

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: October 16-17, 2025

From: TANISHA TAYLOR, Executive Director

Reference Number: 1.13, Action

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Subject: Commission Equity Initiatives Update

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the California Transportation Commission (Commission) approve the Interagency Equity Advisory Committee's (Committee) Vision, Mission, and Foundational Principles for Transportation Equity included in Attachment A. This document was adopted by the Committee at its September 5, 2025 meeting and incorporates feedback from Commissioners when the draft was presented at the May 2025 Committee Executive Meeting. Executives from the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) have approved the document. Commission approval is required to move the document from Committee adoption to formal use and would provide a clear and unified direction for the Committee.

Issue:

The Committee has completed its process to develop and approve a draft Vision, Mission, and Foundational Principles for Transportation Equity document. To move from Committee adoption to formal use, Commission approval is required. Approval will establish these statements as the recognized framework for the Committee's ongoing work and ensure consistency in how the Committee provides advisory support to the Commission, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA). Approval at this stage provides clarity of purpose and allows the Committee's recommendations and activities to proceed with a unified and consistent foundation.

Summary:

Committee Approval of Vision, Mission, and Foundational Principles for Transportation Equity

The Committee convened on September 5, 2025. Members of the Committee voted to approve the draft Vision, Mission, and Foundational Principles for Transportation Equity after Committee discussion and amendments.

The draft Vision, Mission, and Foundational Principles for Transportation Equity reflect a shared understanding of the Committee's purpose and desired impact. These statements serve as a guiding framework for the Committee's activities, policy discussions, and advisory recommendations within each agency's scope and the scope of the Committee.

The development of these statements builds upon work conducted by the Committee in 2024, including a focused workshop, survey, and discussions within the former Safety and Climate Ad Hoc Subcommittee.

At the March 2025 Committee Business Meeting, Chair Armas-Kelly and Member Akemi-Hernandez were identified as subject matter experts (SMEs) to lead this work. In collaboration with interagency staff, the SMEs developed the draft Vision, Mission, and Foundational Principles for Transportation Equity during March and April 2025, incorporating foundational principles and objectives that build upon prior Committee efforts.

The SMEs presented the draft statements at the May 2025 Committee Executive Meeting and solicited feedback from Committee members, agency leadership, and Commissioners. In response to the feedback received, Chair Armas-Kelly and Member Akemi-Hernandez further refined the draft document and presented the revised Vision, Mission, and Foundational Principles for Transportation Equity at the September 2025 Committee Business Meeting for discussion and approval. Committee members provided additional amendments as part of the discussion and the Committee voted to approve the document with the proposed changes. Executive management from all three agencies approved the Vision, Mission, and Foundational Principles for Transportation Equity, affirming the Committee's work and direction moving forward. The approved document is included in Attachment A for Commission approval.

Summary of Commissioner and Committee Member Feedback Received

Following the May 2025 Committee Executive Meeting, interagency staff compiled feedback from Committee members, agency leadership, and Commissioners to share with Chair Armas-Kelly and Member Akemi-Hernandez for incorporation into the draft document. The SMEs also asked interagency staff to solicit an additional round of member feedback via email in June 2025. Overall, feedback emphasized the importance of integrating language related to:

- Advancing safety through a Safe System approach
- Expanding economic opportunity and prosperity, including targeted local job creation with living wages in construction, operations, and maintenance
- Ensuring disability access, rather than accessibility in general
- Improving geographic access, including transportation infrastructure in rural areas
- Promoting access to opportunity and empowerment
- Preserving the liberty to move
- Reflecting California’s geographic diversity and the need for diverse solutions
- Including actionable items

At the September 2025 Committee Business Meeting, members further refined the document to incorporate language focused on:

- Acknowledging historical harms, including incarceration, internment, and systemic disinvestment
- Prioritizing safety for all ages and abilities
- Promoting shared mobility options, zero-emission and clean energy vehicles, and responsible resource use
- Supporting economic opportunity through proactive, adaptable approaches
- Empowering systemic change by linking equity to land use, housing, and community well-being

This agenda item also includes the following informational updates:

Equity Advisory Committee Member Update

Committee member Lisa Marie Alvarado will provide an update on the work she’s been undertaking during her tenure on the Committee.

