

Environmental Justice Report

2015 Update



South Jersey
Transportation
Planning Organization

www.sjtpo.org

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Introduction

One of the requirements contained within NJDOT's 2013 Title VI Certification Report was for SJTPO to provide an analysis assessing the effects of their transportation enhancement, congestion mitigation and air quality projects on Environmental Justice (EJ) communities. As part of the 2013 report, the SJTPO did the following:

- Identified the Environmental Justice Communities of Concern (EJCoC) by comparing the overall regional percentage of EJ communities to each Census Tract.
- Established the Expected Performance Targets for the TIP. The expected performance target is a percentage of the total funds and total number of projects that should be expected for EJ areas, given the overall regional percentage of population that reside in EJCoC's, which in 2013, was 53%.
- Assessed the actual TIP Performance with the Expected Performance Targets, established above. It was found that the regional thresholds of 53% were met.

This report is provided as a supplement to the environmental justice analysis done as part of the 2013 Title VI Assessment. The projects are being updated with those from the 2014-2023 TIP, which is the latest TIP. The demographics and criteria used to determine the EJCoC's remain unchanged from the 2013 Report. SJTPO Environmental Justice-related activities include projects from the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Public Involvement activities, Human Service Transportation Planning activities (HSTP), and the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

Role and Function of the SJTPO

The South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the southern New Jersey region. Formed in 1993, the SJTPO replaced three smaller, existing MPOs while incorporating other areas not previously served. Covering Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, and Salem counties, the SJTPO works to provide a regional approach to solving transportation problems.

Transportation planning and decision-making for urbanized areas is carried out through MPOs. Traditionally, MPOs synchronize the planning actions of participating agencies in the region and provide a forum for decision-making among officials, operators, and the public. The SJTPO also serves as a conduit for Federal funds for transportation improvement projects. Any project that uses federal funding for design, right-of-way, and construction must be included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The SJTPO is governed by a 7-member Policy Board, comprised of a Freeholder from each of the four counties, the major cities of Atlantic City and Vineland, and a city in Cape May and Salem counties. There is also a 14-member Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), comprised of

planners and engineers from each of the four subregions, as well as officials from other transportation agencies, such as the NJ Department of Transportation, NJ Transit, the NJ Turnpike Authority, and the South Jersey Transportation Authority. The Policy Board has vested all the technical review authority into the TAC. Anything brought before the Policy Board has already been vetted by the TAC.

What is EJ and Why Are We Doing It?

Environmental Justice is defined by the federal government 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."¹ It is imperative that we plan to incorporate environmental justice into our planning process, both as a requisite from Federal guidance, but also to ensure that our process is as effective as possible. Environmental justice principles and procedures improve all levels of transportation decision-making when properly implemented. This includes:

- Making better transportation decisions that meet the needs of all people.
- Designing transportation facilities that fit more harmoniously into communities
- Improving data collection, monitoring, and analysis tools that assess the needs of, and analyze the potential impacts on non-Hispanic minority and low-income populations.
- Avoiding disproportionately high and adverse impacts on non-Hispanic minority and low-income populations.
- Minimizing and/or mitigating unavoidable impacts by identifying concerns early in the planning phase and providing offsetting initiatives and enhancement measures to benefit affected communities and neighborhoods.²

Environmental justice should be integrated into every transportation decision, from the first thought in a transportation plan to post-construction operations and maintenance.

The requirement for environmental justice in the metropolitan planning process originates from numerous pieces of legislation described in more detail below. The principles of environmental justice in transportation planning have evolved and expanded based on numerous legislative and executive actions. Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act served as the beginning of environmental justice followed by The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Executive Order 12898 in 1994, Executive Order 13166 in 2000 as well as orders from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The section below details each of these pieces of legislation.

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act serves as the first introduction of environmental justice into Federal policy, including transportation planning. It states that "No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be

¹ <http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/>.

² FHWA. http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/environmental_justice/overview/.

denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Title VI bars intentional discrimination as well as disparate impact discrimination (i.e., a neutral policy or practice that has a disparate impact on protected groups).³

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity and access for persons with disabilities. SJTPO will ensure that no qualified disabled individual shall, solely on the basis of his or her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any of its programs, services, or activities as provided by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). SJTPO further ensures that every effort will be made to provide nondiscrimination in all of its programs and activities regardless of the funding source.

Executive Order 12898

Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low Income Populations, was signed by President Clinton in February 1994. This Order reinforced the requirements of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and focused Federal attention on the environmental and human health conditions in non-Hispanic minority and low income communities. SJTPO is guided by three principles of Order 12898:

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

DOT Order on Environmental Justice (5610.2(a))

The DOT Order on Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations 5610.2(a) is an order that lays the out the process to incorporate the environmental justice principles in Executive Order 12898 into existing programs, policies, and activities. This Order updates the Department's original Environmental Justice Order, which was published April 15, 1997. DOT Order 5610.2(a) sets forth the DOT policy to consider environmental justice principles in all (DOT) programs, policies, and activities. It describes how the objectives of environmental justice will be integrated into planning and programming, rulemaking, and policy formulation. The Order sets forth steps to prevent disproportionately high and adverse effects to non-Hispanic minority or low-income populations through Title VI analyses and environmental justice analyses conducted as part of Federal transportation planning and NEPA

³ FHWA. Implementing Title VI Requirements in Metropolitan and Statewide Planning. 07 October 1999. <<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/ejustice/ej-10-7.htm>>.

provisions. It also describes the specific measures to be taken to address instances of disproportionately high and adverse effects and sets forth relevant definitions.⁴

Executive Order 13166

Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, was signed by President Clinton in August 2000. Order 13166 requires Federal agencies and any other entity that receives federal funds via grants, contracts, or subcontracts to make their activities accessible to persons with Limited-English Proficiency (LEP). Persons with Limited-English Proficiency are those with a primary or home language other than English who must, due to limited English fluency, communicate in that primary language if they are to have an equal opportunity to participate effectively in or benefit from any aid, service, or benefit in federally funded programs and activities.

All four of these legislative actions serve to guide the SJTPO's policies addressing environmental justice. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) serve as the primary forum where State DOTs, transit providers, local agencies, and the public develop local transportation plans and programs that address a metropolitan area's needs. MPOs can help local public officials understand how Title VI and environmental justice requirements improve planning and decision making. The SJTPO, serving as the MPO for South Jersey, seeks to maintain its already established process for incorporating environmental justice into the regional transportation planning process. A successful environmental justice process will meet the goals, previously stated, to ensure that all groups are equally considered and involved in the process.

1. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

This report will now provide an analysis of the FY 2014-2023 TIP in relation to the EJCoC. The SJTPO EJ Analysis methodology is documented in detail in Appendix I. This section will provide an overview of the EJ analysis process and its results.

The TIP is a list of all the projects that are scheduled for the next ten-year period. (See Endnote 1, below, for a more detailed description of the TIP.) Appendix III contains a list of TIP projects considered in this analysis. The TIP/STIP process is driven by the management systems that determine where it makes the most sense to address capital needs. If this approach is followed, the EJ areas of SJTPO should be represented fairly in the SJTPO TIP. The EJ areas are also referred to as Communities of Concern.

1.1. Defining Communities of Concern

Communities of Concern (EJCoC) for the purpose of this 2015 report are defined below. The EJCoC are the census tracts in the SJTPO region that meet or exceed the thresholds for one or more of eight (8) demographic groups, also referred to in this report as the EJ characteristics.

⁴ Department of Transportation. May 2, 2012. Order to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations. At: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/environmental_justice/ej_at_dot/orders/order_56102a/.

We choose eight characteristics to reflect the level of disadvantage for the community. There are eight (8) EJ characteristics. This selection was based on best practices.

- Poverty - Families in poverty;
- Female head of family households with no partner or husband present;
- Vehicle - Households with no vehicle;
- Disability - Non-institutionalized population with a disability;
- Age - Elderly population (Ages 75 and over);
- Language - People aged 5 and over that have a primary language other than English and speak English less than well;
- Hispanic Population;
- Non-Hispanic Minorities.

