

Transportation Equity Framework Report

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

JANUARY 10, 2024



Remind ourselves of the report assignment and provide context



Have a quick lesson on “what is equity?”



Provide an overview of findings, recommendations, and planned FFY24 and FFY25 actions



Questions and discussion

Goals for this morning:

Act No. 55 of 2021 General Assembly

Who? Agency of Transportation, in consultation with the State's 11 Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs)

What? Undertake a comprehensive analysis of the State's existing transportation programs and develop a recommendation on a transportation equity framework.

Why? 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 Actions and Initiatives

EO 13895: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, 2021



Synopsis: All Federal Agencies must review current practices and identify opportunities to improve equity, develop data and tools, and plans to serve that purpose.

[FY 2022-26 U.S. DOT Strategic Plan | US Department of Transportation](#)



[U.S. Department of Transportation Equity Action Plan | US Department of Transportation](#)



Vermont Actions & Initiatives

AOT Civil Rights Program



Vermont Environmental Justice Law | Agency of Natural Resources

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An Official Vermont Government Website VERMONT

State of Vermont
Agency of Natural Resources 🔍

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ANR Flood Recovery Resources
Find updates and information on the recent flood.

Home

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Vermont Environmental Justice Law

Background on the Vermont Environmental Justice Law

Also known as [Act 154 of 2022](#), the Vermont Environmental Justice (EJ) Law is the state's first law specifically meant to address environmental health disparities and improve the health and well-being of all Vermont residents. The Environmental Justice Law establishes Vermont's Environmental Justice State Policy.

The purpose of the Environmental Justice Law is to ensure all Vermonters regardless of race, cultural background, or income have equitable access to environmental benefits such as clean air and water, healthy food, and public transportation. The Environmental Justice Law also protects communities from disproportionate environmental burdens such as polluted air and water, climate change impacts, and limited access to green spaces. The Environmental Justice Law requires State agencies to meaningfully engage Vermonters in the environmental decision-making processes.

The Environmental Justice Law creates an [Environmental Justice Advisory Council](#) and an [Interagency Environmental Justice Committee](#). The Advisory Council is composed of a range of community representatives, and they provide independent advice to State agencies and the General Assembly on matters related to environmental justice. The Interagency Committee is composed of representatives from ten State agencies, and they coordinate State agency implementation of the Environmental Justice Law. Over the coming years, the Advisory Council and Interagency Committee will work together to implement the Environmental Justice Law and ensure that State agencies embed environmental justice throughout the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

To learn more about the Vermont Environmental Justice Law, explore these online learning resources:

- [Environmental Justice Online Resource Library](#)
- [Environmental Justice Law Factsheet](#)

Equality



Equity



Justice



Source: Vermont Dept of Health

Inequality

Unequal access
to opportunities



Equality?

Evenly distributed
tools and assistance



Equity

Custom tools that
identify and address
inequality



Justice

Fixing the system
to offer equal access
to both tools and
opportunities



Source:

Equity is...

...the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as and not limited to: Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

“Equity requires recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must identify and acknowledge imbalances and make adjustments to achieve fairness and justice.”

- National Association of Colleges and Employers
[https:// www.naceweb.org/](https://www.naceweb.org/)

Source: Executive Order 13895



Contextual

Needs Analysis

Service Provision
Transit, DMV, Paving,
Maintenance



Distributive

Accurate
Population
Representation



Procedural

Equitable Access to
Decision Making



Corrective Equity

Prioritization Process

Ongoing Performance
Management

Pillars of Equity



Equity Framework Report Content

- An overview of equity, and a summary of Vermont and national transportation equity efforts.
- Stakeholder and public involvement that informed the framework.
- Key themes arising through stakeholder and public involvement.
- Framework pillars that organize actions and strategies to achieve the vision for transportation equity.
- Implementation plan that identifies key foundational actions and organizes the sequence of recommended strategies.

