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3.8 TITLE VI/ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IMPACTS

3.8.1 Introduction

The following substantive changes have been made to this section since the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was published:

- Added potential Environmental Justice impacts for RPA P and Alternative R to impact tables and assessments.
- Added information regarding outreach efforts to Environmental Justice communities.
- Added information regarding evaluation of potential impacts to Environmental Justice communities.

Executive Order (EO) 12898, “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations”, directs that Environmental Justice impacts for federal activities must be considered. EO 12898 provides that “each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.”

On April 21, 2023, the President signed EO 14096, “Revitalizing Our Nation’s Commitment to Environmental Justice for All”. The order uses a whole-of-government approach to advance environmental justice and serves as a supplement to EO 12898. As guidance on EO 14096 becomes available, it will be used in the Tier 2 studies.

Federal funding also requires compliance with Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which declares that “no person in the United States shall, on the ground 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.” The phrases “environmental justice impacts” and “Title VI impacts” are often used interchangeably; however, impacts to low-income populations are addressed only in EO 12898. Although the nondiscrimination principles of EO 12898 and the Title VI statute intersect, they are two separate mandates, and each has unique requirements.

On December 2, 1998, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) adopted FHWA Order 6640.23, “FHWA Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, in response to the requirements of Executive Order 12898”. On June 14, 2012, FHWA Order 6640.23A (FHWA Order) was issued superseding FHWA Order 6640.23. The FHWA Environmental Justice Reference Guide, published in April 2015, guides FHWA compliance with environmental justice obligations. The Guide repeats the guiding principles of the Department of Transportation Environmental Justice Strategy.¹ It identifies the following three tenets of environmental justice in transportation planning:

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

¹ https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/environmental_justice/ej_at_dot/dot_ej_strategy/index.cfm . Accessed 08/04/2023.



Disproportionately high and adverse effects “refers to an adverse effect that (1) is predominately borne by a minority population and/or a low-income population; or (2) will be suffered by the minority population and/or low-income population and is appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude than the adverse effect that will be suffered by the nonminority population and/or non-low-income population.” See the current Secretarial Order definition, DOT 5610.2C (May 16, 2021), Appendix 1.g.

3.8.2 Methodology

This is a Tier 1 study with a large Study Area. An appropriate process was developed for identifying whether vulnerable communities bear a disproportionate share of the potentially negative environmental consequences of the project. That process included identifying minority and low-income communities and their proximity to potential alternatives. It also included strategies for communicating project information with EJ communities to provide fair treatment and involvement.

Compliance with environmental justice requirements was assessed by identifying and analyzing minority and low-income populations within the 12-county Study Area for the Mid-States Corridor project. The environmental justice analysis was performed following the guidelines established in Section II.B.3.e Environmental Justice in the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) Procedural Manual for Preparing Environmental Studies. The 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) identified that minority and low-income populations exist throughout the Study Area. Groups of low-income populations and minority populations were mapped using the project’s Geographic Information System (GIS) to identify the locations in which these populations reside.

Environmental justice analyses must determine if a federal action would have disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations. Adverse effects, as defined by the FHWA Order, are “the totality of significant individual or cumulative human health or environmental effects, including interrelated social and economic effects.” Adverse effects may include, but are not limited to:

- Bodily impairment, infirmity, illness, or death
- Air, noise, and water pollution and soil contamination
- Destruction or disruption of human-made or natural resources
- Destruction or diminution of aesthetic values
- Destruction or disruption of community cohesion or a community’s economic vitality
- Destruction or disruption of the availability of public and private facilities and services
- Vibration
- Adverse employment effects
- Displacement of persons, businesses, farms, or nonprofit organizations
- Increased traffic congestion, isolation, exclusion, or separation of minority or low-income individuals within a given community or from the broader community
- The denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits of FHWA/DOT programs, policies, or activities

According to the FHWA Order 6640.23A, a disproportionately high and adverse effect is one that predominately affects an environmental justice community or affects the environmental justice population and is substantially more severe than impacts to the non-environmental justice population.



For the purposes of this Tier 1 EIS, the socio-economic study area for the environmental justice analysis is defined as the census block groups (CBG) that would be impacted by one or more of the alternatives. An Environmental Justice Outreach Plan was prepared by the Mid-States Corridor Consultant Public Involvement Team and approved by INDOT and FHWA on June 30, 2020. The plan was updated in May 2021 to include an EJ Action Plan in response to changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. An additional update was made in June 2023, to reflect activity added in response to comments on the DEIS and chronicle outreach activities. More information on those changes can be found in **Section 3.8.4 Outreach**. The Environmental Justice Outreach Plan can be found in **Appendix W—Environmental Justice Analysis** and is posted on the Mid-States Corridor Project web site (<https://midstatescorridor.com/project-documents/>). The Environmental Justice Outreach Plan identified potential environmental justice communities within the socio-economic study area and proposed strategies for outreach to these communities.

