Vermont Agency of Transportation

Transportation Equity Framework

MICHELE BOOMHOWER, DIRECTOR OF POLICY, PLANNING AND INTERMODAL DEVELOPMENT

PRESENTATION TO SENATE TRANSPORTATION

JANUARY 6, 2022
An act relating to the Transportation Program and miscellaneous changes to laws related to transportation, Section 41. Transportation Equity Framework Report

The Agency of Transportation, in consultation with the State’s 11 Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs), shall undertake a comprehensive analysis of the State’s existing transportation programs and develop a recommendation on a transportation equity framework through which the annual Transportation Program (the Agency Capital Program), and the Agency’s Annual Project Prioritization Process, can be evaluated so as to advance mobility equity, which is a transportation system that increases access to mobility options, reduces air pollution, and enhances economic opportunity for Vermonters in communities that have been underserved by the State’s transportation system.......
Federal investments will be made in a manner whereby 40 percent of the overall benefits of such investments flow to disadvantaged communities.

The Justice40 Initiative will impact the way the Vermont Agency of Transportation implements projects and programs.

EQUITY VISUALIZED

The image illustrates different terms related to a Social Equity framework. In the first frame, “Inequality” shows that not everyone faces the same path ahead or has the same resources. “Equality” shows that even when given the same tools, in this case a bicycle, the obstacles each person faces are different. “Social Equity” recognizes inequalities, in this case a more obstructed path, and creates custom solutions—in this case, a bicycle with different tread designed to handle the terrain—but still the obstacles are present. “Social Equity” is on the path to “Justice”, which is the final goal of Social Equity, taking away the inequalities and creating the same opportunities for all.
Project Team

AOT and Regional Planning Commissions
- Dave Pelletier - Project Manager
- Michele Boomhower
- Charlie Baker (CCRPC)

Consultants – RSG lead
- Jonathan Slason (RSG) - Project Manager
- Lydia Hausle (Toole Design) - Project Planner and Deputy Project Manager
- Kiah Morris and Dan Fingas (Rights and Democracy Institute)
- Chris Cole Consulting
- Several others
**TASK 1:** Project Initiation and Research

**TASK 2:** Existing Policies, Programming, and Assessment

**TABLE 2: EQUITY FRAMEWORK WIREFRAME**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distributive</th>
<th>Procedural</th>
<th>Contextual</th>
<th>Corrective Equity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accurate population representation</td>
<td>Equitable access to decision-making</td>
<td>Needs analysis</td>
<td>Prioritization process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Service Provision</td>
<td>Ongoing performance Management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TASK 3: Stakeholder and Public Involvement

Led by Rights and Democracy Institute (Rights and Democracy Institute)

Intentional outreach to marginalized communities
• Bennington BIPOC community
• Winooski/Burlington New American 2nd Generation community
• Barre & Newport Urbanized community
• Rutland area persons experiencing low income

Range of engagement tools being considered:
- Social media
- Text banking
- Phone banking
- Print mail
- Online and email systems
- Events, meetings, interviews and focus groups
- Survey tools
FIGURE 2: VERMONT ENVIRONMENTAL DISPARITY INDEX

In order to identify communities that are most susceptible to environmental hazards and most vulnerable to the modifying effect of socio-economic factors, the Development Research, Resource Management & Risk Reduction Lab at University of Vermont constructed a Vermont environmental disparity index (VTEDI) based on exposure to environmental hazards and population characteristics (including median income, health risk factors and social vulnerability). This index is a combination of environmental exposure and population characteristics:

VT Environmental Disparity Index = Environmental Exposure * (Health Risk Factors + Social Vulnerability * 0.5)

In the VTEDI type, the index is a complex task, as the more combined environmental, social, and health factors that the community carries, the more environmental exposure. The index combines environmental exposure, health risk factors, and social vulnerability to indicate the extent of these three types of environmental hazards. The factors between 1.0 are presented as potential relative rankings of each county compared to all other areas in the state. The greater the percentage, the bigger the impact of the variable.

This is an early version of the index map, and more environmental data sources may be added in the future once they become available.

If you have any questions about this map, please contact Qing Ren or Ruben Ponsik at the Rubenstien School of Environment and Natural Resources of UVM.

Please cite this work as: Ren, Qing and Ponsik, Ruben (2021), Vermont Environmental Disparity Index, University of Vermont.

Also see the Vermont Social Vulnerability Index and the Vermont Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (VBFRS) for health and health data.

Source: https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=68a9290bde0c42529460e1b8dee8368

Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources of UVM
• Updated data files to reflect latest census findings
• Prototype equity index data set

The map to the left is a snapshot of Oregon’s Equity Index, created by ODOT’s Office of Social Equity.

Areas with darker colors ODOT has identified as having higher likelihoods of experiencing disparities.

The lighter the color, the lower the likelihood the area is experiencing disparities.

Explore the map in detail at https://arcg.is/0XjnC50
### TASK 6: Recommendations and Implementation Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VISION</th>
<th>VISION STATEMENT (TO BE DEVELOPED)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goals</strong></td>
<td><strong>Inclusive Engagement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recommend census or public datasets or develop custom dashboards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actions</strong></td>
<td>Periodically validate accuracy of publicly available datasets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accessibility and equity audits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TASK 7: Draft and Final Transportation Equity Framework Report

VT Agency of Transportation Equity Framework Report

- Background and Context Setting: What does transportation equity look like? What is the state of transportation equity in Vermont?
- Task 2: Current Policies, Guidance, and Best Practices
- Task 3: Input from Vermonters
- Task 4: Equity Framework Structure – Gap and Needs Analysis
- Task 5: Data and Tools
- Task 6: Recommendations and Implementation Plan
Timeline

Fall 2021 – RFP and consultant selection

January 2022 - Kickoff

February - First Advisory Group Meeting

May thru September – Community outreach, Stakeholder engagement and RPC TAC Meetings

October thru December – Recommendations and Implementation Plan

February 2023 – Delivery of Final Transportation Equity Framework Report
Questions/ Comments?

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