



Environmental Justice, Title VI, and Public Participation in Regional Planning

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DVRPC Mission Statement

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission is dedicated to uniting the region's elected officials, planning professionals, and the public with a common vision of making a great region even greater. Shaping the way we live, work, and play, DVRPC builds consensus on improving transportation, promoting smart growth, protecting the environment, and enhancing the economy.

We serve a diverse region of nine counties: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia in Pennsylvania; and Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Mercer in New Jersey. DVRPC is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Greater Philadelphia Region – leading the way to a better future.

What is DVRPC? What is an MPO?

DVRPC is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Greater Philadelphia Region

- Federally mandated for urban areas of more than 50,000 people.
- A regional entity responsible for transportation planning and the approval of federal transportation funding for a defined region.
- Conducts regional planning such as transportation and land use planning, economic development, environmental planning, and sustainability.



Perspective

The Commission consistently strives toward a more inclusionary and participatory regional planning process.

- Information, and opportunities for participation should be early, often, and ongoing.

DVRPC believes that Title VI, EJ, and public participation should be inherent to all work completed by the Commission and should be incorporated into all of DVRPC's programs, plans, and public participation activities.



a Strategy for Citizen Involvement



DVRPC and Title VI

Implement Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by assuring that all residents of Greater Philadelphia are represented fairly and not discriminated against in the transportation planning and capital investment process.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act states that "no person in the United States, shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

DVRPC & Environmental Justice

Assure that EJ, as outlined by the 1994 President's Executive Order, is integrated into DVRPC's planning and outreach practices. EJ is defined as:

"the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies."

EJ & Title VI in Practice

Enhance analytical capabilities to ensure that the Long-Range Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) comply with mandates by identifying residential, employment, and transportation patterns of low income and minority populations so that their needs may be identified and addressed.

Evaluate, and where necessary, improve the public involvement process to eliminate barriers and engage minority, disabled, elderly, and low-income populations in regional decision-making

How?

Regional demographics, GIS, and mapping

DVRPC policies, plans, and programs

Field Work and Research

Study advisory committees, public participation, outreach

DVRPC Degrees of Disadvantage Methodology

Map Concentrations of Following Groups Based on Regional Thresholds (in 2000)

Minority (Non-Hispanic) Population

Car Less Households

Low-Income Persons by Household

Physically Disabled

Female Head of Household with Child

Elderly, 75 and Older

Hispanic Population

Limited English Proficiency

Combine Factors to Determine Highly Disadvantaged Census Tracts (5 to 8 factors)

Less Disadvantaged Census Tracts (1 to 4 factors)

No Degrees of Disadvantage (0 factors)