These methods are appropriate for the level of study possible in a Tier 1 Study in a Study Area of over 4,700 square miles. In Tier 2 studies, a more detailed analysis of minority and low-income populations will be developed to determine specific effects to EJ communities. The analysis will include data collection, public involvement, GIS data collection and map analysis. The analysis will include an assessment of communities through a Community Impact Assessment document using available data on population demographics from the U.S. Census Bureau and other resources. Public involvement will provide additional information about potentially affected communities and how the project might negatively or positively impact their communities.

3.8.3 Minority and Low-Income Populations

Minority and low-income populations were identified using information from the 2019 ACS. Under FHWA Order 6640.23A, the FHWA and USDOT Environmental Justice (EJ) Orders define “population” as any “readily identifiable group of minority and/or low-income persons who live in geographic proximity, and, if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed/transient persons of those groups (such as migrant workers, homeless persons, or Native Americans) who will be similarly affected by a proposed FHWA/DOT program, policy, or activity.”

3.8.3.1 Methods

Potential EJ impacts are found by identifying the minority populations and low-income populations that are in or near the project area, calculating their percentage in the area relative to a reference population, and determining whether there may be adverse impacts to them. The reference community is the community of comparison (COC), and for the Mid-States Corridor EJ analysis, the county for each respective CBG was used as the COC.

CBGs are the smallest area for which the ACS provides data on low-income and minority populations. The ACS data set was used to determine where Mid-States Corridor alternatives cross minority or low-income COCs. The ACS data was also used to identify the minority and low-income populations within the Mid-States Corridor study area.

Per FHWA Order 6640.23A, the following minority populations are required to be evaluated as part of an analysis of environmental justice issues. The following descriptions are quoted from the FHWA Order:

- **Black:** a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.
- **Hispanic or Latino:** a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
- **Asian American:** a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent.
- **American Indian and Alaskan Native:** a person having origins in any of the original people of North America, South America (including Central 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 islands.

A community that overlaps the project limits is called the affected community (AC). COCs and ACs were used based on the size of the study area and the demographic data available. For each calculation, individual CBGs were used as the ACs, and the county for each respective CBG was the COC. When the concentration of minority individuals in an affected area is greater than 50 percent or if the concentration in an AC is 125 percent or more than that of the COC, the AC is referred to as having an elevated concentration of minority population or an EJ Population of Concern. Using the 2019 ACS data for minority populations (ACS Table B03002), Minority EJ Populations of Concern were determined as follows:

1. Calculate percent of minority population for both the AC (i.e., CBG) and the COC (i.e., County)
 - a. $\text{Percent Minority} = (\text{Total population} - \text{Not Hispanic or Latino: White alone}) / \text{Total population}$
2. Calculate 125 percent of COC Percent Minority
 - a. $125 \text{ percent of COC Percent Minority} = \text{COC Percent Minority} \times 1.25$
3. IF the AC Percent Minority \geq 50 percent, THEN the AC has a Minority EJ Population of Concern
4. IF the AC Percent Minority \geq 125 percent of COC Percent Minority, THEN the AC has a Minority EJ Population of Concern

The FHWA and USDOT EJ Orders define a low-income individual as a person whose median household income is at or below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Poverty Level Guidelines. Any readily identifiable group of low-income persons who live in geographic proximity, and if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed/transient persons (such as migrant workers or Native Americans) who will be similarly affected by a proposed FHWA program, policy, or activity (FHWA Order 6640.23A).

Communities of comparison and affected communities were chosen based on the size of the study area and the demographic data available. For each calculation, individual CBGs are used as the AC, and the county for each respective CBG is the COC. When the concentration of low-income individuals in an affected area is greater than 50 percent or if the concentration in an affected community is 125 percent or more than that of the COC, the affected community is referred to as having an elevated concentration of low-income populations. Using the 2019 ACS data for low-income populations (ACS Table B17001), Low-Income EJ Populations of Concern were determined as follows:

1. Calculate percent of low-income population for both the AC (i.e., CBG) and the COC (i.e., County)
 - a. $\text{Percent Low-Income} = \text{Income in the past 12 months below poverty level} / \text{Total population}$
2. Calculate 125 percent of COC Percent Low-Income
 - a. $125 \text{ percent of COC Percent Low-Income} = \text{COC Percent Low-Income} \times 1.25$
3. IF the AC Percent Low-Income \geq 50 percent, THEN the AC has a Low-Income EJ Population of Concern

IF the AC Percent Low-Income \geq 125 percent of COC Percent Low-Income, THEN the AC has a Low-Income EJ Population of Concern

3.8.3.2 Determinations

The Study Area has 21 CBGs which have a Population of Concern for environmental justice. An AC is considered a Population of Concern if:

1. The minority or low-income population of an AC is greater than 50 percent of the AC's total population; or



2. The percentage minority or low-income population of an AC is 125 percent (or more) higher than percentage minority or low-income population of the reference population
3. or COC

If either of the above situations occurred, the affected community is referred to as having an elevated concentration of minority or low-income populations. Block groups meeting this threshold were identified within the study area (**Appendix W**). The number of minority or low-income people within block groups having elevated concentrations of minority or low-income populations impacted by the proposed Build Alternatives are summarized in **Table 3.8-1**. The persons enumerated in **Table 3.8.1** do not correspond directly to the number of minority or low-income persons who will be directly impacted by the project because impacts are based on factors (e.g., specific variation and scope of the project, specific locations of low-income or minority persons within the CBGs, etc.) that are not yet known at the Tier 1 level of study. Block groups with EJ Populations of Concern are illustrated in **Figure 3.8-1**.

