

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Environmental Justice (EJ) is a federal directive (Executive Order 12898, enacted in 1994) requiring all federal programs to identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects as the result of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations. Populations that require special consideration include historically marginalized groups such as African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic or Latino Americans, Native Americans and low-income households.

In addition to the general EJ mandate, the US DOT published its own Order (5610.2) in the Federal Register on April 15, 1997. This Order requires the incorporation of EJ principles in all US DOT programs, policies and activities. The US DOT integrates the goals of the Executive Order through a process developed within the framework of existing requirements, primarily the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (to ensure that no person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or is subjected to, discrimination).

Within the NATS area, efforts are undertaken to ensure that transportation system improvements that are implemented do not have disproportionately negative effects on minority and low-income populations. In addition, system investments must provide for an equitable distribution of benefits to areas that are traditionally underrepresented in the planning process. Transportation projects may bring new benefits in terms of greater connectivity to destinations and faster, safer travel. At the same time, these projects can also bring new concerns with increased noise, air pollution, or impediments during construction processes. In order to ensure that transportation investments in the NATS equitably benefit on all of the region's diverse populations, and that they do not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any of these populations, SWMPC undertook procedures listed in the methodology section below.

METHODOLOGY TO IDENTIFY ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POPULATIONS

In June of 2007, SWMPC revisited its procedures for identifying NATS EJ Populations. Staff turned to representatives from MDOT to determine the procedures used at the state level for EJ analysis. The methodology described below outlines the procedures used for NATS EJ analysis and parallels what is being used by the State of Michigan.

Minority group population numbers were assembled from the following 2010 US Census sources:

1. Total Population (Summary File 1, Table 1);
2. Black or African American alone (Summary File 1, P3);
3. American Indian and Alaskan Native alone (Summary File 1, P3);
4. Asian alone (Summary File 1, P3); and
5. Hispanic or Latino (Summary File 1, P5).

All but Hispanic or Latino population numbers were drawn from populations of one race. Since the US Census does not consider Hispanic or Latino to be a race designation, there will be, by definition, individuals who identified themselves as two or more races within the Hispanic or Latino designation.

Low-income population numbers were drawn from the following 2011 American Community Survey (ACS) sources:

1. Population for whom poverty status is determined (ACS 2007-2011 5-Year Estimates, Table S1701) and,
2. Population for whom annual income was below poverty level (ACS 2007-2011 5-Year Estimates, Table S1701).

The 2010 US Census did not include a “long form”, where questions about income had been asked in Census 2000 and prior decennial census datasets. Instead, the American Community Survey, which helps the Census Bureau collect data continuously, now measures income in its questionnaire. 5-Year Estimates were used because they provide a large enough sample for the Census Bureau to report data at the Census Block Group level in our region. Census Block Groups are also the smallest geographic summary area for which race and poverty data are available. At the block group level, individual concentrations of population can be more carefully identified.

To determine whether a census block group constituted an “EJ area”, SWMPC calculated the percentage of the total population in each census block group that belonged to each of the designated EJ groups. The percentage of the population that belonged to each EJ group was then compared to the proportion of the overall population of Michigan that the group constitutes. SWMPC then created maps for each of the EJ groups, shading areas where the concentration of that particular EJ group was higher than the proportion that the group represents of the state of Michigan’s overall population.

For example, people who identify as African American made up 14.6 percent of the total population of Michigan. The Environmental Justice analysis map of the African-American population would show shading for those block groups that had greater than 14.6 percent of their population who identified as African American.

The EJ maps were then overlayed with the 2014-2017 TIP and LRTP project location information to determine potential impacts to EJ populations. These maps can be found within this section, Maps 39-43.

Conclusion

After reviewing the EJ maps with the project locations, it has been determined that there will be no adverse effects on EJ targeted populations and that EJ populations have not been excluded from the benefits to be derived from projects in their area.

PROJECT-LEVEL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ANALYSIS

When a project is submitted, the applicant must fill out the TIP Project Application form (available from http://swmpc.org/nats_tipapp.asp). In the fall of 2009, the project application was revised and approved by the NATS committees. A new section was added for Environmental Justice. When the application is submitted, the SWMPC staff review the application for completeness and raise any concerns regarding the application to the submitting agency.

