

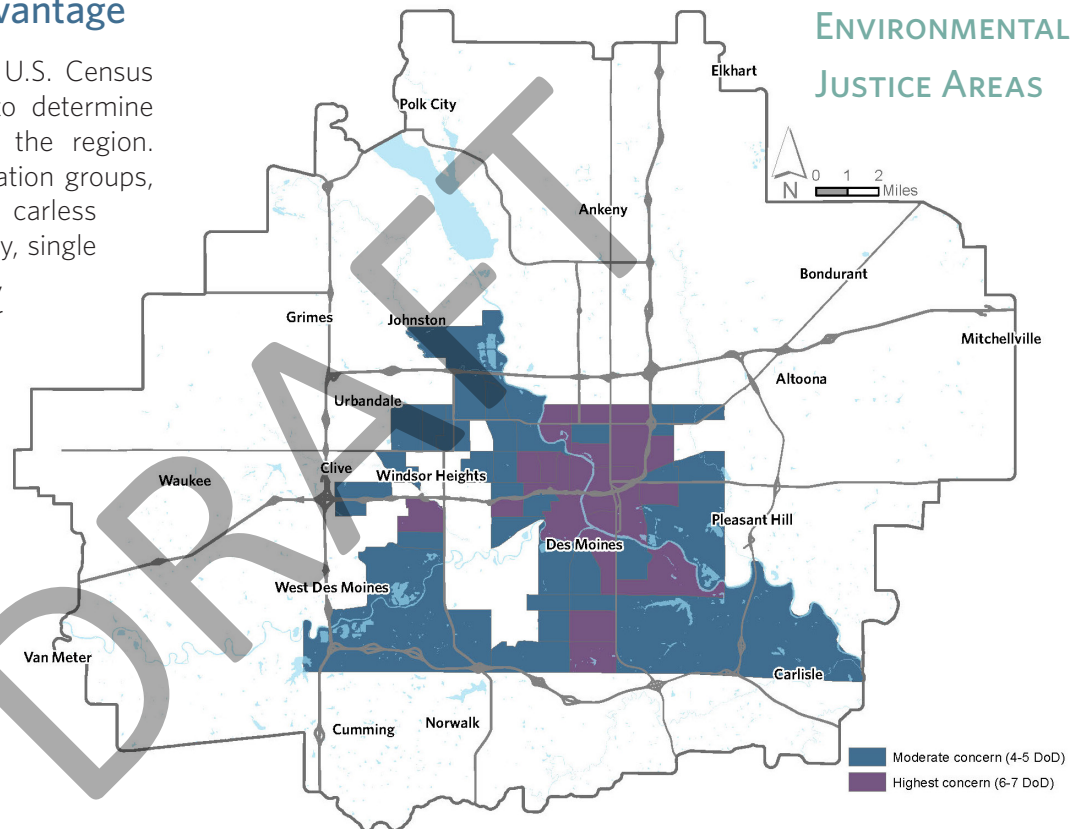
November 2020

Environmental Justice and the MPO

The US Department of Transportation defines environmental justice as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, income, national origin, or educational level with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. To ensure fair treatment, the MPO studies seven Degrees of Disadvantage (DoD) to identify *environmental justice (EJ)* areas, or those areas with large populations of traditionally under-served individuals. EJ areas in the region can be seen in the map below.

Seven Degrees of Disadvantage

The DoD methodology looks at U.S. Census Bureau data at the tract level to determine where EJ areas are located in the region. Data is obtained for seven population groups, including non-white population, carless households, households in poverty, single heads of households with children, households with person(s) over 65, limited English proficiency (LEP), and persons with a disability. A DoD is identified for a population group if the census tract exceeds the regional average for the population group. Census tracts considered EJ are disadvantaged for at least four of the seven population groups, and are scaled in two categories: Moderate Concern (4-5 DoDs) or Highest Concern (6-7 DoDs).