Environmental Justice Impacts						
Alternatives	Total Populations of CBGs for Low Income Calculations	Total Low Income	Percentage Low Income	Total Populations of CBGs for Minority Calculations	Total Minority	Percentage Minority
B	19,002	1,482	7.80%	19,378	1,344	6.94%
C	30,447	2,868	9.42%	30,823	2,737	8.88%
M	38,407	4,257	11.08%	39,613	3,064	7.73%
O	37,979	3,922	10.33%	39,031	3,424	8.77%
P	42,846	3,832	8.94%	43,804	2,984	6.81%
RPA P	44,249	3,985	9.01%	45,207	2,994	6.62%
R	38,305	3,511	9.17%	38,418	3,993	10.39%

* Tier 1 Alternative impacts are reported in ranges including all the local improvements, facility types, and bypass variations.
 **Facility type 1, freeways, has been removed from consideration. Therefore, no modifications to existing US 231 in Section 1 and existing SR 37 in Section 3 are anticipated. No impacts are anticipated on either of these facilities.

Table 3.8-1: Environmental Justice Impacts by Alternative

Figure 3.8-1 shows the CBGs with elevated concentrations of EJ Populations of Concern. The following bullet points summarize the comparative numbers of such CBGs and total CBGs impacted by each alternative.

- **Alternative B** has 13 CBGs. Eight of these, 62 percent, have elevated concentrations of EJ Populations of Concern.
- **Alternative C** has 23 CBGs. 14 of these, 61 percent, have elevated concentrations of EJ Populations of Concern.
- **Alternative M** has 29 CBGs. 19 of these, 66 percent, have elevated concentrations of EJ Populations of Concern.
- **Alternative O** has 28 to 29 CBGs. 19 of these, 66 to 68 percent have elevated concentrations of EJ Populations of Concern.
- **Alternative P** has 28 CBGs. 15 of these, 54 percent, have elevated concentrations of EJ Populations of Concern.
- **Alternative R** has 27 CBGs. 15 of these, 56 percent, have elevated concentrations of EJ Populations of Concern.
- **RPA P** has 28 to 30 CBGs. 15 of these, 50 to 54 percent, have elevated concentrations of EJ Populations of Concern.

