



Transportation Equity

A TPCB Peer Exchange Event

Location: Virtual

Date: March 22-23, 2022

Host Agency: Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)

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Sponsoring Agency: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

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13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words) This report summarizes proceedings of a virtual peer exchange sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and hosted by the Minnesota Department of Transportation on March 22-23, 2022. The purpose of the peer exchange was to discuss transportation equity and the need for inclusive practices in transportation planning, programming, and project delivery. The event provided an opportunity for State departments of transportation from across the U.S. to share experiences, lessons learned, successes, and challenges related to the topic. Specifically, participants discussed defining and incorporating equity into transportation planning, project selection, scoping, and design to incorporate transportation equity, and opportunities for further coordination on equity practices. The event was sponsored by FHWA through its Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program, led in partnership with the Federal Transit Administration.				
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Peer Exchange Overview

This report highlights the presentations, discussions, and key takeaways from the “Transportation Equity” virtual peer exchange, held over two half-days on March 22-23, 2022. The event was sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) through its Transportation Planning Capacity Building (TPCB) program, led jointly with the Federal Transit Administration. The event was held at the request of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to bring together peers from across the country to discuss transportation equity and the need for inclusive practices in transportation planning, programming, and project delivery. About 45 participants attended the event, representing peer State departments of transportation (State DOTs), metropolitan planning organizations, representatives from FHWA, FTA, and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials; and other transportation partner agencies from the peer States. The peers included California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), and Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). During the peer exchange, each peer shared a transportation equity profile (Appendix B) and presented their recent efforts regarding transportation equity.

The peer exchange featured four main sessions: “lightning round” peer introductions, overviews, and presentations; *Defining and Incorporating Equity*; *Project Selection, Scoping, and Implementation*; and *Looking Ahead*. Each session ended with a facilitated discussion, and the peer exchange closed with a breakout session focused on next steps as participants shared what they learned and what they would take back to their respective agencies.

Session Discussions

Opening Remarks

Representatives from the FHWA Office of Planning, FTA, and MnDOT provided opening remarks, recognizing that the purpose of the peer exchange is to share information about transportation equity. With the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act ([IIJA], also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law [BIL]), opportunities abound for investment in infrastructure with greater emphasis on equity.

The FHWA noted that the [TPCB website](#) hosts a variety of other valuable resources for the transportation planning community, including summary reports from TPCB peer exchanges, case studies, and past research.

After opening remarks, a poll was administered asking participants to share their level of awareness regarding transportation equity (Figure 1). Most respondents (94%, in total) reported having either advanced (25%) or intermediate experience (69%). The remaining 6% of respondents reported having beginner experience regarding transportation equity.

What is your level of awareness regarding transportation equity?

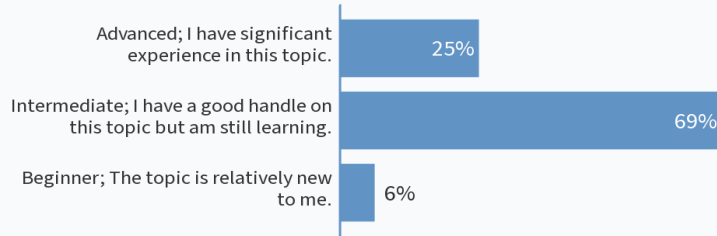


Figure 1: Responses to the poll question, "What is your level of awareness regarding transportation equity"?

Additional polling questions asked participants with whom they primarily work (Figure 2) and examples of the various equity roles or activities to give a sense of the variety of ways that equity is engaged across the organizations represented (Figure 3). The answers shown in Figure 2 emphasize the focus on serving the public, communities, stakeholders, and partners. The answers show in Figure 3 emphasize the ways organizations are bringing equity into transportation planning and processes.

Who do you primarily work with/serve?



Figure 2: Responses to the poll question, "Who do you primarily work with/serve?"

If you are tasked with specific equity roles or activities, please share examples of what these are.



Figure 3: Responses to the poll question, "If you are tasked with specific equity roles or activities, please share examples of what those are."

Introductions, Overviews, and Presentations¹

TPCB FHWA and FTA Overview Presentation

FHWA and FTA reviewed concepts of equity versus equality with visuals that demonstrate nuance in the difference between these concepts. The presenters related equity to transportation in executive orders [13895 “Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government”](#) and [14008 “Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad”](#). Executive Order 14008 created the Justice40 Initiative, directing 40% of federal investments to benefit disadvantaged communities, those historically underserved and over-burdened. FHWA and FTA discussed ways that they can support equity priorities throughout the planning process, effective stewardship and oversight practices, review of policies and processes, technical assistance, and informational resources. Additional data, to identify the communities of concern, and assessment tools, to ensure plans turn into actions, will continue to support equity in transportation. For example, the FHWA Office of Planning recently launched the [Screening Tool for Equity Analysis of Projects](#) to support agencies who have limited or no Geographic Information System (GIS) resources or specialists. The FHWA-FTA TPCB website also has a [Transportation Equity Topic Page](#) and [case studies featuring transportation equity examples](#) to support agencies developing equity strategies.

MnDOT Overview Presentation

As part of the agenda for the peer exchange, MnDOT shared the below note, which helped set the stage for the event and its goals:

Systemic racism and social injustice have had substantial influence on the built and natural environment; and have specifically excluded black, indigenous, and communities of color in decision-making. This has led to inequitable policies, actions, systems, and landscapes which have influenced project decisions in the past and continue to influence them today. Through this peer exchange, we hope to better understand how we can embed equity in the planning, programming, and design of projects; proactively address transportation deficiencies and disparate impacts generated as a result of these past actions; better collaborate with partner agencies to identify holistic, equitable, and people-centric solutions; and build on what others have learned.

MnDOT’s goal in organizing this peer exchange was to invite agencies at all stages of creating an equitable transportation system to share their experiences and insights; discuss ways to proactively address transportation deficiencies and disparate impacts generated as a result of past decisions; collaborate with partner agencies to identify holistic, equitable, and people centered solutions; and identify next steps.

Representatives from MnDOT explained the need for advancing equity and correcting past harms, providing examples of work they have done thus far including their [Equity Lens Framework](#), Livability Initiative, transportation equity research and training, transportation equity labs, and workforce development and equitable contracting.

¹ References to various tools in this report do not represent an endorsement. FHWA recognizes that many tools are available and encourages agencies to use the tools that work best for them.

MnDOT sees its role as a leader, partner, and facilitator in meeting the transportation needs across the State, guided by commitments to vision, co-power, authenticity, respect, transparency, and inclusivity.