54

of the 113 census tracts in the planning area are defined as Environmental Justice Areas of moderate or highest concern based on the seven Degrees of Disadvantage

Interactive map of EJ areas and the seven degrees is available at:
dmampo.org/maps

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

CENSUS TRACTS EXCEEDING REGIONAL AVERAGE BY POPULATION GROUP

POPULATION GROUP	REGIONAL AVERAGE (%)	NUMBER OF TRACTS
Non-White Population	14.4	48
Carless Households	5.3	45
Households in Poverty	9.8	50
Single Head of Household with Children	13.6	57
Households with Person(s) Over 65	22.4	63
Limited English Proficiency	2.6	43
Persons with Disabilities	10.1	63

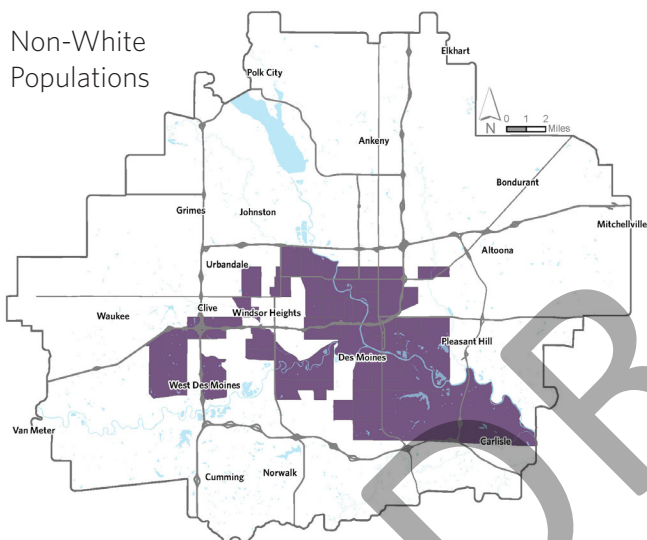
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

DEGREES OF DISADVANTAGE

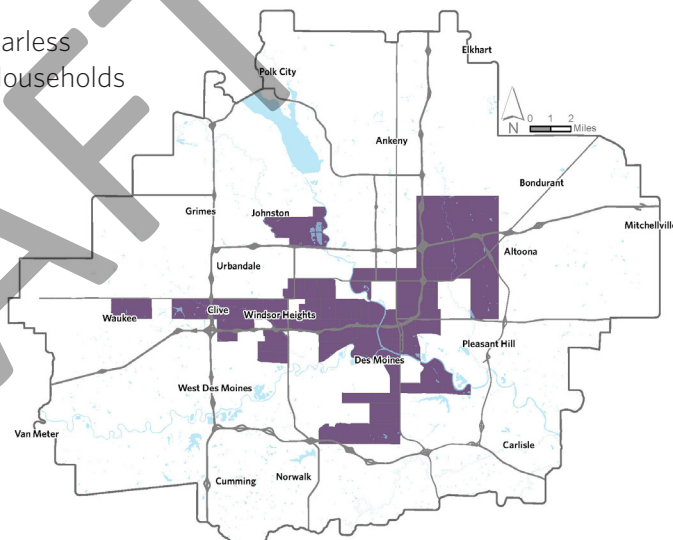
The Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) works to ensure the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all residents in the region. This means that no group, including a racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group, should bear a disproportionate share of negative health or environmental consequences of any action. In order for environmental justice strategies to make an impact in the Des Moines metropolitan region, the MPO has determined seven degrees of disadvantage and identified the spatial distribution of above average concentrations for each degree within its planning area at the census tract level.

In this update the determined degrees are: single heads of households, carless households, non-white populations, households in poverty, households with person(s) over 65, households with a limited English proficiency, and persons with disability. The following maps show in purple the areas with high concentrations of each disadvantaged population, and are provided for the MPO, regional communities, and organizations to review and apply to their efforts in increase access, improve equity, and better serve the region's needs.

