

## **The Vulnerable Population Index in the Howard County Complete Streets Policy: Background and Explanation**

The Howard County Complete Streets Policy incorporates equity into the policy's performance measures used to track implementation progress, prioritize projects, and evaluate designs. To measure equity, the policy uses the Vulnerable Population Index method, a system developed by the Baltimore Metropolitan Council which is compliant with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations."

The Vulnerable Population Index uses U.S. Census Bureau data to measure the percentages of the following population groups in each census tract:

- Poverty
- Non-Hispanic, Non-White
- Hispanic
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
- Disabled
- Elderly
- Carless

When the percent of the seven population groups in each census tract is higher than the County mean, the tract receives one point and tracts that are above the mean of the tracts that receive one point earn an additional point. Data from each group is combined to create a composite score to measure the degree to which each tract is vulnerable. Priority shall be given to projects in census tracts that are within the top 20-25 percent of scores on the Howard County Vulnerable Population Index. Table 1 presents the number and percent of census tracts were below or above the county mean for each attribute under the VPI method, including census tracts with greater disparity.

As shown in the map, 13 out of 55 census tracts in Howard County score 6-11 points based on the VPI method. The census tracts in the darker orange color on the map are the areas that would receive recognition as a priority funding area for equity considerations. In this case, the projects would more likely to be funded if they scored similar to another project on several other factors that are being considered in the project prioritization ranking process. While those factors are still under development at this time, the policy states that projects shall be prioritized quantitatively on an annual basis using the project performance measures listed in the policy and that the prioritization process will be established by late 2020 (within 12 months of the policy's adoption by the Howard County Council).

In addition to the Vulnerable Population Index, the policy includes the following performance measurement categories:

- Safety/Public Health
- Place (Connections to important destinations)
- Access
- Economy

The Vulnerable Population Index is one aspect of the Howard County Complete Streets Policy that helps the community and increases government efficiency and transparency

Table 1:

## Howard-County-VPI-Thresholds

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Metric</b>	<b>0-Pts</b>	<b>1-Pt</b>	<b>2-Pts</b>
<b>Poverty</b>	Threshold-%	0.00%	5.04%	11.96%
	Number-of-Tracts	34	17	4
	Tract-Share	62%	31%	7%
<b>No-Car</b>	Threshold-%	0.00%	3.28%	7.71%
	Number-of-Tracts	35	15	5
	Tract-Share	64%	27%	9%
<b>Minority</b>	Threshold-%	0.00%	37.70%	49.80%
	Number-of-Tracts	28	16	11
	Tract-Share	51%	29%	20%
<b>LEP</b>	Threshold-%	0.00%	3.38%	7.26%
	Number-of-Tracts	32	19	4
	Tract-Share	58%	35%	7%
<b>Hispanic</b>	Threshold-%	0.00%	6.13%	15.32%
	Number-of-Tracts	37	14	4
	Tract-Share	67%	25%	7%
<b>75+</b>	Threshold-%	0.00%	4.44%	8.08%
	Number-of-Tracts	31	19	5
	Tract-Share	56%	35%	9%
<b>Disabled</b>	Threshold-%	0.00%	7.22%	10.91%
	Number-of-Tracts	29	21	5
	Tract-Share	53%	38%	9%

Data-Source: 2011-2015-ACS-5YR; census-tract-geographies

# Howard County 2015 Vulnerable Populations by Census Tract

This map shows the location of vulnerable populations in Howard County according to the Baltimore Metropolitan Council methodology.






This is one of several factors that will be used to prioritize projects under the Complete Streets Policy.






Other factors include:

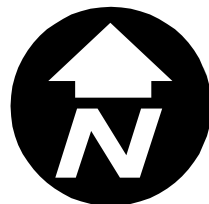
- Safety/public health
- Place (connections to important destinations)
- Access
- Economy

## Vulnerable Population Categories Number of Vulnerable Categories

(Bar Charts Show Status per Census Tract)

-  Households in poverty
-  Non-car-owning households
-  Non-Hispanic minority population
-  Low English Proficiency individuals
-  Hispanic or Latino population
-  Individuals 75+
-  Disabled individuals

-  0 - 1 (12 Tracts)
-  2 (9 Tracts)
-  3 (12 Tracts)
-  4 - 5 (9 Tracts)
-  6 - 11 (13 Tracts)



Map Produced by Howard County Office of Transportation August 5, 2019