Notable Takeaways

- Many communities lost trust as they were overburdened by transportation facilities. Rebuilding trust is a major focus moving forward.
 - It is important to acknowledge the history of inequities within the current planning context.
 - Rethinking I-94 is a long-term effort to improve MnDOT's engagement and relationships with communities along a 15-mile stretch of I-94 between Broadway Avenue in Minneapolis and Highway 61 in St. Paul. MnDOT's work through the Rethinking I-94 effort led to the establishment of the Livability Framework, which includes the pillars of Connectivity, Economic Vitality, Equity, Public Health and the Environment, Safety, Sense of Place, and Trust.
- While benefits of walking and cycling are well documented, there are safety concerns for black and brown populations.
- Lived experience and expertise are both valuable in creating an equitable and effective transportation system.
- Transportation equity requires ensuring underserved communities share in the power of decision-making, especially Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.
 - Equitable engagement is necessary but not sufficient.

Defining and Incorporating Equity

Peers from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) opened this session with short presentations detailing how their agencies are defining transportation equity and incorporating that definition into their agencies' programs. A discussion facilitated by FHWA followed, engaging discussions around defining equity and how that definition or commitment influences funding, programing, and decision-making across the transportation system.

Notable Takeaways

- **Holly Bieneman, Director, Office of Planning and Programming, IDOT**
 - For IDOT, equity is a core value of the organization, seen as a reflection of the communities they serve. IDOT believes varied backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives create a stronger, more productive, and creative work environment. They have committed to equity in hiring, purchasing, and planning as well as construction and consultation projects.
 - IDOT's [Long Range Transportation Plan](#) (LRTP) includes equity as a concept threaded throughout and articulated as an objective to "Enhance existing policies and practices to under-served populations so outreach and inclusion are effective and go beyond meeting the minimum federal requirements."
 - IDOT is working to find or develop an appropriate tool to measure equity. They have location data but need to know how a project supports a community and impacts connectivity.

- **Natasha Fackler, Policy Director, and Nicole Tyler, Director of Equitable Transportation, PennDOT**
 - In recent years, PennDOT recognized that past infrastructure policies did not fully address equity. In response, they initiated several efforts to examine the gaps in their policies and processes such as creating their *Dismantling Systemic Racism and Inequities (DSRI) Working Group*, initiating a Disparity Study in 2018 to examine their procurement processes and procedures, starting the [PennDOT Connects](#) program to consider community needs at the beginning of the planning process, and including specific objectives in their [LRTP](#) that address transportation equity and access across the State. To clarify their vision for greater transportation equity and access, PennDOT drafted their definition as follows:
 - *Envisioning Transportation Equity in PA:*
 - *Race, disability, geographic location, or other characteristics do not determine or predict access to transportation options and services.*
 - *Safe, environmentally sustainable, accessible, and affordable transportation options are adequately supported in all communities, particularly in historically underserved and vulnerable communities.*
 - *Transportation decisions are made in collaboration and in participation with the communities we serve.*
 - *All thrive in vibrant and healthy communities.*
 - PennDOT formed the DSRI working group in 2020 to facilitate conversations around transportation equity, conduct a baseline assessment of its existing programs, analyze the diversity of its boards and commissions, and benchmark its equity actions overall.
 - Internally, equity work relates to retention, recruitment, and culture building.
 - Externally, PennDOT is focused on opportunities for minority owned businesses, public involvement, community investment equity, boards and commissions representing diverse makeup to commonwealth, and workforce development.

Post-Presentation Discussion

Following presentations from IDOT and PennDOT representatives, FHWA facilitated a discussion focused on commitments to equity within the organizations and historical transportation harms and how they relate to future planning, funding, programming decisions. This discussion opened with a polling question² asking participants about challenges they faced internally when developing a transportation equity definition. Answers provided included “implementation,” “buy-in,” “inclusivity,” and “understanding.”

Key Takeaways

Key takeaways from the facilitated discussion were as follows:

- The needs of underserved communities could be addressed through a grant program. Measures of success would include looking not just at the dollars spent or number of projects, but the access provided by interventions.
 - PennDOT is conducting outreach around grant processes. They have a grant equity team engaging with communities to support them in accessing and applying for grants.

² The exact question asked of the participants was: “When we were introducing a definition of transportation equity, there were internal concerns about...”

- MDOT has grant coordinators in each region responsible for getting to know grant applicants. MDOT stewards the process from start to finish.
- Transportation planners are beginning to consider access, going beyond simply counting the number of nearby jobs, to thinking about what kind of jobs, and other locations and services, people have access to.
 - Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is working on a long-range planning tool that assesses access to various job types, starting with entry level work, to think about long-term equity impacts.
 - FTA pointed out the changing distribution of people, pointing to Washington, D.C. as an example of a place experiencing significant population shift with low-income, people of color leaving the city. Gentrification and cost are factors for many people. As people leave inner cities and relocate to the suburbs, how do you deal with transportation in these suburbs?
 - Many who need to use transit to commute are not in professional careers such as engineering or technology, but in vocations. How do you get people where they want or need to be?
 - Transportation can be a barrier to employment. Even if people could complete training, placement is difficult because of the lack of reliable transportation to the job site. This is especially important in construction work.
 - Through the pandemic, pilot programs reduced or eliminated transit fees. However, this does not help if transit does provide access to needed locations and at the right time.
 - BIL includes a discussion of the relationship between housing and transportation.
- It is important for each agency to define equity for themselves.
 - PennDOT explained that different perspectives and backgrounds shape definitions of equity in each agency.
 - It may be helpful to have different definitions, but coordination is necessary to identify shared outcomes across agencies.
 - MnDOT began the process of defining equity in external interactions then brought ideas back to leadership, putting the community voice at the fore. In creating a shared definition of equity, MnDOT had feedback from over 1000 individuals from community-based organizations, MPOs, local and federal transportation agencies, MnDOT employee resource groups, diversity and inclusion committees, and its Disadvantaged Business Enterprise and Workforce Collaborative.
 - They are still working to finalize their definition.
 - They are working on more actionable language.
 - Giving each variable (race, gender, ability, etc.) attention within the larger scope of equity is a challenge. The focus is on highlighting those who have lost the most. Also, to extend the view of burdens and benefits beyond the realm of traditional transportation infrastructure.
- Travel patterns have changed due to COVID-19, and the resulting teleworking creates additional challenges for equitable mobility and access.
 - The reduced ridership on transit effects the service level, which depends on sufficient ridership and funding from fares. Those riding outside standard commute times often have no other transportation options.

- Many people of color feel uncomfortable with walking or cycling due to the prevalence of violence against these groups, making safety and lighting significant topics for transportation equity and access.
- Another challenge is weather. For colder climates, special equipment, clothing, or gear is needed to withstand the conditions which is not feasible for someone who cannot afford bus fare.

Project Selection, Scoping, and Implementation

Peers from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) opened this session, sharing presentations about how their agencies are using a more holistic and community driven approach to project selection, scoping, and design to incorporate transportation equity.