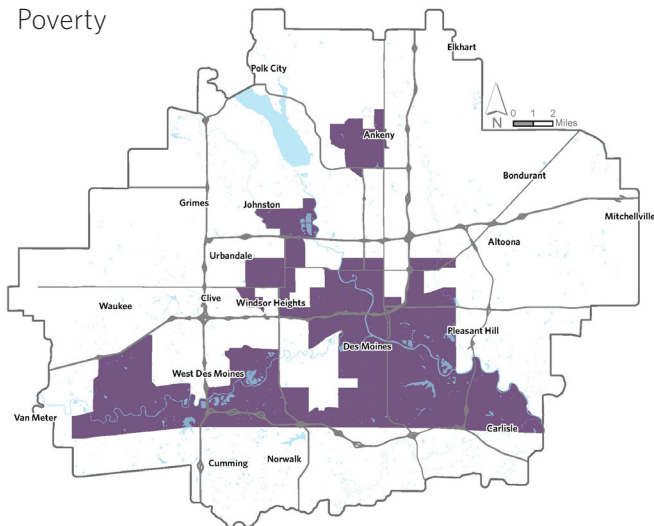
Non-White
Populations



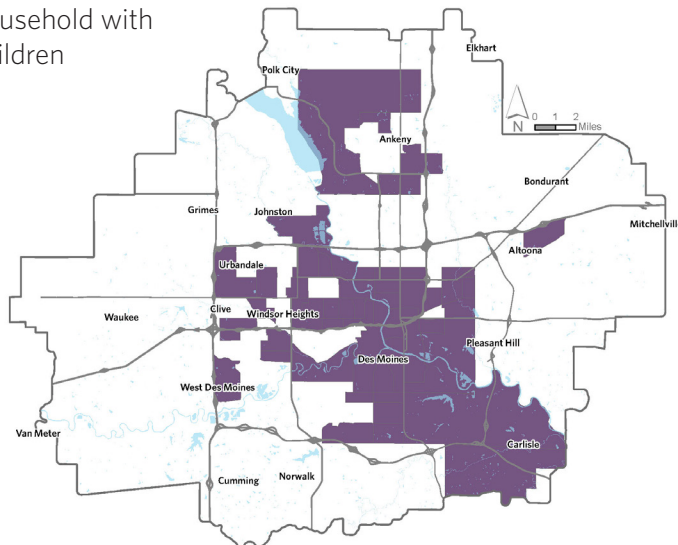
Carless
Households



Households in
Poverty



Single Head of
Household with
Children

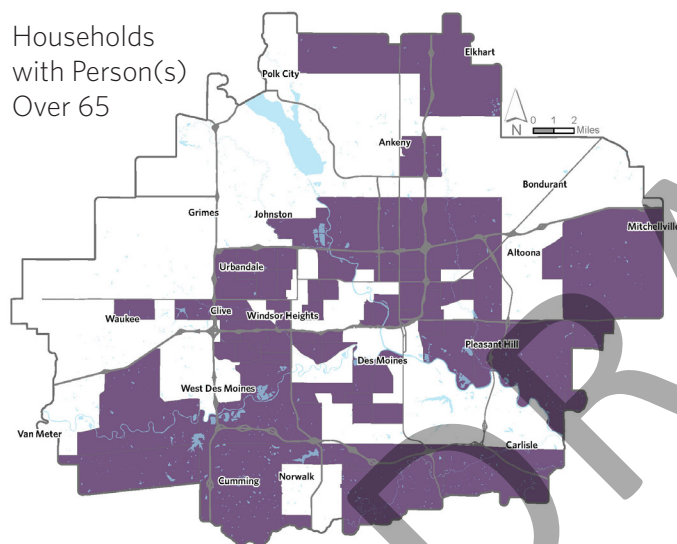


DEGREES OF DISADVANTAGE

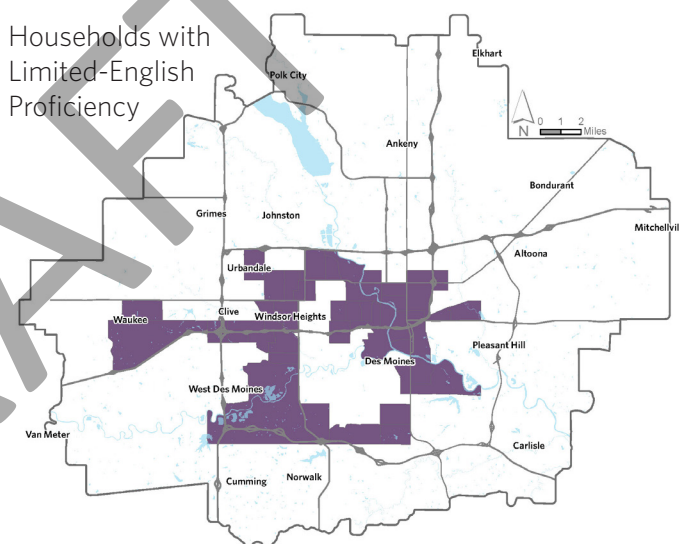
There are a number of shifts in demographics throughout the region since the 2018 Environmental Justice report, the most notable the rise in households with persons over the age of 65. Regionally the 2018 average was 21.4% and in 2018 this proportion is up to 22.4%. The households with non-white population are on the rise as well, up to 14.4% in 2020 from 13.8% in 2018 and households with limited-English proficiency have rose up to 2.6% in 2020 from 2.5% in 2018. Single heads of households have reduced from 14.9% in 2018 to 13.9% in 2020. Both of these demographics are found in many of the MPO planning area communities, and can have profound impacts on community composition and needs. Additional EJ demographic declines were in households with poverty (-0.6%), disability (-0.1%), and carless (-0.1%).

With this information the MPO aims to enhance data-driven regional transportation and related decisions to increase equity, improve the mobility for all citizens, understand positive and negative consequences of decisions, and further involve identified disadvantaged populations in decision-making region wide.

