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## 1.0 WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE?

Environmental justice is defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, sex, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies." In other words, this Transportation Plan must be fair in its treatment of low-income neighborhoods. Those neighborhoods cannot be unduly burdened with negative impacts, nor ignored when services and improvements are programmed.

## 2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE REQUIREMENTS

Compliance with environmental justice is required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and reinforced by the Executive Order 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, February 11, 1994). This Executive Order directs federal agencies to "identify and address the disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their actions on minority and low-income populations, to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law." Title VI regulations direct federal agencies to identify and address the effects of all programs, policies, and activities on traditionally disadvantaged groups such as minorities or low-income households.

### 2.1 MINORITIES - DEFINED

A minority person is defined as a person who identifies with the following ethnic groups:

- Black (having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa);

- Hispanic (of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race);
- Asian American (having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands); or
- American Indian and Alaskan Native (having origins in any of the original people of North America and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition).

### 2.2 LOW-INCOME - DEFINED

Title VI defines low-income as a person whose household income (or in the case of a community or group, whose median household income) is at or below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines. The guidelines are defined by household size. According to the 2012 ACS and 2010 Census Block data the average household size in Lee County was 2.6 persons.

### 2.3 IMPACTS - DEFINED

Efforts to assess countywide performance of transportation projects with regard to socio-cultural effects and environmental justice were integrated into the LRTP development process. The process also seeks to ensure equal access to transportation systems and the transportation planning process. The analysis focuses on areas with a high concentration of minority, low-income, and other traditionally under-served and under-represented populations. The potential positive and adverse impacts of proposed transportation projects were considered. Three major components are addressed in the planning process:

1. Avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental impacts, including social and economic effects, on minority and low-income populations.

2. Ensure the participation of the traditionally under-served and underrepresented segments of the population in the transportation plan development process.
3. Prevent the denial of, reduction in or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

If an activity will have a disproportionately high or adverse effect on minority or low-income populations, mitigation may be required.

### 3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ANALYSIS

#### 3.1 MINORITY BLOCK GROUPS

The 2012 American Community Survey (ACS) and 2010 Census Block data was utilized to identify areas of Lee County with higher minority populations as part of the environmental justice analysis.