Notable Takeaways

- **Amar Azucena Cid, Program Manager, Caltrans Office on Race and Equity (CORE), Caltrans**
 - Caltrans began a strong focus on equity in 2018. Prior to 2018, many programs were individually focusing on equity, some since the early 2000s with some State leadership, such as the governor and commissioner, providing direction.
 - Partnerships have been important—especially with organizations that have been doing work in the equity space.
 - Caltrans went through an extensive process to update its strategic plan ([California Transportation Plan 2050](#)), making equity a major goal and strategic objective of the plan, engaging with communities of color, and consulting with Tribal communities throughout the process.
 - Caltrans established its Office of Equity ([CORE](#)) in 2020. Currently, CORE has four different branches: Priority Populations & Community Engagement, Native American Liaison Branch, Training & Communications, and the Equity Index Branch.
 - Caltrans is improving coordination and expanding equity practices across the department.
 - Currently, each district has equity leads or managers, and four districts have equity officers employed full time.
 - Internal training has been an essential component of their equity work.
 - Caltrans has a Train-the-Trainers program to teach transportation professionals across the State how to conduct equitable community engagement.
 - Internal progress and guidance are shaping the work.
 - Caltrans looked at internal practices and built an equity lens into their EEO practices for their workforce.
 - Caltrans is developing internal toolkits for race and equity work.
 - Caltrans is building partnerships with different divisions within the organization to ingrain race and justice work into celebrations and highlight staff identifying with different cultures experience.
 - Caltrans is developing an [Equity Index](#) to identify and assess the severity of disadvantage of a community or neighborhood. This will help Caltrans identify priorities, determine potential benefits and harms, and prioritize communities for equitable engagement.

- The Equity Index (EQI) is specific to transportation, and the current version includes nine indicators³.
 - The EQI will identify and assess the severity of disadvantage of a California community or neighborhood, analyzing environmental, mobility, accessibility, and socio-economic information.
 - The tool uses a threshold-based approach that includes assigning indicators and calculating comparative scores and equity composite scores, then assigning equity composite scores to each census tract.
 - The equity composite score outputs 4 equity categories (1 = Low, 2 = Medium, 3 = High, 4 = Very High) indicating how the Census tract of interest compares to the statewide average.
 - The EQI captures several Mexican, South American, and other Indigenous communities not captured with other planning tools.
 - Caltrans is currently beta testing and hopes to launch this tool in Fall 2022.
 - With the beta version, they are engaging with diverse audiences to receive feedback on the design and colors that best represent the groups and do not induce harm.
- **Terri Slaughter, Chief Culture, Equity & Inclusion Officer (CCEIO), Michigan DOT**
 - Ms. Slaughter’s role as MDOT’s Chief Culture, Equity, and Inclusion Officer is a newly established position, established after a 2018 executive order directed all State agencies within Michigan to have an equity officer. The CCEIO role oversees the department’s diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts across the entire business with the goal of maximizing inclusivity in processes and equity in outcomes.
 - MDOT has not formalized their definition of transportation equity, but internal conversations have led to guiding concepts of transportation equity: 1) Multi-modal, 2) Accessible to all, especially those individuals and groups that have been historically marginalized, and 3) Rooted in the needs of users as identified through engagement of the most impacted.
 - The I-375 Improvement Project aims to reconnect communities divided by the construction of I-375 and reinvest in a community razed by urban renewal.
 - The original construction of I-375, a small stretch of roadway meant to connect I-75 with downtown Detroit at the riverfront, decimated communities in its path and stripped away community wealth. Residents of the Black Bottom neighborhood, within this area, were relocated in 1954. In 1961, the once vibrant community was destroyed in the name of urban renewal. Many homes, churches, and businesses were leveled to make way for the interstate.
 - Conversations about revitalizing the severed community began in the 1990s, but recently gained momentum.
 - Since 2017, the team has engaged with 25 different stakeholder groups and held workshops and meetings to hear from the community about their desires for the project.

³ The nine indicators for the EQI include: 1) Poverty, 2) Income (percent of income devoted to housing and transportation), 3) Non-white and/or Hispanic, 4) Traffic deaths, 5) Noise, 6) Diesel Particulate Matter (PM) Emissions, 7) Traffic Density, 8) Asthma, and 9) Indigenous/Tribal Population(s).

- Since the building of Ford Field, there has been an interest in rebuilding I-75. In the preferred alternative, the interstate shifts to a multilane road with trees and opportunities to cross – reconnecting the community. It continues towards housing and integrates greenspace into the design.
 - A community enhancement plan was created through the community engagement including affordable housing, historic markers, or memorials to acknowledge the history, incubate and encourage minority businesses, and institute an executive board to oversee activities.
- [I-94 project](#) demonstrated that the solution that seems best may not be what the community wants.
 - The original plan removed bridges, but the community wanted Complete Streets, providing space to bike and walk and reconnecting communities in ways MDOT had not considered.
 - Photos are an important part of telling the story as they humanize a project. Several were shared during the presentation to demonstrate key points.

Post-Presentation Discussion

This session was followed by a polling question⁴ asking participants about the factors that initiate policies, programs, or projects in their organizations and a facilitated discussion led by FTA in a question-and-answer format. Highlights of answers to the poll included “concern over historical harms/inequity, available funding, road conditions, politics”, “disparity issues”, “legislation”, and “leadership commitment”.

Key Takeaways

Key takeaways from the facilitated discussion were as follows:

- Public engagement can provide a platform for gaining community trust and rethinking transportation systems with equity at the fore.
 - MnDOT translated equity and inclusion into projects with the I-94 project previously mentioned as well as incorporated bicycle and pedestrian improvements.
 - With the I-94 project, MDOT engaged many different stakeholder groups and discovered their recommended design did not align with the community desires for the area. The final design incorporates revisions from the community, featuring their priorities on connectivity and investment for the neighborhood.
- The role of State DOTs is evolving, including more than simply building and maintaining roads.
 - MDOT’s I-375 project to remove a freeway and reconnect a community goes beyond the traditional work of State DOTs. Through this project, they provided a platform for the community to voice their desires for the neighborhood and influence the design of the final project.
- Consultation with Tribes is an important element of working toward greater equity in the transportation system

⁴ The exact question asked of the participants was: “What are the factors that initiate policies, programs, or projects in your organization?”

- Caltrans [engagement with tribal nations](#) follows different structures than other forms of engagement in respect of the Tribes' sovereignty. Tribes are referenced separately from other equity populations because of their heightened status as sovereign nations.

Looking Ahead

This session opened with five breakout groups where participants shared perspectives regarding what is within and outside of an agency's control when there is no transportation equity legislation at the State level and how to navigate various contexts and implement equitable practices. Each group was assigned a facilitator to direct the conversation, and a member of the breakout room was designated as the scribe, documenting the discussion highlights to be shared via a virtual "whiteboard."

Notable Takeaways (Breakout Groups)

What is within an agency's control when there is no legislation that addresses transportation equity?

- Everything, unless there is legislation that expressly disallows an action
- Flexibility, particularly regarding outreach
- Grant authority
 - Dependent on the guidance from State and Federal agencies
- Culture change
 - Learning, at all levels, and what it means to engage in equity within an organization
- Working with local partners

What is outside an agency's control when there is no such legislation?