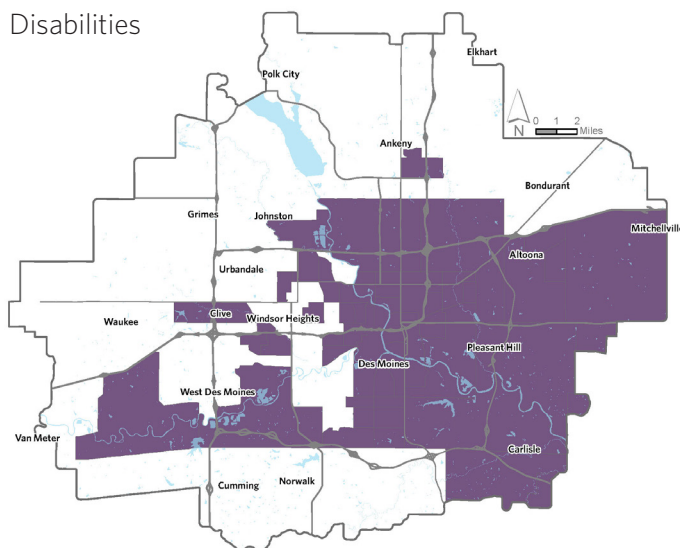
Households
with Person(s)
Over 65



Households with
Limited-English
Proficiency



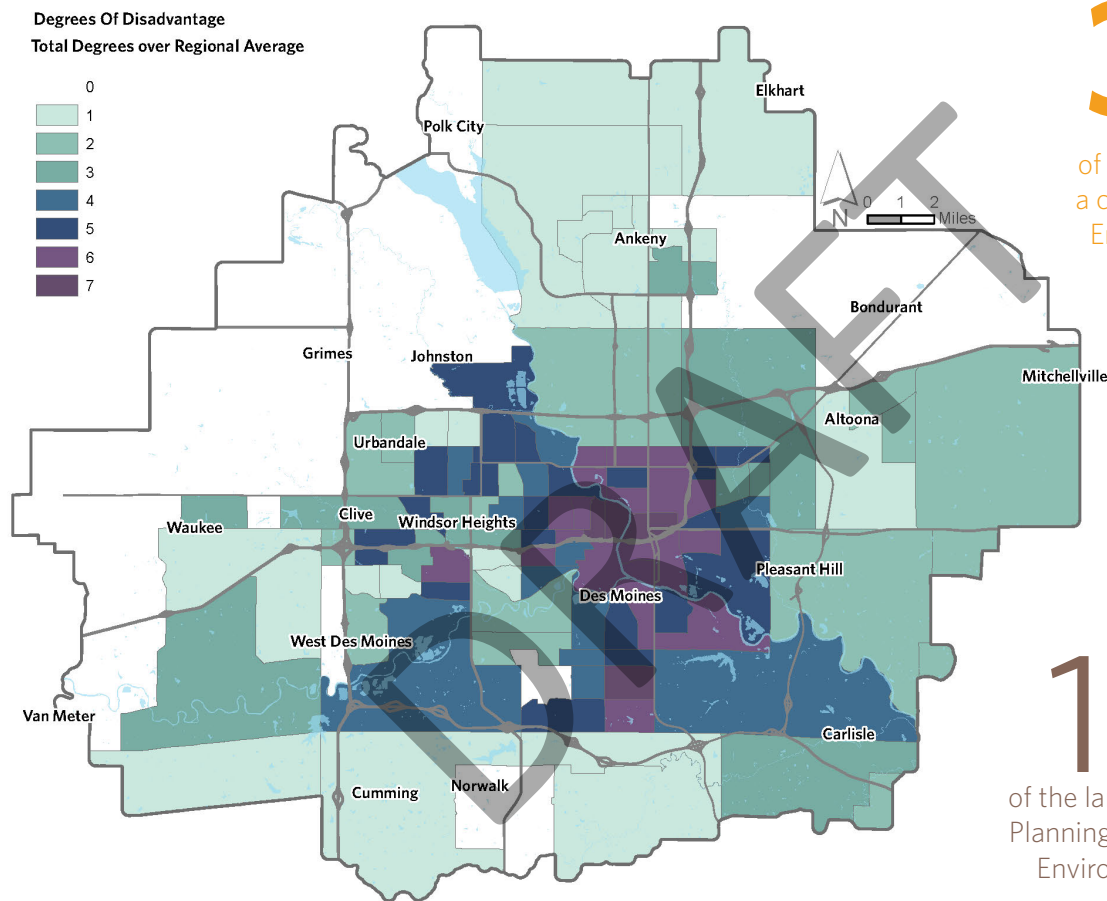
Persons with
Disabilities



IDENTIFYING EJ AREAS

Regional Degrees of Disadvantage

The map below shows the overlaying of each degree of disadvantage throughout the MPO planning area at the census tract level. Of the 113 census tracts only 8 (7%) are under the regional average for all seven degrees. The remaining 105 tracts are home to at least one group of disadvantaged populations. While concentration of highest and moderate concern EJ areas (4-7 DoDs) is highest in the central urban areas, outlying communities also have disadvantage populations, especially so near clusters of multi-family housing units.



39%

of regional population lives in a census tract identified as an Environmental Justice Area

18%

of the land area within the MPO Planning Area is identified as an Environmental Justice Area

FEDERAL MANDATES

"No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

- TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

"Each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations."

- EXECUTIVE ORDER 12898, FEDERAL ACTIONS TO ADDRESS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN MINORITY POPULATIONS AND LOW-INCOME POPULATIONS, 1994