

Downtown Access Project: Environmental Justice Targeted Outreach

The Environmental Justice (EJ) Targeted Outreach Plan builds off the strategies identified in the Public Outreach Plan for the Downtown Access Project, focusing on outreach to minority and low-income populations (EJ populations).

EJ is 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. Fair treatment means (1) that all persons share in the benefits of our investments; and (2) that no person (including racial, ethnic, or low-income groups) should bear a disproportionate share of the negative consequences resulting from the execution of Federal, State, and local programs and policies.

Executive Order 12898, U.S. DOT Order 5610.2(a), and FHWA Order 6640.23A require Federal agencies to ensure meaningful participation of environmental justice populations in the decision-making process. The specific public outreach activities identified in the Public Outreach Plan include a number of opportunities for the public to engage. To ensure EJ populations are also engaged, the outreach team developed targeted strategies to help inform and understand issues, interests, and concerns of those in the project area.

The targeted outreach is intended to engage project-area residents and business owners (primarily small businesses) not specifically identified in the Public Outreach Plan who are minority, low-income, or limited-English proficient (LEP); project-area social service providers; community leaders; Tribes; and representatives of religious and cultural gathering places. The overall goal of the targeted outreach to EJ populations is to ensure effective participation (i.e., opportunities for input to avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects and input on project need and alternatives) in the transportation decision making process and to provide access to information. Based on the feedback from the target groups, the targeted outreach efforts will also help the outreach team refine preferred methods of communication. The ability to customize the targeted outreach will be important during the overall outreach process.

The following sections provide information on the targeted outreach efforts to engage EJ populations, including LEP populations.

Minority Persons

- Black or African American – a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa
- Hispanic – a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race
- Asian – a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands
- American Indian or Alaskan Native – a person having origins in any of the original people of North America and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander – a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Island

Low-Income Persons

Persons whose median household income is at or below the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines. For a four-person household with two related children, the poverty threshold is \$24,600 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2017).

Identifying Environmental Justice Populations

The following methods will be used to identify EJ populations within a quarter mile of I-515 in the study area between Mojave Road and Rancho Drive.

Demographic Analysis

Working with the EJ lead for the project, a demographic analysis will be developed using the latest U.S. Census Data (5-Year American Community Survey data). Census data will be used to identify concentrations of EJ populations, including LEP populations. If needed, the Census data would be supplemented with additional data sources (e.g., local school data). Areas with higher concentrations of EJ populations will be reviewed in greater detail to understand who could be affected by the project, including field visits to identify pockets of EJ residents and EJ-serving businesses. The demographic data will also be overlain on effected project areas, and this information can be used to further inform targeted outreach efforts.

As noted in Section 5.0, Public Outreach Program Strategy, of the Public Outreach Plan, materials will be translated to Spanish, and a Spanish translator will be available at the public meeting. Spanish is the primary language other than English in the project area, but to ensure public outreach efforts are inclusive, Census data will also be reviewed to understand other languages that may be used in the project area. Decisions on when to translate documents into other languages will be based on U.S. Department of Justice guidelines that recommend translated documents if five (5) percent or 1,000 persons in a given area speak a language other than English.

Communication/Coordination Efforts

Methods to identify EJ populations will include not only the demographics analysis described above, but also the following:

- Coordination with the initial stakeholders identified in the Section 4.0, Corridor Stakeholders, in the Public Outreach Plan, and with other community groups and community leaders to identify groups and organizations that provide services to or connect with EJ populations in the project area. These could include neighborhood or community groups, businesses and business organizations, and religious organizations.
- Coordination with organizations that provide services to EJ populations (i.e., Housing Services/Affordable Housing Advocacy, Public Assistance/Social Service Agencies, Charitable Organizations, and Race- or Nationality-Based Community Organizations) including those listed below under EJ Organizations.
- Coordination with service providers and community leaders to better understand where EJ populations are located within the census block groups and to gain insights into these populations, including if there are LEP populations where document translation (other than Spanish) is needed.