- Local planning partners
 - MPO/Regional Planning Organization or local governments may have different priorities
- Funding
 - State limits on expenditures

How can agencies navigate these different contexts and implement equitable policies?

- Focus on Planning and Programming.
 - Set the direction at the top of the organization. Prioritize transportation equity as the beginning of planning processes to properly allocate resources.
- Engage with minority communities but go much further to also engage with tribes through tribal liaisons, and, in Pennsylvania, with the Amish community as well.
- Rethink car-orientation.
 - Go beyond highways when planning and programming to provide other ways to move around.
- Restructure strategic goals to include rankings to ensure equitable distribution of resources across goal areas.

Conclusion and Key Takeaways

This peer exchange, led by FHWA and MnDOT, convened representatives from national, Federal, State, and regional agencies across the U.S. to discuss transportation equity and the need for inclusive practices in transportation planning, programming, and project delivery. State DOTs presented ways

they are defining transportation equity and incorporating that definition into their agencies' programs, particularly for project selection, scoping, and design. Participants shared their experiences, lessons learned, and key challenges during several group discussions and identified opportunities for engagement. Peers shared resources with notable practices and tools in development to help advance transportation equity. Participants discussed finding value in participating and their interest in connecting with others as part of the peer exchange to continue discussions, information-sharing, and collaboration. In closing, participants summarized key takeaways from discussions, including:

- Defining equity
 - Agencies grappled with the appropriate way to define equity, but all emphasized a desire to correct past harms, engage with underrepresented groups to fully represent the populations they serve, create opportunities for greater connectivity and access across the transportation system, and give communities power in the transportation planning process and project selection.
 - Each peer agency gave examples of how they draw on the varied backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives within their organizations to identify areas of growth. The peer agencies discussed how they then use this information to help inform subsequent activities. For example, IDOT establishes strategies in its LRTP to integrate equity throughout its programs.
- Incorporating equity into project selection, scoping, and design
 - MnDOT's I-94 and I-375 projects demonstrated the State DOT's willingness to adjust plans based on community engagement, meeting with community members. They met with community members from a wide variety of stakeholder groups, meeting people where they are instead of simply holding a public meeting.
- Organizational change and growth as a pillar for transportation equity
 - Each peer presented ways that they are expanding their own internal capacity to do equity work. For example, they are educating themselves on equity, unlearning biases, learning better ways to engage, developing workforce and contracting policies to engage minority communities, and seeking greater representation of black and brown communities on boards and commissions.
 - Caltrans training for staff and partners includes toolkits for race and equity work, reworking internal practices through an equity lens, and training people who will undertake engagement. They want to engage equity at every phase of transportation planning.
- PennDOT is focusing on creating greater diversity in their organization through workforce development. They are targeting recruitment strategies to attract younger, more diverse candidates; expanding career development opportunities; and building a more diverse workforce and inclusive work environment. PennDOT is also reducing barriers for Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs), Small Business Enterprises (SBEs), and Diverse Business (DB) organizations to compete with larger, non-DBE firms for contracts. The conversation is not over. There is still much to learn from one another as we move toward greater equity in the transportation system.
 - Different organizations have venues to discuss equity and how to translate equity from conversation to action. MnDOT expressed interest in building a network of peers

interested in transportation equity to continue to learn, build, and advance equity in a shared space, drawing on the strengths across various organizations.

Appendices

Appendix A: Key Contacts

Peer Exchange Planning Team

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Terri Slaughter, Chief Culture, Equity & Inclusion Officer
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Appendix B: Peer Profiles



Minnesota Department of Transportation

Transportation Equity Program Profile

PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

TITLE

Advancing Transportation Equity Initiative

YEAR ESTABLISHED

2017

WEBSITE

<https://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/program/advancing-transportation-equity/index.html>

CONTACT INFORMATION

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BACKGROUND

In 2015, Charles Zelle then commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Transportation offered a formal public acknowledgment and apology to the Rondo community for the impact of past transportation policies and practices that disrupted and dismantled the African American community. Two years later, MnDOT started a series of transportation equity efforts including Metro District's effort to advance equity through a focus on heavy maintenance and construction activities, Rethinking I-94, the Livability Framework and Advancing Transportation Equity Initiative.

Rethinking I-94 is a long-term effort to improve MnDOT's engagement and relationships with communities along a 15-mile stretch of I-94 between Broadway Avenue in Minneapolis and Highway 61

in St. Paul. The geographic limits of Rethinking I-94 reflect both portions of the two cities most impacted by the freeway's initial construction and areas where traffic, safety and highway improvements are most needed. One of the outcomes of the initial phase of activities was the Livability Framework. The Framework's pillars include – Connectivity, Economic Vitality, Equity, Public Health and the Environment, Safety, Sense of Place, and Trust.

MnDOT's Metro District Office of Advancing Equity focuses on improving transportation equity efforts through contracting and purchasing. This program evaluates MnDOT construction and consultant contracts for Targeted Group Business and Veteran-Owned Small Business Program (TGB/VET) goals and requires prime bidders to meet or show good faith efforts of those goals before being awarded a contract.

MnDOT uses existing statutory authority under state law to advance equity through small contracts for work well-suited for local small businesses, such as ADA pedestrian ramps, sidewalks, bituminous trails, rest area accessibility, roadway fill-ins of means of egress, snow fence installation, clearing and grubbing, and bituminous paving. MnDOT focuses on work types that present recurring demand for small businesses (as prime or sub). They allow small businesses to understand MnDOT projects and processes to eventually work as prime on larger projects.

Advancing Transportation Equity Initiative is a statewide collection of transportation equity efforts that first started as a response to community feedback from the 2017 Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan update. Staff heard from Minnesotans then that the agency needed to address transportation equity to meet the needs of underserved communities. People also wanted to understand what transportation equity looks like in the different regions and communities in the state. Since then, MnDOT launched various transportation equity efforts under this initiative including Community Conversations, Transportation Equity Labs and multiple research projects some of which are highlighted in the next sections of this agency profile.

EQUITY DEFINITION

[DRAFT] Transportation equity ensures the benefits and burdens of transportation spending, services, and systems are fair and just, which historically has not been the case. Transportation equity also requires sharing power in decision-making with people, especially Black, Indigenous and People of Color.

IMPLEMENTATION

In 2017, MnDOT launched Community Conversations, a statewide effort to understand how transportation affects equity and identify strategies that will reduce transportation burdens. Staff and consultants conducted about 30 interviews with community-based organizations in each MnDOT district to understand the transportation needs of underserved communities. Community Conversations have been completed so far in 6 out of 8 MnDOT districts. For each district, MnDOT staff worked with project consultants to host three implementation meetings to discuss themes and findings from the interviews and create district-specific equity recommendations and action plans. Consultants created detailed

reports for each district to document the process, findings, recommendations and action plans for implementation and decision-making.

