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**Environmental  
Justice**

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## **Environmental Justice and Title VI**

The Michiana Area Council of Governments uses the Indicators of Potential Disadvantage to help staff, member governments, planning partners, and the general public consider Civil Rights (Title VI) and Environmental Justice (EJ) concerns when carrying out planning activities, project development, and programming. The IPD analysis identifies populations of interest under Title VI and EJ using U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) data.

### **Indicators of Potential Disadvantage**

MACOG supports and models their Environmental Justice (EJ) process based upon guidelines from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) in Pennsylvania. DVRPC developed the Indicators of Potential Disadvantage (IPD) method, which locates selected population groups in the region to better inform how the regional transportation system and MPO programs, policies, and investments might impact these groups. These population groups include minorities, low-income, carless households, persons with physical disabilities, elderly over age 65, Hispanic, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Neither Title VI or the Civil Rights Act nor Executive Order #12898 provides specific guidance to evaluate EJ within a region's transportation planning process. Therefore, MPOs must devise their own methods for ensuring that EJ population groups and issues are represented in transportation decision-making. This is a challenging assignment, and serious consideration must be given to the available types of quantifiable data, as well as how the data is to be used and interpreted. It should be noted that while the IPD method helps ascertain population data, it is

only one tool in a larger strategy involving public participation, stakeholder outreach, data sources, and other research.

IPD information is derived from the American Community Survey (ACS) five-year estimates data set from the U.S. Census. The ACS is conducted every year to provide up-to-date information about the social and economic needs of the country. ACS data is in one-year, three-year, and five-year estimates. The five-year estimates set was chosen as it provides the largest sample size, includes data for all areas, and information can be found at the census tract and block group level.

A full report of the Environmental Justice population analysis with maps and figures is available on MACOG's website at [www.maps.macog.com](http://www.maps.macog.com).

### **Proposed Project Impacts**

By mapping the 2050 Transportation Plan proposed projects, potential impacts to IPD tracts can be anticipated and evaluated. All groups, including IPD populations, can benefit from the proposed transportation improvements in the area. But, careful considerations need to be given to projects located in above average IPD block groups. Over 65% of above average and well above average IPD block groups have a project within 1/4 mile. Many proposed projects will include improved accessibility and connectivity to the area, which provides increased access to community services.

Each project will bring short-term impacts to residents in the area, such as delays, increased detour traffic, noise, or right-of-way purchases. These impacts will be experienced by all populations groups, not just the IPD populations. During project development, considerations will need to be made at the project level if there are any adverse impacts to the potentially disadvantaged population groups. Figures F-1, F-2, F-3, and F-4 illustrate the distribution of transportation projects. The projects are located throughout the region, without a disproportionately high impact to the IPD populations.