The questions asked on the application in the Environmental Justice section are:

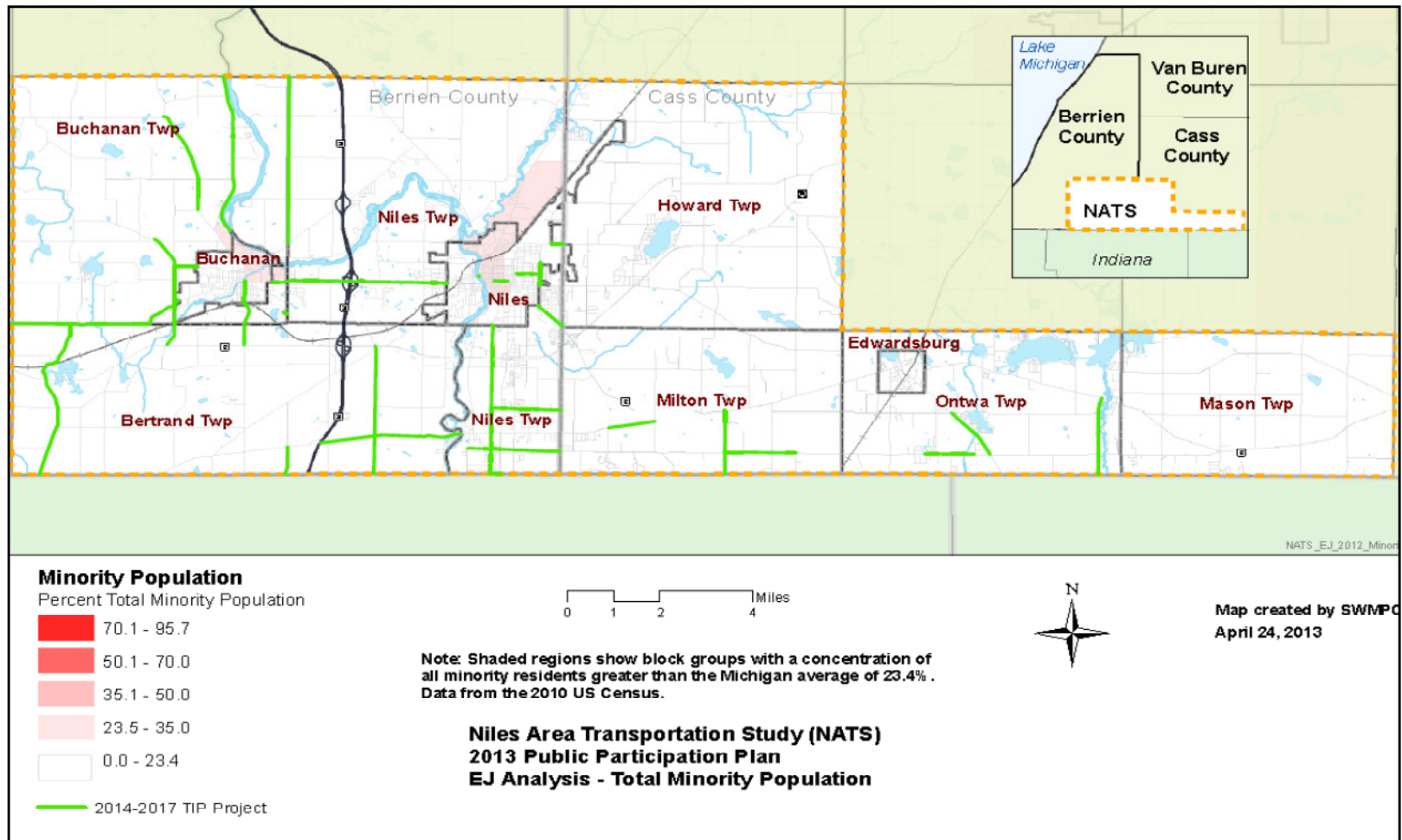
1. Will this project reduce travel time to jobs/training, medical and social services, and food for the population in census-designated EJ areas?
2. Is this project located in a census-designated EJ area?
3. Were outreach materials and public meetings made accessible to encourage participation from EJ populations?
4. Did EJ populations submit comments?