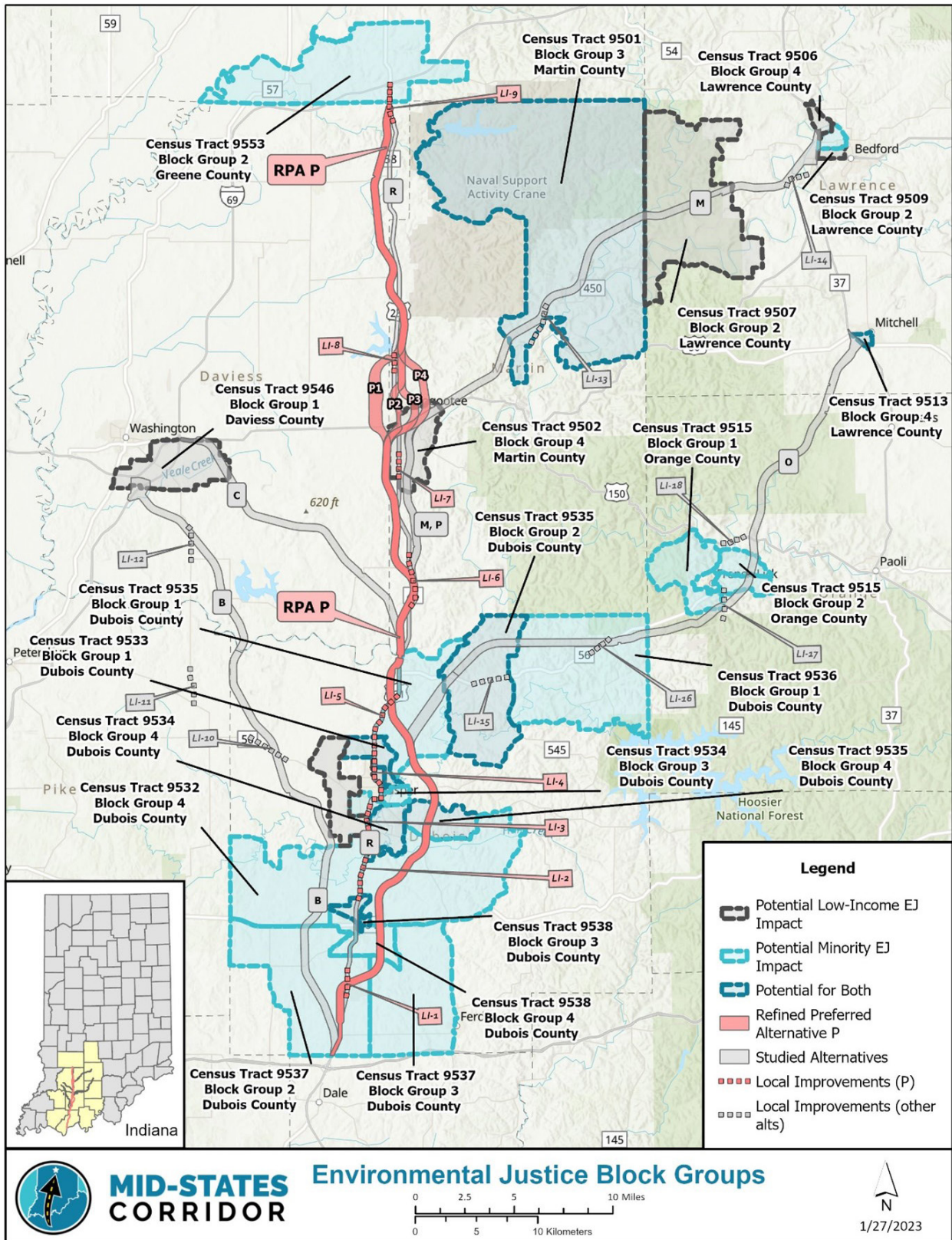


Figure 3.8-1: Environmental Justice Block Groups Impacted



Key observations include:

- Section 2 of Alternatives C, P, RPA P, M and O, below the White River, each have the same 13 CBGs with elevated EJ Populations of Concern.
- Section 2 of Alternative R has 13 CBGs with elevated EJ Populations of Concern, and shares 11 of these CBGs with Alternatives C, P, RPA P, M and O.
- Alternative O has six additional CBGs with elevated EJ Populations of Concern which are not impacted by other alternatives. Three of these are at French Lick.
- Alternative O has the highest number of CBGs with elevated EJ Populations of Concern for minority populations (60% of all Alternative O CBGs) and CBGs with elevated EJ Populations of Concern for both minority and poverty populations (21% of all Alternative O CBGs).
- Alternative M has five additional CBGs with elevated EJ Populations of Concern which are not impacted by other alternatives. Three of these are at Bedford.
- Alternative M has the highest number of CBGs with elevated EJ Populations of Concern for populations in poverty (38% of all Alternative M CBGs).
- Alternatives P, RPA P, and R each have a total of 15 CBGs with elevated EJ Populations of Concern. The only differences lie in the CBGs with elevated EJ Populations of Concern in Section 2, where Alternatives P and RPA P impact two different CBGs than Alternative R, although the totals are the same.
- Alternative P and RPA P have the lowest percentages of CBGs with elevated EJ Populations of Concern.

These findings are consistent with Alternative M and O impacting a higher percentage of CBGs with elevated EJ Populations of Concern.

3.8.4 Outreach

3.8.4.1 Outreach Approach

An Environmental Justice Outreach Plan was created at the outstart of the project. Given the size of the study area, it was determined that as the alignments narrowed, so too would the focus of the outreach efforts to provide fair treatment and create meaningful involvement. The public outreach program for this project was developed to create opportunities to engage potentially affected environmental justice communities in the tiered-environmental study. The Tier 1 activities centered on a two-phase approach.

During Phase 1 Pre-Screening of Alternatives, engagement activities focused on raising project awareness and encouraging participation through multiple channels to provide ease of access for all communities. During Phase 2 Post-Screening of Alternatives, the plan focused on visiting EJ communities proximate to the alternatives carried forward for study. These in person meetings could not be held due to the onset of the COVID 19 pandemic, and an alternate plan was developed. To read more about the alternate strategies, see **3.8.4.3 Post Screening of Alternatives**.

The outreach approach was supported by a mobile-friendly, robust project website. Guidance from FHWA indicated access to computers and the internet could be a challenge within EJ communities. However, EJ community members are more likely to own smartphones. The project website is smartphone compatible. The website will display in a manner suited to the user's device. It can be used and accessed with the same ease as a computer. The website features an option to view content in Spanish. Outreach efforts also incorporated social media messaging to reach broad audiences when project feedback was sought.



