

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SUBCOMMITTEE
Executive Summary

Date: January 8, 2025
Time: 2:00 p.m.
Place: Zoom

Members Present:

Eric VonBerg	Soo Ho Park
Janelle Del Campo	Susanna Herrera
Jensen Vang	Susie Rico-Vasquez
Matthew S. Gillian, Chair	Erin Haagenson
Nicola Steelnack	

Members Absent:

Amneek Chalotra	Patrick Turner, Vice Chair
Clarissa Vivian Petrucci	Tiffany B. Magnum

Fresno COG Staff:

Shichen Fan	Santosh Bhattarai
Simran Jhutti	

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Gillian.

I. Roll Call (Simran Jhutti)

II. ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Approval of Meeting Minutes for November 13, 2024 [ACTION]

- Janelle Del Campo motioned and Nicola Steelnack seconded to approve the minutes as presented.
- No abstentions or opposition.

B. Modification of EJ Analysis Indicators [ACTION] (Shichen Fan)

Summary: The Environmental Justice Analysis of the Regional Transportation Plan includes various performance measures that compare the current transportation system to the future (2049) transportation system, which assumes the construction of all projects proposed in the preferred scenario including transit, capacity increasing, bike and pedestrian, and maintenance and operational improvement projects. The 2022 EJ Analysis included eight performance measures:

access to jobs and services, travel delay, transit productivity, distribution of investments by mode, distribution of road maintenance projects, targeted active transportation investments, housing mix, and pollution exposure. The EJ Subcommittee also has the role of selecting one performance measure to serve as the EJ indicator for the Sustainable Communities Strategy scenario. Last cycle the Subcommittee selected access to destinations as the EJ indicator. This cycle, Fresno COG staff has new recommendations to refine the indicators.

Fresno COG staff made new recommendations based on feedback from the EJ Subcommittee during the November 13, 2024 meeting. Staff recommends utilizing both the Equity Priority Communities (EPC), which covers a third of the Fresno County and Disadvantaged Communities (DAC), which covers about 60% of Fresno County for EJ analysis. Staff proposes to include an AM peak travel time for job purpose only and an average time to the urban center (Downtown Fresno by Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ) within the Access to Jobs and Services indicator. Another indicator with revisions includes the Transit Productivity. The indicator would include percent of population within the ¼-mile walking distance of frequent transit as well as retail stores accessible via a 30-minute transit trip. A third indicator would be Targeted Active Transportation Projects to add lane miles of bicycle and pedestrian projects within ¼ mile to transit stops. Also include an indicator for Planned Safety Projects on the High Injury Network. Lastly the new indicator presented was for Pollution Exposure, to cover peak hours emission reduction in high transportation exposure areas.

The EJ Subcommittee recommended the Transit Productivity indicator to determine the accessibility to healthcare via 30-minute transit trip. Due to the lack of data, it is hard to determine which public agency or services are being frequented. Staff is recommended to omit this indicator. The data tells where the healthcare careers are located, allowing the output to share where healthcare services are located. Likewise, a larger healthcare facility employing more staff will indicate an increase of healthcare services which include primary care, dental, and vision. Another recommendation from the EJ Subcommittee includes a table to separate the data of where investments are being made and for what mode (bike/ped, transit, roads, etc.). FCOG staff will include the Fresno-Clovis Metropolitan Area in addition to the Countywide and DAC areas. This will provide more detailed information. The final results will include a summary table for the 30-minute transit trips and the Downtown access would be a map. Clarification was also provided regarding the growth of e-bikes and bike mode will be in the model to show the bike trips sharing how much time it will take for certain trips.

There will be minor changes to the existing indicators, FCOG staff will utilize the Caltrans Equity Index (EQI) for the transportation exposure definition. Additionally the buffer distance of major polluters to be used in the analysis will be increased from 500 ft. 1 mile. There was clarification on how the buffer distance is used, which is to find how many new housing developments will be in proximity to major polluters. It was determined that 500 ft. was too small, thus expanding to capture more area was decided.

Action: Staff recommends that the Environmental Justice Subcommittee approve and recommend that the Regional Transportation Plan Roundtable approve the indicators to be used for Environmental Justice analysis in 2026 Regional Transportation Plan.

- Shichen Fan (Fresno COG) presented on this item.
- Susanna Herrera motioned, and Jensen Vang seconded to approve this item
- No abstentions or opposition.

C. EJ indicator to be used in SCS evaluation [ACTION] (Shichen Fan)

Summary: The Environmental Justice Analysis of the Regional Transportation Plan includes various performance measures that compare the current transportation system to the future (2049) transportation system, which assumes the construction of all projects proposed in the preferred scenario including transit, capacity increasing, bike and pedestrian, and maintenance and operational improvement projects. The 2022 EJ Analysis included eight performance measures: access to jobs and services, travel delay, transit productivity, distribution of investments by mode, distribution of road maintenance projects, targeted active transportation investments, housing mix, and pollution exposure. The EJ Subcommittee also has the role of selecting one performance measure to serve as the EJ indicator for the Sustainable Communities Strategy scenario. Last cycle the Subcommittee selected access to destinations as the EJ indicator.

Fresno COG staff provided a presentation at the last EJ Subcommittee meeting (11/13/24) on the proposed performance measures for the 2026 EJ Analysis, including the previous 2022 measures, indicators and methodology for their review. Fresno COG staff provided explanation continuing to use “Access to Destinations for Disadvantaged Communities” as the EJ indicator in SCS evaluation in the January meeting regarding trips to jobs and services. There will be two EJ categories, one for equity and one for the disadvantaged community. The action requested is approval to recommend to the SCS subcommittee. However, EJ Subcommittee members had concerns about only having one indicator recommended to the SCS Subcommittee for the final RTP/SCS, would like more than one. FCOG staff explained there’s numerous descriptions that although they aren’t specifically EJ they still capture those communities. For instance, if bike/ped paths are being evaluated or air pollution, the region is capturing the results as a whole. Priorities from the EJ Subcommittee shared are air quality, public health, water, and food insecurity. There are in total 10 indicators used, FCOG staff mentioned how the SCS Subcommittee will decide on the indicators. The indicators must capture land use, housing, and transportation. We don’t have flexibility to only include EJ subcommittee related indicators, though the concerns will be captured such as with public health the bike/ped and air quality indicators will be intended to measure those impacts on all communities in the region. FCOG staff invited EJ Subcommittee members to attend the next SCS Subcommittee meeting, January 16th at 2pm. The action will be taken at the March meeting on which indicators to recommend, FCOG staff will with EJ Subcommittee members to field any other ideas for the EJ indicator.

Action: Staff recommends that the Environmental Justice Subcommittee approve and recommend that the SCS subcommittee/Regional Transportation Plan Roundtable approve to keep “Access to Destinations for Disadvantaged Communities” as EJ indicator to be used in SCS evaluation.

- Shichen Fan (Fresno COG) presented on this item.
- No action was taken.

III. OTHER ITEMS

A. Items from Staff

Simran Jhutti shared the next meeting will be held on March 12th for the EJ Subcommittee to recommend the EJ indicator(s) to the SCS Subcommittee.

B. Items from Members

None.

IV. Public Presentations

This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons wishing to address the Subcommittee on items within its jurisdiction but not on this agenda.

Note: Prior to action by the Subcommittee on any item on this agenda, the public may comment on that item. Unscheduled comments may be limited to 3 minutes.

None.

Adjournment

Eric VonBerg motioned, and Sussana Herrera seconded to adjourn.
Meeting as adjourned at 2:57 pm.