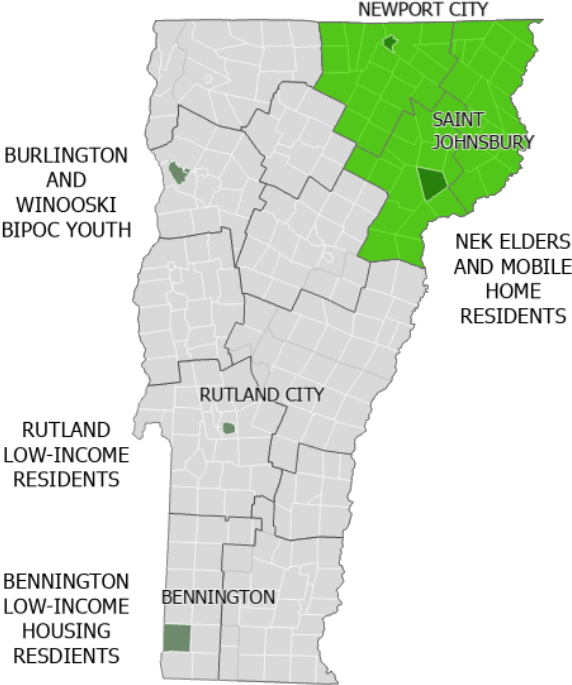


Process and Working Group



Name	Organization	Title
Michele Boomhower	VTrans	PPAID Director
Nancy Prescott	Dept of Motor Vehicles	Motor Vehicle Operations Director
Mike Winslow	Addison County RPC	Transportation Planner
Meghan Brunk	VTrans	District 2 Technician
Lori Valburn / Colleen Montague	VTrans	Civil Rights Program Manager
Patricia Martin	VTrans	Title VI / ADA Coordinator
Erin Sisson	VTrans	Deputy Chief Engineer
Charlie Baker	CCRPC	Executive Director
Carey Hengstenberg	Agency of Natural Resources	Environmental Analyst
Andrea Wright	VTrans	Environmental Policy Manager
Amy Tatko	VTrans	Director of Communications & Public Outreach
Katharine Otto	VTrans	Planning Coordinator

Stakeholder and Public Engagement



Map note: Northeast region highlighted to reflect multiple engagement locations.

Direct Engagement

Deep-dive engagement in 4 locations around the state, with low-income, elders, BIPOC, and un/under-housed communities

Stakeholder Interviews

In-depth interviews with 6 AOT managers and 4 community organizations focused on equity

Regional Meetings

Meetings with 11 RPC Transportation Advisory Committees and guests to discuss regional equity perspectives and needs

Key Outreach Themes & Findings

- Acknowledgement of Department of Motor Vehicle initiatives around equitable access to services including language access accommodations. Learn from and replicate that success.
- Governor's focus on vulnerable populations consistent with this work. [Vermont Community Index](#)
- Continue to focus on cultural growth inside VTrans to develop a truly diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce. Maintenance & Fleet Division efforts on this were identified as exemplary.
- Increase our efforts to educate outside the Agency on how investments are chosen and prioritized.
- Broaden public engagement and communication to encourage involvement from marginalized groups. Community organizations and institutions should be used to supplement data and improve community engagement. Create and maintain durable two-way communication channels.
- Continue to improve and adapt public transit services and active transportation (bike/ped) infrastructure. Increase accessibility and remove barriers to these modes.

Regional Meeting feedback



Different regional understandings of inequity, why it is important, and how outcomes are shaped by inequities.



Active transportation, and public transit are vitally important for those without access to or ability to operate personal automobiles.



Desire for increased funding transparency.

Concern about investment balance between urban and rural areas.

VPSP2* should integrate active travel safety and stronger equity emphasis.



Supplement Census data with local official data or information.

Suggested sources include Town clerks, school data (lunch, transportation).



Leverage relationships with community-based organizations to bring more voices to the table.