**Table 1** shows the minority groups considered in this analysis and their respective population totals in Lee County.

**Table 1: Lee County Minority Population**

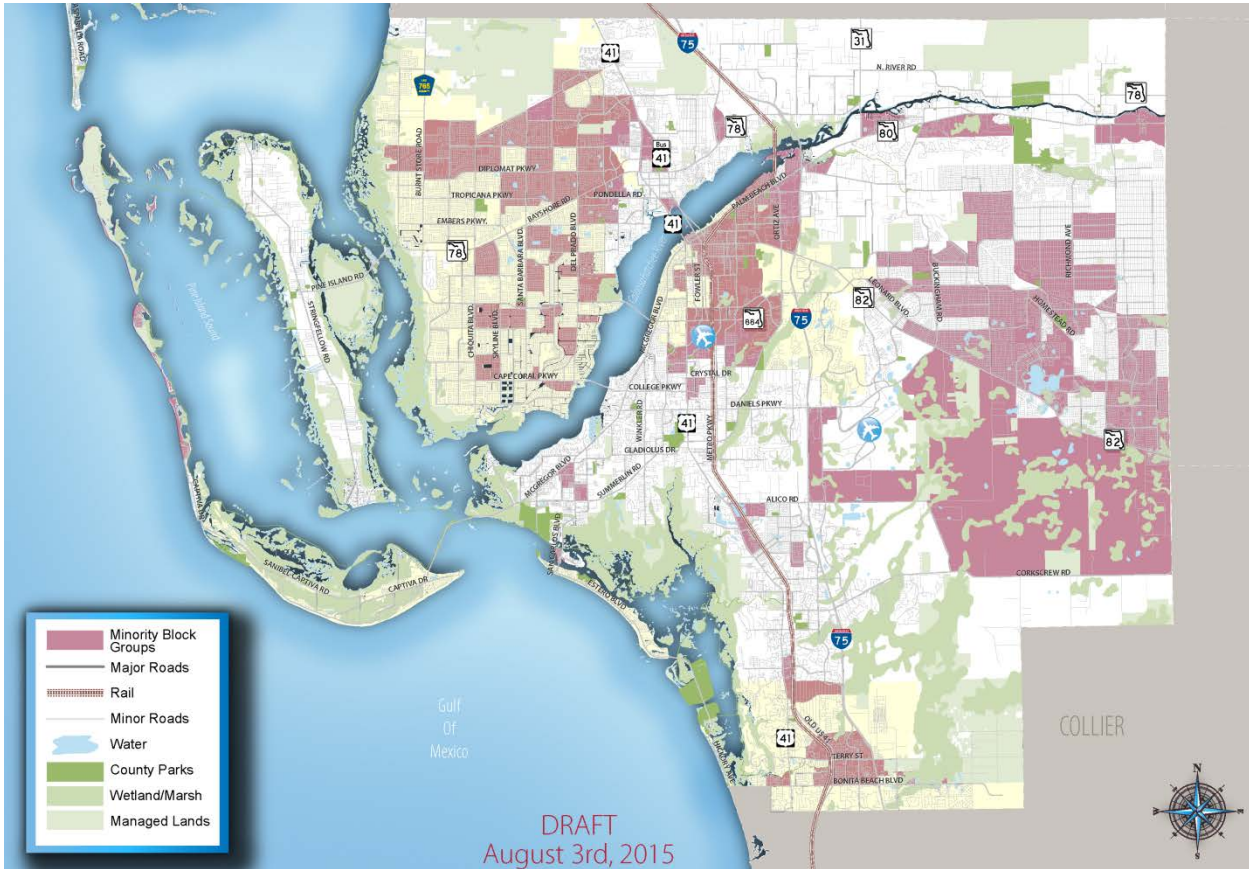
Minority Group	Population
Hispanic	114,755
Black	50,514
Asian	9,476
American Eskimo	2,496
Hawaiian	103
<b>Total</b>	<b>177,344</b>

In 2010, 177,344 minorities lived in Lee County, approximately 28.4 percent of the county's populations. This percentage was used to isolate block groups with minority percentages higher than 28.4 percent.

**Figure 1** shows the block groups within Lee County with a higher minority percentage. These minority areas are significant to the

environmental justice analysis as the percentage of minority population is one of the two factors that define environmental justice areas.

