

Memorandum

To: EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

EAC Business Meeting:
September 5, 2025

From: STATE AGENCIES' EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

Reference Number: Tab 6, Action

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Published Date: August 22, 2025

Subject: Approval of Draft Vision, Mission, and Foundational Principles for Transportation Equity

Recommendation:

Interagency lead staff recommend that the Interagency Equity Advisory Committee approve the draft vision, mission, and foundational principles. Approval of the draft vision, mission, and foundational principles enables the Committee to move forward with a clear and unified direction.

Background:

Members of the Interagency Equity Advisory Committee (Committee) will be requested to approve the draft vision, mission, and foundational principles after Committee discussion.

The draft vision, mission, and foundational principles 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.

In response to Committee feedback received at the March 2025 meeting, Chair Armas-Kelly and Member Akemi-Hernandez, in collaboration with Committee staff, developed the draft

vision and mission statement during March and April 2025, incorporating foundational principles and objectives that build upon prior Committee efforts.

After receiving feedback from Committee members, agency leadership, and Commissioners, at the May 2025 Executive Meeting, Chair Armas-Kelly and Member Akemi-Hernandez refined the draft statements to incorporate the input received. The updated draft is included below for Committee discussion and possible approval.

Summary of Feedback Received

After the May 2025 Executive Meeting, interagency staff compiled feedback received to share with Chair Armas-Kelly and Member Akemi-Hernandez to inform the draft statements. The Subject Matter Expert team also directed staff to solicit an additional round of member feedback via email in June 2025. Committee member, agency leadership, and Commissioner feedback included integrating language focused on:

- Safety and the safe systems approach
- Economic opportunity and prosperity (e.g. targeted local job creation with living wages in construction, operations, and maintenance for transportation projects)
- Disability access (rather than accessibility in general)
- Geographic access, including transportation infrastructure in rural areas
- Access to opportunity and empowerment
- Liberty to move
- Diversity of geography and need for diverse solutions in California
- Inclusion of actionable items

The below Vision, Mission, and Foundational principles statement reflects the incorporation of feedback received.

Draft Committee 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 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.

Draft Committee 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.

Draft Committee 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. 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

Having liberty to move safely is an essential part of life. Safety is a shared responsibility between all road users and those who design, operate, and maintain the transportation system. Prioritizing investing in public transportation will ultimately improve service frequency and reliability, integrating transportation modes, which encompasses a range of options, including public transport, cycling, walking, and electric vehicles, all of which contribute to a healthier lifestyle by reducing CO2 emissions and other pollutants.

Support Economic Opportunity

With rapidly changing technology and communication methods, we will need flexibility to adapt and respond to community needs as they evolve over time. We believe that access to transportation is a key resource that leads to economic opportunities and prosperity. 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 isolated areas, such as 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, and environmental stewardship. 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).

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Tracked Changes to Committee Mission and Vision Statement presented to the Committee in May 2025.

ATTACHMENT A:*Draft Committee 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 **mobility safety, mobility justice, disability access, and sustainability**, ~~and opportunity~~ for generations to come.

We envision **an affordable, reliable**, connected, efficient, accessible, **innovative** network that 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.

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