TSK 458–b: Demographic Data Collection

For a Social Analysis and to Determine if an EJ Population Exists

See also: EPM Chapter 458, TSK 458-a Study Area, ESO Discipline Specialist

Effective: April 2011

Objective: Demographic data is used to determine:

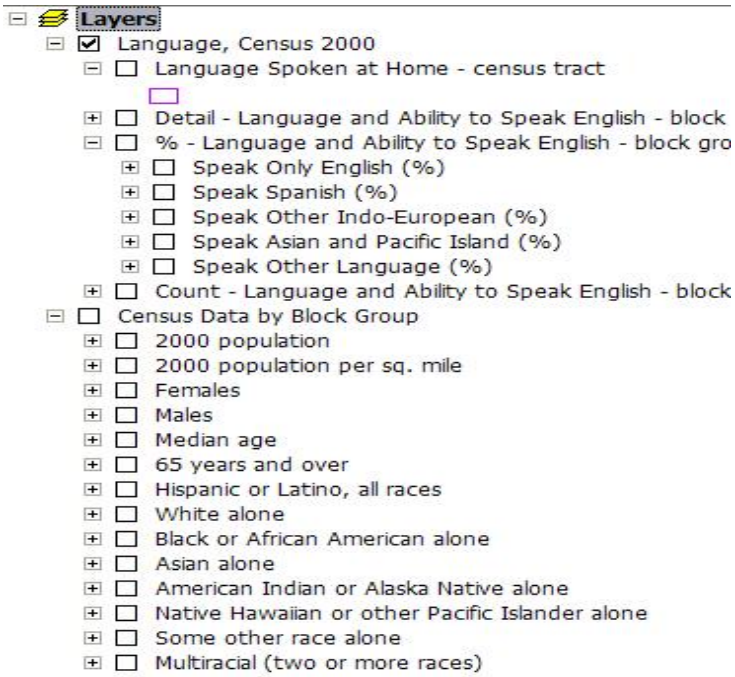
- if minority or low-income populations are present in the project area,
- If translators will be needed and plan effective Public Involvement strategies
- How the project improvements relate to minority and low income populations

The results from this work will determine if an EJ population exists, refine the study area limits, and helps shape the Public Involvement Plan.

Start task: Region Environmental Coordinator or Consultant is asked to determine if an EJ population exists within the vicinity of the project.

End task: Documentation of existence (or non-existence) and geographic extent of an EJ population within the project vicinity.

1. **Collect U. S. Census Block data** for the Project area to identify minority populations.
   - Use the WSDOT GIS Work Bench and the US Census Data Engine to collect data.
   - Data Layers include:



   - The U.S. DOT Order defines a minority as:
     - Black – anyone of the black racial groups of Africa.
     - Hispanic – anyone with Spanish cultural origin regardless of race.

    - Asian & Pacific Islander – anyone from the Far East, Southeast Asia, Pacific Islands, or the Indian sub continent and native Hawaiians.
    - American Indian or Alaskan Native – anyone of the original peoples of North America who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.
- Collect demographics to show the percent of elderly (over 65) and disabled people in each census block.
- The level of information will vary depending on the location of your project. Use the most detailed and most current information available.
- Use language information to determine if translators will be needed on the project and fine tune the Public Involvement Plan – see TSK 438-c.
    - Collect data for "% - Language ability to speak English", then sort by language subgroup.

- **Verify census data with at least one other information source**. This is necessary because census data is only collected every 10 years and therefore may no longer be representative. School Districts are the best secondary information source. They may have data about English language learner programs, recent immigrants, and the percentage of students on reduced and free lunch programs.
    - Contact individual school in the project area or search the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) web site.
    - Other acceptable data sources include:
        - US Department of Housing & Urban Development: Section 8 housing information. Contact local social service providers.
        - Washington State Department of Social and Health Services
        - WSDOT Region Real Estate Services Office

- **Collect income data** to identify "low-income" populations using data from the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines website.
    - FHWA defines "low –income" as a person whose household income is at or below the poverty guidelines set by the Department of Health and Human Services. The guidelines are updated for inflation using the Consumer Price Index. Be sure to download the most current version from the site
    - Document the thresholds used in the project file.
    - The American Community Survey census data maps to confirm US DHHS data.

2. **Create a map** by overlaying the demographic data collected in Steps 1 and 2 on the base map created in TSK 458-b.
    - Adjust graphics to clearly show density and location of demographics. You may need to create more than one map if several minority groups and income groups are located in the study area.
3. **Adjust the map** to include all relevant demographic information. Test your map by asking the following questions and adjusting the boundaries, or collecting additional data as needed.
    - Does the demographic data make sense when you clip away the area outside the study limit? Does it tell the same story? Can I adjust the map so it does?
    - Is the data detailed enough?
        - Does the map include enough census blocks to show variations within the project area, or prove that variation does not exist?
        - Do the census blocks included in your project area have the same level of detail in all data sets? Are alternate data sources available?
        - Does the map show relocations and ROW purchases?
        - Have you included applicable bus routes in the study area?
    - Revise the map as needed to address any concerns. Contact the ESO Subject matter expert for assistance if needed.

4. **Determine if an EJ population is present** by examining the map you created in Step 3. Washington State does not use a percentage threshold to determine if an EJ analysis is required because our populations tend to be very diverse. Determinations are made based on the severity of the impact, not on the number of people impacted.
    - If the map shows concentrations of minority or low income populations in the study area then an EJ population exists.
    - If the map shows an even distribution or very low number of minority and/or low income populations throughout the study area an EJ population *may be* a concern.
    - If the map shows no minority or low income populations in the study area, then you do not have an EJ population. Document your findings in the project file.

5. **Finalize** the map to include demographic data.
    - Summarize supporting information and document references.
    - Be sure to cite reference material on the map and include date and version information.
    - Save electronic and hard copies.

6. **Provide** the map to supporting discipline report writers. The EJ study area should be the same as the study area for:
    - Noise, Air Toxins, Section 4(f), Relocations, Public Services & Utilities, Land Use Transportation, Visual, Hazardous Materials and Cultural Resources.
    - The project's Public Involvement Plan (see EPM Section 458.06).