**Figure 1. Minority Block Groups**

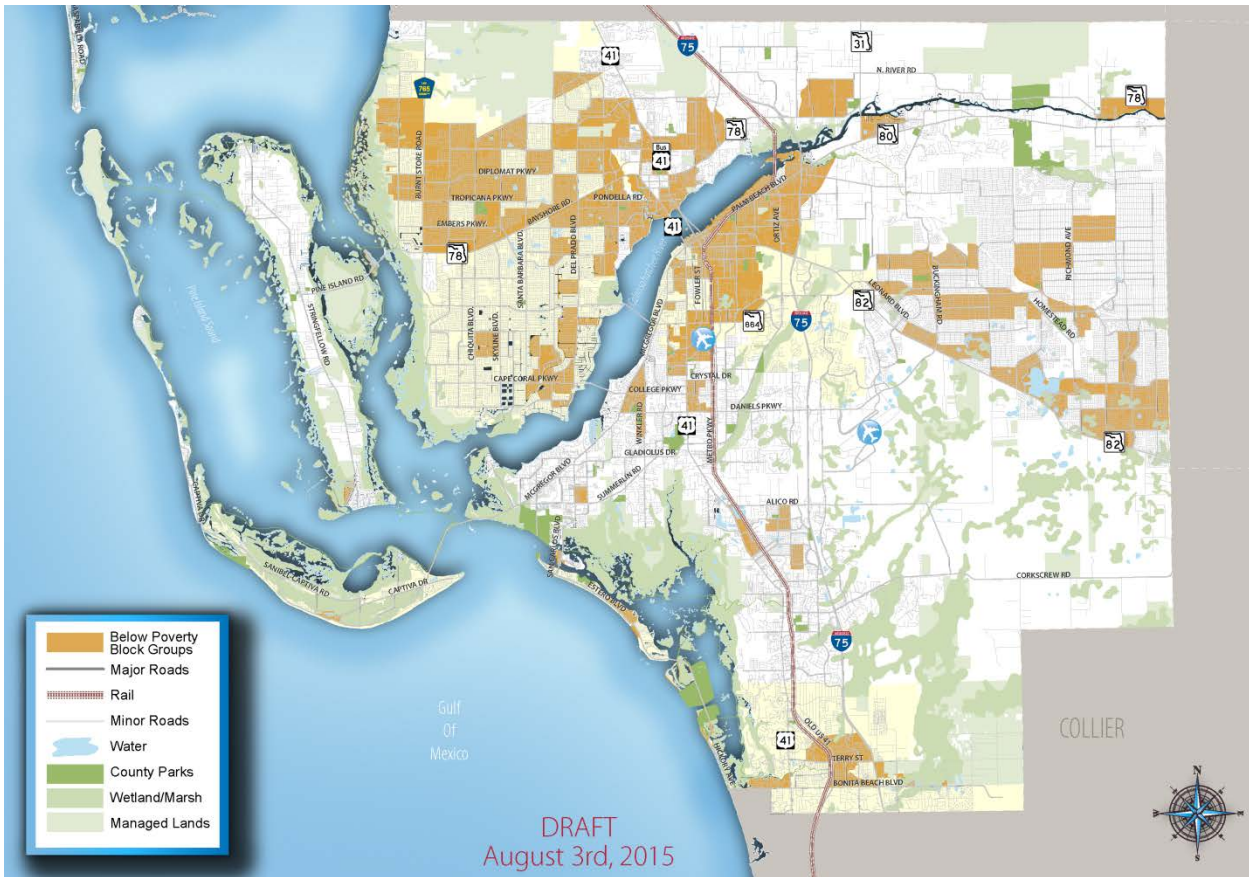


### 3.2 POVERTY BLOCK GROUPS

For the below poverty analysis the 2012 ACS and 2010 Census Block data were used again to identify areas of Lee County with a higher proportion of households living below the poverty level.

In 2010, there were 28,668 or 11.84 percent of households below the poverty level. The data was further reviewed to isolate block groups within Lee County with more than 11.84 percent of the household experiencing poverty. **Figure 2** shows the block groups with a higher percentage of households below the poverty level.