Lisa Marie Alvarado is regenerating Central Valley neighborhoods through community education, wellness, and advocacy. Birthing Womxnwise in 2020, she’s created yearly public art exhibitions, community art classes / expressions, and opportunities for cultural reclamation. Womxnwise has been leading indigenous-inspired talk circles virtually and within Tulare County, incubating place-based decentralized leadership. Reclaiming sacred spaces and centering collective care is the Womxnwise way. With Womxnwise, Lisa advocates at both the local and state level for “transportation wholeness” on the Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee at Tulare County Association of Governments and the Interagency Equity Advisory Committee with the Commission, Caltrans, and CalSTA. When Lisa is not smashing the patriarchy or playing outdoors, you can find her boosting and celebrating all things local.

Committee Activities Update

Commission Activities

- *Senate Bill 1 Funding Program*

Committee members who reviewed the community engagement narratives in project applications for the Commission's Senate Bill 1 (SB 1) Competitive Programs' fourth funding cycle were invited to participate in individual debrief sessions with SB 1 program managers. These sessions provided an opportunity for members to reflect on their review experience and offer suggestions for improvement. In Cycle 4, updates to the program guidelines placed greater emphasis on community engagement and equity considerations, making committee member review even more integral to the evaluation process. Committee member input helped inform the assessment of these elements and strengthened the funding award recommendations considered by the Commission. At its June 2025 meeting, the Commission awarded more than \$1.4 billion to transportation projects through SB 1 Competitive Programs.
- *Active Transportation Program Technical Advisory Committee*
 - The Active Transportation Program (ATP) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is an action-oriented body that supports the Commission's and Caltrans' management and delivery of the ATP. Its mission is to maximize the program's effectiveness in meeting statutory goals, which include increasing walking and biking trips, improving safety and mobility for non-motorized users, advancing greenhouse gas reduction goals, enhancing public health, and ensuring disadvantaged communities fully benefit from the program. At the October 2025 Committee Business Meeting, staff brought forward a recommendation for a Committee representative to serve on the ATP TAC for a two-year term.
- *Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan Guidelines*
 - Program staff held a series of informational briefings to provide additional context to Committee members on the Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan (CMCP) Guidelines. Committee members were asked to provide written comments with their feedback on the guidelines by August 15, 2025. Staff shared the feedback received with the Transportation Planning and Program Guidance Subcommittee on August 25, 2025. Draft guidelines will be presented at the October Commission meeting with final adoption anticipated in December 2025. The guidelines will apply to comprehensive corridor plans initiated or updated after final adoption.
- *Assembly Bill 744*
 - In August 2025, Commission staff provided the Data Implementation Subcommittee with an update on the final proposal developed in response to Assembly Bill 744 (AB 744). This proposal presents a framework to enhance statewide collaboration on transportation data, modeling, and analytic software tools that support decision making, interagency coordination,

- and alignment with state transportation, housing, and climate goals. It fulfills the requirements established in AB 744 (Carrillo, Chapter 872, Statutes of 2023), which directs the Commission to assess existing transportation data and modeling practices and recommend strategies to improve access to high-quality data, modeling, and analytic software tools that support planning and coordination across agencies.
- If the Commission's proposal receives legislative funding, staff will engage the Data Implementation Subcommittee in 2026 to help shape the next phase of implementation planning.
- *State Transportation Improvement Program Guidelines*
 - Committee members were invited to review the 2026 Draft State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Guidelines and provide feedback to staff via member briefings throughout the month of May 2025. Member feedback resulted in the addition of a glossary of terms in the updated guidelines.
- *Statewide Community Engagement Playbook*
 - The Statewide Community Engagement Playbook (Statewide Playbook) is an action item from the 2021 Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI). The Statewide Playbook will document best practices for Caltrans' planning and project development to support institutionalizing meaningful community engagement practices within the department. Based on the Statewide Playbook, Caltrans Districts will develop District-specific Community Engagement Playbooks to address the unique needs and organization of each District.
 - The Community Engagement Policies and Practices Subcommittee received a presentation on the Statewide Playbook at the June 2025 subcommittee meeting and a presentation specifically focused on Chapter 4 of the Playbook: "How We Work Together" at the August 2025 subcommittee meeting. Chapter 4 covers recommended strategies and best practices for building working relationships, as well as platforms and methods for conducting engagement. Subcommittee members were asked to provide feedback that will inform the final version of the Statewide Playbook, anticipated for completion in the spring of 2026.
 - Caltrans staff anticipate returning to the full Committee in the spring of 2026 to review the feedback received from Committee members and other external partners and discuss what feedback was incorporated into the final Statewide Playbook.
- *Equity Index Use Case Development*
 - The Data Implementation Subcommittee received an introductory presentation on the Caltrans Equity Index (EQI) at the June 2025 subcommittee meeting and a technical presentation on the EQI at the August 2025 subcommittee meeting.