Figure F-1: Elkhart County Environmental Justice

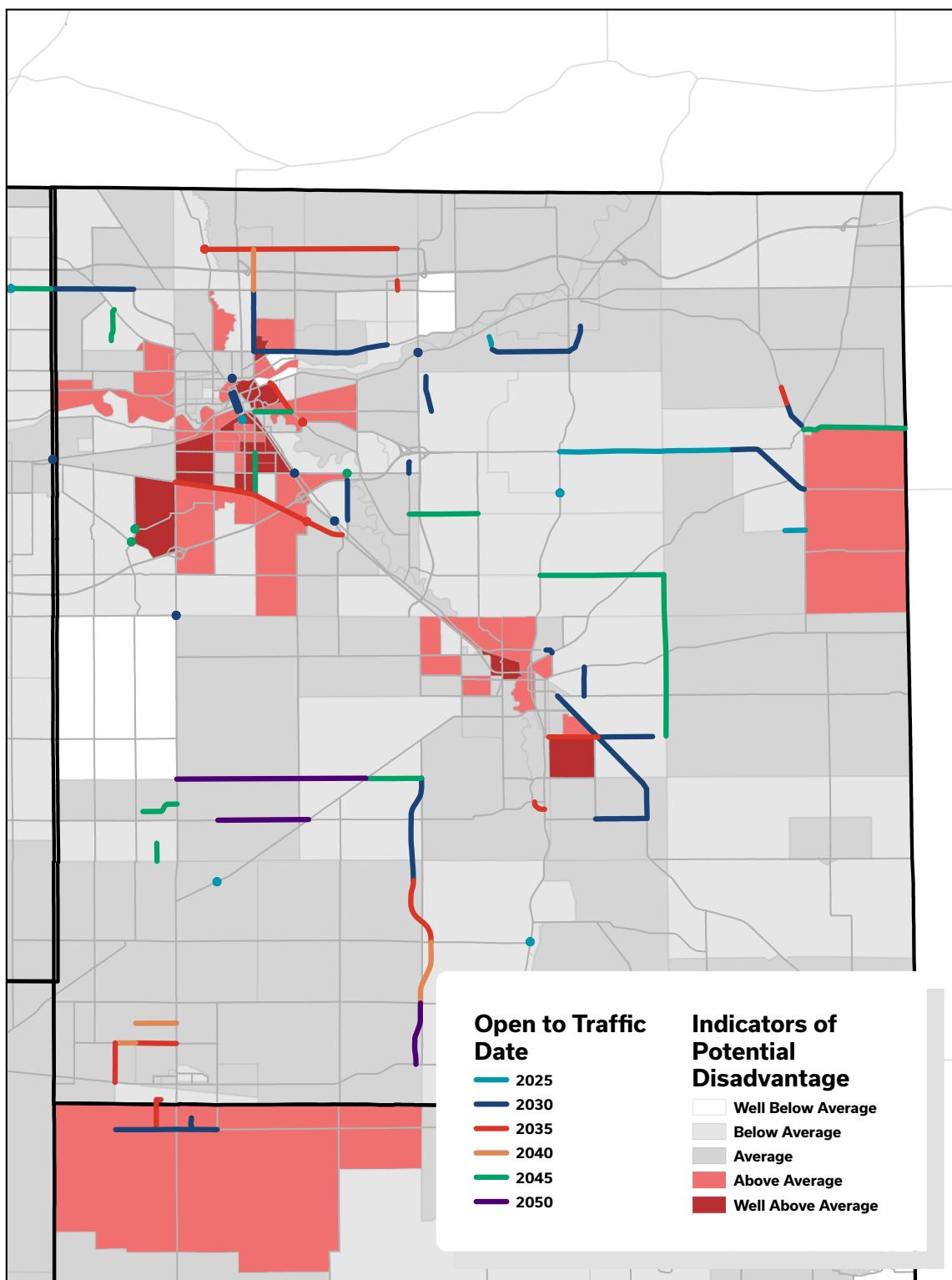


Figure F-2: Kosciusko County Environmental Justice