**Figure 2. Below Poverty Block Groups**



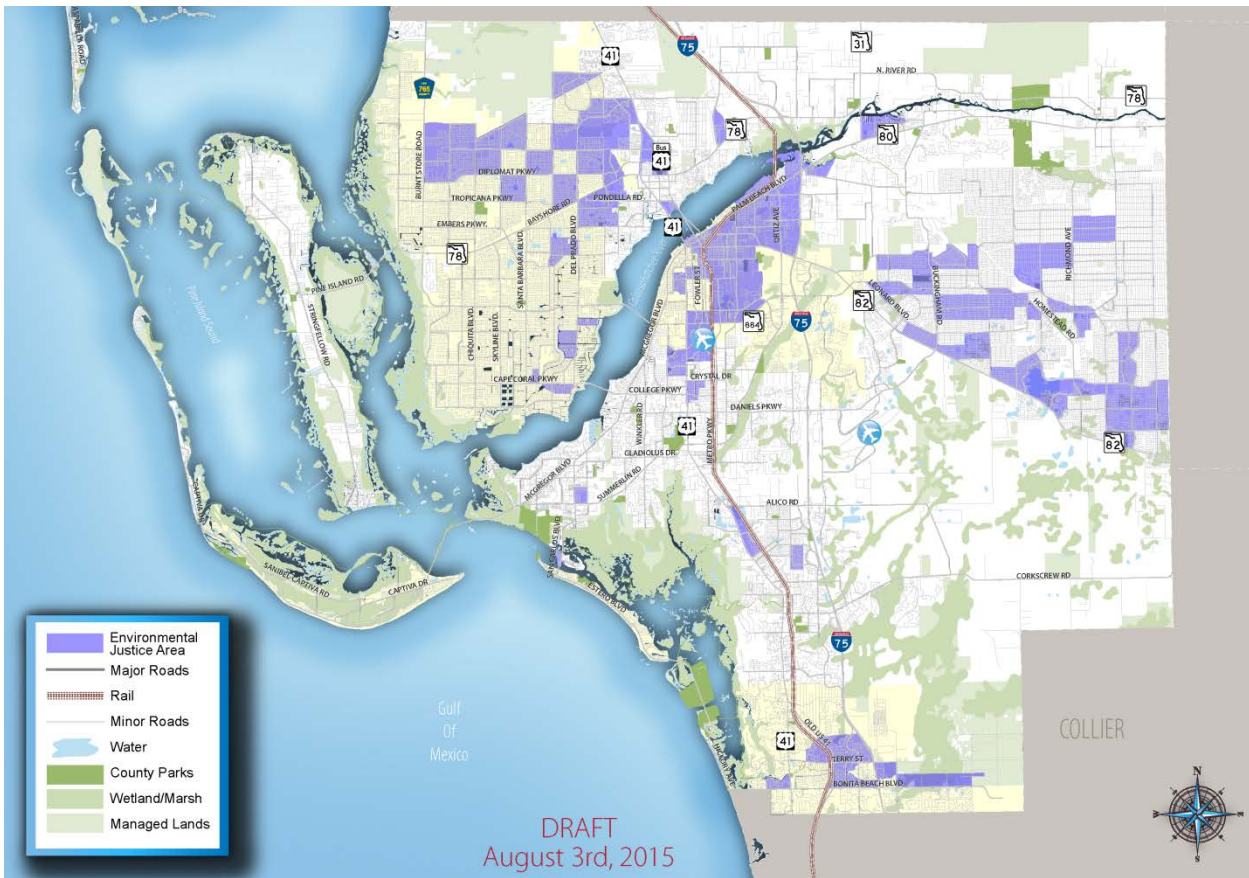
### 3.3 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AREAS

Environmental justice areas were developed by identifying the areas which contain both block groups with the highest minority populations and areas with higher densities of households below the poverty level. Areas where these two categories overlap are considered areas of Environmental Justice (**Figure 3**).

The average household size within the Environmental Justice areas in Lee County is 3.1, which is slightly higher than the average household size in Lee County.

There were no Environmental Justice areas identified in the City of Sanibel or in Fort Myers Beach.

**Figure 3. Environmental Justice Areas**



**Table 2** shows the statistical breakdown of the areas of Environmental Justice in Lee County and how they compare to the averages for all of Lee

County and the individual municipal areas within the county.

**Table 2. Lee County and Environmental Justice Area Statistics**

Area	Population	Average Minority Population Percent	Average Household Size	Average Percent Poverty
Lee County	624,155	28.4%	2.6	14.7%
<b>Municipal Areas</b>				
Bonita Springs	49,884	25.14%	2.5	15.70%
Cape Coral	168,149	23.7%	2.7	12.9%
Fort Myers	82,489	51.35%	2.6	25.63%
Unincorporated Lee Co.	307,266	26.7%	2.6	13.2%
<b>Environmental Justice Areas within Lee County by Municipal Area</b>				
Bonita Springs	12,602	59.4%	3.3	31.8%
Cape Coral	30,620	36.7%	2.8	24.6%
Fort Myers	40,437	76.3%	3.0	37%
Unincorporated Lee Co.	51,047	53.7%	3.3	26.5%

