on "minority populations and low-income populations."

ODOT is committed to the comprehensive, inclusive approach required by environmental justice as we plan and deliver our transportation products.