3.8.4.2 Phase 1 – Pre-Screening of Alternatives

The first round of Public Information Meetings (PIMs) provided an opportunity for the public to identify potential preliminary alternatives as well as providing input on the Draft Purpose and Need. Public Information Meetings were held in three different communities regarding the Purpose and Need. Evening meetings in Jasper, Washington and French Lick were held at local high schools. To see the proximity of meeting locations to environmental justice block groups, see **Figure 3.8-2**. Meeting locations were chosen with consideration for EJ communities. See **Appendix BB – Public Meetings and Correspondence** for more information.

For those who found it difficult to attend these meetings, the “meeting in a box” format was developed and hosted at seventeen public libraries throughout the project study area. Library locations were selected based on their proximity to the preliminary alternatives and potentially impacted EJ communities. Libraries were chosen not just to provide an opportunity for local access to information. They also offer extended daily hours and, in some cases, weekend hours. Librarians were available to assist with understanding study materials. For adults without access to reliable childcare, the libraries provided greater flexibility to participate.

The “meeting in a box” included all PIM materials along with directions on how to provide general comments or comments on potential preliminary alternatives. It also allowed for submitting additional alternatives (line(s) on a map) for consideration. Comments and potential preliminary alternatives were collected from each public library 30 days after distribution and incorporated into the project database. Another “meeting in a box” opportunity was provided to coincide with the second round of PIMs. This second round of meetings concentrated on gathering input on the Screening of Alternatives document. A questionnaire was developed to allow people to rank their preferences of alternatives and give feedback on the facility type, current obstacles, and concerns. This questionnaire was available at the “meetings in a box” libraries as well as the other meeting materials. The public meetings were held at schools in three communities, Loogootee, Bedford, and Jasper. The meetings, held in late February of 2020, would mark the end of in person outreach for an extended period.

3.8.4.3 Phase 2 – Post-Screening of Alternatives

As the comment period for the second round of Public Information Meetings closed, so did the state of Indiana. According to the NY Times, on March 24, 2020, Gov. Eric J. Holcomb asked “Hoosiers to hunker down” in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. All non-essential employees were ordered to stay home and shelter in place. The project office was closed and wouldn’t reopen until February of 2021 when it was available by appointment only. Also in February, as the project was restarting, project team members met electronically with FHWA to discuss best practices for outreach in the COVID-19 era. During this meeting, a new course of action was identified. The EJ Action Plan (**see Appendix W**) was created in response to the challenges still present in an environment where people remained concerned about the pandemic.

The original plan emphasized meetings with potential environmental justice communities after the number of alternatives was reduced during screening. This approach would have allowed more opportunities for detailed discussions while still gathering input from these communities within each geographic region of the project. In May 2021 it was determined that the proposed Post-Screening of Alternatives targeted meetings were no longer feasible due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

In the absence of these meetings, the EJ Action Plan instituted a flier distribution program to reach EJ populations throughout the project study area. Additional details about the modified approach can be found in the Environmental Justice Action Plan. **Appendix W – Title VI/Environmental Justice Analysis** contains the current Environmental Justice Outreach Plan and the Action Plan. Fliers were strategically posted at local grocery and convenience store retailers, especially those within or proximate to EJ communities because they were reliably open for business and visited frequently. The fliers were also posted at several other local facilities, including libraries,

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healthcare facilities, municipal buildings, etc. throughout the project study area. The distribution of fliers was included as an additional outreach effort to increase project awareness within EJ communities and direct them to additional information regarding the project.

