



2026 SENATE BILL 1 PROGRAMS TRANSPORTATION EQUITY SUPPLEMENT

*This supplement is included in all 2026 Senate Bill 1 Program Guidelines
as adopted by the Commission on August 20, 2026*

I. BACKGROUND

A. Racial Equity Statement

On January 27, 2021, the California Transportation Commission (Commission) adopted its [Racial Equity Statement](#), which states:

The California Transportation Commission recognizes that throughout California's history, improvements to the State's transportation system have disproportionately benefitted some population groups and burdened others. The Commission condemns all forms of racism and is actively working to promote equitable outcomes through our programs, policies, and practices.

In the mid-Twentieth Century, California undertook a major expansion of transportation infrastructure aided by an influx of federal funding. While infrastructure improvements were being planned, designed, and constructed, Black, Indigenous, and other people of color were disenfranchised, lacked voting protections, and were underrepresented in government decision-making. New highways were frequently constructed through predominately Black, Latino, Asian, and low-income neighborhoods to meet the needs of primarily white suburban commuters, and through tribal lands. Racist policies and decisions also influenced the siting of other types of transportation infrastructure, such as commuter railways, and the delivery of transit services. The results of racial segregation and disinvestment of transportation funds in communities of color are still visible in cities today.

Californians who live in historically underserved communities are more likely to be negatively impacted by increased exposure to air pollution and noise from cars, trucks, ships, trains, and aircraft, and struck or killed by drivers when walking and biking. These vulnerable communities may have limited access to safe and affordable transportation options to connect residents to jobs, education, healthcare, and recreation. In addition, people of color may experience diminished safety and comfort while walking, biking, driving, or using public transportation as a result of racial discrimination in enforcement.

The Commission vows to create mobility opportunities for all Californians, especially those from underserved communities, to thrive in all aspects of life. The Commission will:

- Work to build and strengthen relationships with community-based organizations, non-profits, advocacy organizations, and other equity experts and practitioners;
- Empower the Commission's Equity Advisory Roundtable and future related efforts to help inform transportation decision making;
- Strengthen understanding of community transportation needs and challenges through the forthcoming Community Listening Sessions;
- Ensure equity, public health, and robust public engagement via our planning and programming guidelines;

- Provide expanded opportunities for Commissioner and staff training related to diversity, equity, and inclusion; and
- Feature equity topics and elevate diverse perspectives in public meetings of the Commission.

We uphold our dedication to serve and improve the quality of life for all Californians by continuing to prioritize transportation equity issues and ensuring all experience safe, affordable, and efficient transportation.

B. Supplement Purpose

The Commission developed this supplement in collaboration with members from the Interagency Equity Advisory Committee and other interested parties as a resource for applicant agencies preparing project nominations for Senate Bill 1 Programs (Local Partnership Program, Solutions for Congested Corridors Program, and Trade Corridor Enhancement Program). The Commission endeavors to ensure program policies progress by embedding equity considerations in the project development, nomination, and selection process.

This supplement provides information on key statistics, benefits, and communication strategies that may be used during project development to yield more equitable outcomes. An applicant agency may use the information and strategies presented here to explain how a project advances transportation equity from identification and inclusion to impacts and outcomes:

- How did the agency engage communities in the project study area to identify their needs? Did the agency directly engage with disadvantaged or historically impacted and marginalized groups, including Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, Native American Tribal Governments and other Tribal communities, displaced or unhoused persons, individuals with disabilities, seniors and elders, and low-income individuals or communities? How was community feedback incorporated into the project? How did the agency inform communities about whether their feedback was incorporated into the project?
- How did the agency develop the project scope? Was the alternatives analysis developed to include community and Tribal feedback, where applicable? Can the agency demonstrate its partnership and collaboration with the disadvantaged or historically impacted and marginalized communities in the project study area?
- How did the agency assess if the project would cause any disparate impacts on the

basis of race, color, socioeconomic status, gender, sexuality, disability status, or national origin? If disparate impacts were identified, did the agency consider and incorporate alternate options as applicable?