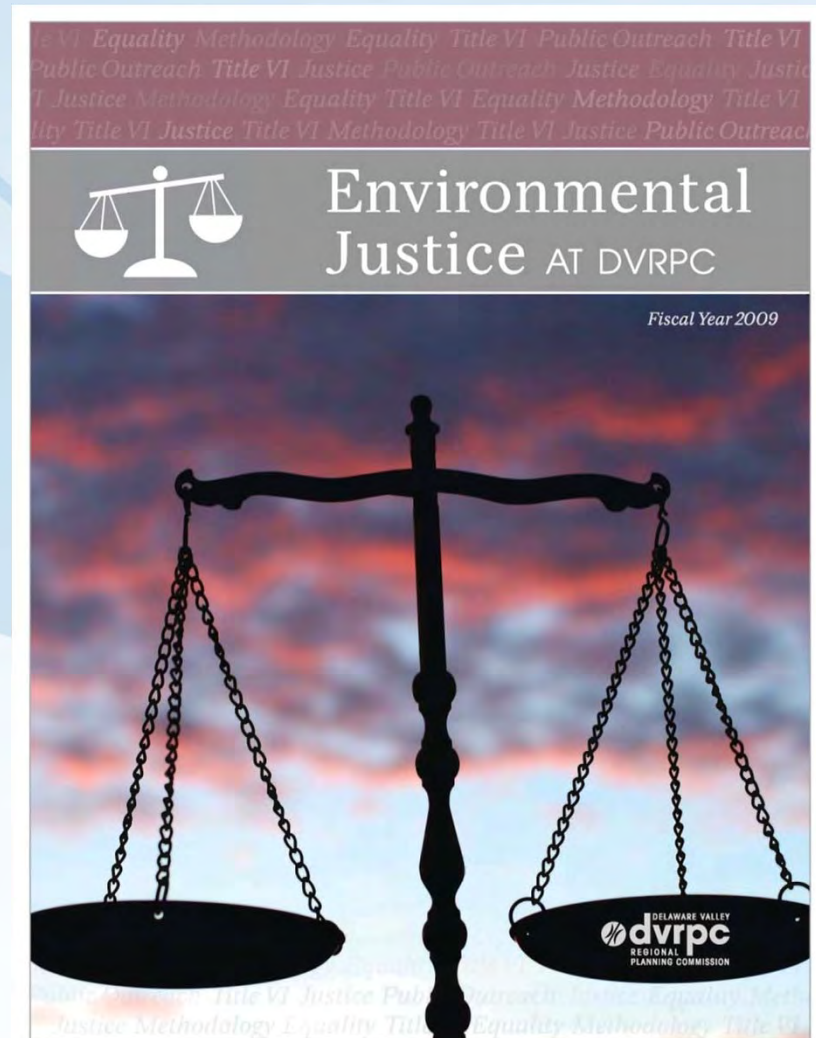
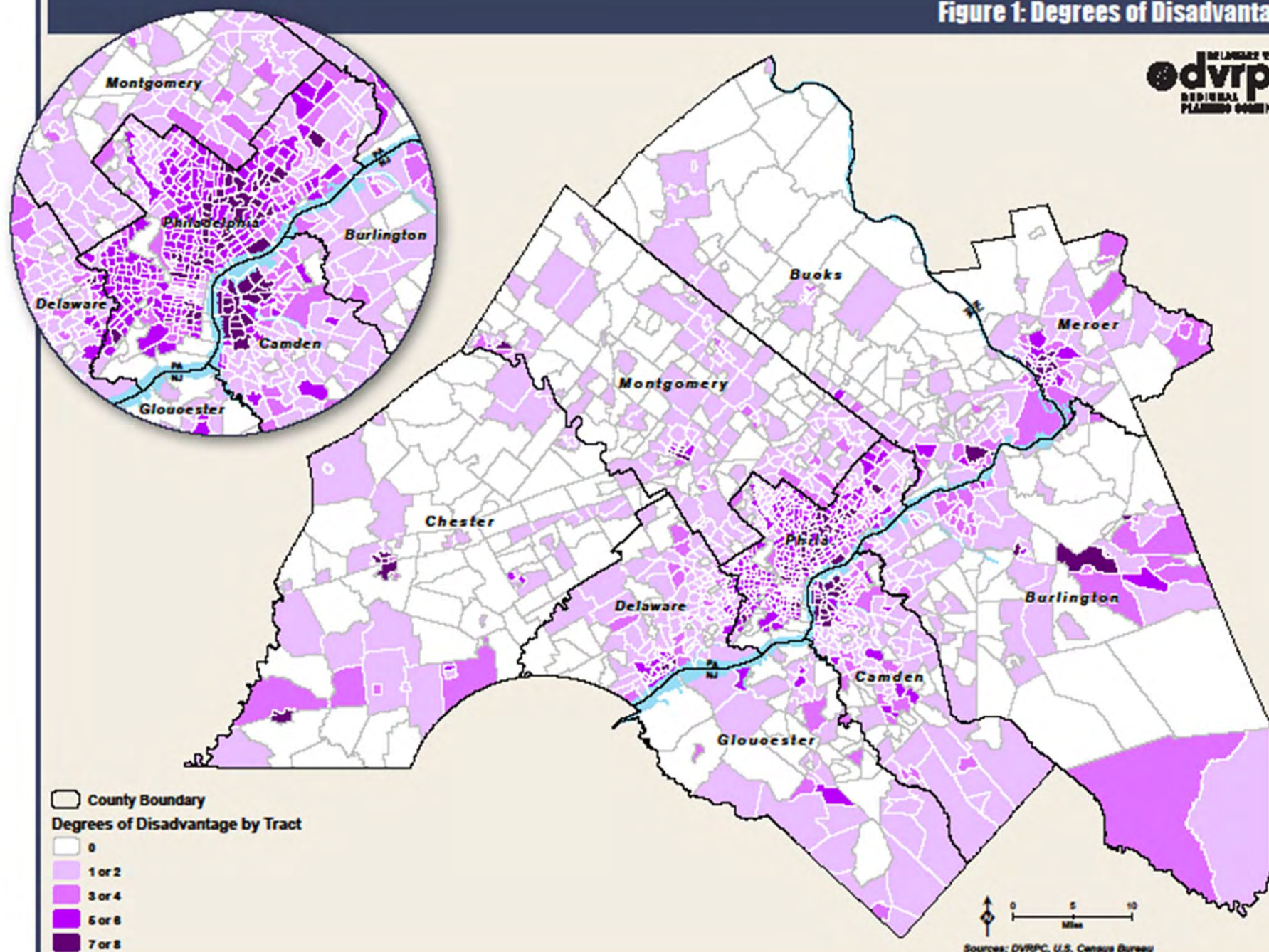


Figure 1: Degrees of Disadvantage



EJ Analysis

Identify study area census tracts

- Regional map utilized for Long-Range Plan and TIP

Determine underserved populations

- The EJ DOD methodology is an integral tool that can be used to understand study area demographics. Along with windshield surveys and stakeholder outreach, other qualitative and quantitative methods may be used to identify EJ issues in a study area.

Define potential remediation strategies

- Promote recommendations that would positively impact the EJ communities identified.
- Ensure that recommendations made in the project or study do not adversely impact EJ communities and/or ensure that the benefits and burdens of a specific recommendation are equitably distributed.
- Be aware that a neutral policy or practice may have a disparate impact on protected groups.

Public Participation

Public Participation federal mandates include:

- Adequate public notice of activities and comment periods; convenient and accessible public meetings;
- Timely notice and reasonable access to information, including via internet;
- Employment of visualization techniques;
- Solicitation and consideration of the needs of the traditionally underserved.



Inform, Educate, Collaborate, Participate

www.twitter.com/DVRPC

www.dvrpc.org

DVRPC Committees

Publications and Reports

DVRPC e-newsletter

Media Releases

Events and Meetings

Workshops

Regional Listening Sessions

Public Comment Periods

Partnering with other agencies

Resource Center



Environmental Justice
WORKGROUP



EJ & Smart Growth in DVRPC Plans and Programs

Connections– The Regional Plan for a Sustainable Future contains goals and recommendations that positively impact EJ communities, such as:

- Food systems planning
- Investing in the region's centers and older suburbs
- Promoting affordable and accessible housing
- Economic and workforce development
- Maintaining the region's transportation infrastructure for all users

The work undertaken by DVRPC inherently includes opportunities for EJ considerations and to promote an open public participation process:

- Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan
- Air Quality Partnership
- Transportation and Community Development Initiative (TCDI)
- DVRPC plans: corridor studies, environmental planning, transit, bike, and pedestrian planning