

Environmental Justice Plan

2014

This plan details Mountain Metropolitan Transit's Environmental Justice process.

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Environmental Justice Plan

Introduction and Purpose

The City of Colorado Springs Transit Services Division (MMTransit) operates the local public fixed-route bus service, ADA paratransit demand-response service, and vanpool programs (collectively branded as **Mountain Metropolitan Transit**), and provides more than 10,000 trips per day in a service area that includes more than 400,000 people.

The *Mountain Metro* fixed-route bus service offers 24 bus routes with weekday service and limited Saturday and Sunday service. The routes extend north to Research Parkway, west into Manitou Springs, east to Peterson Air Force Base and south into Widefield. *Mountain Metro Mobility* is the system's complementary Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service, and *Mountain Metro Rides* is Transit's Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant-funded alternative transportation program, designed to reduce congestion and pollution and encourages more people to use carpools, vanpools, bicycling and other means of commuting.

Environmental justice is a public policy goal of promoting the fair and equitable treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, particularly minority and low-income populations, in the decision-making process for transportation. Satisfying this goal means ensuring that low-income and minority populations receive an equitable distribution of the benefits of transportation activities without suffering disproportionate adverse impacts. Achieving environmental justice requires both analytical techniques as well as the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.

The MMTransit system plays an essential role in advancing the economy and improving safety and quality of life in the City of Colorado Springs. Transportation services and facilities provide mobility to the city's residents, visitors, and businesses. Transportation investments may also generate unintended negative impacts. If poorly planned or designed, new and expanded facilities may be unsightly, increase air and/or noise pollution, and disrupt or displace established communities.

The purpose of MMTransit's Environmental Justice Plan is to:

- Avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental impacts, including social and economic effects, on minority and low-income populations.
- Ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- Prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

MMTransit's Environmental Justice Plan is in place to ensure that minority and low-income populations are not disproportionately affected by transit system operations and/or related facilities construction. MMTransit's Environmental Justice Plan will be updated triennially and incorporates the requirements and guidance of the following:

- Executive Order 12898 – 1994
- Memorandum of Understanding on Environmental Justice and Executive Order 12898 – August 2011
- DOT Order 5610.2(a) – May 2012
- FTA Circular 4703.1

Environmental Justice Analysis Process

MMTransit applies the environmental justice analysis process to major service changes (addition, elimination, or modification of 25% or more of service hours, miles, or bus stops on a route or of the system) and transit facility construction projects. The Mountain Metropolitan Transit Environmental Justice Process includes the following activities:

- Analyze demographic data
- Gain meaningful public involvement
- Determine adverse impacts and benefits
- Mitigate impacts as is feasible

Analysis of Demographic Data

MMTransit collects and maintains demographic data that includes individual route profiles that identify minority and low-income routes. When considering the potential impact of route changes or facilities construction on these populations, MMTransit relies on this data to establish their location and to what extent the project may affect them.

Meaningful Public Involvement

MMTransit's Public Participation Plan defines major, moderate, and minor service changes according to the level of impact to the public and the riders. The public involvement process takes into account the participation of environmental justice populations. Minimally, efforts consider the following:

- Potentially affected community members have an appropriate opportunity to participate in decisions about a proposed activity that will affect their environment or health;
- Decision-makers seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected;
- The concerns of all participants involved will be considered in the decision-making process; and
- The public's contribution can influence the decisions made.

Adverse Impacts – and Benefits

MMTransit acknowledges that disproportionately high and adverse impacts, not population size, are the basis for environmental justice. A very small minority or low-income population in a project, study, or planning area does not eliminate the possibility of a disproportionately high and adverse impact on these populations.

- Adverse impacts include elements such as increased pollution, increased noise pollution, increased vehicle traffic, and reduced service levels; while
- Benefits might include increased service levels, positive economic impacts, and area enhancements resulting from increased service or facilities.

MMTransit will evaluate mitigation measures if it is determined that disproportionately high adverse impacts or effects would be predominantly borne by an environmental justice population, or appreciably more severe than suffered by the non-environmental justice population.

Mitigation Actions

When MMTransit has determined that mitigation efforts are warranted, the following measures may be taken:

- Avoid the action that would cause the disproportionate impact.
- Actions could include locating an alternate location, redesigning or reconfiguring a facility or site, or a revision of service change options.
- Minimize or mitigate the action that would cause the disproportionate impact.
 - Measures may include limitations during construction, sound barriers, speed bumps, and consideration during operations.

Though MMTransit makes every effort to mitigate disparate impacts when warranted, financial constraints, geographical conditions, real estate location, and other factors may impact the extent of mitigation efforts. Measures, if undertaken, will be based on the totality of circumstances (negative impacts, benefits, constraints), reflect community input, and be unique to the project.