The SJTPO region is the poorest in the State. As seen in Table 1, in 2013, over 17% of the residents living in the SJTPO region were living below the poverty line, which was \$23,550 for a family of four in 2013.⁵ At 20.6%, Cumberland has the highest poverty rate in the State. Cumberland County is also an empowerment zone, one of only 15 nationwide. The federal Empowerment Zone initiative is designed to bring people and places together in a concerted effort to reclaim neighborhoods, building economies and strengthen community values. These zones target communities with high levels of distress, defined by specific criteria: poverty rate of the community, existence of brownfields, underused or unused industrial parcels, lack of transit, high crime, and other indications of social and economic distress.

The Empowerment Zone initiatives facilitate neighborhood revitalization, the creating of new employment/training opportunities, resident empowerment and the increased investment of private/public capital within the municipalities of the targeted communities. Projects such as economic development through loans, bonds and tax incentives, job creation, business development/expansion, technical assistance and training, transportation, educational programs, and community development have been targeted for funding.⁶

Table 1 Number and Percentage of Individuals Living in Poverty, 2013

County	Number of people living below the Poverty Line	Percentage of People Living Below the Poverty Line
Atlantic	48,716	18.03
Cape May	8,835	9.37
Cumberland	29,978	20.64
Salem	11,715	18.44
Total	99,244	17.32

Source: US Census, American Community Survey, 2013 (1-Year Data)

⁵ <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/13poverty.cfm>.

⁶ <http://www.cezcorp.org/>.

The above (Table 1) poverty information is one year (2013) data and it relates to individuals. Our EJ analysis uses family below the poverty line data, for one of the EJ characteristics. This is one of eight EJ characteristics in total. The EJ analysis uses the 5-year estimate (a 5-year average) data from the census. Each characteristic has a corresponding regional threshold. These thresholds are applied to each census tract as a test for EJ qualification.

1.1.1. Establishing Regional Thresholds

EJ thresholds were computed by finding the regional mean for each EJ criteria. For example, the Minority (non-Hispanic) population is defined as the total regional non-Hispanic population that is also not white alone. This figure is then divided by the entire population of the region to arrive at the threshold.

For the Hispanic/Latino population, the total Hispanic/Latino population of all tracts was divided by the total population of the region.

Poverty is defined as families in living in poverty. This figure is then divided by the total number of families in the region to arrive at the threshold.

The Disabled population is a function of total non-institutionalized disabled people divided by the total non-institutionalized population of the region.

The Limited English Proficiency (LEP) population is defined as the total population, age five and over, that do have English as their primary language, and they speak English “less than very well.” This figure is divided by the regional population age five and over to arrive at the threshold.

The Vehicle Disadvantaged rate for the region is calculated utilizing the number of occupied housing units that do not have a vehicle. These units are divided by the total regional occupied housing units, to arrive at the threshold.

The Elderly population is defined as age 75 and over. This figure is divided by the regional population to arrive at the threshold.

The Children in Female Head of Households is defined as the population under age 18, that live in a household headed by a female, where there is not a partner or husband present. This figure is divided by the regional population age 18 and under to arrive at the threshold.

Table 2 (below) displays the thresholds for each characteristic.

Table 2: Environmental Justice Characteristics, Thresholds

EJ 1: Minorities (non-Hispanic)	Individuals
Total Minority Population	121,235
Total Population	594,811
Regional Average (Threshold)	20.4%
EJ 2: Hispanic / Latino	Individuals
Total Hispanic Population	102,073
Total Population	594,811
Regional Average (Threshold)	17.2%
EJ 3: Poverty	Families
Total Families Living in Poverty	16,398
Total Families	147,592
Regional Average (Threshold)	11.1%
EJ 4: Disabled	Individuals
Total Non-Institutionalized Disabled	78,789
Total Non-Institutionalized Population	577,373
Regional Average (Threshold)	13.6%
EJ 5: Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	Individuals
Total Language Disadvantaged Population (Five Years Old and Older)	53,272
Total Population (Five Years Old and Older)	558,960
Regional Average (Threshold)	9.5%
EJ 6: Vehicle Disadvantaged	Occupied Units
Total Occupied Housing Units with No Vehicle	25,445
Total Occupied Housing Units	219,082
Regional Average (Threshold)	11.6%
EJ 7: Elderly	Individuals
Total Population Age 75 and Over	42,132
Total Population	594,811
Regional Average (Threshold)	7.1%
EJ 8: Children in Female Head of Households	Individuals
Total Population Age Under 18, Living with Female Head of Households (with no partner or husband present)	34,700
Total Population Under Age 18	133,476
Regional Average (Threshold)	26.0%

Source: US Census, American Community Survey, 2009-2013 (5-Year Estimates)

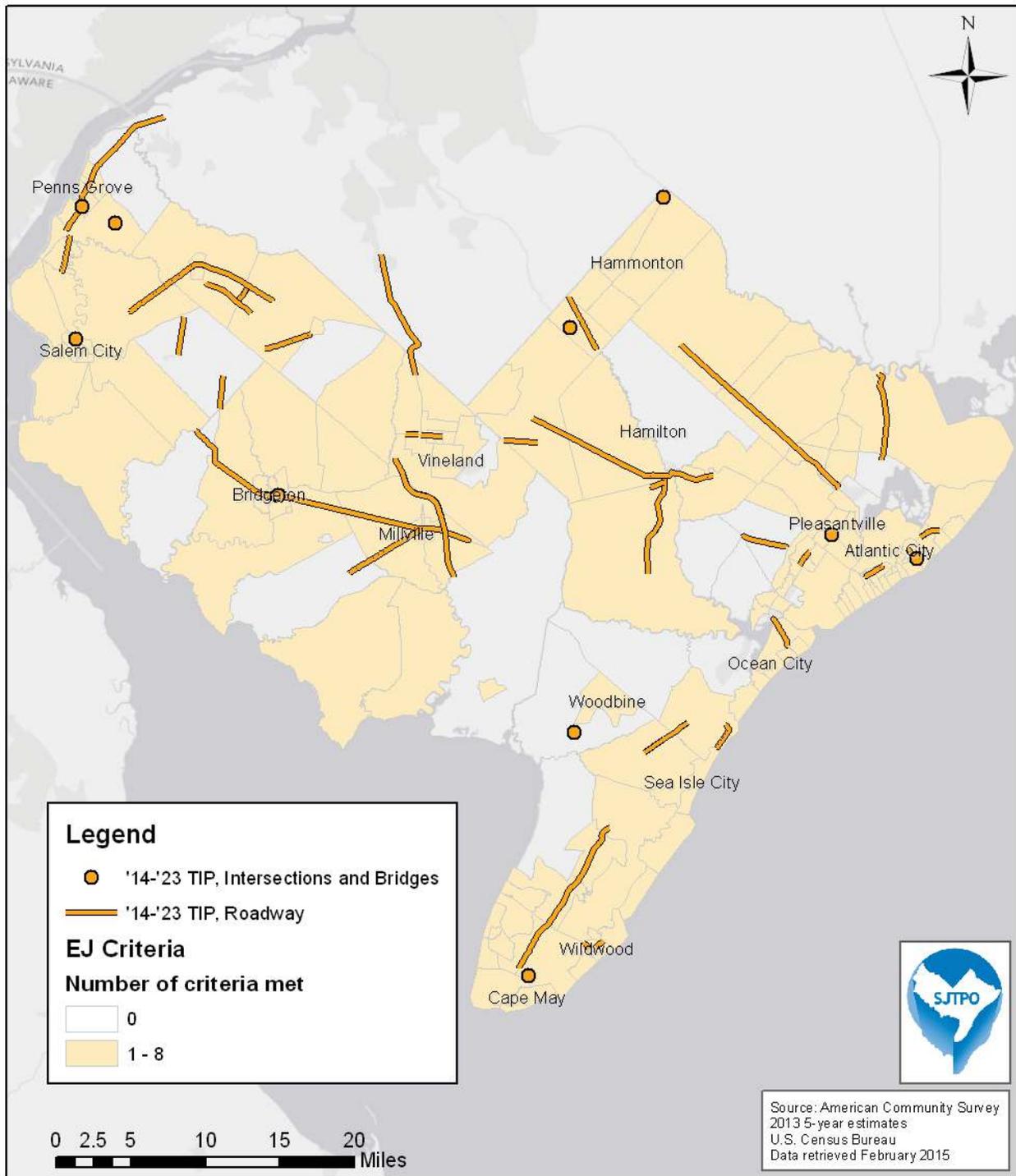
1.1.2. Identifying the EJCoC by Comparing the Region to each Census Tract.

