

Demographic Guiding Questions Matrix

Introduction

Demographics is an important factor to consider within both Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act (WEPA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analyses. While demographics is considered a “factor” within WisDOT’s environmental tools and templates, it is not a stand-alone factor. Other factors may, and oftentimes do, have implications on the individuals living on, near, or otherwise utilizing a transportation corridor. Consideration of demographics should start early in the NEPA process (i.e., during scoping and public involvement plan development). In evaluating the impacts of a transportation proposal, consideration of demographics should begin with the very **first** environmental factor. Meaningful and continuous public involvement is imperative to understand the potential impacts a proposed transportation improvement project may have on those living on, around, or traveling through the corridor.

Impacts resulting from a transportation proposal may have beneficial or adverse effects on these populations. For example, in filling a wetland (a negative impact to the wetland), WisDOT is concerned about the wetland loss that can appropriately be mitigated with banking. However, WisDOT should also determine whether populations may value the wetland as a food source or for its cultural significance. The guiding questions matrices below have been developed as a tool to help reviewers examine different environmental factors across both the natural and human environment for implications on the individuals or groups living near and utilizing a transportation corridor.

Using this approach to the analysis, **factor-by-factor**, the reviewer is in a better position to determine the demographic impacts of a proposed action. Which will facilitate better environmental documentation and more consistent analyses of environmental impacts.

Factor Area – Human Environment; Guiding questions to examine each environmental factor for implications on the human environment								
Business & Economics	Community	Relocations & ROW	Cultural Resources	Agriculture	Construction Sound & Traffic Noise	Aesthetics	Section 4(f) & Section 6(f)	Hazardous Materials
<p>Will owners, operators, or employees of farms or businesses in the area experience any adverse effects?</p> <p>Ex: Decrease in sales, loss of income or employment, business closure or relocation, loss of business visibility, loss of farmland, loss of or change in access, increased transportation cost, and increased travel time.</p>	<p>Will any changes in the types and volumes of traffic resulting from the proposed action produce an adverse effect on residents?</p> <p>Ex: Congestion, noise, vibration, air pollution, reduced safety for non-motorists, limit access to areas or resources</p>	<p>How many businesses, industries, and employees will be displaced or relocated because of the proposal? Are effects consistent throughout the population of the project area?</p>	<p>Will the proposed project impact any current or traditional social or cultural practices or places of Native American populations?</p> <p>Ex: Meeting places, cultural activity locations, sacred places, medicinal or sacred plant areas, fishing or spearing locations, ceremonial places, or Archeological sites</p>	<p>Will a farm be split by right-of-way acquisition?</p>	<p>Will any residences or other noise-sensitive facilities be in use during construction?</p>	<p>Will all viewers of the improved transportation facility have a similar view?</p>	<p>Will the proposal have an effect on any parkland or other unique area?</p> <p>Ex: reduced acreage, increase in noise level, park enhancement measures</p>	<p>Are the same considerations accorded for the handling hazardous substances or underground storage tanks accorded to all communities?</p>
<p>Will owners, operators, or employees experience any benefits because of this proposal?</p> <p>Ex: Job generation, increase in property value, improved access, increased visibility, decreased travel time.</p>	<p>Will residents endure any adverse effects on existing and planned land uses in the project area because of the proposal?</p> <p>Ex: Changes in the character of the neighborhood, commercial growth, and neighborhood separation.</p>	<p>How many employees will lose their jobs because of this displacement or relocation? Are impacts share proportionally among all demographic groups?</p>	<p>Will the proposed project impact resource areas important for subsistence or are culturally significant to the Native American populations?</p> <p>Ex: Wetlands, rivers, lakes, plants, tree, animals, fish, birds</p>	<p>Will migrant workers be affected by the project?</p>	<p>Will residences, or community facilities be exposed to an elevated level of noise based on traffic, roadway, terrain, and receiver characteristics affecting sound levels?</p>	<p>Will any groups experience any adverse or beneficial visual effects because of this proposal?</p>	<p>Is any recreational land being converted to a transportation purpose as a result of this project?</p>	<p>Are there sites that will be partially or fully remediated as part of this project to the benefit of nearby communities?</p>
<p>Will owners, operators, or employees experience any adverse effects because of the proposal?</p> <p>Ex: Job loss, decrease in property, decreased visibility.</p>	<p>Is there potential for adverse or beneficial effects on residents who depend on transit and other non-automobile modes of transportation?</p>	<p>Will any community facilities & services used by residents be relocated or displaced by the proposal? Will the availability of facilities and services be disrupted as a resulted of the proposal?</p>	<p>Will the proposed project impact economic resources utilized by Native American populations?</p> <p>Ex: businesses, natural resources</p>	<p>Will farm field access and farm equipment mobility be impacted?</p>	<p>Will the project increase noise levels and vibration near traditional cultural places or areas of importance?</p>	<p>If aesthetic enhancement measures are used, are they implemented in a non-discriminatory fashion?</p>		
<p>Is there potential for any adverse effects on transit- dependent residents who commute to jobs and services in and out of the project area?</p> <p>Ex: increased transportation cost, decreased access, including transit access impacted by detours</p>	<p>Will any changes to mass transit, emergency service or other public services during and after construction of the proposed project adversely affect residents?</p> <p>Ex: police and fire response times</p>	<p>Will the displacement or relocation of the business or service result in an increase in travel time and cost to populations who will need access to the business or service?</p>	<p>Will the proposed project change access to or impact the quality of any resources of significance to Native American populations?</p>					
<p>Will the proposal produce any beneficial effects, including decreased transportation cost or increased access?</p>	<p>Will any community facilities & services be affected or disrupted by the proposal?</p>	<p>Is a neighborhood dependent upon the displaced businesses for its economic, social, or cultural vitality?</p>	<p>Do the adverse effects resulting from this proposal exacerbate any on-going problem or issue?</p>					
<p>Will the proposal produce any beneficial or adverse effects on residents who depend on other modes of transportation, such as, but not limited to bicycle and pedestrian facilities, busses, and paratransit accommodations?</p>	<p>Will the relocation or other adverse effects on the affected individuals isolate, exclude, or separate them from the broader community?</p>	<p>Will any dwelling areas for the homeless or mobile homes be displaced or relocated?</p>	<p>Are the impacts identified on these populations proportionate to those experienced by the public in general? Greater or less?</p>					