Equitable practices should be considered through a project's lifecycle (planning, development, and delivery). This can include structural and procedural equity strategies like the examples provided in this supplement. Structural strategies reform planning practices to create inclusive, affordable, and resource-efficient transportation infrastructure, whereas procedural strategies provide special benefits to disadvantaged groups to create fairness in process. Mindful and meaningful inclusion and engagement are critical to successfully advance equity in transportation planning as well as project development and delivery.

Agencies may use this supplement to incorporate equitable corridor improvement strategies and advance projects with more equitable outcomes in their comprehensive multimodal corridor plans, as required in the Solutions for Congested Corridors Program.

Agencies may also consult the [California Strategic Growth Council's Racial Equity Resource Hub](#) to learn more about racial equity best practices (key focus hubs to consider: Creating Your Roadmap, Growing Awareness, Taking Action). The California Strategic Growth Council represents seven state member agencies, including the California State Transportation Agency, and created the Racial Equity Resource Hub to consolidate, streamline, and promote racial equity resources and tools for state agencies' implementation.

II. RESOURCES AND EXAMPLES

A. Example Indicators Used to Identify Disadvantaged or Historically Impacted and Marginalized Groups

Pursuant to California Health and Safety Code Section 39711, disadvantaged communities are identified based on geographic, socioeconomic, public health, and environmental hazard criteria. Disadvantaged communities may include either of the following:

- (1) Areas disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative public health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation.
- (2) Areas with concentrations of people that are of low income, high unemployment, low levels of homeownership, high rent burden, sensitive populations, or low levels of educational attainment.

Recognizing localized differences helps to identify disadvantaged or historically impacted and marginalized groups. Some example indicators are included for reference below.

1. **Median Household Income:** Census tracts where the median household income is less than 80 percent of the statewide median based on the most current Census Tract (ID 140) level data. Communities with a population less than 15,000 may use data at the Census Block Group (ID 150) level. Unincorporated communities may use data at the Census Place (ID 160) level. Data is available at the United States Census Bureau [website](#).
2. **California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen):** CalEnviroScreen is a mapping tool developed by the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment on behalf of the California Environmental Protection Agency that uses environmental, health, and socioeconomic information to produce scores for every census tract in the state, which can be accessed on the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment's [website](#).
 - Senate Bill 535 (De León, Chapter 830, Statutes of 2012) established initial requirements for minimum funding levels to “Disadvantaged Communities” for specified programs and required the California Environmental Protection Agency to identify those communities. The Senate Bill 535 Designation of Disadvantaged Communities identifies four types of geographic areas as disadvantaged, including census tracts that receive the highest 25 percent of overall scores in the most recent version of CalEnviroScreen.
3. **Healthy Places Index:** The Healthy Places Index was developed by the Public Health Alliance of Southern California, and includes a composite score for each census tract in the state. The higher the score, the healthier the community conditions based on 25 community characteristics. The scores are then converted to a percentile to compare it to other tracts in the state. Within the Healthy Places Index, a census tract must be in the 25th percentile or less to qualify as a disadvantaged community. The live map and direct data can be accessed on the California Healthy Places Index [website](#).
 - **Extreme Heat Edition:** Developed by the Public Health Alliance in partnership with the UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation, the Healthy Places Index Extreme Heat Edition provides datasets on projected heat exposure for California, place-based indicators measuring community conditions and sensitive populations. It also provides a list of resources and funding opportunities that can be used to address extreme heat. More information about the tool and a live map can both be found on the UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation [website](#). This tool complements the [California Heat Assessment Tool](#) funded by the California Natural Resources Agency as part of the state’s Fourth Climate Change

Assessment.