The above percentages are used as the region's thresholds; these thresholds are compared to the demographics of each census tract. If any of the eight groups (i.e. minorities, disadvantaged groups) has a concentration (% of the tract topic total) over that group's regional threshold, that census tract is an EJCoC. For example, if census tract 1 had a concentration of non-Hispanic minorities of 35%, and the regional non-Hispanic minority threshold is 29.4%, then that census tract qualifies as an EJCoC. Any one of the eight groups can cause a census tract to qualify.

As a result of the above process, 139 of the 163 census tracts in our region were found to be EJCoC census tracts. These EJCoC census tracts are displayed on Map 1.

Environmental Justice Criteria:

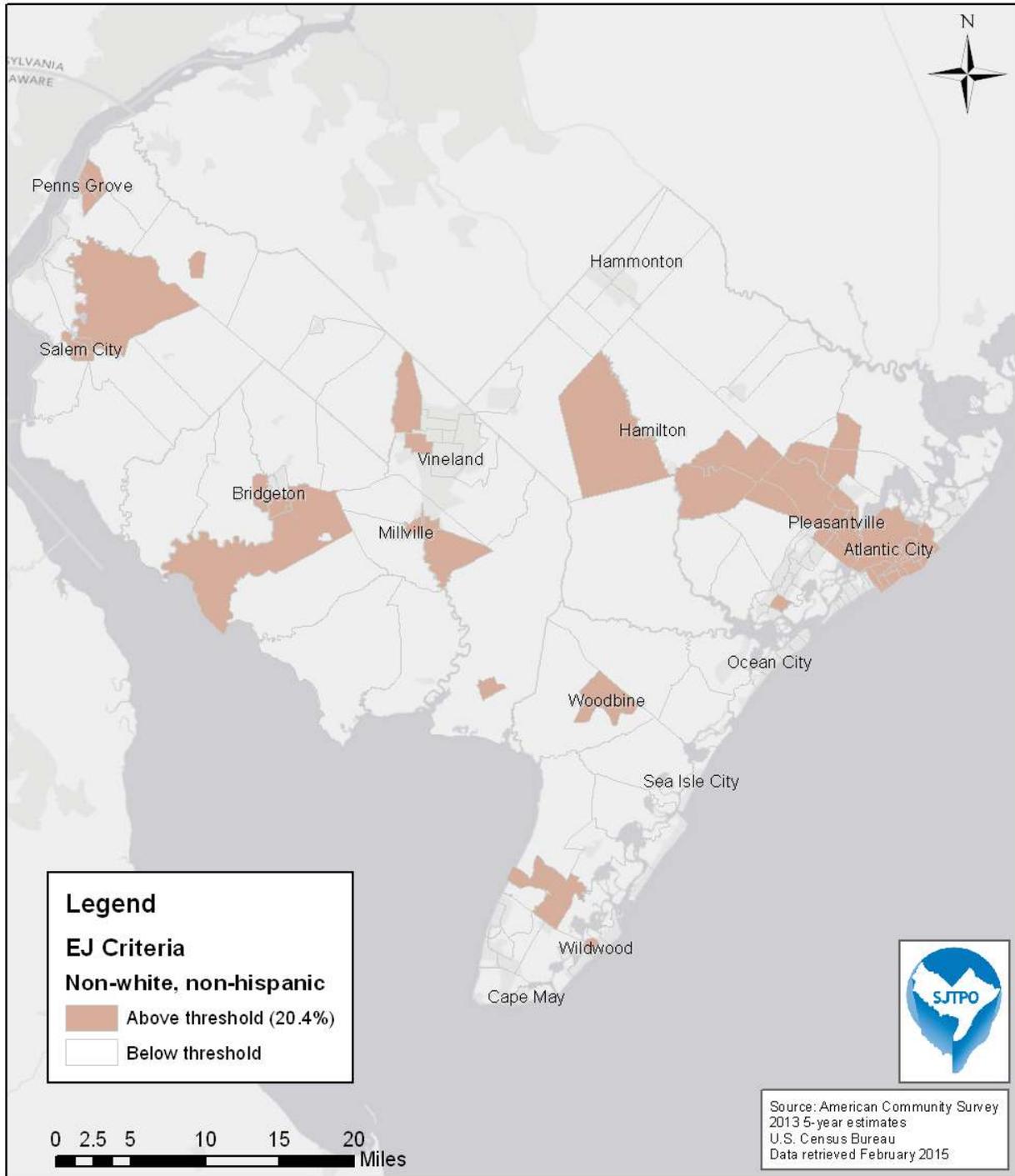
Map 1: EJ Census Tracts (2010) and TIP Projects (FY 2014-2023)



Selected EJ characteristics by Census Tract in the SJTPO region

Environmental Justice Criteria:

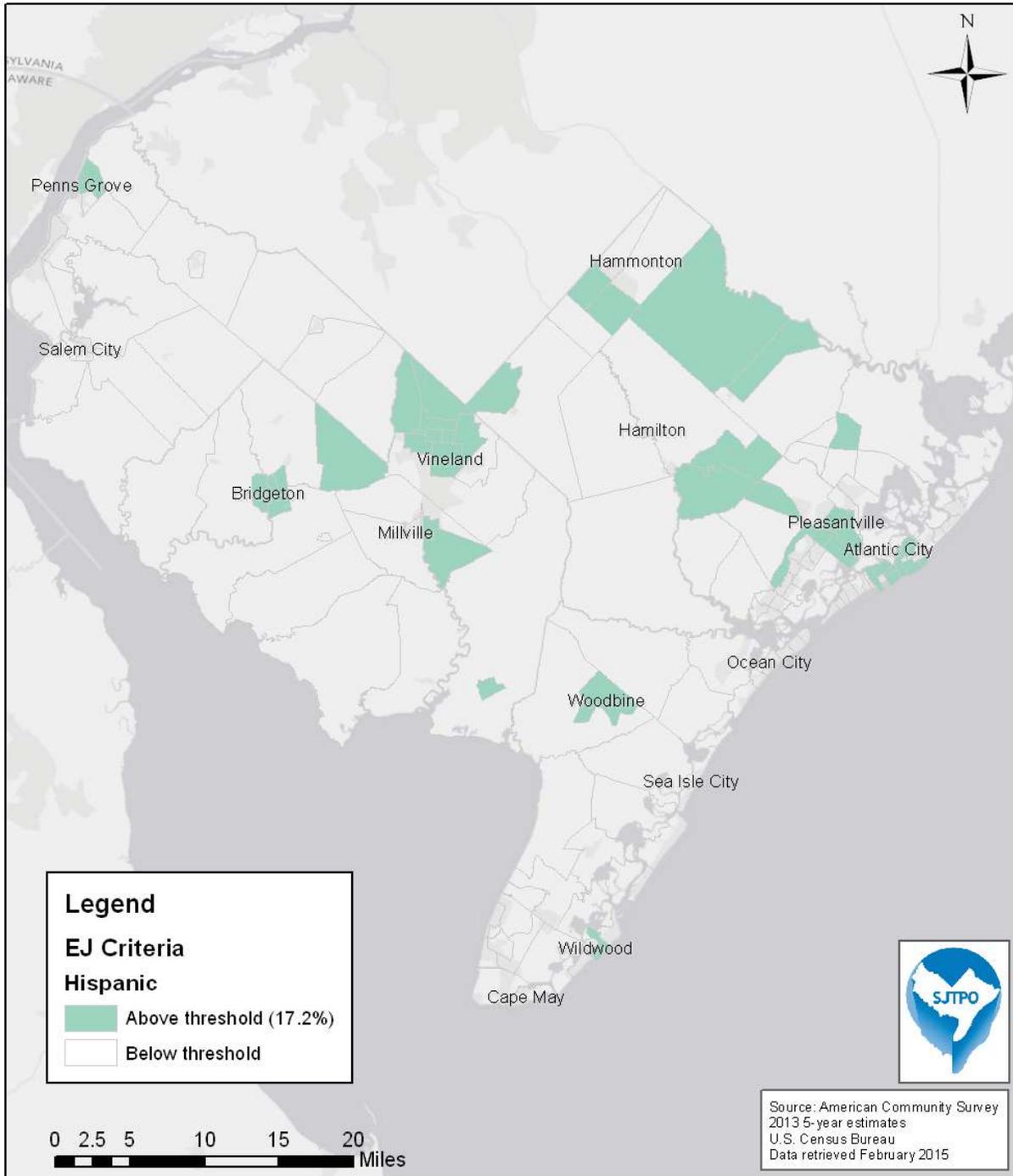
Map 2: EJ Census Tracts by EJ 1: Minority Population



