

5.21 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

5.21.1 Introduction

Presidential Executive Order 12898, issued in 1994, directs federal agencies to incorporate Environmental Justice as part of their mission by identifying and addressing the effects of all programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations.

The fundamental principles of Environmental Justice are as follows:

- Ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process;
- Prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations; and
- 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.

In 1997, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) issued its *Order to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations* (USDOT Order) to summarize and expand upon the requirements of Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice. The USDOT Order sets forth the transportation agency's policy to promote the principles of Environmental Justice in all policies, programs, and other activities that are undertaken, funded, or approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the FTA, or other USDOT entities.

This section presents an analysis of whether minority or low-income populations within the study area surrounding the project site would be disproportionately impacted by the Proposed Action.

5.21.2 Demographics

To evaluate the potential environmental justice impacts related to the project, the study area was defined as an area encompassing a half-mile radius around the project site. This area reflects the limits of potential direct and indirect environmental justice impacts on communities of concern that could result from the construction and operation of the Proposed Action. For purposes of this analysis, the study area is defined in terms of the census blocks and tracts by which demographic and socioeconomic data is made available by public agencies.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, a total of 11,852 people reside within the study area. Table 5-54 presents the population and economic characteristics for the study area and the surrounding regions that include Lower Manhattan and New York County. Overall, the study area has a smaller proportion of minority residents than Lower Manhattan or New York County. The percentage of minorities in the study area was 29.7 percent, compared with 68 percent of Lower Manhattan residents and 36 percent of New York County residents. Note that this proportion for the study area is substantially lower than the 50 percent threshold in the Federal Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) *Environmental Justice Guidance under the National Environmental Policy Act*, (December 1997) guidelines. Approximately 16 percent of the study area residents characterized themselves as Asian, and 6.4 percent as Hispanic. Figure 37 shows the proportion of minority residents with the study area census tracts.

The proportion of persons living under the poverty line in the study area was found to be 7.8 percent. The median household income in the study area was found to be \$101,651 for 1999. Incomes in the study area are substantially greater when compared to those in Lower Manhattan (\$45,111) and New York County (\$47,030). Figure 38 shows the proportion of persons below the poverty line in the study area census tracts.

5.21.3 Conclusions

The Proposed Action consists of reconstructing the existing South Ferry Station into a new and improved terminal that would eliminate the physical and operational deficiencies of the existing station. This Proposed Action will deliver transit enhancements and benefits intended for both the local community's and the region's livability, economic recovery and safety. No single ethnic group will be denied the overall benefits anticipated by the project; no racial or ethnic group is likely to experience disproportionately high or adverse effects from this project. Therefore, on the basis of the demographics presented in this section, the impacted area is not a community of concern for environmental justice purposes.

With regard to the fundamental principles of Environmental Justice, the following conclusions can be drawn for the South Ferry Terminal Project:

- Full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process has been attained through the public outreach and agency coordination efforts conducted by MTA/NYCT for this project (see Chapter 7 for a description of these efforts).

Table 5-54
Population and Economic Characteristics of the Study Area
Compared with Surrounding Region

	Study Area		Lower Manhattan		New York County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Race						
White Alone	8,724	73.6%	32,331	38.8%	835,298	54.3%
Non-Hispanic White	8,326		26,441		703,462	45.8%
Hispanic White	398		5,890		131,836	8.6%
Non-Hispanic White	3,128	26.3%	50,908	61.2%	415,728	27.0%
Black or African-American	422	3.6%	5,642	6.8%	233,383	15.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native	38	0.3%	174	0.2%	2,319	0.2%
Asian Alone	1,913	16.1%	37,414	44.9%	143,028	9.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0%	26	0.03%	354	0.0%
Other *	755	6.4%	7,652	9.2%	36,644	2.4%
TOTAL	11,852	100.0%	83,239	100.0%	1,537,198	100.0%
Minority Population**	3,526	29.7%	56,798	68.2%	547,564	35.6%
Hispanic Origin	755	6.4%	12,314	14.8%	418,008	27.2%
Age (Years)						
0-5	821	6.9%	4,868	5.8%	89,694	5.8%
6-12	528	4.5%	4,649	5.6%	101,582	6.6%
13-18	198	1.7%	4,793	5.8%	81,309	5.3%
19-24	947	7.9%	9,250	11.1%	138,623	9.0%
25-34	3,873	32.6%	14,768	17.7%	332,210	21.6%
35-49	3,712	31.3%	20,122	24.2%	369,132	24.0%
50-64	1,351	11.4%	12,375	14.9%	237,997	15.5%
65 years and older	422	3.6%	12,414	14.9%	186,648	12.1%
TOTAL	11,852	100.0%	83,239	100.0%	1,537,795	100.0%
Number of Households	6,491		33,404		738,644	
Poverty						
Persons below Poverty	918	7.8%	17,872	21.5%	298,231	19.4%
Median Household Income (1999) ***	\$101,651		\$45,111		\$47,030	

Source: U.S Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, U.S Census of Population and Housing, 2000.

Notes:

* The Study Area comprises block groups 1, 2, 3 in census tract 7; block groups 1 and 2 in tract 9; block groups 2 and 3 in tract 13, block group 9 in tract 317.01 and block group 9 in census tract 319.

Lower Manhattan includes all census tracts south of Canal Street.

* The Other Category includes census categories 'some other race alone' and 'two or more races.'

** The total minority population includes all those who are Black, Hispanic Whites, American Indian and Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander and Other categories.

*** The median household income was calculated by taking the weighted average of the median incomes of the census tracts in a given study area.

- The benefits of the project to minority and low-income populations has not been prevented, reduced or significantly delayed. The Proposed Action will provide greater intermodal transit connectivity between ferry and subway users in Lower Manhattan.
- As indicated in Table 5-54, there are no significant concentrations of minority and low-income populations in the study area that could be affected by project construction and operation.