



Resilience 2050

Adapting to the Challenges of Tomorrow

Environmental Justice Analysis:
Definition of Low-Income Households
December 7, 2021



»BRTB

Introduction

- **EJ Principles:**

- Avoid, minimize or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects on minority and low-income populations
- 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 of these protections for minority and low-income populations

Introduction

- **Federal definitions of EJ Populations:**
 - **Low-income:** A person whose household income is at or below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines is considered low-income.
 - **Minorities:** A person belonging to any of the following groups is considered part of a minority population:
 - Person of origin in any of the black racial groups of Africa;
 - Person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin;
 - Person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, Indian subcontinent, or Pacific Islands; or
 - Person having origins in any of the original people of North America (American Indian, Alaskan Native) and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

Introduction

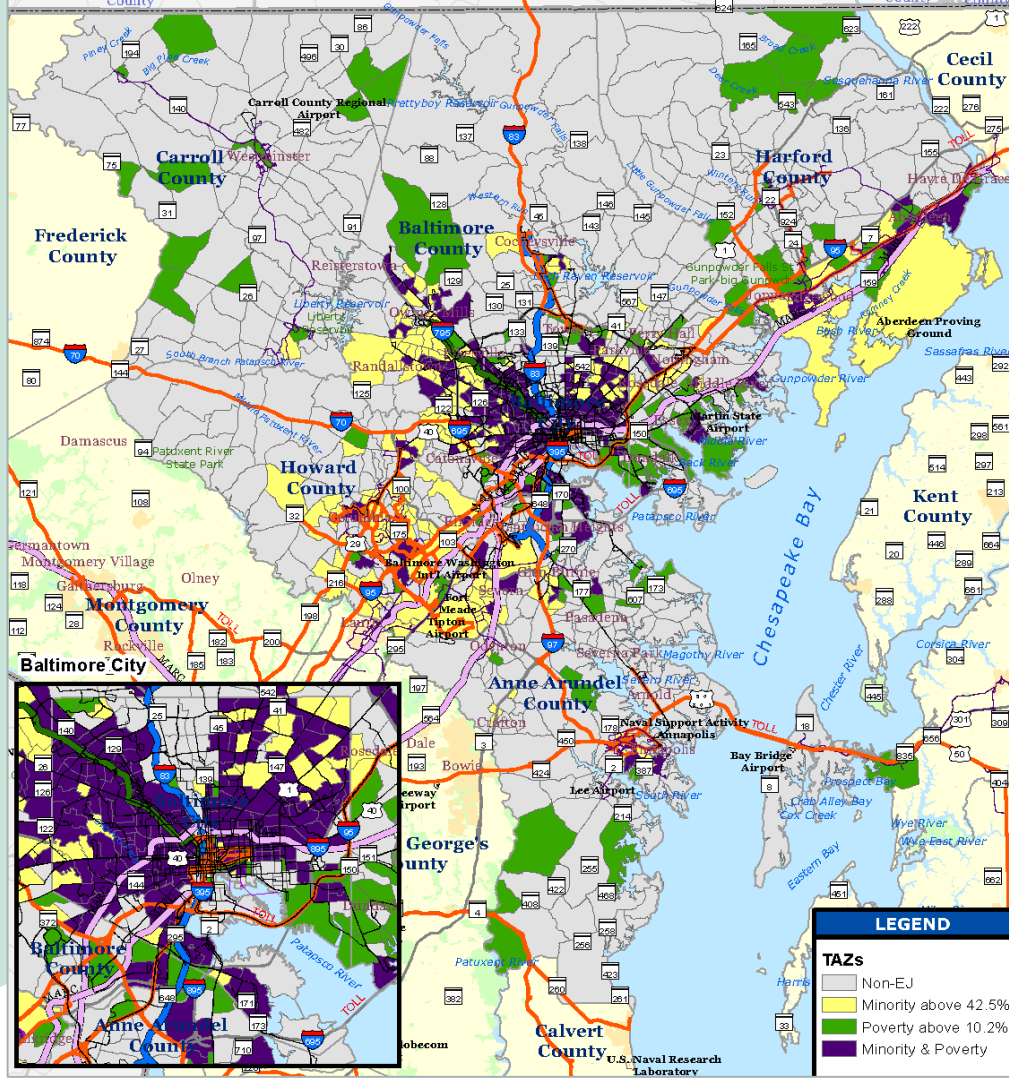
- EJ populations are used in a variety of analyses:
 - LRTP Project Scoring
 - Vulnerable Populations Index (VPI)
 - Environmental Justice Analysis for the plan
- MPOs have the flexibility in federal guidance to determine their own definitions of EJ populations for analysis
- This presentation will focus on the definition of low-income populations for use in EJ analyses