Selected EJ characteristics by Census Tract in the SJTPO region

Environmental Justice Criteria:

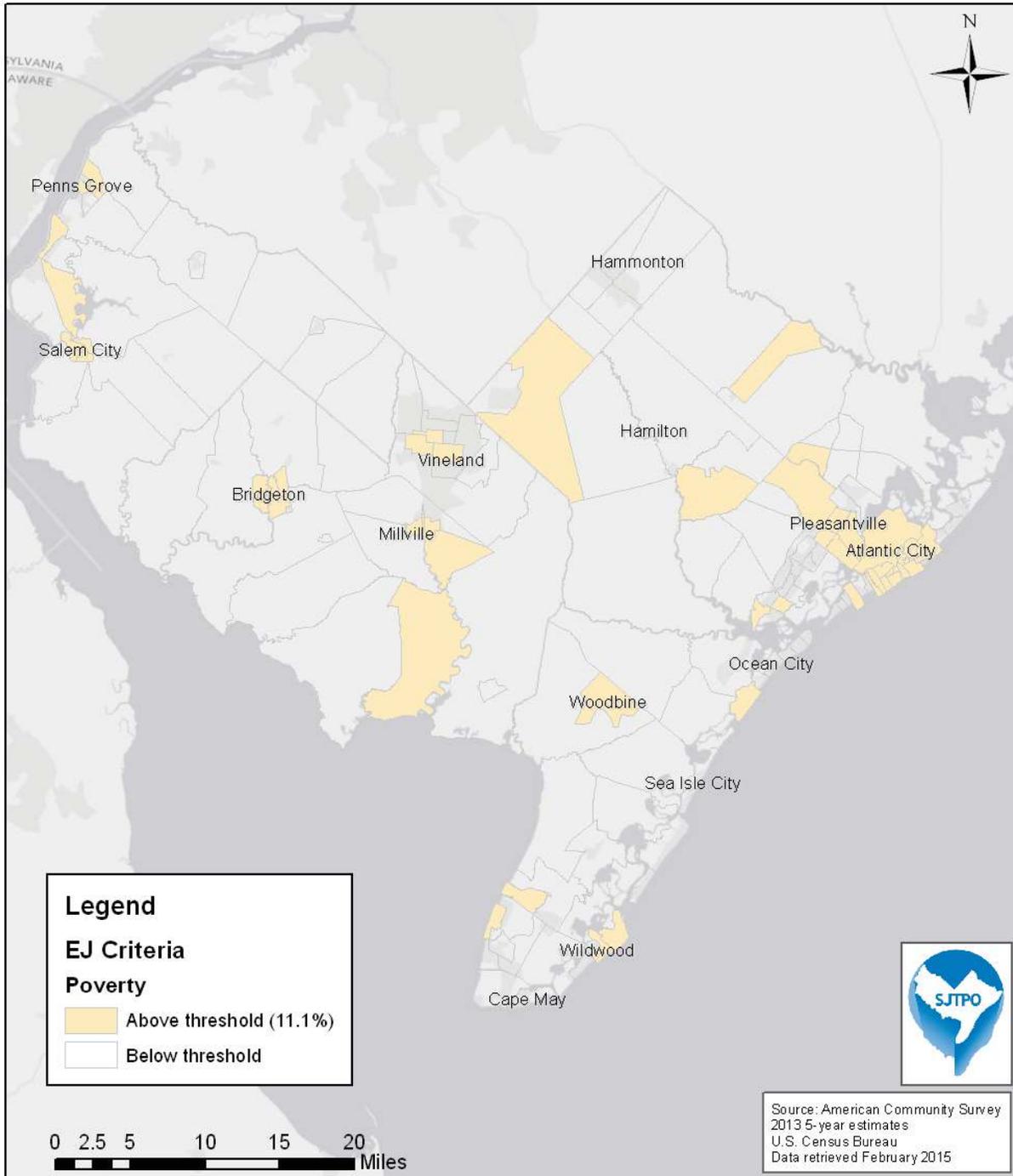
Map 3: EJ Census Tracts by EJ 2: Hispanic Population



Selected EJ characteristics by Census Tract in the SJTPO region

Environmental Justice Criteria:

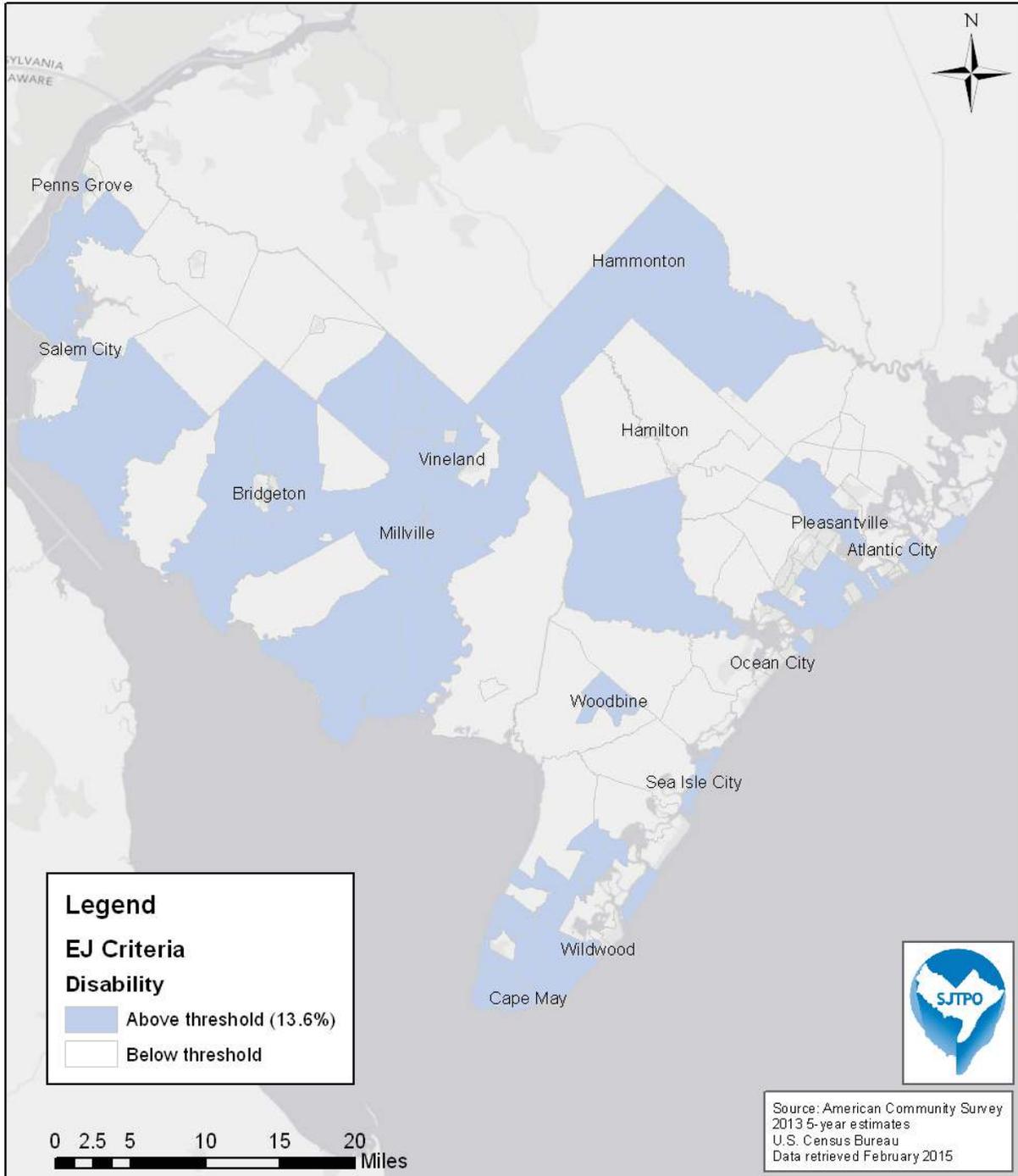
Map 4: EJ Census Tracts by EJ 3: Families Living in Poverty



