

Environmental Justice Analysis for the AGSM Bridge Replacement Environmental Assessment

1.0 Introduction

Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (February 11, 1994), requires each federal agency to “make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.” The FHWA has identified three fundamental principles of environmental justice:

- To 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;
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the decision-making process; and
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or substantial delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations. (FHWA, 2013)

The potential for the proposed project to have an environmental justice impact was examined through visits to the Project Area, investigation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, and other locally specific information.

2.0 Study Area

The study area for this analysis includes the Census Blocks that overlap or are adjacent to the proposed project. This area includes five (5) Census Blocks within two (2) Census Block Groups, nested within two (2) Census Tracts.

The proposed project is located in Clay County, WV. In the 2010 U.S. Census, Clay County had a total population of 9,386 people. All of the activity associated with the Preferred Alternative will occur within the boundaries of Census Tract 9580, which includes WV 4 and the neighborhood around Camp Creek. The project is also adjacent to Census Tract 9579, which lies on the north side of WV 4.

In 2010, Census Tract 9580 had a population of 3,427 people, and Census Tract 9579 had a population of 3,589 people. The Census Block Groups overlapping the Project Area had population totals of 1,873 and 1,554, and the five Census Blocks overlapping the Project Area included a total of 115 residents. A summary of these areas is provided in Table 1, and the Census Tract, Block Groups, and Blocks are shown in the attached figures.

Table 1. Summary of Minority and Income Data

Area	Total Population	Minorities ¹	Median Household Income ²	Below Poverty Threshold
Census Tract 9579	3,589	2.3% (83)	\$32,109	25.8%
Census Tract 9579, Census Block Group 2	1,873	0.75% (14)	NA	NA
<i>Census Tract 9579, Census Block Group 2, Census Block 2044</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>
Census Tract 9580	3,427	0.4% (15)	\$27,247	27.0%
Census Tract 9580, Census Block Group 1	1,554	0	NA	NA
<i>Census Tract 9580, Census Block Group 1, Census Block 1025</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>
<i>Census Tract 9580, Census Block Group 1, Census Block 1026</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>
<i>Census Tract 9580, Census Block Group 1, Census Block 2030</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>
<i>Census Tract 9580, Census Block Group 1, Census Block 2045</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>
Clay County	9,386	1.6% (150)	\$31,613	24.8%
West Virginia	1,852,994	6.1% (113,006)	\$40,400	17.6%

Sources: 2010 U.S. Census for population and minority data; U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates for income data.

¹ Minorities include people identifying themselves on the U.S. Census as Black, Hispanic, Asian American, American Indian and Alaskan Native, and other non-white persons, including those persons of two or more races.

² Median Household Income can be compared to the DHHS poverty guideline of \$23,850 (for a family unit size of four persons) to estimate poverty status. However, this table also presents the percentage of all people living below the Census poverty threshold (2009-2013 5-yr estimates).

3.0 Low Income

Low-income is defined as households living below the 2014 Department of Human Health Services (DHHS) poverty guideline of \$23,850 (for a family unit size of four persons) (DHHS, 2014). Statistics on income presented below are based on the U.S. Census Bureau's poverty threshold, which is somewhat different from the DHHS poverty guideline; however, as stated at the DHHS website, "The best approximation for the number of people below the HHS poverty guidelines in a particular area would be the number of persons below the Census Bureau poverty thresholds in that area." (DHHS, 2013a and 2013b)

Table 1 provides a summary of the data retrieved from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates. Similar U.S. Census data for income were not available at the Census Block Group or Census Block levels of analysis.

The U.S. Census data show that the Project Area Census Tracts have average household incomes above the DHHS poverty threshold. The community affected by the project is entirely within Census Tract 9580, which has an average household income of \$27,247. This average is lower than that of the county and state (\$31,613 and \$40,400, respectively). Census data report that 27% of Census Tract 9580 total population lives below the Census poverty threshold.

In addition to examining Census data, field views, comments from the public, and planning documents were consulted. The Project Area does not appear to be dominated by low-income residents, although individuals living with low income could reside in the community.

4.0 Minority

According to FHWA Order 6640.23 (1998), "FHWA Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations," population groups defined as minorities include the following:

- Black (having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa);
- Hispanic (of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture of origin, regardless of race);
- Asian American (having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands);
- American Indian and Alaskan Native (having origins in any of the original people of North America and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition); or
- Other non-white persons, including those persons of two or more races.

Results of the 2010 U.S. Census data analysis show that the Census Tract surrounding the community within the Project Area (Census Tract 9580) had a lower percentage of minorities (0.4%) than at the county (1.6%) or state (6.1%) levels. The Census Tract on the other side of the Elk River, which does not contain any residences in the Project Area (Census Tract 9579), has a higher percentage of minorities (2.3%) than at the county level and lower than at the state level. More specifically, 2010 U.S. Census data show that the Census Blocks in the study area did not include any minorities (Table 1).

In addition to examining Census data, field views, comments from the public, and planning documents were consulted. No businesses, community centers, or newspapers that cater to a particular minority group were identified in the Project Area.

5.0 Impacts

It is possible that right-of-way requirements on two properties for this project may affect a minority or low-income individual; however, the effects do not include displacing a resident. The total area of new right-of-way required has been minimized to only 0.26 acre, and there will not be a noise impact, as defined by regulations and detailed in the Environmental Assessment (EA). Potential benefits of the project will serve all of the public and help to offset adverse effects. Benefits include improved efficiency and safety of access to employment and community centers and improved access for emergency response and school buses.

6.0 Conclusions

Based on the above analysis, the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect low-income and/or minority individuals and will not cause disproportionately high and adverse effects on any minority or low-income populations as discussed in the Executive Order 12898 regarding environmental justice. As discussed in the EA, to help ensure potential impacts to the community are addressed, WVDOH has provided forums for exchange of information on the proposed project, and has considered comments received by the public.

7.0 References

U.S. Census Bureau. 2011. 2010 Decennial Census – 2010 Population Data. Available via the internet through <http://www.census.gov/>.

_____. 2014. 2009-2013 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates. Available via the internet through <http://factfinder2.census.gov/>.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2014. 2014 Poverty Guidelines. <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/14poverty.cfm>.

Figure 1. Census Tracts and Block Groups around the Project Area.



Census Tracts and Block Groups

Legend:

Boundaries

- State
- '13 County
- '14 Co Sub
- '14 Census Tract
- '14 Block Group

Features

- Major Road
- Street
- Stream/Waterbody

Your Selections

- Your Selections

Items in grey text are not visible at this zoom level



Figure 2. Census Block areas around the Project Area. Map generated from <http://www.census.gov/geo/maps-data/maps/block/2010/>.