Identifying EJ Populations in Max 2045: HHs in Poverty

Jurisdiction	Total Households	Below 100% of Poverty Line	
		Households	Share
Anne Arundel	205,395	11,818	5.8%
Baltimore City	239,791	49,940	20.8%
Baltimore	312,859	27,209	8.7%
Carroll	60,432	3,174	5.3%
Harford	92,895	7,539	8.1%
Howard	111,337	5,385	4.8%
Queen Anne's	17,995	1,079	6.0%
Regional Total	1,040,704	106,144	10.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates

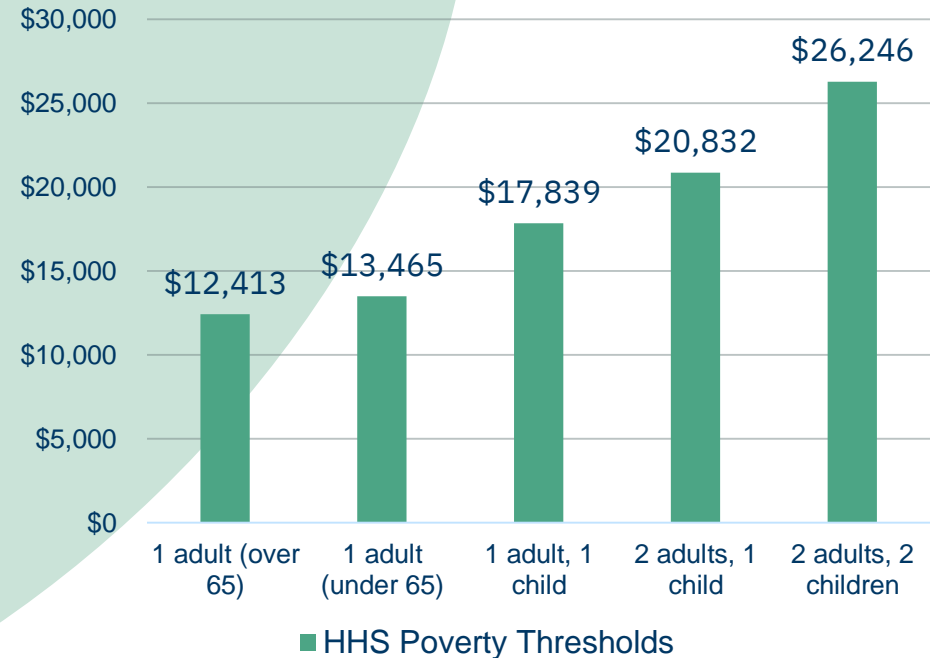
EJ TAZs



Definition of Low-Income Households

- **Different definition for low-income**
 - HHS poverty thresholds extremely low
 - PAC recommendation to increase
 - BMC staff agree that definition should be increased
 - Alternatives should be drawn from regularly updated federal sources:
 - 150% Federal Poverty Level
 - 200% Federal Poverty Level
 - % of Household Area Median Income

HHS Poverty Thresholds



Definition of Low-Income Households

- Baltimore Region Data:

Jurisdiction	Total Population*	<150% Poverty Level		<185% Poverty Level		<200% Poverty Level	
		Pop	Share	Pop	Share	Pop	Share
Anne Arundel	554,326	55,463	10.0%	72,587	13.1%	80,064	14.4%
Baltimore City	586,821	179,929	30.7%	218,417	37.2%	236,357	40.3%
Baltimore County	807,583	117,340	14.5%	158,248	19.6%	175,711	21.8%
Carroll	163,920	14,764	9.0%	19,385	11.8%	22,029	13.4%
Harford	249,996	30,374	12.1%	39,313	15.7%	42,864	17.1%
Howard	316,280	27,431	8.7%	35,450	11.2%	37,971	12.0%
Queen Anne's	49,080	4,672	9.5%	6,048	12.3%	6,737	13.7%
BRTB Region	2,728,006	429,973	15.8%	549,448	20.1%	601,733	22.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 ACS 5-year Estimates Table S1701

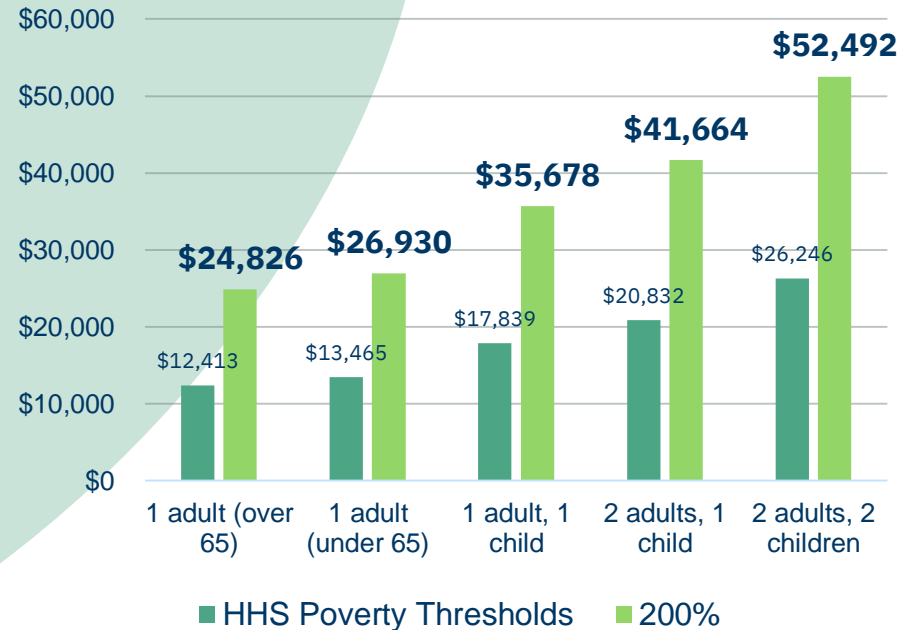
Definition of Low-Income Households

- **Survey of 23 MPOs:**

- 11 use Poverty Level (Wilmington, Phoenix, Orlando, Tampa, Kansas City, Cincinnati, Columbus, St. Louis, Pittsburgh)
- 10 use a higher % of the Poverty Level (DC, Philadelphia, San Antonio, Minneapolis, San Diego, Portland, Sacramento, Seattle)
- 1 uses % of AMI (Boston)
- 1 uses lowest income quartile (Detroit)

- **Staff Recommendation for low income = 200% Poverty Level**

HHS Poverty Thresholds



Definition of Low-Income Households

- **Advantages of 200% Poverty Level:**
 - Captures a larger portion of economically insecure households in the Baltimore region
 - Housing staff indicate that it is a close approximation to 50% Baltimore area AMI, an income level that is utilized for some HUD programs
 - Available through the ACS and readily available for use in BMC tools such as the VPI
 - Good approximation of family-supporting wage
 - FS wage utilized in BMC workforce development analysis
 - Aggregates across several household types based on MIT living wage calculator
 - **~\$24.36/hour ≈ \$50,700 annually ≈ 50% AMI ≈ 200% poverty level for a four person household**

Thanks!

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