

**BEYOND ENGAGEMENT:**  
Equity Principles to  
Guide State Department  
of Transportation and  
Community Collaboration



 THE  
GREENLINING  
INSTITUTE

A blurred photograph of two people riding bicycles on a city street. The person in the foreground is wearing a grey hoodie and a blue beanie. The background shows a car and city lights, suggesting an urban environment.

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# Our Vision

The Greenlining Institute works towards a future where communities of color can build wealth, live in healthy places filled with economic opportunity, and are ready to meet the challenges posed by climate change.



# Agenda

- Background
- Equity Principles to Guide State Departments of Transportation and Community Collaboration
- Application to the IEAC
- Questions

# Background

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- [Research](#) showing that federal infrastructure dollars are largely reinforcing historical patterns of disinvestment and harm to BIPOC communities.
- [New report](#) found that more than half of federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funds have gone towards resurfacing and expanding highways, and just one fifth going towards public transit.

# Background

- To stop the cycle of marginalized communities bearing the brunt of pollution and climate change impacts, decision-makers must reshape this once-in-a-generation investment opportunity.
- State Departments of Transportation must deliver more equitable and sustainable outcomes that guide better transportation investments in a way that reflects community needs.

# Background

- Greenlining and Tamika Butler interviewed and surveyed nearly 50 national stakeholders who have knowledge and experience working with State DOTs and compiled this report.
- The report is aimed at helping CBOs and State DOTs better understand how to engage with each other in order to advance more equitable transportation policies and programs and offered recommendations for productive collaboration.



# Overview of the Collaboration Principles



# Collaboration Principles

1. Advance Equity Beyond Engagement
2. Adapt Equity Strategies Based on the Political Context
3. Embrace and Honor the Wide Array of Community Expertise to Work Across Sectors
4. Elevate and Share Stories
5. Refer to the Experiences and Lessons Learned of Others

# 1. Advance Equity Beyond Engagement

- Establish an equity advisory committee or other bodies that can directly impact decisions and learn about how those decisions are made.
- Provide consistent, reliable platforms and meetings to help CBOs navigate and understand which of the many funding guideline updates, budget processes, key decisions, and programs may be the top priority for them to engage on, based on their needs and interests.
- Agencies should define and operationalize what administrative equity means in the context of working with communities and CBOs (i.e. contracting, compensating reimbursement, etc.)

## 2. Adapt Equity Strategies Based on the Political Context

- State DOT staff should track and report data on how current transportation investments are benefiting or harming low income and communities of color. Regardless of political dynamics, this is a good governance approach to basic transparency and accountability of funds.
  - Obtaining this baseline data is critical to begin to embed equity into budgeting and other decision making processes.

### 3. Embrace and Honor the Wide Array of Community Expertise to Work Across Sectors

- Garner broader support, gather data, and create talking points to make the case to other interest groups that transportation is connected to their issue area. For example:
  - Jobs, Labor, Economic Benefits: [Public transit, road maintenance](#), greenway bicycle and pedestrian projects create jobs and [spur local economy and business benefits](#).
  - Affordable Housing: [Walking, biking and public transit investments support affordable housing](#).

## 4. Elevate and Share Stories

- Utilize storytelling to combat different kinds of opposition, move decision makers, and help people who lack an ability or desire to navigate the technical nature of transportation systems.
- To share complex and technical information, utilize storytelling to demonstrate to CBOs why engaging on various topics are relevant to and impactful on their needs and priorities.
- Uplift targeted strategies to specific demographics, such as [this resource for addressing transportation equity in Latino communities](#).

# 5. Refer to the Experiences and Lessons Learned of Others

- Read the State Smart Transportation Initiative [The USDOT's Request for Information on Transportation Equity Data: An Analysis of State DOT Responses](#) to understand other State DOTs' current needs, perspectives, and best practices.

# Application to the IEAC

- **Transparency:** Have conversations around the transparency and accountability of transportation investments as a foundation for moving all equity work forward
- **Storytelling to break down silos:** Tap into the lived experience of the EAC to help bring seemingly divergent issues together.
  - For example, helping bridge the false dichotomy between the economic vs. sustainability outcomes of transportation projects, by sharing examples of how climate-friendly transportation investments in disadvantaged communities have created jobs and local economic benefits.

# Contact

- Hana Creger, [hanac@greenlining.org](mailto:hanac@greenlining.org)
- Tamika Butler, [tamika@tamikabutler.com](mailto:tamika@tamikabutler.com)