- Subcommittee members have been asked to inform the implementation of the EQI, including the development and review of both internal and external use cases. The EQI is expected to improve Caltrans' analysis of project impacts and improve project planning, development, and design. The tool can also be applied externally to planning and decision-making processes for other transportation agencies and community partners.
- Caltrans staff will return to the Data Implementation Subcommittee in November with opportunities to inform use case development. Collaboration with the subcommittee will continue into 2026.
- *Director's Policy on Public Transit*
 - The Transportation Planning and Program Guidance Subcommittee received a presentation at the August 2025 subcommittee meeting on the Director's Policy on Public Transit (Transit Policy). The subcommittee will receive a follow-up presentation at the November 2025 subcommittee meeting about opportunities to provide input on the Transit Policy Implementation Plan.
 - The Transit Policy will provide high-level, long-range direction to Caltrans on transit-related activities, including improvements to transit facilities on the State Highway System, enhanced state collaboration in transit planning, and modernization of transit data and technology.
- *Federal Transit Administration 5310 – Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities*
 - The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5310 – Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program is intended to improve the mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation services and expanding the transportation options available to meet this specialized transportation need. Caltrans released the FTA 5310 “Call for Projects” on June 30, 2025. Eligible projects include Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible vehicles, related support equipment, Operating Assistance, and Mobility Management funding.
 - Caltrans assembled a State Review Committee (SRC) consisting of advocates, users of 5310 services, and other interested parties to review the project applications. Caltrans extended an invitation to Committee members to participate in the SRC for the 2025 grant cycle. Five Committee members signed up to serve on the SRC. The scoring took place in late September.
- *Application Period for the 2026 – 2028 Term of the Interagency Equity Advisory Committee*
 - The Commission, Caltrans, and CalSTA opened the application period on September 8 for individuals interested in serving a two-year term as a member of the Committee. New terms begin in February 2026.
 - The online application portal will close on Sunday, October 19, 2025, at 11:59 pm. Interested individuals can apply online at:
<https://forms.office.com/g/qJ4QktySmr>

- Visit the Commission website to learn more about the Committee and its activities: catc.ca.gov/programs/interagency-equity-advisory-committee

Background:

The Committee is a priority for the Commission, Caltrans, and CalSTA. The Committee elevates diverse and historically marginalized voices to advise the three agencies on how to achieve meaningful outcomes in transportation equity, environmental justice, and equitable economic opportunities, especially as they relate to transportation planning and programming.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Interagency Equity Advisory Committee Vision, Mission, and Foundational Principles for Transportation Equity as approved by the Committee in September 2025.

Attachment A

Interagency Equity Advisory Committee Vision, Mission, and Foundational Principles for
Transportation Equity as approved by the Committee in September 2025

Vision Statement

Our vision is a California where transportation systems serve all people equitably, reflect the rich diversity of our communities, empower economic opportunity, and foster safety, mobility justice, disability access, and sustainability for generations to come.

We envision an affordable, reliable, connected, efficient, accessible, innovative network that prioritizes and responds to the rapidly changing needs of underserved populations, including our seniors, people with disabilities, and communities historically harmed by systemic inequities.

Rooted in the understanding of our interconnected relationship with the land, we are committed to supporting the reduction of environmental harm, integration of renewable energy, and the advancement of ecological and environmental justice throughout our transportation system — including the protection of wildlife corridors and natural resources.

Guided by community partnerships, disability justice, cultural responsiveness, and climate resilience, we strive to transform our transportation infrastructure into a just, inclusive, and forward-thinking system that enhances quality of life and nurtures the well-being of all Californians.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Equity Advisory Committee is to support interagency efforts to create an equitable, sustainable, and inclusive transportation system that ensures safe access for all and reflects the needs, cultures, and voices of all communities.

We are committed to transforming mobility through innovation, more reliable resources, community-led recommendations, accessible practices, and ecological and environmental justice.

By elevating lived experiences and honoring every person's right to move safely with respect, love, and dignity, we aim to reduce systemic harm and to offer impactful solutions that will guide responsive change in California's transportation system to sustain Californians for the future.

Foundational Principles

Acknowledge History & Past Harms

Transportation has long been a key driver of progress, opportunity, and connection across California. We have diverse transportation systems that connect our urban, rural, and suburban communities, as well as our waterways, which include our rivers, lakes, and oceans.

While our infrastructure has enabled economic growth and vibrant communities, it has also caused significant harm—often developed without consideration for the people and ecosystems it disrupted. Historical practices, including Indigenous displacement, redlining, segregation, and the creation of sundown towns, denied many communities safe and equitable access to transportation, resources, and opportunity.