Targeted Development/Strategies

Because EJ populations may not be reached using general population approaches and can often feel disenfranchised, specific targeted outreach strategies will be used, as appropriate, to ensure their effective participation in the transportation decision making process. As part of the coordination with stakeholders and community leaders, described below under EJ Organization, understanding the best way to reach EJ populations based on their experiences will be informative and help develop and refine effective strategies for engagement. It will also be important to determine if EJ populations have certain characteristics that could help determine the best location, date and time of project meetings (i.e., single parent households, type of worker), and to identify if there are locations within the project area that EJ populations can easily access and/or visit frequently. These areas could include ethnic grocery or specialty

stores, senior centers, residential and care facilities, shelters and missions, community centers, religious institutions, public and non-profit health and social service offices.

Targeted Outreach

In addition to the public outreach program strategies in Section 5.0, which includes community stakeholder notification, community outreach meetings, corridor events and activities, and social media, the outreach team will engage EJ populations using the following methods:

- Conduct a door-to-door survey to better understand who lives and works in the project area that could be affected. The questions will include information to understand if those affected are EJ populations. The survey will include the use of translators.
- Provide information (newsletters, fact sheets, etc.) to social service organizations to distribute. Ensure that information is translated. Information and materials need to be clear and understandable and should avoid technical terms.
- Distribute materials to tenants in mobile home parks near the project area and affordable housing locations and conduct meetings as needed.
- Use of social and print media sources to help reach the Hispanic/Latino populations and provide project information. These include Telemundo, a Spanish language television station, El Mundo, a Spanish language newspaper, and the City of Las Vegas Ward 3 social media.
- Ensure the same people are interacting with the public at events to help build relationships and trust.
- Ensure public outreach locations are accessible by transit, biking, and walking; understand when people work; and when to hold the events.
- Coordinate with Nevada Highway Patrol (NHP) on outreach to unsheltered individuals who reside in the project area. NHP can assist in providing detailed location information and meeting times to unsheltered individuals.

In addition to the methods to engage EJ populations, consideration will be given to the following as part of the targeted outreach efforts:

- Hosting public outreach events in non-traditional locations where EJ populations feel more comfortable attending meetings. These locations include schools, local places of worships, cultural festivals/fairs, or being part of a larger meeting instead of a stand-alone event. Focus less on the open-house style events where EJ populations may be less likely to attend due to language barriers (real or perceived) and the potential uneasiness in dealing with project staff. Prior to events, reach out to leadership at the specific locations to assist with meeting notices (i.e., announcements and flyers that could be posted or distributed).
- Develop and use visuals over text to the extent possible to convey messages on the project and encourage involvement in the decision-making process especially for those populations where English is not the first language.

Environmental Justice Organizations

The stakeholder list identified in Section 4.0 of the Public Outreach Plan will include EJ organizations (i.e., service providers, community groups, advisory boards, and community leaders) and, as needed, will be regularly updated to ensure effective coordination with EJ populations and participation in the decision-making process.

To encourage effective participation, the outreach team will engage with the service providers and others that provide services to and/or work directly with EJ populations in the project area including the homeless, low-income populations, and Hispanic/Latino populations. These organizations include, but are not limited, to the following:

- City of Las Vegas Homeless Courtyard Resource Center (medical, housing, employment services)
- Las Vegas Rescue Mission (homeless shelter, meals, and addiction recovery)
- Salvation Army (homeless shelter, meals)
- Family Promise of Las Vegas (food and shelter, path to sustainable housing)
- The Shade Tree (safe shelter and services to homeless and abused women and children in crisis)
- Safe Nest for Women (shelter, food, clothing, counseling, education for domestic violence victims)
- Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth (services for homeless youth)
- Catholic Charities (food and shelter for men)
- Latin Chamber of Commerce (focused on promoting Hispanic commerce, community, and culture)
- Salvadoran and Mexico Consulates offices

Through these engagements, the outreach team will provide information about the project and the environmental process and discuss the targeted outreach methods, listed above under Targeted Outreach, that will be implemented to ensure the most effective strategies are being used to inform and engage EJ populations.