SWMPC staff relay their concerns and/or any public concerns raised about the environmental justice of a project to the NATS committees before the project is approved. TIP projects were plotted on the Environmental Justice maps displayed in Maps 40-44 and staff evaluated if there were any concerns regarding Environmental Justice populations and projects being proposed.

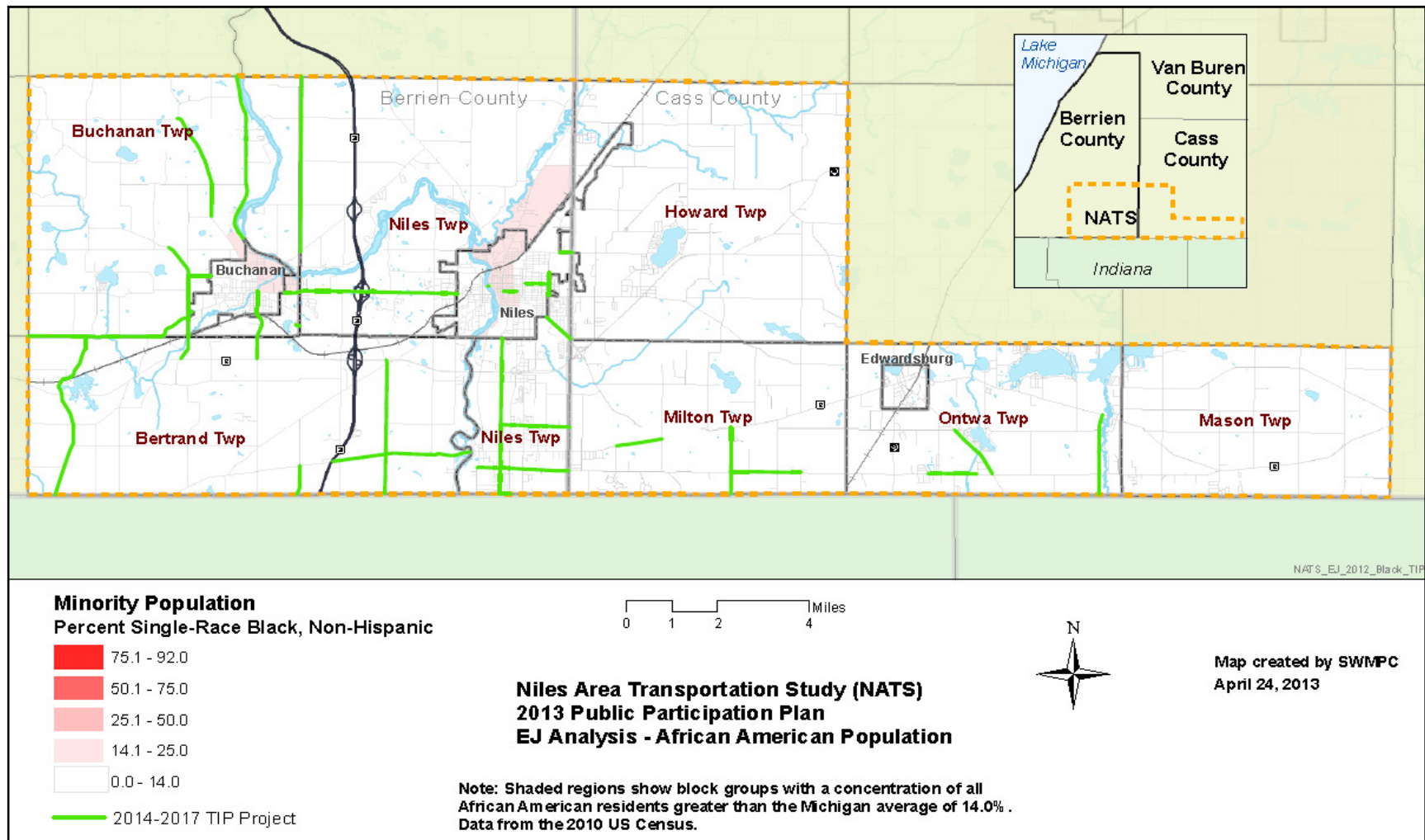
Conclusion

After reviewing the project applications and the EJ maps with the project locations, it has been determined that there will be no adverse effects on EJ targeted populations and that EJ populations have not been excluded from the benefits of receiving projects in their area.