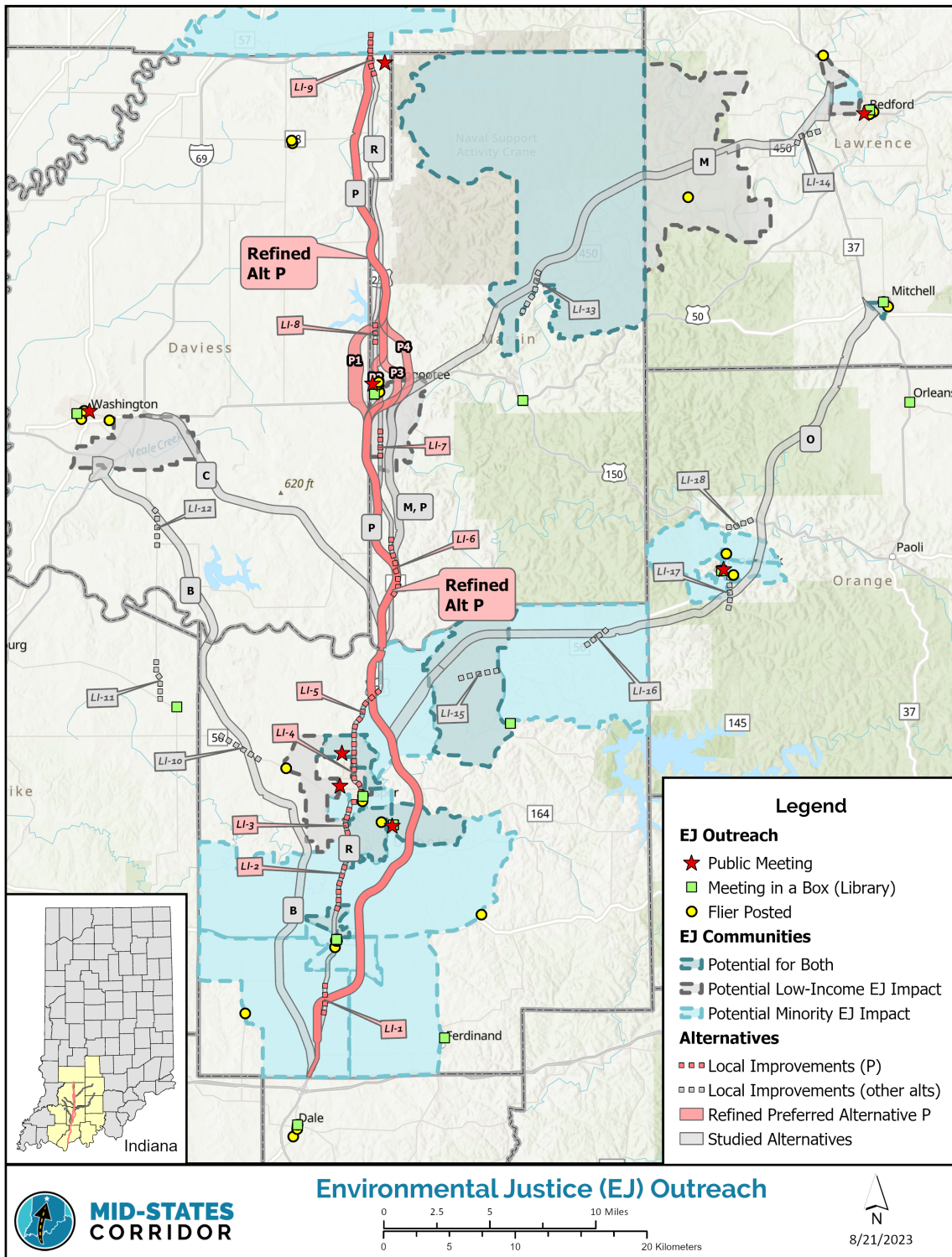


Figure 3.8-2: Environmental Justice Outreach



The flier distribution targeted EJ block groups overlapping or proximate to each Build Alternative. Locations for fliers were identified within each of those block groups with more locations identified in groups with higher population densities. Additionally, fliers were posted at “meeting in a box” library locations.

Fliers were posted in the spring of 2021 to increase awareness of the project. A second round of fliers was posted with the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in April 2022 coinciding with the public hearings and formal DEIS comment period. The postings were targeted at increasing awareness within EJ communities. They were accompanied by other outreach mechanisms, including the project website, social media and news outlets. All notified people about the DEIS publication. “Meeting in a Box” materials were provided at the library locations to solicit feedback on the DEIS and provide EJ communities with more convenient access to the updated project information.

Tier 2 studies will incorporate strategies to measure participation among the EJ population and create a method to identify feedback submitted by participants in EJ communities. Coordination with community resource providers and agencies will be used to ensure EJ representation on a Community Advisory Committee. Tier 2 will also include the targeted meetings in EJ communities that were not feasible in the Tier 1 Study. Early coordination will help point out potential barriers to participation so strategies, such as translation for Limited English Proficiency participants, can be arranged.

3.8.5 Impacts

Potential impacts to be considered for Environmental Justice communities can include relocations, economic changes, alterations to existing travel patterns, changes in community cohesion, changes in public and private community services and changes in noise levels and air quality. These impacts can vary in urban and rural locations.

3.8.5.1 Relocations

Projects that displace residents or businesses have the potential to impact a community. Community cohesion (3.8.5.4) and changes to services (3.8.5.5) can be impacted by relocations associated with the project. Relocation impacts to identified EJ Minority and Low-Income Populations of Concern may occur in Dubois, Daviess, Greene, Lawrence, Martin and Orange counties. Potential relocations due to direct right-of-way impacts in CBGs with EJ Populations of Concern are given in ranges to account for ranges of facility types. Total potential relocations are 31 to 33 for Alternative B, 54 to 72 for Alternative C, 82 to 102 for Alternative M, 82 to 105 for Alternative O, 47 to 74 for Alternative P, 182 for Alternative R and, 47 to 73 for Alternative RPA P. Any individual, family, business, or farm displaced by the project will be offered relocation assistance services to locate a suitable replacement property.

EJ Relocations	
Alternatives	Number of Potential Relocations
B	31-33
C	54-72
M	82-102
O	82-105
P	47-74
RPA P	47-73
R	182

Table 3.8-2: Environmental Justice Relocations by Alternative

The Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (amended in 1987) (Uniform Act) was established to ensure uniform and equitable treatment for persons displaced by federally funded programs. The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 49, Part 24 requires all Federal, State, and local government agencies receiving Federal financial assistance for projects that require acquisitions of real property to comply with the Uniform Act. For more information on how these impacts were calculated, see **Chapter 3.5 Relocations**.