Selected EJ characteristics by Census Tract in the SJTPO region

Environmental Justice Criteria:

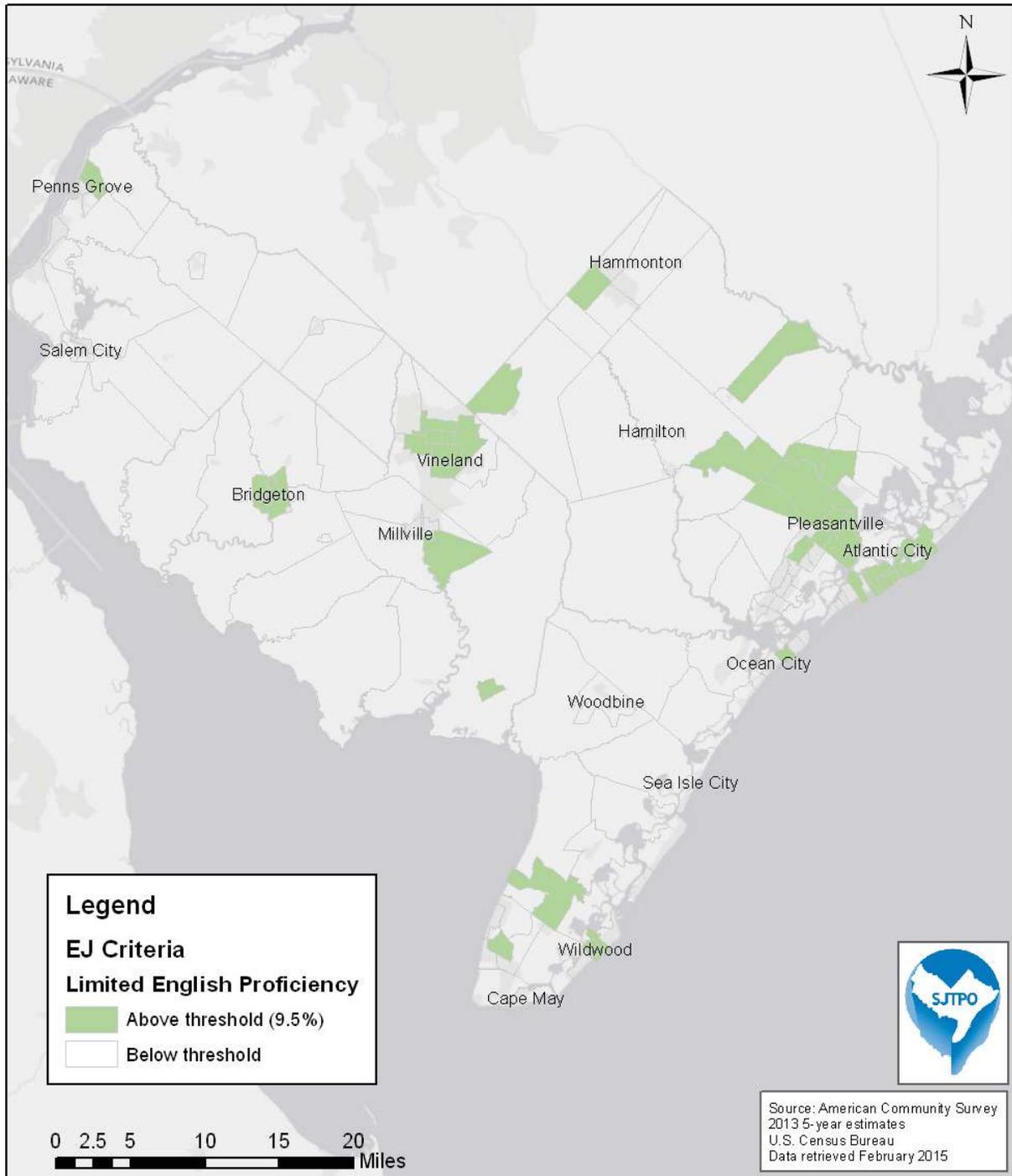
Map 5: EJ Census Tracts by EJ 4: Non-Institutionalized Disabled



Selected EJ characteristics by Census Tract in the SJTPO region

Environmental Justice Criteria:

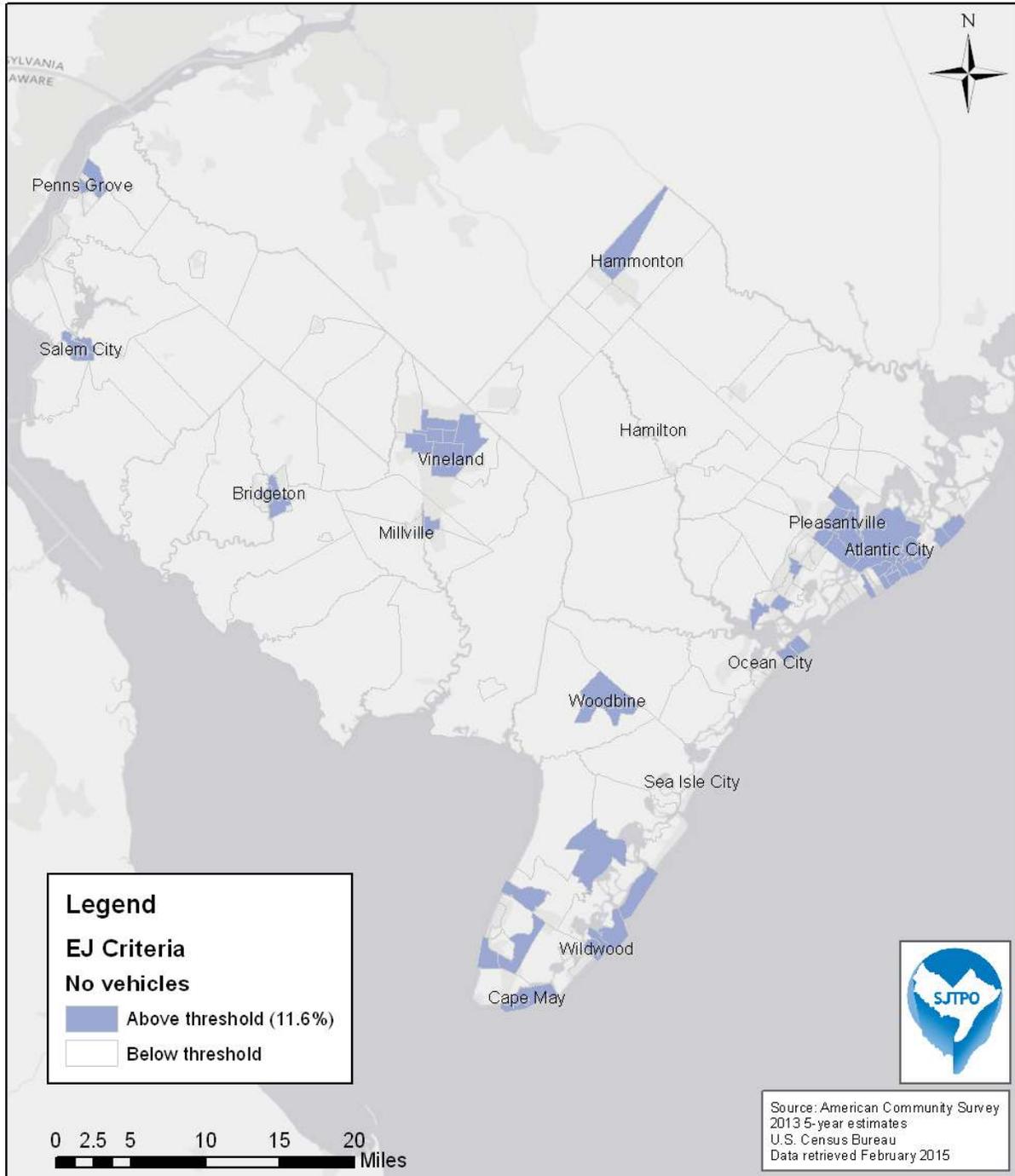
Map 6: EJ Census Tracts by EJ 5: Limited English Proficiency (LEP)



Selected EJ characteristics by Census Tract in the SJTPO region

Environmental Justice Criteria:

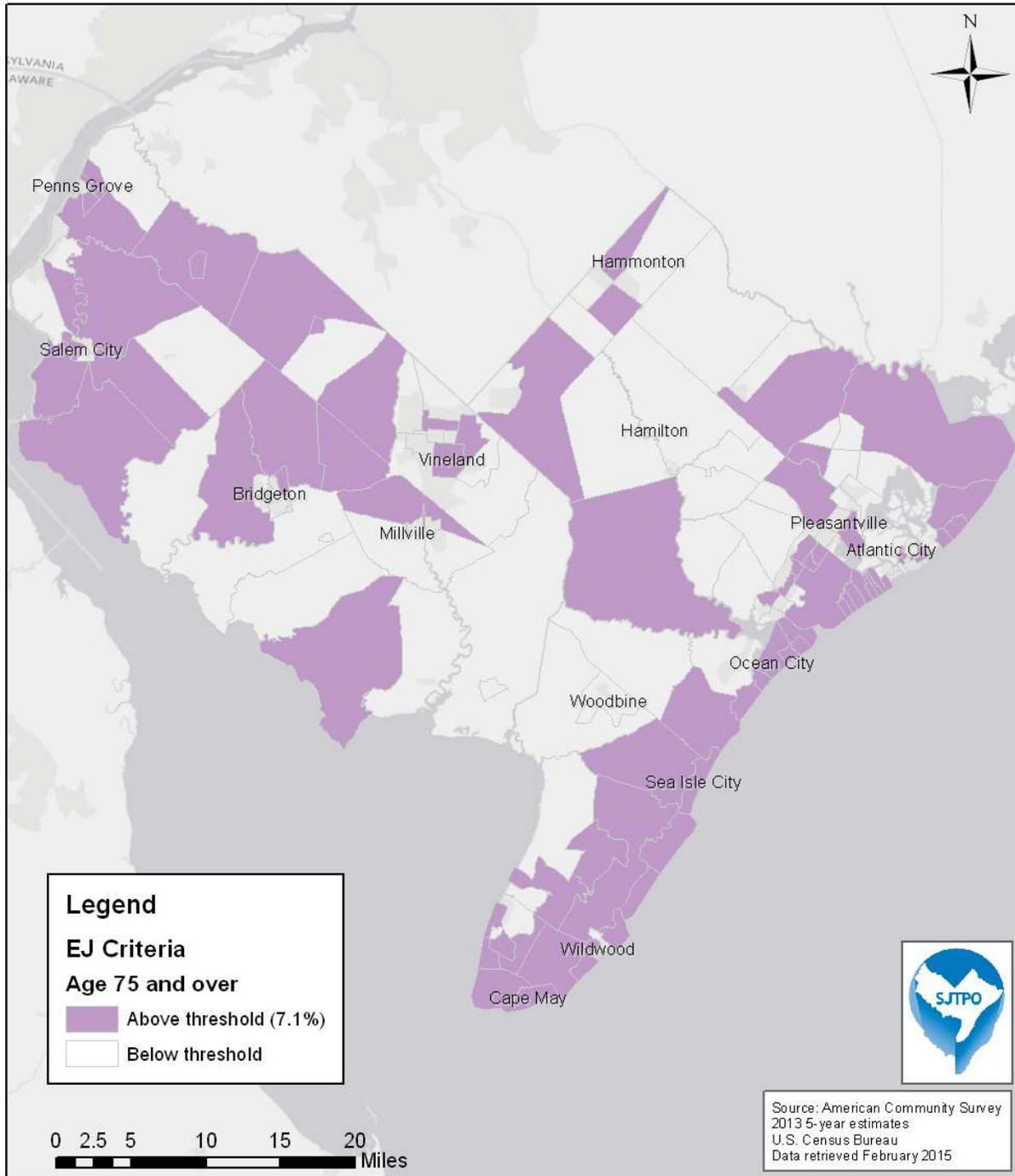
Map 7: EJ Census Tracts by EJ 6: Occupied Housing Units with No Vehicles



Selected EJ characteristics by Census Tract in the SJTPO region

Environmental Justice Criteria:

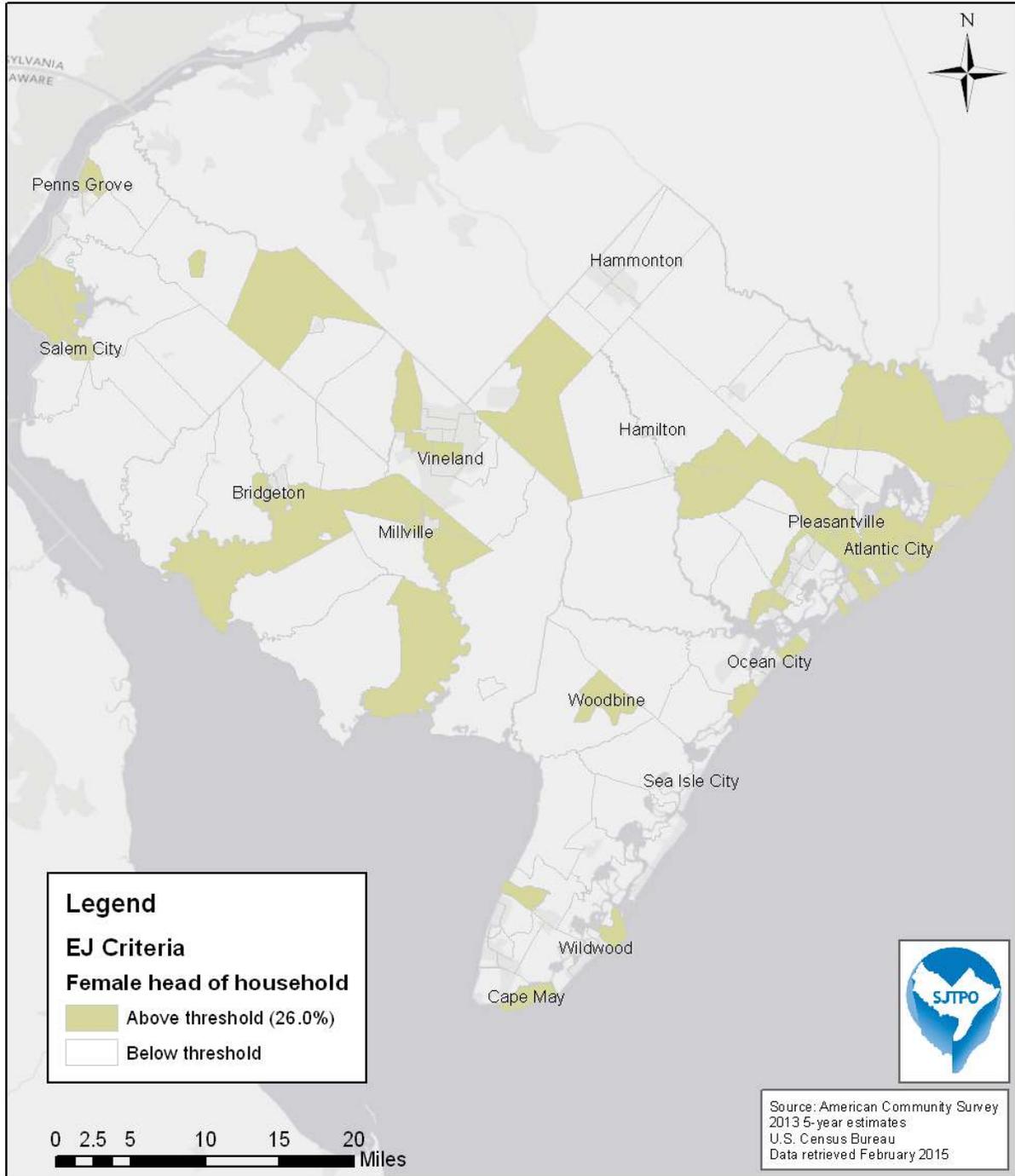
Map 8: EJ Census Tracts by EJ 7: Population Age 75 & Over