Transportation Equity Labs are effective collaborative processes to build internal staff capacity to incorporate equity into the different State plans, programs, and policies. In 2020, MnDOT hosted Transportation Equity Lab for Safe Routes to School Strategic Plan which led to the creation of the STEPP tool discussed below. In 2021, MnDOT hosted two other Transportation Equity Labs. The first one was for the Sustainability and Public Health staff to discuss how to best incorporate transportation equity in the agency's Complete Streets policy. The second lab was hosted to ensure MnDOT's District Safety Plans sufficiently account for transportation equity considerations. These labs have proven to be useful tools to put transportation professionals who are not necessarily equity experts in the driver seat of advancing transportation equity in their focus areas.

MnDOT also developed a few different data tools to help the agency implement equitable transportation projects.

- [Student Transportation Equity for Priority Populations \(STEPP\)](#) tool supports equitable scoring during the Safe Routes to School grant application process. The tool uses various metrics related to reaching priority populations and allows grant applicants to quickly lookup equity scores of schools identified in applications. The tool also uses metrics like the percent of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, non-motorists killed or seriously injured in crashes, percent of students who are Black Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) and percent of English-learner students.
- [Suitability of Pedestrian and Cyclist Environment \(SPACE\)](#) is another important tool for transportation equity planning. The tool quantifies equity within projects and highlights the latent demand for walking and biking in an area. It uses public data to identify priority populations, environmental justice and latent demand and trip generators. Main data sources include US Census, Economic Research Service, MN Department of Education, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Department of Agriculture and Metro Transit. The tool also uses MnDOT data including bicycle routes, bus stops, safety plans, traffic volume and tribal boundaries. The data is aggregated into ¼ mile hexagons laid over the state. Each hexagon then receives a score based on 19 factors that indicate demand for walking and bicycling and the need for improvement to the pedestrian environment.
- [Priority Areas for Walking \(PAWS\)](#) uses a similar approach to SPACE and identifies priority locations for people walking as part of MnDOT's first Statewide Pedestrian System Plan adopted earlier this year. It integrates equity, safety, land use, health, and infrastructure considerations to identify the highest priority areas for walking on trunk highways across the state. Similar to SPACE, the PAWS analysis divides the state into half-mile diameter hexagons.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

Equity Lens Framework – In 2020, MnDOT developed the Equity Lens Framework to support the institutional and structural change of policies and programming that emphasize underserved communities. The framework asks staff to consider system bias and acknowledge historical events that caused disparate outcomes for marginalized communities. It uses a conceptual framework focused on

relationships, discovering important factors that others may miss, and examining discomfort some may feel when focusing on underrepresented groups. Use of the framework is now a required step in the process of updating or creating new agency policies.

Transportation Equity as part of MnDOT's Strategic Plan – MnDOT recognizes our transportation decisions can have a significant impact on communities throughout Minnesota, affecting access to employment, healthcare, and education. We recognize that past actions have harmed underrepresented communities and contributed to ongoing transportation inequities. We have the ability and the responsibility to ensure that our spending, services, and systems are supporting a transportation future that works better for everyone. Specific goals and targets are currently being set for the 2022-2025 strategic plan cycle.

Livability Initiative – the initiative resulted from community feedback during phase 1 of the Rethinking I-94 engagement. The initiative aims to work with communities to address Connectivity, Economic Vitality, Equity, Public Health and the Environment, Safety, Sense of Place and Trust. This initiative will be conducted in partnership with other governmental entities, community-based and philanthropic organizations. The anticipated outcomes will improve the livability of neighborhoods by providing access to jobs, affordable housing, support for the creation and maintenance of household wealth, quality schools, safe streets and clean environment.

Performance Measurements – this research project focuses on developing performance measures by synthesizing previous research on equity assessments by MnDOT and other partners. The objectives of this study include establishing a detailed understanding of current challenges and needs related to equity assessment, identifying assessment methods and equity-focused strategic actions, and facilitating the adoption of identified equity assessment methods and complementary strategic actions.

Centering the Margins – this is another research project that looks into the systemic barriers that marginalized individuals confront, especially those constructed by Minnesota government agencies while studying the survival strategies individuals use to navigate these barriers.

Gender and Travel – this research project interrogates whether socially constructed gender roles could lead to disparate travel patterns for Minnesotans. Researchers are conducting a review of literature on gender transportation, science and economics to understand how gender can influence travel-related behaviors.

Enhancing Managed Lane Equity Analysis – project evaluates methods for improving equity and environmental justice analysis during the planning and environmental studies that involve managed lane alternatives.

Equitable Contracting and Workforce Development – MnDOT has several activities to advance equity in contracting and to improve business practices on federally funded projects. Since 2016, MnDOT has issued more than \$200 million in prime contracts to underutilized small businesses, the vast majority of which were less than \$250,000. These activities include but are not limited to:

- Hosting monthly DBE and Workforce Collaborative meetings. This group includes contractor associations, labor unions, community groups, civil rights organizations, federal agencies, and other stakeholders as an important connection with the constituents MnDOT serves.

- Partnering with the Improve Group, a DBE firm, to review the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the DBE and small business community in Minnesota and other areas that may affect the agency’s engagement with DBE firms and BIPOC communities.
- Contracting with the University of Minnesota's Center for Transportation Studies (CTS) to conduct an analysis of the MnDOT contracting marketplace on federal contracts to ensure data inform its 3-year DBE goal-setting process.

FUTURE GOALS

- **Develop Transportation Equity Statement** – MnDOT is currently finalizing an industry-wide transportation equity definition that applies to all transportation service providers in the state. We expect the definition shared above to be finalized in the next few months. The next step for MnDOT is to develop an agency-specific transportation equity statement to communicate the agency’s future goals.
- **Transportation Equity Integration** – MnDOT plans to integrate transportation equity into all the work the agency does that impacts people’s lives from long-term visioning, planning and programming to project scoping and implementation.
- **Transportation Equity Training and Capacity Building** – MnDOT is starting to develop a transportation equity training project for its employees and potentially employees of other transportation partners to build a basic understanding of transportation equity and staff’s role to advance equity in their respective areas.
- **Collaboration with FHWA on Justice40 Initiative Implementation** – MnDOT will continue to partner with the Federal Highway Administration and Minnesota communities to implement federal transportation equity initiatives including Justice40 Initiative.

RESOURCES

- [MnDOT Metro District Livability Initiative](#)
- [Community Conversations](#)
- [Transportation Equity Labs](#)
- [Student Transportation Equity for Priority Populations \(STEPP\)](#)
- [Suitability of Pedestrian and Cyclist Environment \(SPACE\)](#)
- [Transportation Equity Research Projects](#)
- [Enhancing Managed Lane Equity Analysis.](#)
- [Office of Advancing Equity](#) (contracting)

California DOT (Caltrans)

Transportation Equity Program Profile

PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

TITLE

Caltrans Office of Race and Equity

YEAR ESTABLISHED

Summer 2020

WEBSITE

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/planning-modal/race-equity>

CONTACT INFORMATION

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BACKGROUND

Caltrans Office of Race and Equity (CORE) was officially launched in August 2020 under Planning and Modal Programs. CORE has been tasked with advancing racial equity throughout the Department's internal and external operations. CORE provides leadership, guidance, training, and support to all divisions, districts, and programs regarding equity efforts, working closely with the Office of Civil Rights, Caltrans Administration, Human Resources, and Equal Employment Opportunity Programs to advance diversity and equity within our workforce. Currently, CORE has four different branches: Priority Populations & Community Engagement, Native American Liaison Branch, Training & Communications, and the Equity Index Branch.