**3.3.1 FORT MYERS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AREAS**

Results from the data show Fort Myers had a total population of 82,489 people within the city limits. Of that population 40,437 people were within Environmental Justice areas. The percent minority rate within the Fort Myers city limits is 51.35 percent. Within the Environmental Justice areas, the minority rate is 76.3 percent.

The average household size within the Fort Myers city limits is 2.6 people and 3.0 in the areas identified as Environmental Justice areas.

The average percent of people living in poverty within the Fort Myers City limits is 25.6 percent. Within areas identified as Environmental Justice areas, that average is 37 percent.

**3.3.2 BONITA SPRINGS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AREAS**

According to the analysis, Bonita Springs has a total population of 49,884 people within the city limits. Of that population 12,602 people are within the Environmental Justice areas within city limits. Bonita Springs had the lowest total population of all the areas in Lee County that were analyzed, both within the city limits and within the

Environmental Justice areas. The minority rate in Bonita Springs is 25.1 percent. Within the Environmental Justice areas, the minority rate is 59.4 percent.

The average household size in Bonita Springs is 2.5 people and 3.3 in the areas identified as Environmental Justice areas.

The average percent of the population living in poverty in Bonita Springs is 15.7 percent within areas identified as Environmental Justice areas, that average is 31.8 percent.

**3.3.3 CAPE CORAL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AREAS**

Cape Coral’s population of 168,149 people is approximately 27 percent of Lee County’s total population; it is the second largest population in Lee County. Of Cape Coral’s population, approximately 18 percent or 30,620 people are within the Environmental Justice areas. The minority rate in Cape Coral is 23.7 percent. Within the Environmental Justice areas that average is 36.7 percent.

The average household size in Cape Coral is 2.7 people and 2.8 in the areas identified as Environmental Justice areas.



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The average percent of the population living in poverty in Cape Coral is 12.9 percent. Within areas identified as Environmental Justice areas, that average is 24.6.

### **3.3.4 UNINCORPORATED LEE COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AREAS**

Unincorporated Lee County has the largest total population compared to the individual municipal areas in Lee County. Of the 307,266 people in unincorporated Lee County, 51,047 people are within Environmental Justice areas. The minority rate within unincorporated Lee County is 26.7 percent. Within the Environmental Justice areas, the minority rate is 53.7 percent.

The average household size in unincorporated Lee County is 2.6 people and 3.3 in the areas identified as Environmental Justice areas.

The average percent of the population living in poverty in unincorporated Lee County is 13.2 percent within areas identified as Environmental Justice areas, that average is 26.5 percent.

### 3.4 EXISTING TRANSIT

**Figure 4** illustrates existing transit in Lee County and how transit services areas of Environmental Justice.

The Fort Myers Environmental Justice areas have the most transit service, compared to the rest of the areas in the County.

Cape Coral Environmental Justice areas south of SR 78 have consistent coverage when compared to the area north of SR 78 where there is a significant lack of transit to these areas. The northwestern portion of Cape Coral from Burnt Store Road to US 41 has the largest gap in transit coverage and the largest density of Environmental Justice areas.

The Bonita Springs area has the fewest Environmental Justice areas in the county, and existing transit service covers approximately half of these areas. There are two noticeable gaps in service, one along the Imperial Parkway, and another along Bonita Beach Boulevard east of Bonita Grande Drive.

In unincorporated Lee County, particularly in the Lehigh Acres area, transit service is limited and does not service areas of Environmental Justice along SR 82. Also there is a cluster of Environmental Justice areas along Eisenhower Boulevard with no existing service.

**Figure 4: Environmental Justice and Existing Transit**