4. **Native American Tribal Governments:** Projects located within Federally Recognized Tribal Lands (typically within the boundaries of a Reservation or Rancheria) or projects that provide benefits to California Native American Tribes.
5. **Regional Definition:** Regional definitions such as “environmental justice communities,” “equity priority communities,” or “communities of concern.” The regional definition must be developed through a robust public outreach process that includes community members’ input and must be stratified based on severity. A regional definition of disadvantaged communities must be adopted as part of a regular four-year cycle adoption of a regional transportation plan (RTP) or sustainable communities strategy (SCS) by a metropolitan planning organization or regional transportation planning agency, per obligations with Title VI of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964. A regional definition of disadvantaged communities must be used for the region’s broader planning purposes rather than only to apply for Senate Bill 1 Program funding.
6. **California Department of Transportation Equity Index (EQI):** A mapping tool developed by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to identify areas with the greatest need for improved transportation access and safety. It incorporates multiple indicators, including underserved communities (based on Census blocks aligned with Senate Bill 535 and Assembly Bill 1550 (Gomez, Chapter 369, Statutes of 2016)), traffic exposure (such as proximity to high-volume corridors), access to destinations (measuring multimodal access to essential services), and transportation-based priority populations (considering demographic factors and the intersection of transportation benefits and burdens). Together, these components provide a comprehensive, data-driven view of transportation equity conditions at a granular level. The live map and detailed use instructions can be accessed on the California Department of Transportation’s [website](#).
 - **Underserved Communities:** Caltrans defines underserved communities using a combination of socioeconomic and geographic criteria captured in the EQI. This includes low-income communities as well as Tribal lands. These definitions align with state guidance (i.e., Senate Bill 960 (Wiener, Chapter 630, Statutes of 2024)) and are intended to ensure consistency in identifying communities most affected by transportation inequities, therefore supporting more equitable planning, investment, and decision-making. For additional details, users can refer to the EQI User Guide and the [Senate Bill 960 Underserved Communities Guidance](#) available on the [EQI website](#).

7. Other: If an applicant agency cannot utilize the aforementioned indicators, it may submit other documentation to demonstrate the project benefits a disadvantaged or historically impacted and marginalized community. Suggested alternatives include:

- Census data that represents an assessment of the project study area. The agency must submit a quantitative assessment (e.g., a survey) to demonstrate that the population contained within the project study area boundary includes:
 - A median household income that is at or below 80 percent of the state median household income.
 - A significant number of households at risk of displacement due to cost-of-living burden or project siting.
 - A significant number of households receiving food stamps or public assistance.
 - A significant population of seniors and elderly residents.
 - A significant population of individuals with disabilities or mobility-impaired residents.
 - A significant population of single-parent households.
 - A significant population of immigrant or foreign-born households.
 - A significant population of veterans.
 - A significant number of car-less households.
 - A significant number of public transit users (including mobility-impaired users who rely on public transit).
- Unemployment measurements.
- Nearby amenities, including shopping centers, health centers, schools, social services, and employment sites, or lack thereof.
- Traffic safety indicators, including collisions and injuries sustained.
- Community-derived safety information and indicators such as high-risk zones for pedestrians and cyclists, illegal dumping hot-spots, or school-safety priority zones.
- Areas of Persistent Poverty and Historically Disadvantaged Communities, as defined by the United States Department of Transportation and identified using the mapping tools provided [here](#).

B. Example Equity Outcomes

Advancing equity in transportation results in a more diverse, affordable, accessible, and efficient transportation system for everyone. Equitable transportation projects can:

1. Increase access to educational, economic, social, and cultural opportunities and amenities, including shopping centers, health centers, schools, community

organizations, museums, social services, transit centers, employment sites, parks, and open space.