EQUITY DEFINITION

Caltrans acknowledges that communities of color and under-served communities experienced fewer benefits and a greater share of negative impacts associated with our state’s transportation system. Some of these disparities reflect a history of transportation decision-making, policy, processes, planning, design, and construction that "quite literally put up barriers, divided communities, and amplified racial inequities, particularly in our Black and Brown neighborhoods." ¹

Caltrans recognizes our leadership role and unique responsibility in State government to eliminate barriers to provide more equitable transportation opportunities for all Californians. This understanding is the foundation for intentional decision-making that recognizes the past, stops current, and prevents future harms from our work.

CORE developed a living document called the Equity Glossary of Terms for the department. Since the definition of Caltrans’ equity work is constantly evolving, CORE regularly updates this document to fit the Department’s vision and goals best.

IMPLEMENTATION

As stated in our Caltrans Strategic Plan, Caltrans is implementing equity in all phases of work, including project planning, programming, and design. One of the three strategic imperatives is a “commitment to equity-focused actions that make advancements in People, Programs and Projects, Partnerships, and Planet.” One of the five values includes “striving to eliminate disparities while improving outcomes for all.” Additionally, one of the six key strategic goals is to “Advance equity and livability in all communities.” This goal outlines three strategies:

1. Avoid and work to address transportation-related disparities in underserved communities on all new projects.
2. Plan and design transportation facilities to support vibrant, livable places, with a focus on addressing the needs and concerns of underserved communities; and
3. Collaborate with partner agencies to make equity and inclusion central in funding decisions. Many Caltrans programs and divisions have updated and revised guidelines with equity criteria. And the CORE is working in collaboration with other offices to develop and implement equity metrics.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

To meet strategic actions under the Caltrans Equity and Livability Goal, CORE is spearheading the development of an equity analysis tool that creates a multi- indicator metric. The EQI will identify and assess the severity of disadvantage by analyzing environmental, mobility, accessibility, and socioeconomic information to produce a transportation equity score for census tracts across the state. The EQI will score populations via nine indicators to help the Department direct transportation investments on safety accessibility, assess active transportation infrastructure gaps in pedestrian fatalities, and reduce traffic deaths in underserved communities. Additionally, it will help address any

potential inequitable impacts from future transportation investments when coupled with program-specific analysis.

FUTURE GOALS

There are many goals and actions to increase equitable outcomes within our transportation system. We identify and update many of these actions in the 2022 Race and Equity Action Plan. Caltrans is committed to meaningfully engaging communities most impacted by structural racism through an equitable engagement process where everyone is treated with dignity and justice. In collaboration with the Equity Engagement and Health branch, we have developed an equity engagement training platform that will later transition into a “train the trainer” program. This will support the dissemination of the training across the 22,000+ Caltrans workforce. All 12 Caltrans Districts have convened an equity task force and are working on District equity action plans. We are working to establish equity leads in each district to support equitable engagement and build trusting relationships to ensure our transportation investments provide a meaningful benefit to communities.

Illinois DOT

Transportation Equity Program Profile

PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

TITLE

No title

YEAR ESTABLISHED

Work has been ongoing; first measurable consideration in planning in 2017.

WEBSITE

<https://idot.illinois.gov/about-idot/our-story/governance/index>

[https://idot.illinois.gov/Assets/uploads/files/Transportation-System/Reports/Aero/RBI ACIP_04_30_21.pdf](https://idot.illinois.gov/Assets/uploads/files/Transportation-System/Reports/Aero/RBI_ACIP_04_30_21.pdf)

<https://idot.illinois.gov/transportation-system/transportation-management/planning/illinois-port-facilities-capital-grant-program>

<https://idot.illinois.gov/transportation-system/local-transportation-partners/county-engineers-and-local-public-agencies/safe-routes-to-school/index>

<https://idot.illinois.gov/transportation-system/local-transportation-partners/county-engineers-and-local-public-agencies/funding-opportunities/ITEP>

<https://idot.illinois.gov/data-driven-decisions.html>

<https://idot.illinois.gov/transportation-system/transportation-management/planning/lrtp/index>

CONTACT INFORMATION

Holly Bieneman, Director of Office of Planning & Programming

BACKGROUND

Equity was established as a core value at the Department in 2020 with our Equity Statement. Since then the department has been evaluating processes for hiring a workforce that mirrors

that of the residents of the State of Illinois, include considerations of equity during project development, and include equity during prioritization of projects.

EQUITY DEFINITION

Equity is a core value at IDOT. We are passionate about creating an inclusive workplace that promotes and values diversity while reflecting the communities we serve. Varied backgrounds, ideas and perspectives create a stronger, more productive and creative work environment. We recognize that the deficiencies of the past have more negatively impacted people of color and under-served communities and commit to expanding future opportunities to eliminate systemic barriers to a fully equitable transportation system. We are committed to ensuring there is equity in our hiring, purchasing, and planning as well as construction and consulting projects. Together, we will continue to build an inclusive culture that supports, celebrates and encourages the diverse opinions and voices of our employees while building a world class transportation system that serves all of our citizens safely, fairly and equitably.

IMPLEMENTATION

In 2017, the Long Range Transportation plan set objectives and strategies that include:

- Increased access for historically disadvantaged populations
- Identify ways to add equity considerations into project prioritization processes
- Enhance existing policies and practices related to under-served populations so outreach and inclusion are effective and go beyond meeting the minimum federal requirements.
- Review and enhance existing IDOT policies and practices related to environmental justice and under-served populations.
- Improve effectiveness in receiving feedback from underserved populations during the transportation planning and design process.
- Identify unique ways to mitigate impacts of new projects on under-served populations.

Illinois DOT has begun to include easy to measure, consistent statewide, and agreed upon metric for equity when planning and programming of projects. This includes items like Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's (IEPA) Environmental Justice (EJ) definition, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's (DCEO) Opportunity Zones, and Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's (CMAP) community cohorts. However, we don't necessarily think these are the best metrics because they are simply identifying populations that are or have been disadvantaged. That doesn't mean that the project or plan will necessarily improve their situation.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

Including considerations of equity into our programming processes. During our last call for projects for our Statewide Planning & Research program, we prioritized projects that were either in an Environmental Justice area or Opportunity Zone and we let the jurisdictions tell us if they believe they were in a disadvantaged area. We also provided 100% funding for those projects.