3.8.5.2 Economics

New highways create changes to several economic categories that could impact EJ communities. They include motor vehicle operating costs, travel time savings, costs associated with crashes and impacts to property values. All alternatives are forecasted to increase vehicle operating costs. The smallest increases are associated with alternatives M, P, RPA P, and R. Alternative P and RPA P provide the largest decrease in crash costs. Alternatives M, P, RPA P and R result in travel time savings and have the lowest travel time costs. During construction, property values would be unaffected or temporarily decrease. Over time, there is potential for a positive change in property values improved by accessibility. How these changes might positively or negatively impact EJ communities will be more precisely determined in the Tier 2 studies. However, economic development induced by the new highway resulting in additional jobs and households locating in the area could be a significant benefit. For more information on how these impacts were calculated, see **Appendix EE – Economic Impacts**.

3.8.5.3 Changes in Travel Patterns

New highways change travel patterns. Changes in access due to altered travel patterns is expected to cause minimal impacts in populated areas. Most community resources are located within the core of a community's downtown or commercial area. All the alternatives except Alternative R and RPA P2 (using existing US 231 in Loogootee) avoid urban areas. Rural communities that rely on access to more populated areas for their needs may have altered access to facilities in nearby towns. Changes in access may cause impacts to local and county roads currently used. Most of the alternatives are in rural areas where EJ communities are more dispersed. Tier 2 activities will determine how rural EJ communities access populated areas and look for ways to avoid or minimize impacts. For more information on how these impacts were determined, see **Chapter 3.3 Social Impacts**.

3.8.5.4 Changes in Community Cohesion

Highways can have a noticeable impact on communities. Changes in neighborhood or community cohesion caused by a project can be adverse or beneficial to the community. These changes may include displacements, splitting neighborhoods, isolating members of an ethnic group, generating new development, changes in property values or separation of residences from community facilities. Like the changes seen in travel patterns, rural communities are more likely to see changes in community cohesion because alternatives generally avoid highly populated areas. These rural communities might be impacted if the project divides them from the populated areas they use for services. Alternative C would divide the Maltersville and Jasper communities. Alternative RPA P would pass a cluster of small communities including Bramble, Ragsville, Burns City, Odon and Farlen. These communities use US 231 as well as multiple county roads to access Loogootee. Access decisions made in Tier 2 will focus on avoiding and mitigating these kinds of impacts, specifically where EJ communities exist. For more information on how these impacts were calculated, see **Chapter 3.3 Social Impacts**.

3.8.5.5 Changes in Public and Private Community Services

Highways can impact public and private community services and create new settlement patterns. Impacts to school districts, recreation areas, religious and education institutions and emergency services were evaluated in the Tier 1 Study. Alternative R and RPA P2 could result in relocation impacts to four religious institutions in Loogootee.

All the alternatives have the potential to impact school corporations and bus routes through indirect impacts like altered access. Alternative R has one of the highest direct impacts to educational facilities with two potential relocations. RPA P has the widest ranging impacts to educational facilities, ranging from one to three potential relocations depending on facility type and final alignment.

Public safety facilities include emergency medical services, fire stations and police stations. Though all alternatives will result in access impacts to several public safety facilities, Alternatives B, C, O, and P will not result in any direct impacts. Alternative M will directly impact one public safety facility. RPA P will potentially cause direct impacts



to four public safety facilities should RPA P2 be chosen at Loogootee. None of the other RPA P variations around Loogootee will cause direct impacts to public safety facilities. Alternative R will potentially cause six direct or relocation impacts. Whether these impacts create a loss in services for EJ communities will be evaluated in Tier 2 when access decisions are made. Identifying which services the EJ communities rely on and how they access those services will be part of the targeted EJ outreach in Tier 2.

Impacts to recreational facilities depend on facility type and final alignment. RPA P is second only to Alternative R for highest number of total impacts to recreational facilities. Direct impacts for RPA P vary depending on the variation, with RPA P2 having the most direct impacts. Alternative R has the highest number of direct impacts to recreational facilities. Alternative M, the western variation of Alternative P and RPA P1 could each impact one planned trail. Alternative R could impact four planned trails and one existing trail.

For more information on how these impacts were calculated, see **Chapter 3.3 Social Impacts**.

3.8.5.6 Changes in Noise and Air Quality

Highways can change levels of traffic noise and air quality. Measuring noise impacts at a Tier 1 level can give a general idea about expected changes. However, noise impacts can vary greatly by facility type and vehicle speeds. A simple shift in alignment of a few hundred feet can abate potential noise impacts. Decisions on facility type and determining an exact alignment in Tier 2 studies will give a more complete analysis of noise impacts and how to avoid or mitigate any impacts to EJ communities. Rural alternatives have fewer impacts due to their dispersed housing. Alternative R and the portion of Alternative RPA P2 in Loogootee traverse populated areas and would have greater noise impacts. See **Section 3.10 – Noise Impacts** for details.