Before California became a state in 1850, this land was home to over 100 distinct sovereign Indigenous nations whose descendants still live here today. Many modern roads follow trails and waterways that Indigenous communities have used since time immemorial. As cities expanded, these communities were forcibly relocated to Rancherias or faced outright violence and genocide. Communities of color in California have endured state-sanctioned violence and the denial of resources and opportunity, exemplified by forced internment and mass incarceration, among other historic injustices. This legacy of harm continues to impact Black, Indigenous, and people of color, as well as California’s aging population and people with disabilities, low-income communities, farmworkers, and others facing systemic barriers to mobility and opportunity.

Emphasize Partnership & Collaboration

In response, the Interagency Equity Advisory Committee seeks to support the Commission, Caltrans, and CalSTA, in partnership with community leaders, to build a more just, inclusive, and sustainable transportation future. We are committed to reducing systemic harms and expanding opportunities to address issues such as—human trafficking, environmental degradation, and unequal access to vital resources like healthcare, education, consumer advocacy, and economic opportunity—by actively centering the voices of those most impacted.

Center Community Practices

We are guided by a deep respect for the land and the communities who call it home. Our approach integrates Indigenous values such as being in right relation with the land, fostering ecojustice, and addressing the realities of climate change through renewable energy solutions and wildlife-conscious planning. We acknowledge our California farmworkers who are essential to our state’s agricultural success and how vital our transportation methods are to providing local resources and transporting them worldwide.

Prioritize Safety & Safe System Approach

The liberty to move safely is an essential part of life for people of all ages and abilities. Safety is a shared responsibility between all road users and those who design, operate, and maintain the transportation system. Prioritizing investment in public transportation will ultimately improve service frequency and reliability, integrating transportation modes, which encompass a range of options, including public transport, cycling, walking, rolling, and shared mobilities, all of which contribute to a healthier lifestyle by reducing CO2 emissions and other pollutants. We support a responsible transition to zero emission and clean energy vehicles, recognizing the extractive practices and burdens these technologies place on communities.

Support Economic Opportunity

We believe that access to transportation is a key resource that leads to economic opportunities

and prosperity. As a global leader in technology, the state of California has the responsibility to lead using innovative technology and communication methods to be proactive, adaptive, and responsive to community needs as they evolve over time. New projects and maintenance of existing transportation systems allows for workforce development with targeted local job creation and living wage opportunities. It is equally important to consider diverse geographic topographies and identify infrastructure challenges often faced in geographically or economically disinvested areas, such as Tribal, rural and unincorporated communities, and find solutions to provide more connecting routes.

Affirm Disability Access & Inclusive Mobility Justice

We are dedicated to incorporating the principles of mobility justice to make transportation accessible to all, provide guidance on language access and needed routes, and support the expansion of transportation services and programs to improve access. We are especially focused on ensuring that disability justice is at the core of our work by supporting the design of systems that address the full spectrum of challenges people with disabilities may encounter. We also acknowledge the unique needs many seniors face, with the aging population as the biggest group that may rely on these services for access to their physical, cognitive, economic, and social needs.

Empower Systemic Change

At the heart of this initiative is a bold, imaginative vision: one that reimagines transportation as a force for equity, connection, environmental stewardship, affordable housing, and an inclusive built environment. Together, through radical imagination, community collaboration, cultural responsiveness, and sustainable innovation, we can build a future where transportation systems truly serve all Californians.

Definitions:

Right Relation

In indigenous context, [right relation](#) signifies a way of being grounded in respectful reciprocity and relationality with all of creation, including humans, non-human relatives, and the land. Right relation is about practicing deep listening, self-reflexivity, creating space for marginalized voices, and acting with responsibility and accountability.

Ecojustice

[Ecojustice](#) refers to the interconnectedness of environmental sustainability and social justice, emphasizing the need to protect the environment while ensuring fairness and equity for all.

Safe System Approach

The [Safe System approach](#) is closely related to the [Vision Zero](#) philosophy, which aims to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries by designing a transportation system that anticipates human error and accommodates human vulnerability. This approach shifts the focus from solely modifying human behavior to creating a system where mistakes are less likely to result in severe harm. [Caltrans](#) is actively adopting the Safe System approach, integrating it into its policies and practices. This includes prioritizing complete streets that

provide safe and accessible options for all road users (e.g., pedestrians, cyclists, transit users).

Radical Imagination

Radical imagination is a tool used by social justice leaders and movements to collectively shape what's possible. It is the ability to imagine the world, life, and social institutions not as they are but as they might otherwise be (Haiven and Khasnabish, 2014).