*VPSP2 = VTrans Project Selection and Prioritization Process



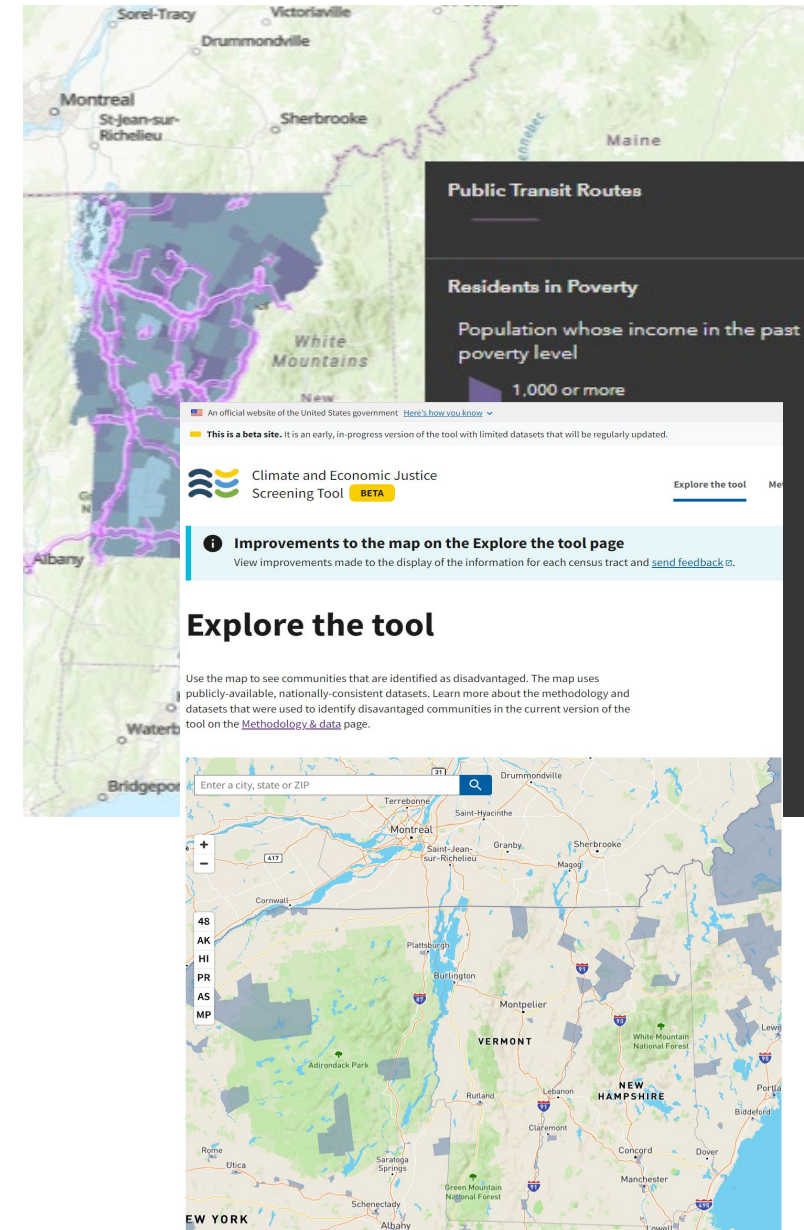
Distributive

Accurate Population Representation

Key Actions

- Develop guidance for identifying underserved communities in study areas. Align with Act 154 definitions and practices.*
- Develop best practices for creating and using state and local data to supplement Census data.*

* Foundational Actions





Procedural

Equitable Access to Decision Making

Key Actions

- Develop community engagement plans and public involvement processes specifically focused on underserved communities.*



*This action is consistent with the Act 154 Environmental Justice Law requirement that all covered agencies, including AOT, develop agency-wide community engagement plans by July 1, 2025. This is also a Foundational recommended action in the Equity Framework Report.



Contextual

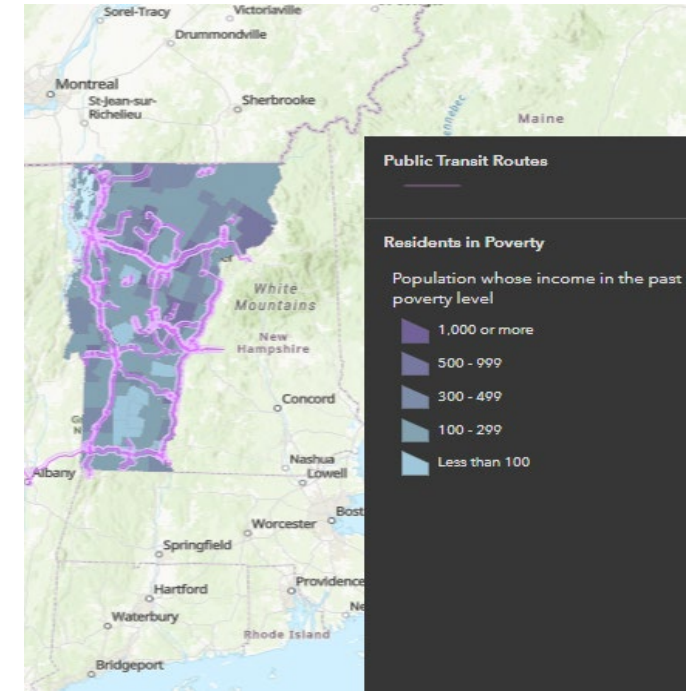
Needs Analysis

Service Provision
Transit, DMV, Paving,
Maintenance

Key Actions

- Establish a consistent consideration of equity in the planning and project development process.
- Establish a standardized process to measure regional needs across underserved communities.
- Provide support and resources to less-resourced municipalities to access grants, technical support, and other resources.
- Increase investment in public transit services, and active travel modes including bicycling and walking.

AOT Equity Planning Tool





Corrective Equity

Prioritization Process

Ongoing Performance Management

Key Actions

- Enhance the consideration of equity within the project selection and prioritization (VPSP2) criteria and emphasize AOT/RPC coordination in the process.
- Develop a quantitative equity screening component for the capital program and STIP development process.*
- Develop a performance report template and update process summarizing investment patterns in transportation funding across geographies.

*This action is consistent with the Act 154 Environmental Justice Law requirement that all covered agencies, including AOT, develop baseline spending reports describing the distribution of environmental benefits. Guidance is anticipated this fall, and the report is due April 15, 2024. It is also consistent with the USDOT Equity Action Plan goal of all State DOTs having an equity screening component for the STIP by 2030.

EIGHT CRITERIA

SAFETY Max points = 20	ASSET CONDITION Max points = 20
MOBILITY / CONNECTIVITY Max points = 15	COMMUNITY Max points = 10
ECONOMIC ACCESS Max points = 10	ENVIRONMENT Max points = 10
RESILIENCY Max points = 10	HEALTH ACCESS Max points = 5



Next Steps

FFY24

- Report to Legislature 2024
- Begin Education and Awareness Training
 - RPCs via Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI)
 - AOT Lunch and Learn(s)
 - LMS training development
 - 1/4ly Managers Meetings
- Begin Act 154 Community Engagement Plan development
- Evaluate VPSP2 for equity considerations
- Initiate regional mapping and analysis of investments per Act 154 requirements

FFY25

- Complete the AOT Community Engagement Plan
 - Provide agency-wide and RPC education and training on its use.
- Implement modifications to VPSP2 based on evaluation findings
- Assess progress on implementing the recommendations

More information:

Project Webpage <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/equity>

Final Report [Vermont Transportation Equity Framework](#)

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