Selected EJ characteristics by Census Tract in the SJTPO region

Environmental Justice Criteria:

Map 9: EJ Census Tracts by EJ 8: Population Age 18 & Under, Living with Female Head of Household, (No Husband or Partner Present)



1.2 Allocating the TIP Projects

The TIP projects are allocated to the proper census tracts depending on the project location. See the following appendices for detailed information related to methodology for TIP funding allocation to census tracts and the results of the allocation to the census tracts. Note that the TIP amounts being allocated are from the 2014-2023 SJTPO TIP. This means that this analysis is forward looking. The analysis assumes that these 2014-2023 SJTPO TIP funds will be available.

- Appendix I EJ Analysis Methodology Narration and Flowchart
- Appendix II Census Tracts and EJ Threshold Tests.
- Appendix III TIP Projects Table

1.3 Establishing the Expected Performance Targets for the TIP

One benchmark used to evaluate the TIP EJ performance is the Regional TIP expenditure per capita (Benchmark 1). This benchmark is compared to the EJ TIP expenditure per EJ population.

Two other benchmarks are used for the evaluation. Benchmark 2 is the percentage of total population that is in the EJ census tracts. Benchmark 3 is the percentage of regional census tracts that are EJ census tracts. Both Benchmarks 2 and 3 are compared to the percentage of total funds that are allocated to the EJ area.

Table 3: Regional TIP Funding Allocated per Population – Benchmark 1

	SJTPO Region	Environmental Justice Census Tracts
TIP Funds Allocated	\$225,202,000	\$209,629,693
Population of Census Tracts	594,811	515,617
Funds per Person (Benchmark 1 & Test 1)	\$379	\$407

We can see from Table 3 above that our benchmark is \$379 per person. This is what we expect to see if the EJ allocation of funding is appropriate. The actual EJ area TIP expenditure per person is \$407. This exceeds the test, and is a favorable result.

Table 4: Population vs. Funding Allocation – Benchmark 2

Population vs. Funding Allocation	Population	Funding
Total Region	594,811	\$225,202,000
Total EJ Population	515,617	\$209,629,693
Population Allocated – (Benchmark 2)	86.7%	
Funding Allocated – (Test 2)		93.1%

We can see from Table 4 above that our benchmark is 86.7%. That is, we expect that 86.7 % of our funding be allocated to the EJ area. The actual EJ area TIP expenditure is 93.1% of the total. This exceeds the test, and is a favorable result.

Table 5: Census Tract Numbers vs. Funding Allocation – Benchmark 3

Census Tract Numbers vs. Funding Allocation	Census Tracts	Funding
Total Region	163	\$225,202,000
Total EJ Census Tracts	139	\$209,629,693
Census Tracts Allocated – (Benchmark 3)	85.3%	
Funding Allocated – (Test 3)		93.1%

We can see from Table 5 above that our benchmark is 85.3%. That is, we expect that 85.3% of our funding be allocated to the EJ area. The actual EJ area TIP expenditure is 93.1% of the total. This exceeds the test, and is a favorable result.

1.4. Assessing Actual TIP Performance with the Expected Performance Target

The analysis shows that we are investing in transportation projects in an equitable manner throughout the SJTPO region. This conclusion is possible because of the analysis conducted in Tables 3, 4, & 5. Note that the actual EJ performance was in line with our expected performance.

A spatial analysis was conducted to arrive at the above conclusion. The FY 2014-2023 TIP was reviewed for projects that were considered to improve local safety, preserve the existing roadways, or enhance the local transportation system. Projects were categorized as either a roadway improvement, or as an intersection/interchange improvement. Map 1 (section 1.1.2) displays the spatial relationship between the EJCoCs and the TIP projects.

Project Impact

If a project was located partially or completely within a census tract, it was assumed to benefit the entire population of that tract. For this analysis, every project was considered a positive event for its area (census tract). While many of SJTPO’s projects do have a positive impact upon an area in terms of improving mobility and access; in reality, projects are equally likely to have a negative impact, in that they can result in an increase in traffic and noise, worsen air quality, or result in property takings or displacements or other environmental degradation. While a detailed assessment of a project’s environmental impact is beyond the scope of this report, every project receiving Federal funds must have a signed Categorical Exclusion Document (CED), which documents any significant impact to an EJ community; and if one exists, recommends mitigation measures. It is a distinct policy of SJTPO “to avoid, minimize, or

mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low income populations.”⁷

Alternative Analysis

Alternative EJ Performance analysis included two other methods. One method created a more focused EJ area and EJ population by requiring a census tract to clear any six of the total eight EJ thresholds. This compares to just one EJ threshold in the Basic Analysis Method. This resulted in \$39,444,528 being allocated to the EJ area; this alternative EJ area had a population of 96,520. This produces an EJ funding per capita of \$409. This amount compares favorably to Benchmark 1 (\$379).

Another alternative method also produced a more focused EJ area and population. In this method, the census tracts needed to meet just one of the eight EJ thresholds; however the eight thresholds were multiplied by a factor of 1.25. This method produced an EJ expenditure of \$385 per capita. This also compared favorably to Benchmark 1 (\$379). Appendix IV includes maps depicting the results of this alternative analysis.

⁷ SJTPO. Regional Transportation Plan 2040. At: http://www.sjtpo.org/Documents/RTP/2040/RTP2040_Main.pdf.

Assessing Other Major Planning Products

This report will now focus on the remaining four (4) SJTPO products/activities with respect to EJ impact. Those SJTPO efforts are the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Public Involvement Efforts, the HSTP, and the Unified Planning Work Program.

2. Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

SJTPO fully recognizes the importance of identifying and addressing issues related to environmental justice and Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act in the formulation of its policies and plans. The Regional Transportation Plan (2040 RTP) contains an overview of environmental justice issues and identifies the location of particular communities of concern (low-income, minority, and elderly populations). Those EJCoCs were updated as a part of this report, using 2010 Census and ACS data. The RTP also states that it is a goal of the organization to promote linkages between low-income households and employment opportunities; the SJTPO has provided Human Service Transportation Plans for each of the counties to further the accomplishment of this goal. These efforts, along with other key plans, projects, and policies are summarized below, with excerpts highlighting environmental justice-related policies and recommendations.

The Regional Transportation Plan (2040 RTP) serves as the official plan for the SJTPO region and guides the transportation decision-making for a projected twenty-five year horizon. It is updated periodically and was recently updated to plan for the years 2012 through 2040. The primary goals of the updated 2040 RTP are to:

- Promote transportation choices for the movement of people and goods
- Support the regional economy
- Improve transportation safety
- Improve security
- Mitigate traffic congestion
- Protect and enhance the environment
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system
- Restore, preserve, and maintain the existing transportation system

While pursuing all of these goals are as important to all populations as well as the low-income and minority populations of the SJTPO region, the goal “to promote transportation choices for the movement of people and goods” is particularly relevant to the organization’s recognition of the need to address access and quality of life for low-income, minority, and other disadvantaged populations. The policies supporting this goal include:

- Expand and improve non-auto transportation systems as needed: aviation, passenger rail, marine, rail freight, bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit.
- Provide for affordable mobility options to all segments of the transportation disadvantaged and support welfare-to work transportation initiatives.

- Support transit operating subsidies to ensure affordable mobility options.

