



# WHAT IS PLANNING FOR SOCIAL EQUITY?

## What is social equity planning?

Land use and transportation decisions impact a wide range of people. The concept of social equity (or environmental justice) requires that minority and low-income communities get special attention from public agencies during public decision-making processes.

These populations include minority groups: African-American, American Indian, Asian and Hispanic, as well as low-income communities. They are often expanded to include other groups sometimes underrepresented in the planning process, like the elderly, children and people with disabilities. Agencies receiving federal funds for transportation projects, like ARC, must abide by the federal provisions that define social equity and mandate its inclusion in the activities of all federal agencies.

ARC views social equity as inclusive. It considers the region's growth patterns and addresses environmental, health, housing, economic, educational, and social impacts on minority, low-income and other under-represented communities. It also provides these communities meaningful access to public officials, planners and information for input.

## Why is social equity planning important?

Minority populations are among the fastest growing in the Atlanta region, and low-income communities are increasingly dispersed throughout the region. Social equity planning ensures that:

- These communities are included in discussions about planning needs and outcomes
- Planning research and technical evaluation activities include potential impacts to these groups.

Social equity planning also ensures that low-income and minority populations are not disproportionately or adversely affected by human health and environmental impacts as compared to the general population. Transportation-related impacts could include air pollution, noise, safety issues, reduced property values and displacement of homes and businesses. Social equity in planning ensures that better decisions are made for the benefit of the entire community. Considerable attention is given to the fair and equitable distribution of benefits and burdens combined with the equal opportunity for participation in the development of regional plans, policies and projects.

## WHAT IS PLAN 2040?

**PLAN 2040** is metro Atlanta's long-range planning process for land development and transportation needs through the year 2040. It will guide growth by addressing not only land use and transportation issues, but economic, environmental, housing and human services challenges, as well.



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## How does ARC incorporate social equity into planning?

Social equity methodologies ensure that there is equitable impacts and outreach to all segments of the community through the following tools and programs, among others:

- **Regional Transportation Participation Plan** — provides guidelines for public participation, including minority and low-income communities, in the planning process.
- **Social Equity Advisory Committee** — provides advice and guidance to, and forges new relationships with members of the potential affected communities.
- **Hispanic and Asian American Advisory Councils** — assist ARC in partnering with members of Hispanic and Asian American communities.
- **Focus Groups and Listening Sessions** — allow members of the affected community to voice concerns and express their perspectives, particularly regarding impacts and benefits of transportation projects.
- **Studies and Surveys** — allow EJ communities to provide specific feedback on transit, roadway projects, and other components of transportation plans.
- **Community Conversations on Diversity** — opens the line of communication between ARC, local leaders, and minority/low-income communities.
- **Global Atlanta Snapshots** — enhances awareness of metro Atlanta's minority and immigrant populations.

## How can someone participate in developing Plan 2040?

Metro Atlanta residents can participate in ARC's Plan 2040 activities in several ways:

- Regularly visit the Plan 2040 Web site at [www.atlantaregional.com/plan2040](http://www.atlantaregional.com/plan2040) for the latest information about the planning process. Check the "Get Involved" section of the site for discussions, meetings and other ways to share thoughts and ideas.
- Email comments to ARC at [plan2040@atlantaregional.com](mailto:plan2040@atlantaregional.com)
- Share ideas at ARC's group page on LENS on Atlanta at [www.lensonatlanta.org](http://www.lensonatlanta.org)
- Call ARC with comments or questions:
  - 404. 463. 3272
  - TTY number is 404. 463. 3272

## Helpful links for more info

- **ARC's activities and planning initiatives**
- **ARC Social Equity Planning** — scroll to Environmental Justice Fact Sheet

For more information on environmental justice:

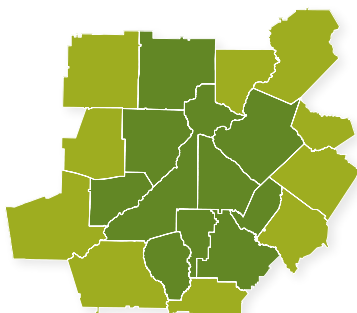
- **Beyond Race and Poverty Environmental Justice Report**
- **Federal Highway Administration**
- **Environmental Protection Agency**
- **National Environmental Justice Advisory Council**

This document can be found on ARC's Web site at [www.atlantaregional.com/plan2040](http://www.atlantaregional.com/plan2040). For assistance in viewing this document, contact [plan2040@atlantaregional.com](mailto:plan2040@atlantaregional.com) or 404.463.3272.



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40 COURTLAND STREET, NE  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303  
[ATLANTAREGIONAL.COM](http://ATLANTAREGIONAL.COM)



## WHAT IS THE ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION?

ARC is the regional planning and intergovernmental coordination agency for the **10-county** metropolitan area. For transportation planning, ARC's area of responsibility includes all or parts of **20 counties** and the City of Atlanta.