For our capital programs we also include measures of equity – generally if a project is in a location where there is a high-need population that project scores more ‘points’ and/or also includes reduced match.

Capital Port Program – If a project’s port district’s jurisdiction was in a EJ community and DCEO opportunity zone it received extra “points” and decreased match.

Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program – If a project was in an area that met certain economic factors the project received matching assistance.

Safe Routes to School Program – projects where the schools have a higher population of 1) free lunch students and/or 2) disabled students, those projects received more “points”.

Airport Capital Improvement Program – airports within 5 miles of a low income or majority minority community as defined by the IEPA Environmental Justice receive more “points”.

Downstate Transit Program – Projects that are in an environmental justice area receive more “points”.

Data Driven Decisions – This tool is for any capacity adding highway projects – so adding lanes, new roads, new interchanges, etc. Currently, if a project is in an IEPA defined EJ community it receives extra points. The definition of EJ in Illinois is both minority population greater than or equal to 75.4% of the population is a minority and 63.4% of the population’s income is below the level of income to be considered in poverty. If a project is either a majority of minority population **or** majority of population’s income is below the level of income to be considered in poverty – then the project receives more “points”. If it is in both criteria it gets even more “points”.

FUTURE GOALS

The department wants to work on developing different measures of equity when prioritizing projects – that include measures that evaluate if the project actually enhances the quality of life and opportunity for the populations identified. This would include something like an accessibility index.

We also are evaluating how to navigate hiring processes to hire and encourage candidates whose demographics reflect that of the residents of the state of Illinois.

Lastly, we are also evaluating the opportunity for projects to identify equity as a purpose and need to justify the completion of a project.

RESOURCES

The department has just mapped all of the Google Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) data which allows us to understand where transit service is provided.

We kicked off the development of an active transportation network that will identify the bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the state of Illinois. The hope is that we can combine the bike/ped inventory and the transit services inventory to develop an accessibility index. We also participate in a pooled fund with the University of Minnesota regarding an accessibility index.

We have been working with ESRI to help us develop a dashboard on our workforce compared to the demographics of Illinois.

Michigan DOT

Transportation Equity Program Profile

PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

TITLE

Culture, Equity, and Inclusion at the Michigan Department of Transportation

YEAR ESTABLISHED

2021

WEBSITE

[Five-Year Transportation Program 713823 7.pdf \(michigan.gov\)](#)

CONTACT INFORMATION

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BACKGROUND

Recent years have seen social unrest after tragic events uncovered the roles that institutional and implicit bias play in perpetuating inequitable treatment and outcomes within public programs and projects. In 2021, MDOT began addressing ways it can be better in this area, both internally and externally, with the creation of a new executive-level position: the chief culture, equity, and inclusion officer (CCEIO). The CCEIO role oversees the department's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts across the entire business with the goal of maximizing inclusivity in our processes and equity in outcomes.

EQUITY DEFINITION

MDOT does not have a published, agreed-upon definition of transportation equity. That said, as we have engaged the EI conversation throughout the organization, the following hallmarks of equitable transportation seem to be widely accepted:

Equitable transportation is:

- Multi-modal
- Accessible to all, especially those individuals and groups that have been historically marginalized
- Rooted in the needs of users as identified through engagement of those most impacted

IMPLEMENTATION

To ensure that advancing equity and inclusion is an intentional effort across the enterprise and is embedded in each aspect of MDOT's work, the Bureau of Transportation Planning, the Office of Economic Development, the Office of Business Development, the Office of Organizational Development, and the Equity and Inclusion Officer and Equal Employment Opportunity Officer roles report directly to the CCEIO. As articulated in the 2022-2026 Five-Year Transportation Plan, MDOT considers equity and inclusion in each of its projects. We acknowledge and embrace the paradigm shift in transportation that moves beyond a focus on asset management to recognize how we all use infrastructure to improve economic access and the quality of our lives.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

Internally, with the hire of the CCEIO in September 2021, continued its commitment to the MDOT House, its workforce development and succession planning model. Designed to address each stage of the employee lifecycle from recruitment/onboarding to retention/professional development and succession, the House was created as a means to address 21st century workforce challenges including attracting and retaining diverse talent. In keeping with these workforce goals, MDOT is building recruitment pipelines through a slate of internship, skill-building, and mentoring programs that seek to eliminate barriers to employment for students attending HBCUs, women, veterans, and others.

Externally, in addition to a strong foundation of public involvement and stakeholder engagement in the project selection process, MDOT is also growing DBE capacity through the deployment of innovative tracking systems to ensure prompt payment for services to these businesses and scaling up our DBE rosters with the hope that more small business will get the opportunity to thrive through our program. Finally, MDOT is working closely with tribal communities to include the voices of these nations are heard and valued.

FUTURE GOALS

In the transportation sector, where a project management approach prevails, it's natural to question whether you can set meaningful metrics for things like diversity and inclusion. But, the reality is that we can and must. Good intentions can only reach full potential if we set and achieve measurable outcomes. We recognize that we're creating next-level transportation systems that must perform in an increasingly complex environment. This requires setting goals, measuring progress and accepting accountability for results, with both an internal and external focus. We need to get better data to drive decision-making around how to be inclusive, and how to deal with equity issues. Good data lets the organization have productive conversations about change from a basis of facts, rather than assumptions or emotions. Data confirms when you're moving in the right direction, such as with our expansion from four to 60 diverse interns in just a few years. Those metrics serve as proof we can achieve aggressive goals, and they form a growing number of success stories we share inside and outside of our organization.

RESOURCES

[Five-Year Transportation Program 713823_7.pdf \(michigan.gov\)](#)

[Taking Inclusion to the Next Level in Michigan - HNTB](#)

[I-496 History: Paving the Way - YouTube](#)

[Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and Section 4\(f\) Evaluation for the I-94 Modernization Project in Detroit from I-96 to Conner Avenue \(i94detroit.org\)](#)

Pennsylvania DOT

Transportation Equity Program Profile

PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

TITLE

Cultivating Transportation Equity

YEAR ESTABLISHED

2021

WEBSITE

<https://www.penndot.gov/about-us/equity/Pages/default.aspx>

CONTACT INFORMATION

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BACKGROUND

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) recognizes that our nation's infrastructure investments and policies have not always been aligned to address systemic racism, impacting generations of people of color and posing challenges in mobility and access for underserved communities persist. Therefore, PennDOT created a workgroup, *Dismantling Systemic Racism and Inequities Working Group*, to conduct an in-depth examination of systemic racism and its relationship to transportation.

Initial efforts focused on information gathering and evaluation of the current programs and metrics used to gauge organizational diversity. With this information, the group then reached out to other state's departments of transportation (DOTs) to hear about best practices and innovative programs, to sibling agencies within the Commonwealth to seek opportunities for collaboration, and to local community leaders to gain insight into the specific transportation issues impacting communities of color in Pennsylvania (PA).

