

Staff Memorandum

To: Chair and Members of the Oregon Environmental Justice Council
From: Eric Main, Oregon Health Authority
Date: May 5, 2026

Regarding: Agenda Item 3: EJ Mapping Tool – Adopt Statewide Index Indicators

The Oregon Environmental Justice Mapping Tool project is currently undergoing the Indicator Selection decision point for the Statewide Index, Coastal Index, Remote Index, Rural Index, Small City Index, and Large City Index.

Initial recommendations for the Statewide Index were presented to the Oregon Environmental Justice Council on March 11, 2026. Council members provided feedback regarding the proposed indicators during their virtual meeting and through an online survey after the meeting.

Staff will present refined recommendations for indicators in the Statewide Index on May 6, 2026 and request the EJC to adopt the Statewide Index indicator recommendations.

Staff recommendations per subdomain are listed below:

Environmental Exposures Subdomain – Statewide Index Indicators

1. *Air Quality Index (AQI) Unhealthy Days*
2. *Cancer Risk from Diesel Particulate Matter (PM)*
3. *Cancer Risk minus Diesel PM*
4. *Drinking Water Contaminants Index*
5. *Lead Exposure Risk Index*
6. *Permitted Air Pollution Sites*
7. *Transportation Noise Pollution*

Environmental Hazards Subdomain – Statewide Index Indicators

1. *Earthquake Risk*
2. *Groundwater Threats - Cleanup Sites, Leaking Underground Storage Tanks, Landfills, Confined Animal Feeding Operations*
3. *Hazardous Material Storage*
4. *Hazardous Waste Facilities*
5. *Impaired Water Bodies*
6. *Residential Buildings in Wildfire Burn Areas*

7. Wastewater Discharge

Climate Change Risks Subdomain – Statewide Index Indicators

- 1. Days with Max Temperature above the 90th Percentile*
- 2. Days Below 32F*
- 3. Drought*
- 4. Fire Weather Index Events*
- 5. Flood Risk*
- 6. Heat Index Days above 90F*
- 7. Wildfire Risk*

Built Environment Subdomain – Statewide Index Indicators

- 1. Access to Healthcare*
- 2. Access to Parks*
- 3. Community Design Index = Walkability + Population Density – Impervious Surface*
- 4. Digital Equity – Access to Highspeed Internet*
- 5. Food Insecurity – Access to Healthy Food + SNAP Recipients*
- 6. Traffic Safety – Injuries and Fatalities*
- 7. Urban Tree Canopy Coverage*

Human Health Subdomain – Statewide Index Indicators

- 1. Adult Cancer Prevalence Minus Skin Cancer*
- 2. Circulatory Disease Prevalence*
- 3. Diabetes Prevalence*
- 4. Frequent Mental Distress Prevalence*
- 5. Population Living with a Disability*
- 6. Preterm Birth Prevalence*
- 7. Respiratory Disease Prevalence*

Demographic & Social Factors Subdomain – Statewide Index Indicators

- 1. Adults Without a College Degree*
- 2. Households without Access to a Vehicle*
- 3. Limited English Proficiency*
- 4. Population Below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level*
- 5. Population Under 5 Years Old*

Staff request the EJC to determine the two remaining indicators for subdomain Demographic & Social Factors from these three options:

- Inheritance Proxy (Ability to Accumulate Generational Wealth),

- Uninsured Population, and
- No Vehicle Households.

EJC members will be requested to rank the three options based on their impact defining higher risk communities through an [online survey](#). The live results will be presented to the EJC during the May 6th meeting.

Inheritance Proxy (Ability to Accumulate Generational Wealth)

Indicator inputs:

- Percentage of owner-occupied homes with householders under 65
- Median home value
- Median household income
- Percentage of homes without a mortgage

Rationale: Minority populations face significant systemic barriers to accumulating generational wealth, resulting in a persistent racial wealth gap where median white households hold over six times the wealth of median Black households. Key obstacles include lower homeownership rates, disparities in asset appreciation, higher debt loads, and limited intergenerational transfers.

Mean indicator score: 49.8

Correlation with life expectancy: 0.05*** (there is less than a 0.1% probability the observed results occurred by random chance)

Uninsured Population

Indicator inputs:

- Percent of the population without health insurance

Rationale: Uninsured adults face severe health inequities, experiencing lower quality care, limited access to preventative services, and higher rates of unmanaged chronic conditions like diabetes and cancer. They are twice as likely as insured adults to have difficulty paying medical bills, leading to higher debt and financial distress. These disparities disproportionately affect low-income, Hispanic, and Black individuals.

Mean indicator score: 36.1

Correlation with life expectancy: 0.46*** (there is less than a 0.1% probability the observed results occurred by random chance)

No Vehicle Households

Indicator inputs:

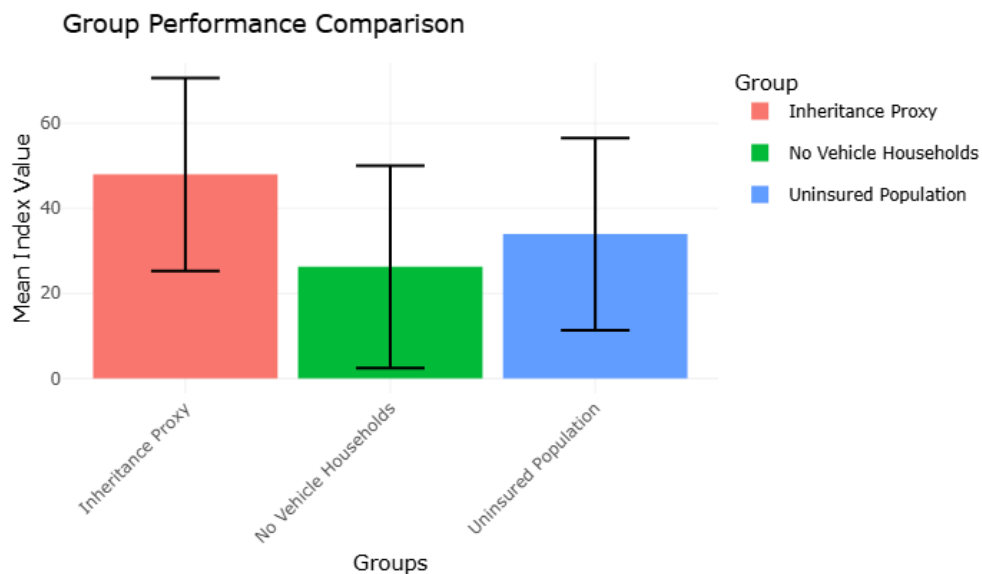
- Occupied housing units where no passenger cars, vans, or pickup/panel trucks of one-ton capacity or less are kept at home and available for use by household members

Rationale: No-vehicle households in the US face significant disparities, primarily driven by income and racial inequality rather than choice. Roughly 19% of households below 200% of the poverty level lack vehicle access, compared to 5% of wealthier households, heavily affecting Black, Native American, and immigrant communities. These households, often in car-dependent areas, face limited access to food, health services, and jobs, which correlates with higher mortality after health emergencies.

Mean indicator score: 27.3

Correlation with life expectancy: 0.09*** (there is less than a 0.1% probability the observed results occurred by random chance)

The bar charts show how much each indicator will contribute to the Demographic and Social Factor subdomain. Indicator contributions are determined by the average indicator score for all measurable census tracts. Indicators with lower average scores contribute less than indicators with higher average scores.



Group Performance Comparison