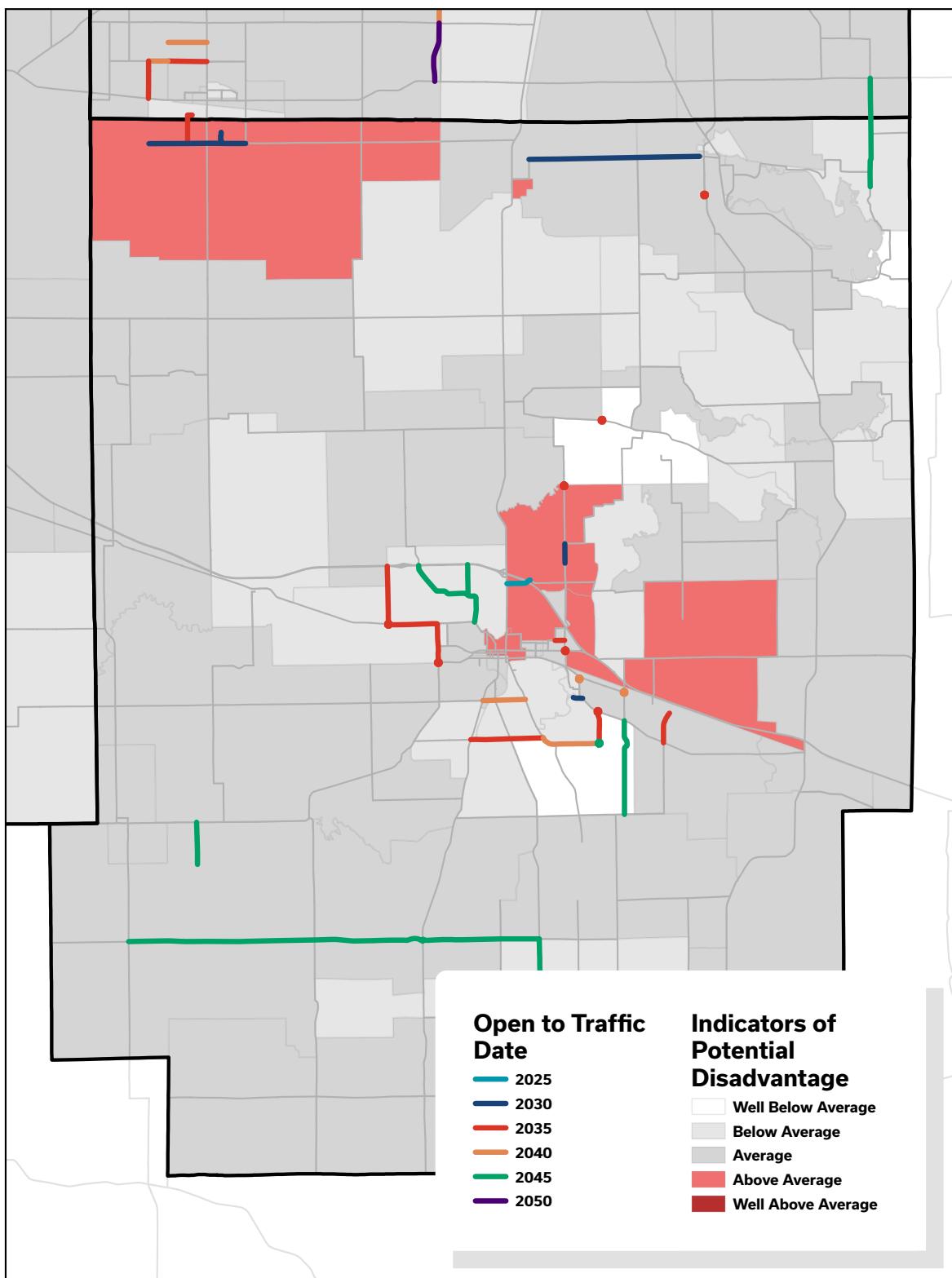


Figure F-3: Marshall County Environmental Justice

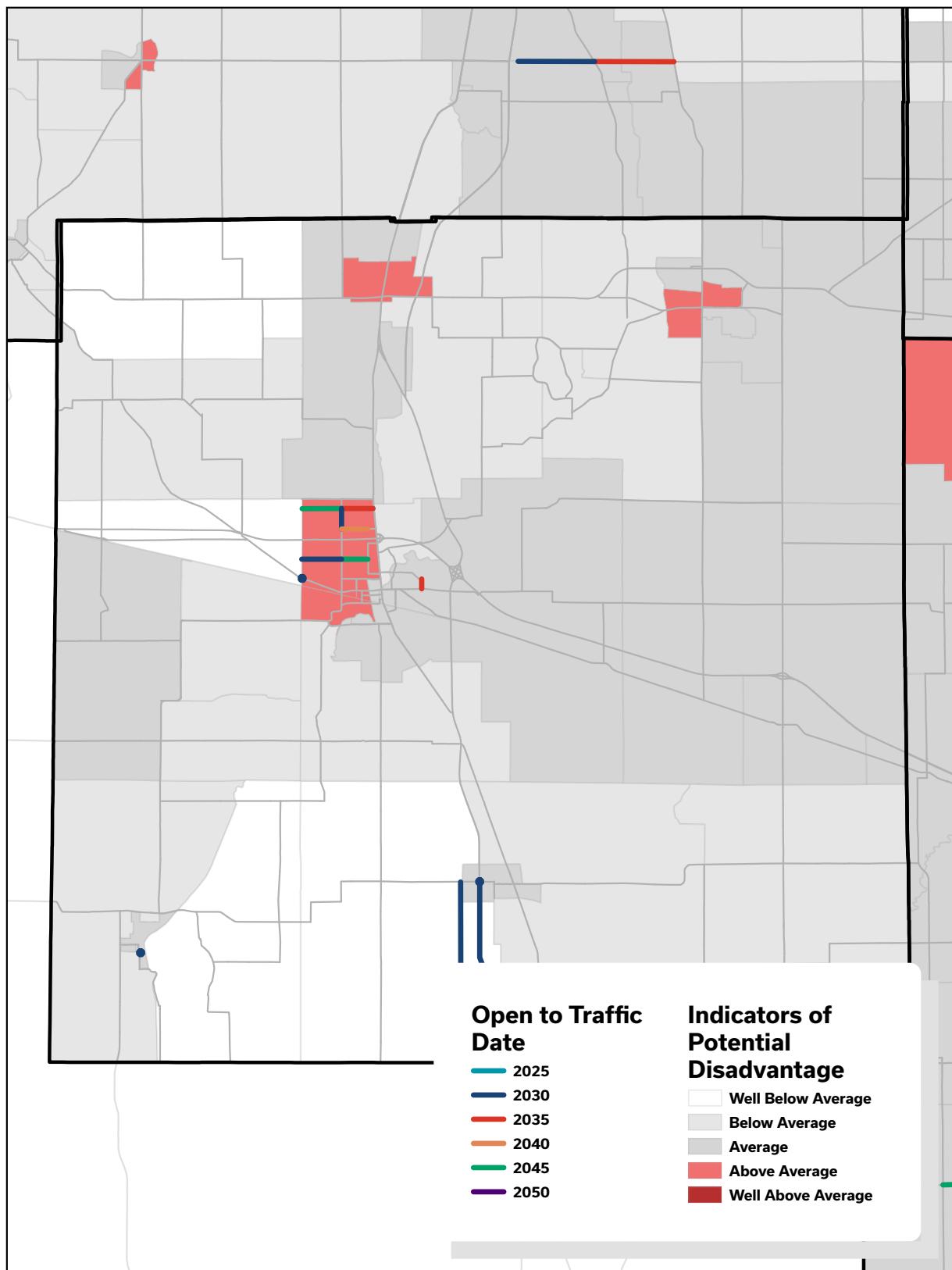
