

Environmental Justice Documentation 2015-2018 TIP

Shenango Valley Area Transportation Study (SVATS) MPO

The SVATS MPO is providing the attached maps in order to comply with the requirements of Environmental Justice. These maps demonstrate the correlation between transportation projects in Mercer County and residents who are low-income or racial minorities—two groups who have been traditionally underserved by the transportation planning process. The use of these maps will assist the MPO with current and future development of projects and ensure equal treatment of all populations of the County in relation to transportation planning.

The projects identified on the two maps show the locations of all designated highway and bridge projects. There are a few notes to go along with this: (1.) No project locations are being shown for line items on the TIP. Projects that come out of these funding categories are decided upon by PennDOT and the SVATS MPO and deal with maintenance issues on existing systems. (2.) More than half of the projects on the TIP are bridge replacement or repair efforts. Bridge replacement is completed on a priority basis with major input from the Mercer County Bridge Engineer and PennDOT District 1-0's Bridge Unit. (3.) The vast majority of the projects on the current TIP are projects that were already identified on the 2011 Long Range Transportation Plan and some have been programmed on the previous TIP.

The Shenango Valley Shuttle Service (SVSS) provides fixed-route transit services within the Mercer County urbanized area, which includes the Cities of Farrell, Hermitage and Sharon and the Boroughs of Sharpsville and Wheatland. Routes are purposely designed to better-connect neighborhoods with high minority and poverty rates to places of business and employment throughout the Shenango Valley.

In addition to this service, transit offers an on-demand, shared ride service as well as an exclusive ride service (operating much like a taxi) to residents living throughout the county. These services operate under the moniker of Mercer County Community Transit.

As projects enter into preliminary engineering and final engineering phases, the MPO and PennDOT will ensure that issues concerning environmental justice are addressed on a project-by-project basis.

As of June 2014, the largest, most expensive TIP projects are as follows:

Project Location	Scope of Work	Municipality
SR 718/760/Broadway Ave. /MLK Jr. Blvd.	Roadway reconstruction (Phase II)	Farrell, Sharon
SR 3008/State Street	School and hospital zone pedestrian improvements, traffic calming, streetscape	Sharon
PA 318	Replacement of Viaduct over Shenango River	West Middlesex

All of these projects are located in municipalities that have relatively high percentages of minorities and/or populations below the poverty level. By far the largest project to be undertaken by the SVATS MPO—and the project most directly affecting EJ populations—is the Broadway Avenue project. The attached maps help to demonstrate the correlation between project location and traditionally underserved populations. It should be noted that 2010 U.S. Census Data is used for percentage of minorities but that poverty levels are taken from 2000 Census figures. This is because income/economic data were not part of the 2010 U.S. Census.

Also attached is a Benefits and Burdens analysis which explains the degree to which a project will affect minority and impoverished populations. The chart classifies projects based upon how large of an EJ population lives, works, or utilizes the project area as well as how large of a benefit or burden (although no burdens are expected on this TIP) the proposed improvement will have to EJ populations.

Enclosures: Mercer County, PA—Percentage of Minorities by Community
Mercer County, PA—Percentage of Population Below Poverty
Environmental Justice Effects on TIP Capital Projects (Benefits and Burdens Analysis)