The group discussions and outreach efforts yielded many ideas for improving the diversity and organizational culture of PennDOT and ensuring equity and diversity considerations are an integral part of our planning, programming, and project delivery operations. The group identified recommendations

that were important to them in overcoming perceived barriers to equity within PennDOT and improving how we could serve the residents of the commonwealth.

As a result of the DSRI group's efforts, all of the recommendations are currently being analyzed by leadership and program staff experts for feasibility and implementation strategies. Some of the recommended strategies are in the implementation phase. Additionally, a newly created position has been created to lead the organization's diversity, equity, and inclusion program.

EQUITY DEFINITION

Envisioning Transportation Equity in PA:

- Race, disability, geographic location, or other characteristics do not determine or predict access to transportation options and services.
- Safe, environmentally sustainable, accessible, and affordable transportation options are adequately supported in all communities, particularly in historically underserved and vulnerable communities.
- Transportation decisions are made in collaboration and in participation with the communities we serve.
- All thrive in vibrant and healthy communities.

IMPLEMENTATION

PennDOT has made a commitment to place equity at the forefront of any project, from the initial planning phase to implementation. As such, we have created equity principles as part of our Electric Vehicle (EV) Mobility program, Active Transportation Plan, and Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

Additionally, our LRTP has specific objectives that are designed to improve transportation access and equity throughout PA. They include the following:

- Evaluate transportation equity issues and opportunities across PA.
- Develop measurable goals and metrics for equitable transportation in collaboration with key stakeholder groups.
- Establish equity and access strategies in partnership with stakeholder organizations and groups that advance the identified measurable goals.
- Improve equity and accessibility through ADA improvements and modal choice.
- Develop education, awareness, and training initiatives that strengthen transportation professionals' knowledge and skills to effectively address equity issues and opportunities.
- Implement and support public transportation initiatives for affordability, reliability, and availability for transit-dependent population.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

- **PennDOT Connects program** – This program allows PennDOT staff and our planning partners to consider community needs at the beginning of the planning process to ensure the best allocation of our resources.

- **Disparity Study** – In 2018 we finalized a Disparity Study project which included a comprehensive review of the legal framework, applicable procurement laws and regulations, identification of relevant businesses, and measuring the activity levels of the different businesses providing goods or services. The goal of the study was to determine whether discrimination or its effects exist in PennDOT’s overall transportation-related contracting.
- **Grant Equity** – PennDOT is a participant in the Commonwealth’s Grant Equity Interagency Workgroup. This workgroup is focused on improving equitable distribution of Commonwealth grants and reducing barriers to Commonwealth funding opportunities. To help guide the process, the workgroup solicited feedback from external stakeholders regarding the grant application and review process. The survey data, along with individual discussions, have provided helpful insight to create recommendations and best practices for advancing more equitable grantmaking across the Commonwealth.
- **Electric Vehicles (EV) and Equity** – As regions progress toward goals of 100% EV sales, PennDOT is considering how to establish a more equitable EV market so that the benefits of electrification are experienced by all and so that underserved, low-income, persons of color, and otherwise vulnerable consumers are not imposed with higher transportation costs. As more EVs come online in PA, PennDOT has established equity principles that guide our EV planning initiatives.
- **Mileage Based User Fee (MBUF)** - PennDOT has partnered with the Eastern Transportation Coalition to study various aspects of a MBUF program including public outreach and education, technology, and equity. PennDOT recently completed a rural/urban analysis to gather data and analyze the impacts a MBUF would have on drivers in various communities. PennDOT will continue a focus on equity in the next phase of the project to complete an equity analysis to assess the impact a shift to MBUF would have on different socioeconomic groups.
- **Statewide Backbone and Rural Broadband Initiatives** – PennDOT is developing a Fiber and Smart Mobility Strategic Plan for statewide coverage along with a deployment plan which would include adding conduit and/or fiber to all projects on that system. The goal also includes planning efforts to run broadband and fiber to get internet access out to rural areas.
- **Boards and Commissions** – PennDOT is looking at the diversity of our advisory boards and commissions and setting a path forward to making sure that membership better reflects our communities. We recently created a new Advisory Committees, Boards and Commissions webpage and application on PennDOT’s website.

FUTURE GOALS

- **Culture Building** – PennDOT is establishing a *Council on Inclusive Excellence* to foster a culture of inclusion and belonging. The Council will work to ensure PennDOT’s programs and policies support PennDOT’s strategic plan, promoting inclusion, and ensuring diversity, equity, and inclusion considerations are included in all transportation operational decisions and activities. *Specific goals include the following:*
 - The Council will consider areas of interest and activities such as increasing workforce diversity, workplace culture, public participation, community investment, and data collection and reporting. Future goals will be developed based upon recommendations from the Council; this also includes monitoring and advocating for progress towards implementation.

- Create and implement a communication strategy to engage with and foster a sense of connection among employees with PennDOT's equity, inclusion, and belonging efforts.
- Collaborate with the Governor's Office of Advocacy and Reform (OAR) and the Office of Administration's Bureau of Talent Development (BTD) to create and develop strategies for creating psychological and brave spaces for employees to have meaningful conversations about unconscious bias, racism, ableism, classism, and their impact in the workplace and on our transportation system.
- Develop education, awareness, and training initiatives that strengthen transportation professionals' knowledge and skills to effectively address equity issues and opportunities.
- **Recruitment, Hiring Practices, Interviewing** – PennDOT will be creating a training on unconscious bias in recruitment and hiring for all staff members who are involved in the interviewing and selection process.
- **Mentor Protégé Program** – PennDOT is creating a Mentor Protégé Program to increase diversity and participation in the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program with a focus on drawing in underserved and underrepresented companies. PennDOT's goal is to support the growth of a more diverse supply chain. *Launch Date – Q1 2022*
- **Public Engagement Initiatives** – PennDOT will be partnering with students and faculty from Carnegie Mellon University and East Stroudsburg University on a Capstone project for the 2022 Spring semester. PennDOT is working to leverage the use of technology and identify the most effective communication strategies to increase the level of engagement with diverse populations such as younger generations and underserved populations across the commonwealth. *Launch Date – Q1 2022*
- **External Outreach** – Collaborate with external transportation partners and sibling agencies on projects related to their diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.

RESOURCES

- [PennDOT Connects](#)
- [2018 PennDOT Disparity Study Final Report.pdf](#)
- 2020, PennDOT Public Participation Plan
<https://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/PUB%20823.pdf>
- PennDOT's 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Freight Movement Plan
<https://www.penndot.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/Planning/Pages/index.html>
- May 2021, updated Pub. 295 "The Project Level Public Engagement Handbook"
<https://www.dot.state.pa.us/public/PubsForms/Publications/PUB%20295.pdf>
- 2021, PennDOT report from the Dismantling Systematic Racism and Inequities Working Group (DSRI). <https://www.penndot.gov/about-us/equity/Documents/PennDOT-DSRI-Report.pdf>
- [Health Equity Analysis Tool \(HEAT\)](#)