Factor Area – Natural Environment; Guiding questions to examine each environmental factor for implications on the human environment							
Wetlands	Unique Wildlife & Habitat	Surface Waters	Stormwater & Erosion Control	Coastal Zones & Floodplains	Air Quality	Groundwater Wells and Springs	Threatened and Endangered Species
Are the waterfowl, fish, and wildlife populations (including mammals) inhabiting or depending on the affected wetland consumed by any groups for subsistence protein or for food in general?	Will the severance or elimination of a wildlife or waterfowl use area or movement corridor resulting from the proposal adversely affect groups who depend on these resources for subsistence protein or food in general? Will it have a negative impact on recreation?	Will the adverse effects on fish and aquatic populations affect those who depend on the fish populations as a subsistence protein source?	Will any groundwater recharge areas, drinking water supply protection areas, karst formations be negatively impacted from the proposal?	Would flooding/rising waters negatively impact residences or businesses, including agricultural lands and crop yields?	Is an increase or reduction of congestion in nearby neighborhoods anticipated?	Will the proposal negatively impact a sole source aquafer such that groundwater, wells or springs are compromised?	Do any threatened or endangered species impacted because of this proposal have cultural or religious importance to groups in the project area?
Do any groups depend on the wetland for other food supplies? Ex: Rice, berries, nuts, or other wild edible plant material: cattail, etc.	Do any of the wildlife or habitat have economic value? Ex: Trapping, collecting- for basket making, birch tree, crafting	Will the activity affect the flood elevation or storage capacity in a way that could impact individuals or groups in the area, such as flooding or altered property values?	Will stormwater runoff best management practices be installed to return 403b impaired water bodies to original designated uses, such as recreation, fishing, wildlife support, etc.?	Would fishery and aquatic habitat be negatively impacted?	Will the clean-up of contaminated sites increase air pollution in nearby communities?	Does the spring have recreational, economic, or cultural value?	
Does the wetland have economic or recreational value? Ex: Fishing, trapping, collecting-for basket making; porcupine quill or other craft resources	Does the affected group rely on the vegetation for food and cultural uses? Ex: Mammals, birds, berries, wild onions, other plant and animals	Does the stream/floodplain have recreational value?	Will any sensitive resource consumed or utilized by nearby populations (wild rice, fisheries, cranberries, etc.) be negatively impacted by erosion, sedimentation, or water quality degradation resulting from the proposal?	Would flooding/rising waters negatively impact recreational areas?	Will the proposed facility be closer in proximity to sensitive groups such as children, the elderly, those with impaired health?		
Does the wetland itself, or the wetland plant and wildlife communities, have cultural, medicinal, or spiritual significance?	Is any plant community adversely affected by the proposal valued for its medicinal properties; cultural or spiritual attributes?	Will the project have an adverse impact on drinking water supplies, quality, and safety?					
Will the proposal impact the access to the wetland?							