2. Reduce travel times and congestion, especially in the long term.
3. Reduce pollution.
4. Improve access to active transportation and provide alternatives to automotive options.
5. Improve safety of active transportation and non-motorized modes of travel in the community and the corridor.
6. Enhance opportunities to increase physical activity by encouraging use of active transportation.
7. Enhance opportunities to encourage use of zero-emission modes of travel.
8. Increase access to accessible facilities and infrastructure with first-and-last-mile connectivity to accommodate all types of travelers, especially mobility-impaired users and seniors and elders.
9. Incorporate community and Tribal art into the design of project elements.

C. Example Inclusion and Engagement Strategies

Meaningful inclusion and engagement require sustained interactions and consistent, transparent communications to build trust through every step of the project planning process—from first thought to last action. This is especially important in disadvantaged or historically impacted and marginalized communities.

Community inclusion and engagement may be pursued during each stage in the project development and delivery process. An applicant agency should demonstrate how its inclusion and engagement strategies align with the types of strategies included as examples below, describe how recently that engagement has occurred, and how it is actively implemented.

While there are many types of engagement strategies to utilize, applying multifaceted approaches may provide the best opportunity to effectively engage with and learn from the communities and populations in question. For example, direct engagement strategies, such as meeting with community leaders to develop relationships, can be combined with indirect strategies, such as surveys and polls to understand community needs, in which case both the communities and the applicant agencies benefit from building trust and gaining new insights through collaboration.

While effective engagement strategies are important, building trust with disadvantaged or historically impacted and marginalized communities is also critical. Meaningful engagement often depends on establishing and maintaining trusted relationships through consistent follow-up, transparency, and culturally competent communication, and the acknowledgement of past harms that contribute to community distrust and shape community perspectives.

Potential engagement strategies include:

1. Identify, contact, engage, and include the perspectives of disadvantaged or historically impacted and marginalized groups. Public outreach should include a mix of traditional and digital communication strategies to reach a broad range of community members:
 - Traditional engagement methods may include phone calls, mailers, flyers, and in-person events, as disadvantaged and historically impacted and marginalized groups may lack access to computers and the Internet.
 - Digital engagement methods may include virtual meetings, online surveys, social media, infographics, and other accessible online content, to broaden participation and reach community members through multiple formats.
 - In-person engagement activities could be conducted at community-relevant locations such as schools, community centers, senior centers, food distribution locations, parks, transit stops, community events, and other commonly visited public spaces, and at times that are convenient for community members.
 - Agencies could endeavor to make in-person engagement activities as accessible and inclusive as possible by selecting locations that are accessible by public transit, and considering supportive accommodations, such as food and childcare, where allowable by law.
 - Engagement resources could be provided in multiple languages for non-native English speakers, and in accessible formats based on community needs, including braille, accessible digital formats, human readers, captioning, interpretation, and other accommodations for persons with visual, auditory, or other accessibility needs.
2. Develop relationships with community-based leaders, groups, or organizations, such as environmental justice groups, religious or spiritual leaders, well-known individual advocates and community organizers, local pedestrian and bike advocacy groups, public school leadership, local transit riders, senior centers, long-distance commuters (super commuters), linguistically or physically isolated groups, seniors and elders, and youth individuals and groups. This can also include community members who may face barriers, including formerly incarcerated persons; undocumented persons; individuals with disabilities; displaced and unhoused persons; and lesbian, gay, transgender, and queer communities. When engaging with individuals with disabilities, applicants should consider coordination with organizations such as [California Independent Living Centers](#), centers for the blind, and other organizations and advocates that serve individuals with disabilities.
3. Collaborate with community-based groups and organizations to establish a local or regional project study area organization or committee (e.g., planning, oversight, advisory, steering, etc.) with decision-making authority to empower community leaders and solicit quality community input and feedback through the project planning process.

