

Equity

Adapted from the FHWA: Pursuing Equity in Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning - Equity in transportation seeks fairness in mobility and accessibility to meet the needs of all community members. A central goal of transportation equity is to facilitate social and economic opportunities through equitable levels of access to affordable and reliable transportation options based on the needs of the populations being served, particularly populations that are traditionally underserved. Traditionally underserved groups include individuals in at least one of the following categories: low Income, minority, elderly, limited English proficiency, or persons with disabilities. It is important to note that transportation equity does not mean allocating transportation resources in equal amounts to all people. Transportation equity relates to how transportation practitioners can provide access to affordable and reliable transportation (and specifically, pedestrian and bicycle facilities and programs) to fairly meet the needs of all community members, particularly traditionally underserved populations.

This is largely a summary of “Pursuing Equity in Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning,” from the *Federal Highway Administration* with some local examples to illustrate barriers that inhibit equitable access to transportation networks and data-points that can augment the tools currently utilized in transportation planning.

Equity concerns in transportation focus on underserved communities and seek affordable and reliable transportation options for entire communities and all types of individuals.

Traditionally Underserved Populations:

- Low Income
- Minority
- Older Adults
- Limited English Proficiency
- Persons with Disabilities

Equity concerns to keep in mind:

- 24% of Americans living in poverty do not own a car.
- Low-income, minority, or immigrant individuals are more likely to have jobs that require transportation at night or early morning.
- Language barriers inhibit education on best and safest practices.
- Individuals with language barriers, constraints due to age, constraints due to ability, and constraints due to income are most likely to be forced to travel by foot or wheel on roads lacking safe facilities.
- Limited mobility options equates to limited economic opportunities.
- Disparity in pedestrian fatality rates based on race and social class.

Strategies to Address Inequities

- Hiring, Training, and Communication with Equity in mind.
- Expand beyond Complaint-Based or Community Request initiated projects.
- Consider the impact on underserved communities in every project.
- Foster Inclusive Public Involvement, including: informal meetings, non-

- traditional times, providing childcare, partnering with community groups.
- Evaluate land-use policies for better mobility and occupational opportunities in underserved areas.
- Measuring connectivity in networks of various modes.

Local Examples:

South of Interstate 94:

A vibrant neighborhood of low- and moderate-income individuals and include a high minority population, yet has limited access to the larger active-transportation network due to Interstate 94 as well as gaps in the network once crossing the interstate.

East of Highway 23:

A significant percentage of commuters to and from Ann Arbor originate in Ypsilanti Township, Pittsfield Township, and the City of Ypsilanti. These locations also consist of low- and moderate-income individuals and include a high minority population. Highway 23 forces all users to use Washtenaw, Packard, Ellsworth, or E Huron—all high-speed, high volume corridors with limited facilities. Significant gaps in the network continue once individuals travel west of Highway 23.

<https://maps.semcog.org/CommutingPatterns/>

<https://demographics.virginia.edu/DotMap/>

<https://www.census.gov/censusexplorer/censusexplorer.html>

<https://maps.semcog.org/bicyclenetwork/>