For purposes of air quality analyses, this FEIS considers general location, land use and areawide air quality implications. This Tier 1 EIS addresses air quality implications of the project within the 12-county Study Area. Any micro-scale analyses, such as Carbon Monoxide (CO) hotspots, will be conducted in Tier 2 NEPA studies. These local hot spot analyses will consider impacts to Environmental Justice communities. Regional air quality impacts are small for Build Alternatives in comparison to the No-Build Alternative. Changes in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) are small, and all alternatives produce result in less than a one percent increase in VMT, with correspondingly low changes in emissions. Of the Build Alternatives, RPA P has the smallest increase in emissions. Any regional air quality impacts would be small and be realized across the entire region. Because there are no significant air quality impacts, the EJ community will not be adversely impacted. See **Section 3.9 Air Quality** for details.

3.8.6 Summary

To address environmental justice requirements for the Mid-States Corridor project, the number and location of minority and low-income populations within the 12-county Study Area were analyzed. The environmental justice analysis helped facilitate full and fair participation by potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process. The Mid-States Corridor project public outreach program included specific efforts to engage potentially affected environmental justice communities in the context of a tiered-environmental study. The Tier 1 activities involved a two-phase approach that focused on broad outreach to raise project awareness during Pre-Screening and Post-Screening of Alternatives. A narrower focus on environmental justice communities was scheduled to begin after the number of potential alternatives was reduced. The outreach meetings, scheduled to take place in the areas proximate to Census Block Groups with EJ communities, were not feasible in the wake of a pandemic and an alternate EJ Action Plan was introduced. The plan relied on the mobile-friendly website and social media channels for giving information and soliciting feedback. It used fliers posted in spots proximate to EJ communities like grocery stores to help maintain awareness and access to vulnerable populations.



The Environmental Justice Outreach Plan was developed to allow those in minority and low-income communities to discuss the project and identify concerns in those communities. The Outreach Plan included a project office established in Jasper, Indiana. The plan used distribution of project related fliers not only in local retailers, but also in libraries, healthcare facilities and municipal buildings throughout the project study area. Public information meetings and public hearings were held in multiple locations to allow for additional input from the environmental justice communities. Outreach also aimed to eliminate obstacles to participation by creating the “meeting in a box” whereby EJ populations could participate in a convenient and accessible way.

The study identified EJ Populations of Concern and their proximity to the project alternatives. Alternative P and RPA P have the lowest percentages of CBGs with elevated EJ Populations of Concern. Alternative M and O have the highest percentage of CBGs with elevated EJ Populations of Concern.

With EJ Populations of Concern identified, the study team was able to determine the number of potential relocations in CBGs with elevated EJ Populations of Concern. Alternative R has the greatest potential to impact EJ communities with 182 potential relocations, followed by Alternatives M and O. RPA P has the potential for 47 to 73 relocations.

Additional impacts were evaluated in the Tier 1 Study that have the potential to create changes to EJ communities. Economic impacts and changes in travel patterns, community cohesion, and community services were evaluated by alternative. For the alternatives that avoid populated places, the impacts are generally lower. For rural communities, there is the potential to be divided from the larger populations where they access services. This division could create social impacts in EJ communities that will need to be evaluated further in the Tier 2 studies when access and a facility type is determined. Through outreach with EJ community members and leaders, as well as service providers, the study team can receive feedback on potential alternatives in Tier 2 to avoid or minimize impacts.

Due to the minor changes in air quality for all alternatives, measurable impacts to EJ communities is not anticipated. Tier 2 studies will conduct local CO Hotspot analyses to assess potential effects upon EJ communities. Noise impacts vary depending on the alternative’s proximity to populated places. As alignments are developed and a facility type is chosen in Tier 2, additional noise analysis will create a clearer understanding of which areas might have noise impacts and the degree to which EJ communities are impacted.

The Tier 1 analysis provided a broad assessment of potential impacts. Smaller Study Areas in Tier 2 will allow the project team to use the information gathered during Tier 1 to perform targeted outreach and analysis to identify effects upon EJ communities. Tier 2 studies will carefully assess effects upon environmental justice populations, and whether they are disproportionately high or adverse.

Analysis will continue during the Tier 2 studies to further analyze potential impacts to EJ communities in greater detail. Coordination in Tier 2 will identify opportunities for the meaningful participation of EJ communities in receiving their feedback on the various facility types and how each might negatively or positively impact their community. Methods to measure participation among EJ communities and isolate feedback will be developed to identify potential impacts. Early coordination with community partners will determine ways to remove barriers to participation and provide solutions to obstacles like Limited English Proficiency. Targeted outreach with EJ communities will provide input that will be incorporated in the Tier 2 analysis.