4. Develop a community benefits agreement with a project study area community to strengthen incentives for good-faith community engagement and deliver targeted, meaningful benefits to the community.
5. Demonstrate how community-identified and community-driven perspectives were solicited and included or integrated into the project purpose and need or scope.
6. Survey and collect information on non-motorized travel demands and the unmet mobility needs of disadvantaged and historically impacted and marginalized groups identified in the project study area. Use this information to develop transportation improvements to address these needs.
7. Incorporate opportunities for community members to share personal and community experiences, histories, challenges, and perspectives as part of the engagement process.
8. Develop relationships and conduct meaningful engagement with Tribal governments and incorporate their feedback into the project planning and delivery process.
9. Collaborate, fund, or contract with local organizations to support community engagement efforts in the project planning and delivery process.
10. Prioritize community-identified high-need areas, such as those identified through robust community engagement.
11. Prioritize contracting strategies that benefit disadvantaged or historically impacted and marginalized groups such as the communities identified in this supplement.
12. Ensure stability in neighborhoods and communities through the successful implementation of short-term and long-term anti-displacement strategies and policies consistent with federal and state law.

D. Example Anti-Displacement Resources

Anti-displacement strategies help ensure that transportation investments benefit existing residents and businesses rather than contributing to involuntary displacement, loss of community ties, reduced access to jobs and services, or exclusion from future opportunities. These strategies can help protect housing stability, preserve community cultural identity, and promote more equitable outcomes for disadvantaged and historically impacted or marginalized groups.

Definitions:

- **Anti-displacement** refers to various strategies, programs, and laws that intend to counteract the displacement pressures felt by individuals. Some examples include, but are not limited to, rent assistance, subsidized housing, tenant protections, legal assistance to at-risk renters, rent stabilization, foreclosure prevention programs, and eviction prevention programs.

- **Displacement** refers to a situation in which households or businesses are involuntarily forced to relocate. Displacement effects can include homelessness, loss of community, loss of access to jobs and services, and loss of economic opportunity, and disproportionately affects historically marginalized groups.
 - **Direct displacement** may occur due to economic (foreclosure, rent increases, eviction, etc.) or physical reasons (environmental catastrophe, demolition of existing housing, etc.).
 - **Indirect or “exclusionary” displacement** prevents people or businesses from moving into a neighborhood (i.e., excluded) because of high rents or other conditions they are unable to control or prevent, such as policies that prohibit overnight parking, which may affect unhoused individuals who sleep in their vehicle.

Resources:

1. [California Department of Housing and Community Development Final 2020 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice](#): Report detailing impediments to fair housing and recommendations for anti-displacement strategies.
2. [Urban Displacement Project](#): Comprehensive website with reports, data mapping, and resources for California local, regional, and state entities.
3. [Framework for Evaluating Anti-Displacement Policies](#): Criteria that can be utilized to better understand the ways that certain policy tools can be used to address the needs of vulnerable groups impacted by displacement.
4. [Greening Without Gentrification](#): Ongoing study that identifies and classifies parks-related anti-displacement strategies.
5. [Transit-Oriented Development Without Displacement: Strategies to Help Pacoima Businesses Thrive](#): Research study focused on commercial anti-displacement strategies that can support a predominantly immigrant-owned small business community.

E. Tribal Coordination and Consultation Resources

[Assembly Bill 52](#) (Gatto, Chapter 532, Statutes of 2014) requires public agencies to consult with California Native American Tribes (federally and non-federally recognized) during the California Environmental Quality Act process for projects that may affect Tribal cultural resources.

California embraces meaningful consultation and collaboration with Tribal Nations. Agencies are encouraged to develop relationships and conduct meaningful engagement with Tribal Governments and incorporate their feedback into project planning and implementation.

Resources:

1. [The Governor's Office of Tribal Affairs](#): Website that includes training, reports, and other resources related to Tribal engagement, Tribal cultures, California Native American Tribe history, and more.
2. [California Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation \(LCI\) Tribal Cultural Resources \(Assembly Bill 52\)](#): Includes additional information to assist with the implementation of Assembly Bill 52 regarding the analysis of tribal cultural resource impacts and tribal consultation requirements.
3. [Caltrans Tribal Relations](#): Caltrans resource that includes links to Native American land maps and contact lists.