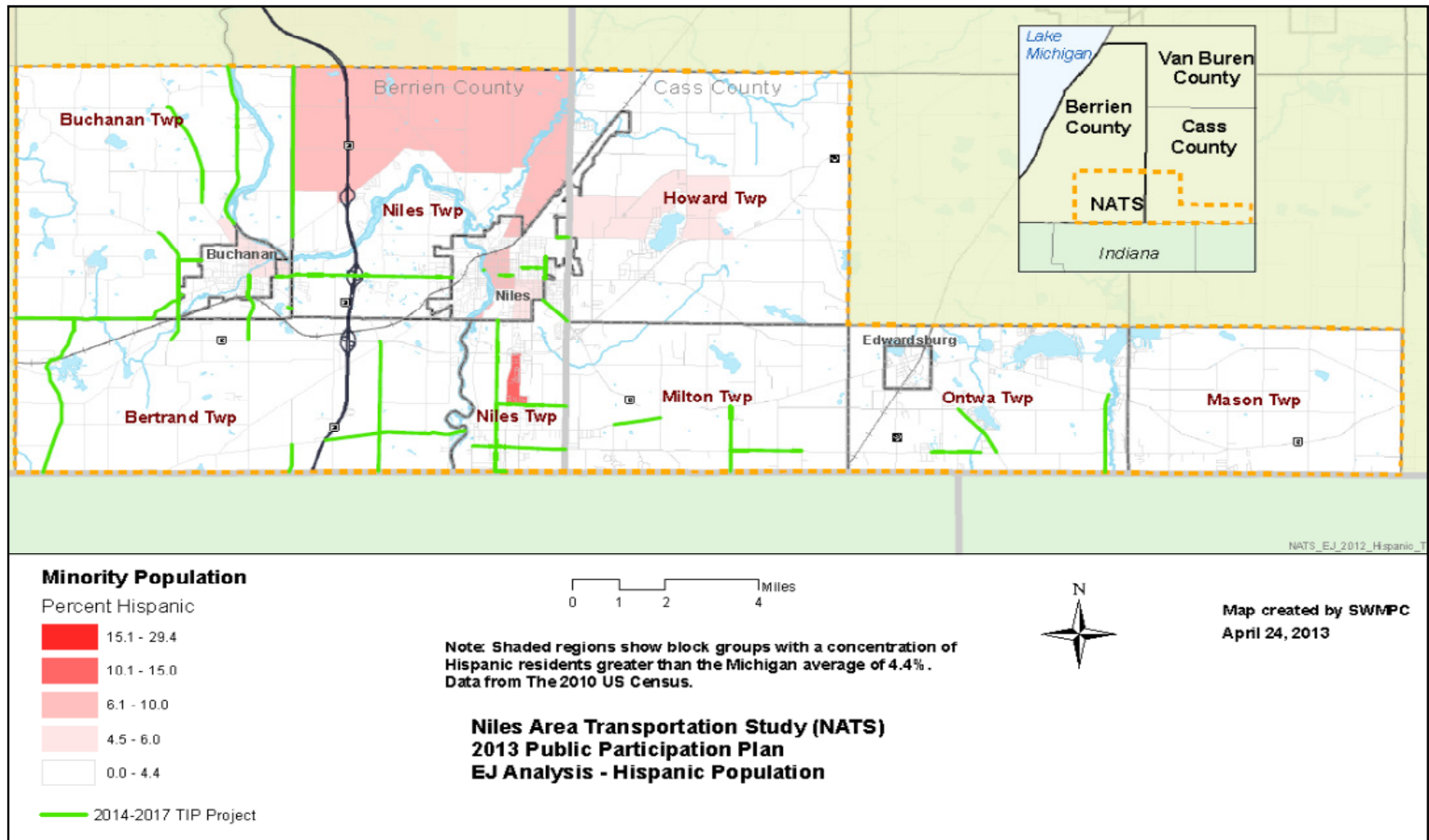
Map 40 - Total Minority Population



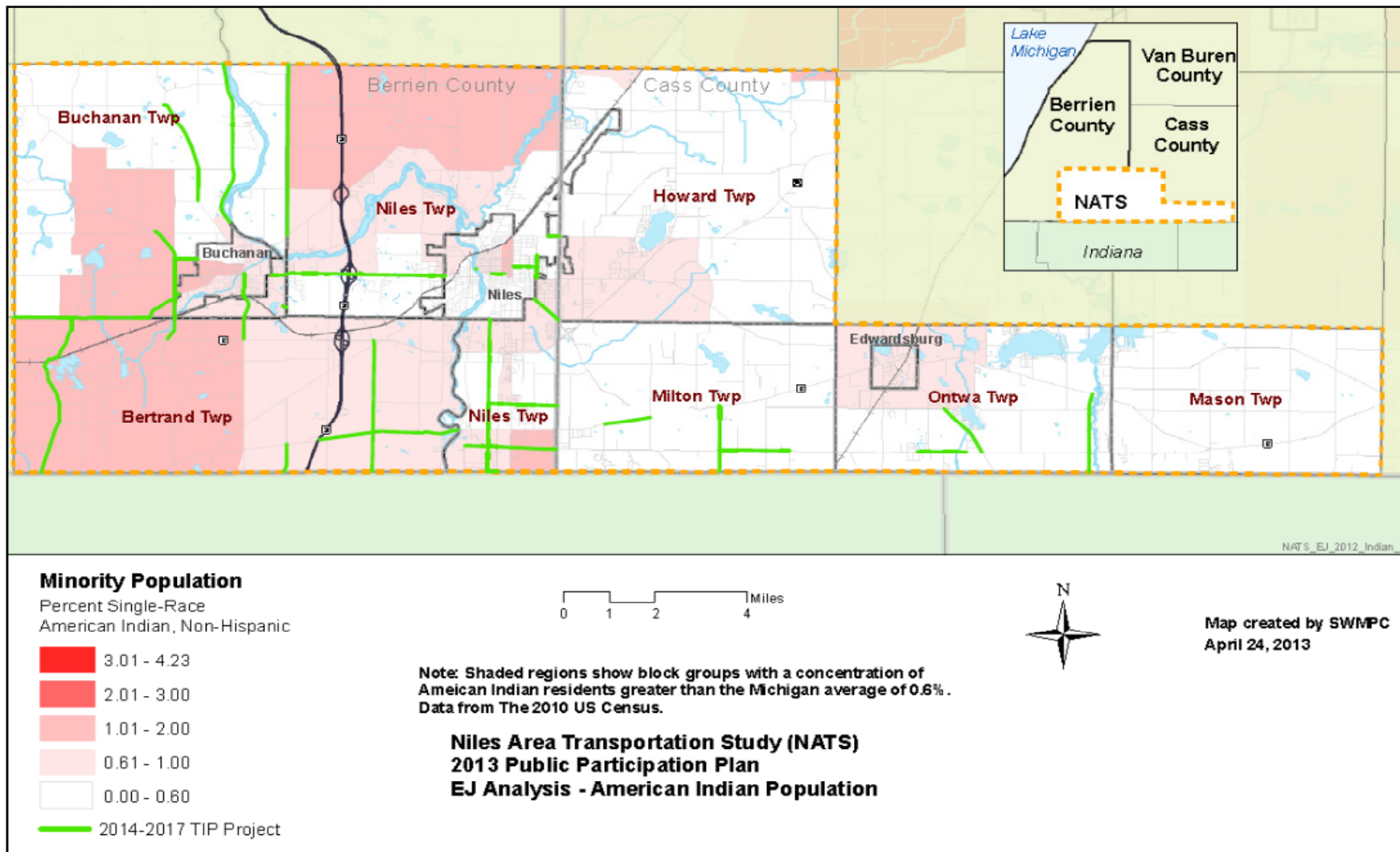
Map 41 - Minority Population-Black



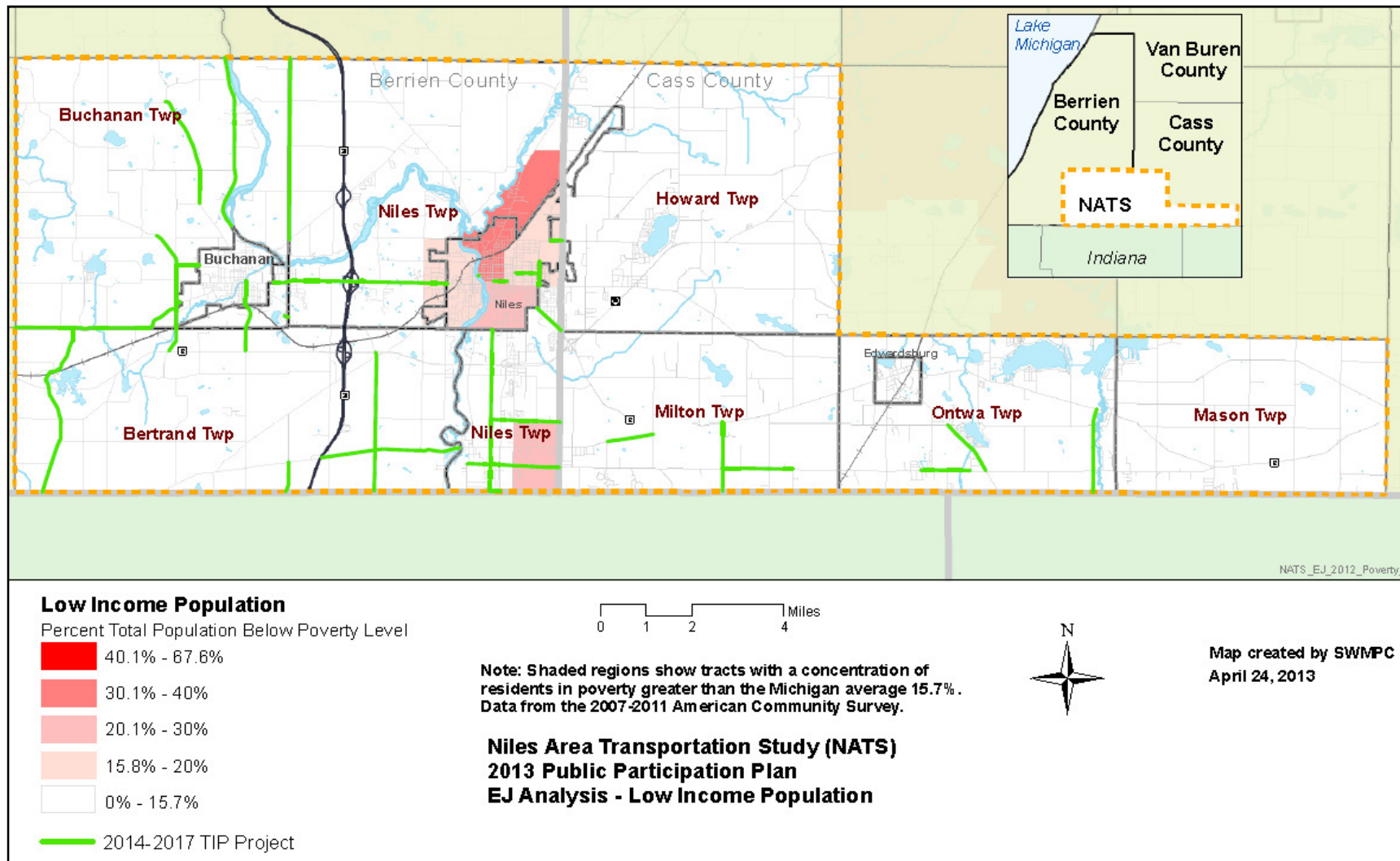
Map 42 - Minority Population-Hispanic



Map 43 - Minority Population-American Indian



Map 44 - Total Population Below the Poverty Line



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