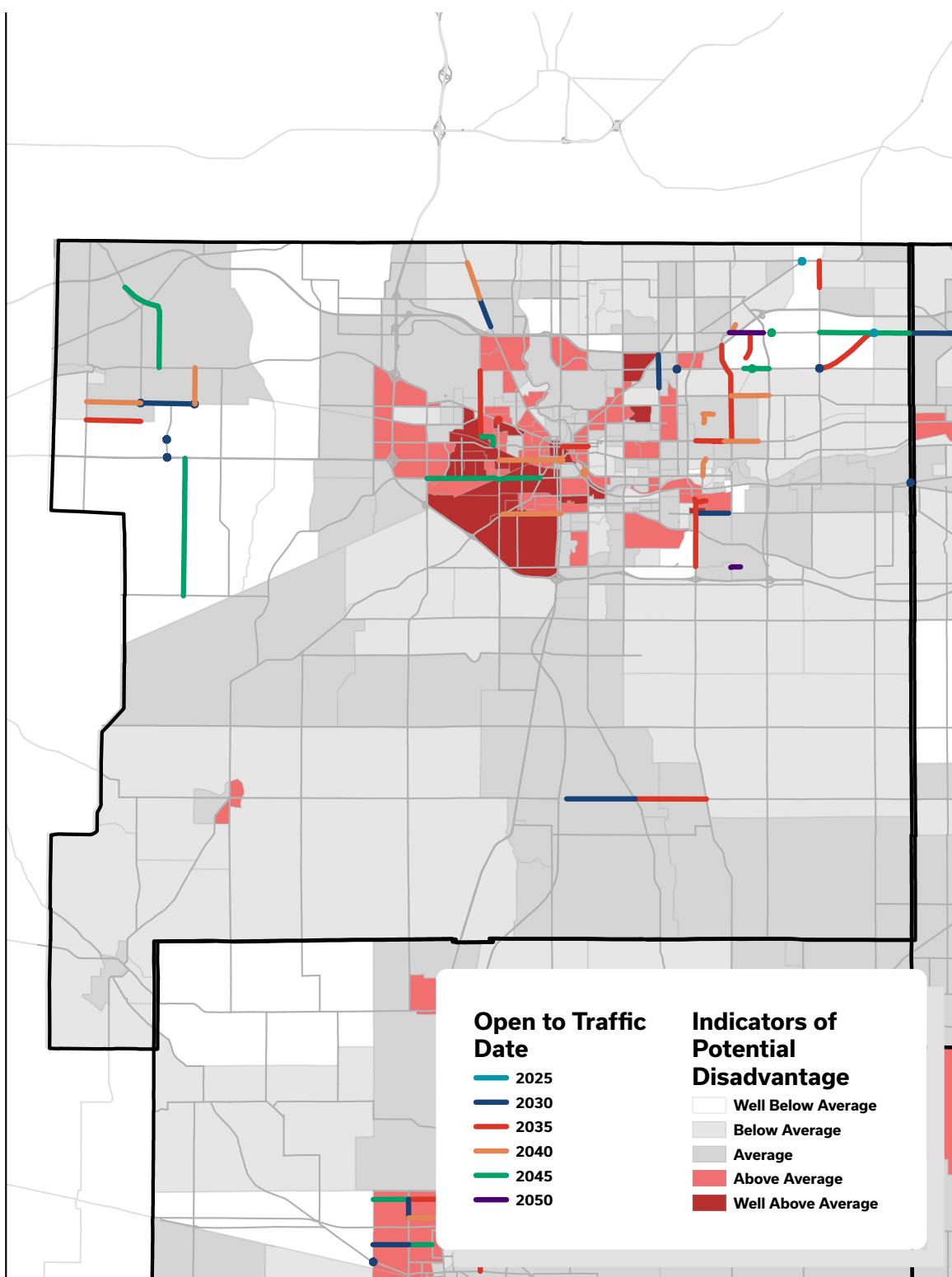


Figure F-4: St. Joseph County Environmental Justice



**Figure F-5: Pop-Up Outreach Events**