Public involvement was an essential component of developing the 2040 RTP. The RTP Public Involvement Program was instituted to ensure early and timely input from a wide range of participants, particularly at critical milestones in the plan development process. The program included a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) workshop, a CAC/TAC questionnaire, focus groups, public and agency meetings, and outreach through newsletters and the SJTPO website. For future updates and RTP development, the SJTPO will continue to use the RTP Public Involvement Program, which will enable them to more effectively reach low-income and minority populations and include these populations in the planning process.

3. Public Involvement Plan (PIP)

The SJTPO has a Public Involvement Plan (PIP), adopted in 2010, which guides all SJTPO public involvement efforts. The intent of the PIP is to insure that the SJTPO has a provocative and meaningful public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access by all segments of the population to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing the RTP and TIP.

The PIP also responds to the inherent need of the organization to develop public understanding and support of its activities. To accomplish this, the SJTPO maintains procedures encompassing the following major goals:

- Increase and improve opportunities for public involvement.
- Increase the accessibility and transparency of information available to the public.
- Increase the efficiency of the public involvement process.
- Provide the public with more options and more education on how to get involved and be heard in the transportation planning process.
- Make better transportation decisions that meet the needs of all people.
- Enhance the environmental justice process.

In addition to the PIP, the SJTPO developed the RTP Public Involvement Program, as described above, which focuses specifically on the RTP. The basic objectives of the program are to inform and educate citizens about the RTP, describe how citizens may provide input to assist with plan development, solicit, and document local input, and to foster better public relations. To meet these objectives, the program emphasizes information exchange and online outreach to compensate for the inherent difficulty in holding meetings and workshops for the general public in a region with low overall population density that is not well served by transit. The RTP Public Involvement Program also includes innovative outreach approaches, such as visits to local advocacy groups, and identification of key interest groups throughout the region, to be targeted for inclusion in the SJTPO's planning processes.

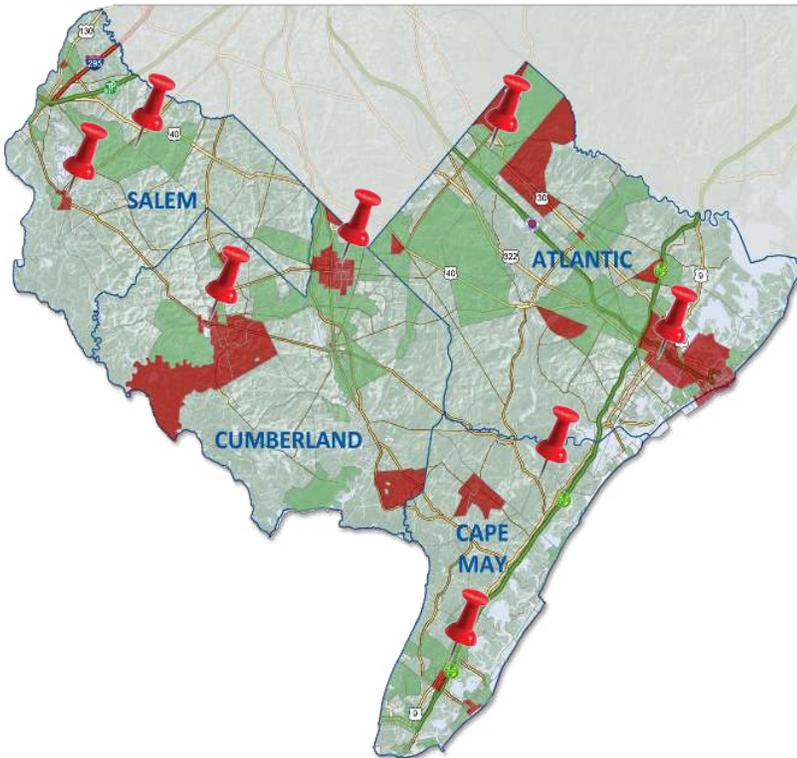
The RTP Public Involvement Program also addresses public involvement as it relates to environmental justice. It includes a discussion of environmental justice and populations considered under the DOT Order, identifies barriers specific to reaching environmental justice

populations along with strategies to overcome them, and recommends public involvement activities that will enhance outreach efforts to disadvantaged populations.

For the RTP 2040 public outreach efforts, there were a total of eight (8) preliminary public outreach meetings in 2011. A total of six (6) were held in EJ areas. Map 10 below displays the locations of the preliminary meetings along with the EJ areas as they were defined at that time.

The SJTPO put forth a great deal of effort to ensure that these Kick-Off Meetings were as accessible as reasonably possible. Care was taken to ensure that each county had at least one meeting that was in an Environmental Justice (EJ) area and at least one that was in a walkable and/or transit accessible area. EJ refers to an area that represents an above average clustering of low-income or minority populations. These are groups that are identified in federal guidance as under-represented in the transportation planning process.

Map 10: Preliminary RTP 2040 Public Outreach Locations



The Map 10 displays the Environmental Justice areas, as they were identified in 2011 and 2012. This was the time period of our latest RTP public outreach effort. The points on the map represent the location of the eight Kick-Off Meetings. In addition to the eight (8) preliminary meetings in 2011, SJTPO also had two (2) RTP-related public meetings in 2012. Both of these were in Vineland. This means that 8 of 10 public meetings for the RTP 2040 were held in EJ areas.

4. Regional Human Service Transportation Planning

The purpose of the SJTPO and state-wide human service transportation (HST) planning program is to provide transportation to that portion of the Title VI population that are in need of such services. MPO's are required to develop, on a periodic basis, regional human service transportation plans that address the transportation needs of this population and to recommend strategies for the development of cost-efficient, coordinated county (or regional) HST systems. These Plans guide the counties in their HST coordination efforts, and serve as the basis for public and private HST provider funding applications to create, maintain and expand their services. These services provide transportation for senior citizens, the disabled, persons of low income and those seeking access to the job market to places of employment and job training, medical and day care facilities, and other important destinations.

The most recent SJTPO HST Report, the 2010 Regional Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan, identified, within the SJTPO region, the major HST providers, and included information and graphics on various segments of the Title VI population, location of major employers, and other transportation generators. The Plan identified HST gaps and coordination opportunities, and recommended HST service improvements and coordination strategies. SJTPO is currently in the process of updating its Regional Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan, with an expected completion date of June 30, 2015.

5. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Each year, the SJTPO, in cooperation with member agencies, prepares a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The UPWP essentially serves as the master regional transportation planning funding application, emphasizing documentation of planning activities to be performed with funds provided to the SJTPO by the FHWA and FTA. It includes the work of member agencies and consultants, as well as the work done directly by the SJTPO staff. Public involvement is important to the development of the UPWP. From the outset, citizens are given an opportunity to suggest projects and other activities for consideration and the SJTPO staff solicits comments from the CAC.

Over \$2,564,899 is programmed for use in the FY 2015 UPWP. Of these funds, over \$1,355,149 is programmed for Central Staff, \$321,500 (amount includes federal funds and local match) is programmed for county activities, and over \$816,250 is programmed for technical studies. While a majority of this funding is needed for mandatory planning activities such as the RTP, and support to carry them out, which includes staff salaries and equipment, a notable amount of money is available to conduct studies and fund projects. As there continues to be funding available through the UPWP to fund local studies and projects, it is critical for organizations and communities throughout the region to become familiar with the planning process and encourage the development of a work program responsive to the needs, concerns, and issues facing their communities.

Endnote 1: TIP Background Information

The SJTPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) reflects the transportation capital improvement priorities of the South Jersey region and serves as the link between the transportation planning process and implementation. It includes a list of transportation projects and programs scheduled for implementation over a four-year period, and must be consistent with the goals and policies of the RTP. While inclusion in the TIP does not guarantee funding, it is an essential step in the authorization of funding for a project. Getting a project on the TIP is a critical step towards securing funding and implementation; therefore, it is important to ensure that all groups in the SJTPO region understand and have access to the TIP process, including representatives from low-income and minority communities. By analyzing the distribution of TIP projects, it can be determined if it complies with Title VI, Executive Order 12898 and 13166, and US DOT Orders.