Memorandum

To: EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

EAC Executive Meeting:
December 3, 2025

From: STATE AGENCIES' EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

Reference Number: Tab 6, Information

Prepared By: Sasha Linker
Equity and Engagement Specialist
California Transportation Commission

Published Date: November 21, 2025

Subject: Presentation and Discussion: Vision, Mission, and Foundational Principles for Transportation Equity Visuals

Summary:

During the September 5, 2025 Business Meeting, the Committee approved its Vision, Mission, and Foundational Principles for Transportation Equity following discussion and amendments. The document incorporates feedback from Committee members, Commissioners, and Executives provided at the May 2025 Committee Executive Meeting and was approved by the California Transportation Commission (Commission) during its October 16, 2025 meeting. The Commission, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) have approved the statement.

To illustrate the purpose and impact of the Committee's work, Chair Armas-Kelly and Member Akemi-Hernandez, serving as subject matter experts, initiated a call to the Committee for visuals highlighting community efforts, projects, and partnerships that demonstrate equitable practices throughout California. Photos from across the state were submitted by Committee members and incorporated into the adopted Vision, Mission and Foundational Principles. This final document is included as Attachment A.

Background:

The final 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 continue 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.

The SMEs presented the draft statements at the May 2025 Committee Executive Meeting and solicited feedback from Committee members, agency leadership, and Commissioners. Incorporating the feedback received, Chair Armas-Kelly and Member Akemi-Hernandez 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.

The California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and the Commission have approved the Vision, Mission, and Foundational Principles for Transportation Equity, affirming the Committee's work and direction moving forward.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Vision, Mission, and Foundational Principles for Transportation Equity

Interagency Equity Advisory Committee: Vision, Mission, and Foundational Principles for Transportation Equity

October 2025



Credit: Keri Akemi-Hernandez

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, the 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 principles", 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.


Credit: Yadira Whitney

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 offer impactful solutions that will guide responsive change in California's transportation system and 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 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.



Credit: Keri Akemi-Hernandez

Foundational Principles

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 the vital methods that transport resources both locally and worldwide.

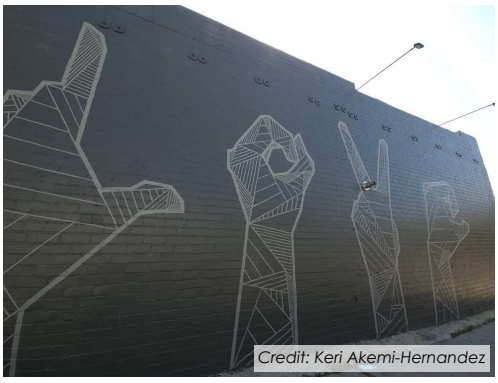


Credit: Vincent Ma

Foundational Principles


Credit: Martha Armas-Kelly


Credit: Martha Armas-Kelly


Credit: Keri Akemi-Hernandez


Credit: Keri Akemi-Hernandez


Credit: Photo provided by the family for media purposes

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, and further integrate 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 allow 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 connective routes.

Foundational Principles

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 that people with disabilities may encounter. We also acknowledge the unique needs many seniors face, with the aging population as the largest 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.



Credit: Howard Wong

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 and 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.

Mobility Justice

Mobility Justice is a framework for ensuring all people can move freely and safely, regardless of race, ability, class, gender, or other identities. Key principles include: centering marginalized communities, addressing systemic barriers, expanding the definition of safety, promoting inclusive planning, investing equitably, and recognizing interconnectedness.

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).



Credit: Keri Akemi-Hernandez


Caltrans
CalSTA
STATE OF CALIFORNIA
CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION