



## SUMMARY REPORT

# Advancing Equity in Alameda County





# Contents

- 1. Overview and Executive Summary ..... 1**
  - 1.1. Why is Equity Important in Alameda County? ..... 1
  - 1.2. How Has Alameda CTC Addressed Equity? ..... 2
  - 1.3. What Is Our Research Methodology? ..... 5
  - 1.4. What Are the Key Findings from Our Research? ..... 6
  - 1.5. Summary of Findings ..... 8
- 2. What Are the Principles of Transportation Equity? ..... 10**
  - 2.1. What Is Equity? ..... 10
  - 2.2. What Are the Recent Drivers for Equity in Transportation? ..... 12
  - 2.3. How Do We Consider Transportation Equity in Our Work? ..... 14
- 3. What Are the Equity Initiatives by Other Agencies? ..... 17**
  - 3.1. How Is Equity Defined by Others? ..... 17
  - 3.2. What Types of Initiatives Have Been Developed by Others? ..... 18
  - 3.3. What Are Some of the Common Features of Agency Equity Initiatives? ..... 23
- 4. What Inclusive Engagement Strategies Are Used by Other Agencies? ..... 25**
  - 4.1. Why Is Inclusive Engagement Important? ..... 25
  - 4.2. What Are Considerations for Inclusive Public Engagement Programs? ..... 26
  - 4.3. How Do Other Agencies Engage Community-Based Organizations? ..... 27
- 5. What Are Example Equity Analyses and Applications? ..... 30**
  - 5.1. What Factors and Thresholds Do Other Agencies Use to Identify Equity Populations? ..... 30
  - 5.2. What Equity Analyses Are Used by Other Agencies? ..... 32
- 6. Implementation Opportunities ..... 37**

# 1. Overview and Executive Summary

The *Advancing Equity in Alameda County* report is the culmination of equity-based research that focused on emerging best practices and protocols at agencies in the Bay Area and around the country. This document is high-level and includes an overview of equity initiatives at other transportation agencies, key components of equitable engagement on projects, plans and programs and an overview of analytical tools and metrics that take equity into account in planning and project development. This report is based off of the following four, detailed memos, that are available upon request:

- **Agency Review Memorandum.** This memorandum documents research on the evolving practice of an equity initiative and policies developed by other transportation agencies in the country to identify common and best practices, as well as any lessons learned.
- **Countywide Survey Effectiveness Memorandum.** This memorandum provides a review on the comments gathered from the 2020 Countywide Transportation Plan (CTP) survey with respect to equity and can inform online inclusive engagement strategies.
- **Inclusive Engagement Strategies Memorandum.** This memo identifies current and evolving industry best practices and/or models, and standards for equitable engagement.
- **Equity Metrics and Tools Memorandum.** This memorandum describes how equity can be technically defined in transportation planning by looking at different mapping paradigms in California and across the country. This memorandum documents how different definitions have been applied in a few planning efforts.

The following sections describe the high-level findings of this research effort. Section 3 provides a summary of the equity initiatives and programs at other agencies, Section 4 describes equitable engagement practices of other agencies, and Section 5 identifies a few of the equity metrics and tools used by other agencies. The document concludes with implementation opportunities for Alameda CTC to consider carrying forward.

## 1.1. Why is Equity Important in Alameda County?

The mission of the Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) is to plan, fund, and deliver transportation programs and projects that expand access and improve mobility to foster a vibrant and livable Alameda County. Alameda CTC prioritizes equity across its plans, programs, and funding.

Equity is a foundation in Alameda CTC's policy documents as well as is a key goal for executive leadership. As part of the 2020 [Countywide Transportation Plan](#) (CTP), a document that guides transportation planning and policy for the agency, Alameda CTC adopted four goals and a vision statement. The four goals as seen to the right, begin with equity for planning and implementing accessible, affordable, and multimodal transportation projects and programs. Throughout the CTP, equity is identified as a key crosscutting issue that needs to inform all agency activities. This report begins to define next steps for what an equity initiative could look like at Alameda CTC. Additionally, the Alameda CTC Executive Director goals for 2021 included a specific Equity and Mobility goal, ensuring the agency's commitment to advancing equity throughout the agency's work program.

## FOUR GOALS SUPPORT THE TRANSPORTATION VISION



### ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE, AND EQUITABLE

Improve and expand connected multimodal choices that are available for people of all abilities, affordable to all income levels and equitable.



### SAFE, HEALTHY, AND SUSTAINABLE

Create safe multimodal facilities to walk, bike and access public transportation to promote healthy outcomes and support strategies that reduce reliance on single-occupant vehicles and minimize impacts of pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions.



### HIGH QUALITY AND MODERN INFRASTRUCTURE

Deliver a transportation system that is of a high quality, well-maintained, resilient, and maximizes the benefits of new technologies for the public.



### ECONOMIC VITALITY

Support the growth of Alameda County's economy and vibrant local communities through a transportation system that is safe, reliable, efficient, cost-effective, high-capacity and integrated with sustainable transit-oriented development facilitating multimodal local, regional, and interregional travel.

In order to achieve Alameda CTC's vision of improving mobility to foster a vibrant and livable Alameda County for all residents, it is imperative to lift up communities that have been harmed and generally not well-served by the transportation system. This can be achieved through centering equitable policies and actions in Alameda CTC's planning work, projects, programs, funding, hiring, and contracting. Advancing equity in all aspects of Alameda CTC's work program and operations is an integral part of delivering the agency's mission.

## 1.2. How Has Alameda CTC Addressed Equity?

The term "equity" has many meanings within the work of Alameda CTC. The concept of "geographic equity" considers how certain geographies – *often planning areas or jurisdictions* – compare with others in terms of funding distributions. The term "modal equity" considers how various modes – *pedestrian, bicycle, transit, auto* – are treated relative to each other. For the purposes of this effort, the term "equity" focuses on racial and economic considerations.

Alameda CTC has incorporated equity into agency planning and funding processes, including prioritizing projects within the 2020 CTP and Comprehensive Investment Plan

(CIP) that are in and/or serve equity communities. Moreover, Alameda CTC completed the most recent [Community Based Transportation Plan](#) (CBTP) in 2020, which specifically identifies needs and priorities within equity communities throughout the county. In the development of both the CTP and CBTP, outreach across the county included specific efforts to gain input from equity communities in addition to more generalized countywide outreach. In addition, equity is the foundation for a landmark agency-led [Affordable Student Transit Pass Program](#) (STPP), for the on-going Paratransit program that the agency has funded since the 2000 sales tax measure, and for the School Travel Opportunities Program component of the larger [Safe Routes to School](#) (SR2S) program. These agency efforts are summarized below.

### **2020 Countywide Transportation Plan and Community-Based Transportation Plan**

As previously described, with the 2020 update to the CTP, a document that establishes near-term priorities and guides long-term decision-making for Alameda CTC, a commitment to social equity was infused throughout its goals, priority projects, recommended strategies, and the engagement that informed these elements. A key input into the 2020 CTP was the CBTP, a parallel effort to the CTP that focused on community engagement and a needs assessment within the County's Communities of Concern (now referred to as [Equity Priority Communities](#)<sup>1</sup> (EPC).

As previously described, the first of four goals of the 2020 CTP is to improve and expand connected multimodal choices that are available for people of all abilities, affordable to all income levels, and are equitable. This goal permeated the priorities and recommended strategies throughout the 2020 CTP. Comprehensive public engagement over the two-year development period for the CTP included surveys, focus groups, and a virtual open house. In the near-term, Alameda CTC will continue to advance implementation of all strategies and actions in the 2020 CTP with equity at the center.

A primary input for community engagement and the CTP's needs assessment was the CBTP, which relied on direct engagement in low-income and communities of color. Outreach strategies focused on "pop-up" events at high foot traffic locations or community events in low-income communities and communities of color, surveys, and interviews with Community Based Organizations from 2019 to 2020.

For the final phase of outreach for the CTP, in August through October of 2020, around 1,500 responses, including over 1,000 open-ended comments, were submitted as part of a survey. The survey responses were reviewed and assigned general categories to

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly called "Communities of Concern," Equity Priority Communities are census tracts that have a significant concentration of underserved populations, such as households with low incomes and people of color. A combination of additional factors helps define these areas, including limited-English proficiency, seniors 75 years or older, zero-vehicle households, single-parent families, people with a disability, and rent-burdened households.

summarize community members' concerns related to equity considerations for transportation in Alameda County.

An analysis of the responses revealed that 57% of the open-ended survey responses (more than 600) mentioned an equity-related concern, indicating the high importance of and concern around equity issues in the county. A ZIP code analysis showed that there was considerably lower survey participation in zip codes where disadvantaged populations reside, indicating a potential need to do targeted outreach to increase the rate of participation in these areas in future iterations of a countywide, online survey.

### **Affordable Student Transit Pass Program**

Alameda CTC is responsible for the implementation of the STPP in Alameda County. The program provides free youth Clipper cards to eligible middle and high school students in the county that can be used for unlimited free bus rides in their area (on AC Transit, Union City Transit or LAVTA Wheels), as well as a 50 percent discount on BART trips and youth discounts on other transit systems. In the 2019/2020 school year over 13,500 students participated in the STPP. The STPP is a largely means-based program, which means students who are eligible for a Free and Reduced Priced Meal (FRPM) are also eligible to receive an STPP Youth Clipper card. The program makes it easier for these students to travel to and from school and school-related programs, jobs, and other activities. The expansion of the STPP focuses on inclusion of high-need schools<sup>2</sup> first as part of the expansion criteria. The program will continue to expand to all eligible middle and high schools in Alameda county by fall 2023.

### **Paratransit Program**

The 2000 Measure B and 2014 Measure BB Transportation Expenditure Plans contain formulaic distributions of net sales tax revenues to the Seniors and People with Disabilities (Paratransit) Program. The distribution formula is based on set percentages in the respective Transportation Expenditure Plans for ADA-mandated and non-mandated paratransit services by planning area. Per the Expenditure Plans, Alameda CTC's Paratransit and Planning Advisory Committee (PAPCO) further defines the distribution within the planning areas. In 2017, the PAPCO adopted formula factors that provide distribution share within the planning areas using the following factors: Age, Disability, and Income based on current American Community Survey data. In addition, the Alameda CTC Paratransit program also supports means-based fare programs with clear guidelines for low-income individuals with demonstrated financial need.

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<sup>2</sup> High-need schools are defined as schools with a significant number of students that are eligible for Free and Reduced Priced (FRPM) meals

## Safe Routes to School

The SR2S program partners with local school districts to promote safe, active, and shared transportation choices to travel to and from school. Since the program began in 2006, SR2S has grown from two participating schools to over 260 by the start of the 2021 – 2022 school year. The program framework implements six pillars – Engagement, Education, Encouragement, Engineering, Evaluation, and Equity. Equity activities aim to reach the school communities that need the program the most due to safety, as well as lack of resources to participate. The SR2S program also includes targeted programming for under-resourced school through the Access program which provides supportive interventions to gather vital input and engagement from the schools. This approach informs short- and long-term efforts to develop the infrastructure necessary to maximize use of active and shared transportation modes for school-related travel. The Alameda County SR2S Program works to ensure geographic equity distributing program resources and activities throughout the county. The program also establishes and maintains strong partnerships and effective engagement activities to foster program sustainability.

## Comprehensive Investment Plan

As Alameda CTC is responsible for allocating all federal, state, and regional funding to local jurisdiction that pertains to transportation projects, the agency initiates a call for projects from local governments and evaluates them to prioritize and focus funding investments over a five-year programming and allocation period. The Comprehensive Investment Plan (CIP) uses a project evaluation and selection process that assesses projects based on three pillars that culminate into a 100-point scale: Readiness Delivery (45 points), Needs and Benefits (45 points), and Matching Funds (10 points). Each pillar incorporates specific criteria which, if qualified, would add points to a project. The Needs and Benefits category includes the criterion “*Serves transit-dependent populations, communities of concerns, disadvantaged, or vulnerable populations*”, which would add up to 3 points to the project and increase the score for acceptance in the program to receive funding by Alameda CTC.

### 1.3. What Is Our Research Methodology?



The *Advancing Equity* report uses insights from agency interviews and combines materials gathered through desktop research to synthesize key findings that inform Alameda CTC's future work on equity.

The agencies selected for this knowledge exchange have previous experience in starting equity initiatives, developing equity metrics and tools, and conducting inclusive engagement for their projects, plans, and programs. The selection of agencies interviewed was a broad net to understand the full range of equity approaches in public agencies across the state and country.



The following agencies were interviewed:

- Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)
- San Francisco County Transportation Agency (SFCTA)
- City of San Jose Department of Transportation (San Jose DOT)
- Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro)
- Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)
- City of Oakland Department of Transportation (OakDOT)
- Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) Link 21 Program – focused on partnering with CBO's

In addition, the equity initiatives and practices of the following agencies were researched through public documents:

- California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA)
- California Transportation Commission (CTC)
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
- California Strategic Growth Council (SGC)
- Oregon Metro
- Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)
- San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA)
- Cities of Madrid, Portland

The research process also included review of relevant resources and tools from the [Government Alliance on Race and Equity](#) (GARE) and identified best practices for consideration at Alameda CTC.

## 1.4. What Are the Key Findings from Our Research?

As described in previous sections, Alameda CTC has integrated equity principles in the countywide plan and on-going programs (e.g., STPP, SR2S). The following findings related to agency-wide initiatives, engagement, and analysis are provided for consideration as the agency determines additional ways for advancing equity.

### Equity Initiatives

Across the agencies researched for their equity initiatives, the common features among their efforts are:

- Defining Equity
- Establishing Committees/Working Groups
- Involving Community Based Organizations (CBOs)
- Conducting Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DE&I) Training for Internal Staff
- Including Equity as a key consideration in Programs and Plans



Section 3 of this report describes these elements in more detail. A separate memo, entitled “Agency Review Memorandum” is also available.

## Inclusive Engagement



One critical goal and a desired outcome of equitable engagement is the establishment of trust and long-standing partnerships among diverse community representatives. There is a greater likelihood of engagement from underserved communities when organizations or agencies like Alameda CTC take direct steps to create, enhance, and maintain relationships with those populations. This begins with understanding who the target populations are and working collaboratively with trusted community leaders to identify meaningful ways to share information, learn, build understanding, and create opportunities for effective engagement.

An Equity Engagement Roadmap would provide a step-by-step Equity Engagement roadmap for Alameda CTC with best practice solutions for implementation of a successful Equity Engagement Program.

One resounding industry change that has occurred over the last several years is the elevation of CBO participation in transportation planning work and project delivery. Through conversations with agencies during this research process, the following seven steps to successful CBO partnership were identified:

### Steps to Successful CBO Partnership

1. **SECURE** budget source for CBO compensation
2. **ESTABLISH** process to effectively identify community organizations that truly represent the target community(s) and have capacity to conduct the work
3. **SOLICIT** participation
4. **ESTABLISH** expectations and contracting mechanisms
5. **TRAIN** and share information to onboard them to the Project
6. **COLLABORATE** throughout planning
7. **PROVIDE** timely compensation

Section 4 describes inclusive engagement in more detail. A separate memo is available.

## Equity Metrics and Tools

An extensive review of the agencies' application of transportation equity into plans, programs, and projects showed that there are both qualitative and quantitative equity tools. In addition, agencies tend to adopt at least one quantitative definition of equity communities that is used to identify its equity populations for project prioritization purposes. MTC's Equity Priority Communities, CalEPA's Priority Populations, Bay Area Air Quality Management District Community Air Risk Evaluation Program (CARE) Communities, and AB 617 Communities are four examples, and more are explained in more detail in Table 5.



The use of equity tools in project applications were also fully explored in this research. Our research characterized the variety of equity tools into the following six categories:

- General Equity Framework for Analysis (OakDOT)
- Equity Analysis in Planning (Link 21, US 101 Mobility Access Plan, SFCTA Congestion Pricing, SFMTA Transit Assessment)
- Equity Analysis in Programs (San Jose Vision Zero, OakDOT Paving Program)
- Equity Analysis in Funding (Portland, OakDOT CIP)

Section 5 describes inclusive engagement in more detail. A separate memo is available.

## 1.5. Summary of Findings

Based on the comprehensive research and agency interviews, we identified five key findings that can also serve as recommendations for Alameda CTC to consider:

- **Agencies have institutionalized equity in a variety of ways depending on the type and function of the agency.**
  - Some agencies have either a dedicated department that focuses on equity or have established agency wide equity initiatives which provides more of an established framework to carry out equity work.
  - Agencies noted creating and then implementing their agency equity initiatives were multi-year efforts
- **Agencies have primarily implemented and participated in equity training, such as through GARE processes.**
  - Participating in equity training, such as GARE, as an organization was foundational to establishing equity initiatives for several agencies interviewed.
  - Participating in equity programs, such as GARE, gave agencies the tools and resources to create Racial Equity Plans (REAPs). This document includes an overview of the key components of a REAP.
- **Agencies have released equity statements that are also policy commitments.**
  - The majority of agencies we interviewed have released equity statements which reflect an agency's commitment to building an inclusive, varied workplace welcoming to people of all backgrounds. Much like a mission and values statement, an equity statement should guide hiring, employee workplace culture and work programs.
  - A policy commitment delineates on a policy level what the agency will do to implement equitable outcomes
  - The agencies interviewed noted the importance of defining equity as a key component establishing an equity initiative. An Equity definition should be relative and personal to the constituents that an Agency serves which gives it context.

- **Agencies are exploring new and deeper ways of partnering with communities and utilizing community groups.**
  - Inclusive engagement practice employs strategies that remove barriers to participation, collaboration with participants through co-creation, some of which Alameda CTC has already used in outreach for our plans, notably the CBTP and CTP.
  - Agencies interviewed also noted that CBOs can be very effective in helping agencies ensure their outreach strategies are multilingual and culturally targeted, help increase trust with community that leads to involvement, and help analyze community feedback and needs and turn them into recommendations.
- **There are a variety of ways for technically defining disadvantage with a growing emphasis on public health.**
  - Agencies interviewed and researched for this report use a variety of demographic factors and thresholds to help define who and where marginalized communities reside. Mapping of these disadvantage factors help determine the who and where of equity communities.

## 2. What Are the Principles of Transportation Equity?

### 2.1. What Is Equity?

#### *Equality is not the same as equity*

Transportation investment is guided by numerous criteria, depending on the funding source and agency priorities. It often includes consideration for distributing funds equally across geographies and communities. If transportation investment is looked at through a “horizontal equity lens”, regardless of location or socioeconomic status, individuals and groups would be treated the same in the distribution of resources/benefits and costs. This “fair” treatment is what we call “equality”.

“Vertical equity” is something completely different. Through this lens, transportation investments are distributed differently between individuals and groups based on income, social class, or transportation needs. Historic disinvestment in communities has contributed to current disadvantage in populations. Taking equity into account now with planning, programming, and funding makes up for historic disinvestment and discrimination. Transportation policies are equitable if they provide additional resources and benefits for economically, socially, or mobility disadvantaged groups in order to compensate for overall inequities. This is what we call “equity”.

Policies based in equality aim to provide everyone the same access to resources and opportunities. Policies based in equity consider that some groups or individuals may have different needs and require different types of support to achieve the same level of success. The key to equity is that the process leads to a desired outcome – and sometimes that process needs to be flexible or tailored so that outcome can be achieved. People do not start from the same place, they do not have the same needs, and the paths they follow may be very different. Equity looks at all of these things to help promote success for everyone.

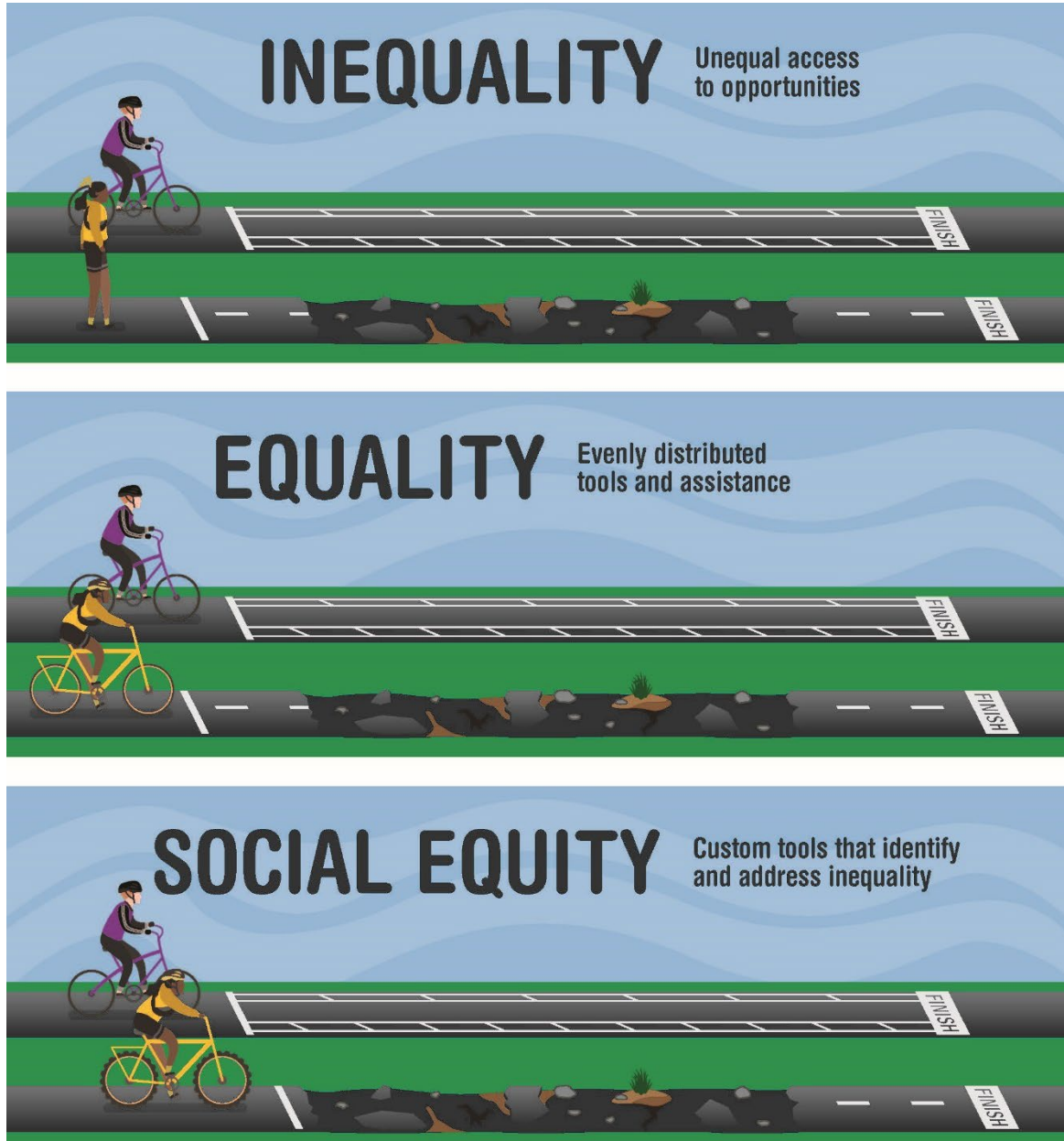


#### *Can we achieve justice?*

Equality is outcome-based, i.e., we strive for everyone's success. Providing tools and opportunities may not always be enough, because disparities across populations and communities often stem from external factors and conditions that are systemic and institutionalized. Transportation providers, planners, and policy-makers, including Alameda CTC, may not be able to create these fundamental changes. Full achievement of justice – which includes the removal of the barriers that some communities face – is beyond what one agency can accomplish; however, policies to

help advance equity and move toward justice would improve the lives of county residents, workers, and visitors. Figure 1 provides an illustration of the path from inequality to equity.

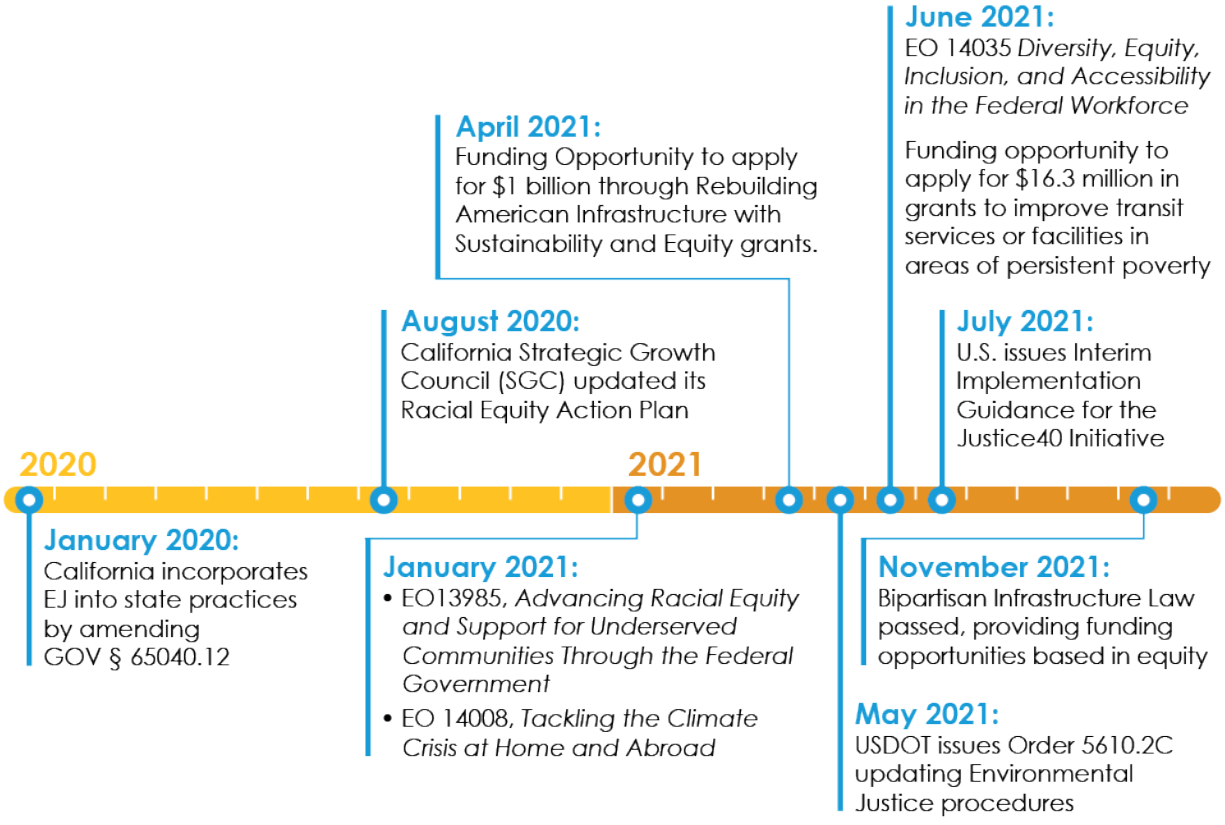
**Figure 1. From Inequality to Equity**



SOURCE. HDR, INC., 2021

## 2.2. What Are the Recent Drivers for Equity in Transportation?

From the federal level down to the state and county level, equity in transportation planning has become a crucial part of project development, prioritization, and funding. The timeline below can be extended back several decades with the inclusion of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964<sup>3</sup>, and the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and Executive Order (EO) 12898 on Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice (EJ) in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations in 1994. Key landmark decisions noted in the timeline focus on current equity standards in transportation policies, programs, and funding. These are discussed in more detail below.



### 2021 Presidential Executive Orders are leading the way

Equity took center stage on the day President Biden was inaugurated, when he signed Executive Order (EO) 13985, [\*Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government\*](#), to direct the federal government to revise agency policies to account for racial inequities in their implementation.

The EO defines “equity” as the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved

<sup>3</sup> As a recipient of federal funding, Alameda CTC must comply with Title VI and has a Title VI program, located here: <https://www.alamedactc.org/title-vi/>

communities that have been denied such treatment, such as: people of color (Black, Latino, Indigenous, Native American, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders and others); members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality. EO 13985 further defines “underserved communities” as populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life.

As part of EO 13985, President Biden revoked EO 13950, *Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping*, which, among other things, prohibited federal contractors and subcontractors from providing certain workplace diversity training and programs. EO 13985 affirmed that “equal opportunity is the bedrock of American democracy, and our diversity is one of our country’s greatest strengths.”

On January 27, 2021, President Biden kicked off the [Justice40 Initiative](#) by signing EO 14008, [Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad](#), to ensure that Federal agencies work with states and local communities to deliver the Administrations’ promise of at least 40 percent of the overall benefits from Federal investments in climate and clean energy going to disadvantaged communities. The initiative focuses on clean energy, energy efficiency, clean transit, affordable and sustainable housing, training and workforce development, remediation and reduction of legacy pollution, and the development of critical clean water infrastructure.

On June 25, 2021, President Biden signed EO 14035, [Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce](#), which covers a wide range of groups that have historically faced employment discrimination and professional barriers, such as people of color, women, LGBTQ+ individuals, first-generation professionals and immigrants, individuals with disabilities, rural residents, older Americans, people of faith who require religious accommodations, individuals who were formerly incarcerated, and veterans and military spouses.

### ***New Federal funding is based in equity***

On April 13, 2021, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) published a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to apply for \$1 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 discretionary grant funding through Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grants. Projects for RAISE funding are evaluated based on criteria that include safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, economic competitiveness, state of good repair, innovation, and partnership. Key to the evaluation is the focus on equity and climate change as USDOT will prioritize projects that can demonstrate improvements to racial equity, reductions in impacts of climate change, and creation



of good-paying jobs. The RAISE funding program allowed at least \$10 million to be awarded to projects located in or to directly benefit “areas of persistent poverty”<sup>4</sup>.

On June 30, 2021, the Federal Transit Administration published a NOFO to apply for \$16.3 million in competitive grants for FY 2021 for the [Areas of Persistent Poverty Program](#). The program provides funding for planning, engineering, technical studies, or financial plans that will result in improved public transportation, new routes and facilities, and innovative technologies in communities experiencing a high poverty rate. Applicants were encouraged to work with non-profits or other entities to develop eligible projects.

### **State of California has been taking action since 2019**

The California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) adopted a [Racial Equity Action Plan](#) in April 2019, [updated in August 2020](#), that is viewed as the catalyst for equity programs and initiatives in California agencies. The SGC is committed to achieve its vision that *all people in California live in healthy, thriving, and resilient communities regardless of race*.

Environmental justice (EJ), previously considered just a requirement when federal actions, such as funding, were involved in a project, is now prominent throughout all aspects of transportation planning, funding, and delivery in California. EJ is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, income, national origin, or educational level with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. California was one of the first U.S. states to incorporate EJ principles and requirements into state practices by amending [GOV § 65040.12](#) in January 2020. In addition to the fair treatment, California agencies and organizations have actively been working to include individuals disproportionately impacted by pollution and other environmental impacts, and most vulnerable to their effects, in decision making processes.

## **2.3. How Do We Consider Transportation Equity in Our Work?**

As a transportation agency in a very diverse county in California, Alameda CTC is committed to advancing transportation equity to improve the lives of all residents. Incorporating equity in the planning, delivery, and funding of transportation improvements is multi-faceted as it considers both the potential benefits to various communities based on their needs as well as the potential impacts, or burdens, on these communities.

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<sup>4</sup> Areas of Persistent Poverty are defined as U.S. counties that have had 20% of its population living in poverty in all three of the listed datasets: (a) The 1990 decennial census; (b) the 2000 decennial census; and (c) the 2019 Small Area Income Poverty Estimates. The full definition is located here: [https:// www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants](https://www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants).

Research in the advancement of equity has looked at public facilities and services, user costs and benefits, service quality, external impacts, and economic impacts, as important considerations for transportation equity<sup>5</sup>. For Alameda CTC and its mission for Alameda County, equity is considered through engagement, project evaluation and funding decisions, and administration, as described below:

- **Engagement** – Working directly with equity communities in initial planning work, by engaging communities early, and continuing the collaboration through project/program development, delivery, and operation
- **Project evaluation and funding decisions** – Considering benefits and burdens to communities, costs and quality of services or facilities, and environmental and economic impacts of new, expanded, or modified projects and programs in the evaluation process to help make funding decisions
- **Administration** – Incorporating equitable measures in Alameda CTC's staffing and contracting policies, building upon the agency's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiative

Key to implementing an equity lens to the planning, delivery, and funding of transportation improvements in Alameda County is the incorporation of community input throughout the process, as identified in the first bullet above. Figure 2 illustrates an example flowchart of an iterative approach to outcome-based equity approach to transportation planning. The process starts with conducting independent research to understand a community's demographics, and potentially working with Community Based Organizations (CBO) that are part of the community to engage residents. The next steps include assessing the community's needs, such as identifying specific concerns and desires. The process concludes by working with the community to get input on development and assessment of solutions. For Alameda CTC, this approach is relevant to corridor planning where multiple jurisdictions are involved in the planning process.

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<sup>5</sup> Litman, Todd, [Evaluating Transportation Equity: Guidance for Incorporating Distributional Impacts in Transportation Planning](#), Victoria Transport Policy Institute, April 21, 2021.

**Figure 2. Example of an Outcome-Based Equity Approach to Transportation Planning**



## 3. What Are the Equity Initiatives by Other Agencies?

As part of the Equity Initiative research for Alameda CTC, a total of ten agencies' equity initiatives were reviewed through interviews and research. These agencies were selected because they have been advancing agency-wide equity initiatives and implementing evolving best practices within their agencies and on-going work products. In addition to the interviews conducted from June to July of 2021, research was conducted on the equity initiatives of the California agencies (SGC, Caltrans, CTC, and CalSTA), Oregon Metro, and Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP).

### 3.1. How Is Equity Defined by Others?

Defining equity is important to guide agency efforts and particularly to consider what is and is not part of an equity initiative (e.g., geographic, city vs. rural, etc.). The example equity definitions in Table 3 have been incorporated into agency functions, defining what the agency strives to achieve through equity and identifying desired outcomes (e.g., just participation, equality in outcome).

The equity definitions at MTC and LA Metro were adopted by their boards; however, at SFCTA, City of Oakland, Strategic Growth Council, Caltrans, Oregon Metro, and CMAP, their equity definitions exist in official documents and it unclear whether they were approved by any governing body. The equity definition at Minnesota DOT is a working statement, while San Jose DOT's Transportation Equity Task Force is in the process of defining their racial and social equity strategies and tactics.

**Table 3. Equity Definitions at Researched Agencies**

Agency	Definition
<a href="#">MTC</a>	Equity means a just inclusion into a Bay Area where everyone can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.
<a href="#">SFCTA</a>	SFCTA defines Equity as believing everyone deserves high quality transportation.
<a href="#">City of Oakland</a>	In Oakland, the City defines equity as fairness. It means that identity—such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or expression—has no detrimental effect on the distribution of resources, opportunities and outcomes for our City's residents.
<a href="#">City of San Jose DOT (Draft)</a>	The Office of Racial Equity is developing a citywide racial equity framework that will examine and improve San José's internal policies, programs, and practices to eradicate any structural and/or institutional racism in the City of San José.

Agency	Definition
<a href="#">LA Metro</a>	Equity is both an outcome and a process to address racial, socioeconomic, and gender disparities, to ensure fair and just access - with respect to where you begin and your capacity to improve from that starting point - to opportunities, including jobs, housing, education, mobility options, and healthier communities. It is achieved when one's outcomes in life are not predetermined, in a statistical or experiential sense, on their racial, economic, or social identities. It requires community informed and needs-based provision, implementation, and impact of services, programs, and policies that reduce and ultimately prevent disparities.
<a href="#">MnDOT (draft)</a>	Transportation equity ensures the benefits and burdens of transportation spending, services, and systems are fair, which historically have not been fair, and people (especially black, indigenous, and people of color) are empowered in transportation decision making.
<a href="#">Strategic Growth Council</a>	Equity Vision: All people in California live in healthy, thriving, and resilient communities regardless of race.
<a href="#">Caltrans</a>	We will achieve equity when everyone has access to what they need to thrive — starting with our most vulnerable — no matter their race, socioeconomic status, identity, where they live, or how they travel.
<a href="#">Oregon Metro</a>	Our region is stronger when all individuals and communities benefit from quality jobs, living wages, a strong economy, stable and affordable housing, safe and reliable transportation, clean air and water, a healthy environment and sustainable resources that enhance our quality of life.
<a href="#">CMAP</a>	We are guided by the principle that everyone has a right to opportunity and a high quality of life. We work to realize equity for all.

### 3.2. What Types of Initiatives Have Been Developed by Others?

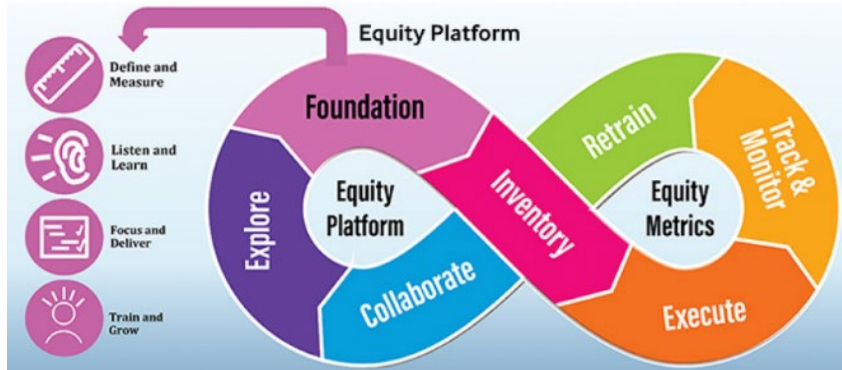
#### Metropolitan Transportation Commission

MTC advances equity through investments and policies directed at historically underserved and systemically marginalized groups. In 2019, MTC solidified its commitment to equity by establishing the [Equity Platform](#), built largely on work done by LA Metro.



At the core of the Equity Platform is a set of beliefs:

- Racism is real, and must be acknowledged and dismantled
- Designing for equity must start at the community level
- Equity is intersectional (interconnected nature with multiple social identities)



The equity platform is grounded by a set of four pillars: Define and Measure; Listen and Learn; Focus and Deliver; and Train and Grow.

## San Francisco County Transportation Authority

SFCTA participated in the City of San Francisco's citywide [Racial Equity Framework](#) developed by the [Office of Racial Equity](#) and formed a [Racial Equity Working Group](#) (REWG) in fall 2018. The REWG has since led a number of initiatives to advance racial equity internally and externally. This includes hosting regular Racial Equity Trainings to normalize conversations on race and equip staff with skills to speak to racial issues, applying a Racial Equity Tool to agency projects and processes, and developing the agency's [Racial Equity Action Plan](#) (REAP). SFCTA's REAP, which is focused on internal operations and hiring practices, includes 80 individual actions related to hiring and recruitment, retention and promotion, diverse and equitable leadership, organizational culture of inclusion and belonging, and more.



## City of Oakland

The [Department of Race and Equity](#) was created by a city ordinance in 2015. The primary goals of the Department of Race and Equity are threefold: 1) Eliminate systemic causes of racial disparities in City Government; 2) Promote inclusion and full participation for all residents of the City; and 3) Reduce race-based disparities in our communities. The three-staff Department supports all City departments and decision makers to address systemic causes of inequities and to remove barriers that restrict access to fair service from city government.



CITY OF OAKLAND

The City of Oakland Department of Transportation (OakDOT) has a [Racial Equity Team](#) (RET) that supports the broad vision as noted in the [OakDOT Strategic Plan](#) for equitable outcomes in transportation for all of Oakland's diverse constituencies. The OakDOT RET works to implement this vision in accordance with the OakDOT Strategic Plan and through the adopted of the [Racial Equity Charter](#).

## City of San Jose

In 2018, the City of San Jose began work on racial equity through a commitment to building a shared understanding of equity within the city and greater racial equity and improved outcomes for all San José residents. As a first step, the City joined the [Government Alliance on Race and Equity](#), a national network of governments working to achieve racial equity within and through government. The City of San Jose institutionalized a focus on equity through their [Office of Racial Equity](#) which was established in 2019. The Office of Racial Equity currently has a staff of five people.



Within San Jose DOT, equity has been elevated through the creation of an [Equity Task Force](#) to create a more equitable and people-focused transportation system. The Task Force includes nine community leaders and CBOs from diverse local communities, particularly the city's most historically marginalized communities.

## LA Metro

The LA Metro [Equity Platform Framework](#) was adopted by the LA Metro Board in 2018 and committed the agency to advancing equity. The platform includes four pillars – Listen and Learn, Define and Measure, Focus and Deliver, Train and Grow.



In FY19, the Equity Platform [FY19 Activation Plan](#) (January 2019) outlined the set of activities that LA Metro is pursuing to implement the LA Metro Equity Platform Framework. The most recent [Equity and Race Program Update](#) was in August 2020 when staff provided a progress report on the action plan since January 2019.

LA Metro also integrated equity into their work plans, programs, and projects by adopting recommendations from GARE. GARE representatives are assigned in different departments and LA Metro is now developing equity classes for different staff levels. LA Metro is looking to contract with transportation equity thought leaders and facilitators to create an unconscious bias training.

## Minnesota Department of Transportation

MnDOT's [Advancing Transportation Equity Initiative](#) aims to better understand how the transportation system, services, and decision-making processes help or hinder the lives of people in underserved and underrepresented communities in Minnesota. Specifically, MnDOT wants to identify key actions that transportation agencies can take to make meaningful change.



The overarching objectives for the Advancing Transportation Equity initiative are to

- Learn more about the transportation experiences hindering the quality of life for underserved and underrepresented communities in Minnesota
- Identify possible solutions to address challenges faced by these communities
- Initiate partnerships to advance equity in the state

Equity-related work is in the long-range planning Equity Work Group, which is currently developing strategy language. There are six total work groups of 15 to 20 people; half are professionals from the department and half are community members. There are four key projects in the initiative – Community Conversations, Contracting and Public Engagement, Research Projects, and Transportation Equity Labs.

### California Strategic Growth Council

The California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) was the first state cabinet-level body in the country to adopt a [Racial Equity Action Plan](#) (REAP) in April 2019 and updated in [2020](#). The SGC comprises six state Secretaries, including the Secretary of CalSTA, and three appointed public members. SGC's REAP was developed through the agency's participation in GARE's Capitol Cohort and is viewed as the catalyst for equity programs and initiatives in California agencies.



CALIFORNIA  
STRATEGIC  
GROWTH  
COUNCIL

Collaboration on equity began with a 2018-19 GARE Capitol Cohort Pilot Initiative that has evolved into the [Capitol Collaborative on Race & Equity](#) (CCORE). CCORE is jointly led by the SGC and the Public Health Institute. It covers 19 California departments and agencies with the directives that each state agency establishes a REAP, state agencies increase transparency on racial equity commitments, increase resources to advance racial equity, and commit to continual learnings about racial equity, including at the executive level.

### Caltrans

Caltrans developed a draft [REAP](#) in two years in collaboration with the Caltrans Alliance on Race and Equity Solutions team (CARES) and its executive sponsors. Released in 2019, the Caltrans REAP is intended to be a two-year plan with priorities and strategies maintaining alignment with department goals. In 2021, Caltrans released the [Caltrans Equity Statement](#) and the [2020-2024 Strategic Plan](#). The Equity Statement states Caltrans will implement concrete actions as outlined in the REAP, regularly update the Action Plan, and establish clear metrics for accountability.





Caltrans will adopt many new approaches focused on collaborative community and partner engagement, on measuring impacts to public health and community vibrancy, and on prioritization of investment in historically harmed and segmented communities.

## Oregon Metro

In 2010, Oregon Metro Council adopted equity as one of its six desired outcomes from the [2035 Regional Transportation Plan](#)'s outcome-based framework. As a result, Oregon Metro initiated the Equity Strategy Program and released the [Equity Inventory Report](#) (EIR) in 2012. The inventory report led the Oregon Metro Council to authorize the creation of an equity definition and an Equity Strategy and Action Plan. In January 2015, Oregon Metro created the Equity Baseline Workgroup and released the [Equity Framework Report](#) (EFR).



The collaboration among the EIR, EFR, and the Equity Strategy Advisory Committee resulted in the [Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) in 2016. The Plan is an organizational effort to advance social equity across all Oregon Metro departments, staff, and programs, policies, and funding decisions by concentrating on removing barriers and improving equitable outcomes for people of color.

The 15-member representative [Committee on Racial Equity](#) (CORE) appointed by the Oregon Metro Council in Spring 2017 as the successor to the Equity Strategy Advisory Committee, helped create and approve the Strategic Plan. Most recently, Oregon Metro released the [Transportation Equity Evaluation](#) that evaluates how well Oregon Metro's long-range transportation investments performed relative to transportation priorities identified by historically marginalized communities.

## Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

In its most recent Regional Transportation Plan, [On to 2050](#), CMAP developed a comprehensive plan using a three-year process that is heavily data-driven and specifically included four strategies and 15 action items that leverage the transportation network to promote inclusive growth and equitable engagement.



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

CMAP's latest report, [Improving Equity in Transportation Fees, Fines, and Fares](#), analyzed how residents of different income groups pay for transportation and how the structure of fees, fines, and fares fit with the financial realities of low-income households. It also highlighted how new user fees or taxes should be implemented so as not to induce additional disproportionate burdens on vulnerable communities.

### 3.3. What Are Some of the Common Features of Agency Equity Initiatives?

Each of the researched agencies tailored an equity initiative specific to their region. Across the agencies interviewed, three ([MTC](#), [SFCTA](#), [MnDOT](#)) have institutionalized an equity framework to guide their equity initiatives, but not a specific department focused on Equity. The remaining three agencies ([LA Metro](#), [City of San Jose](#), [City of Oakland](#)) have dedicated departments and full-time staff focused on equity. Below and identified in Table 4 are some of the common features among these and the other researched agencies.

**Table 4. Common Features of Other Agencies' Equity Initiatives**

Agency	Equity Initiative	Definition of Equity	Committees/ Working Groups	CBO Involvement	Internal DEI Training	Equity Considerations in Programs and Plans
MTC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SFCTA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
City of San Jose DOT	✓	IP	✓	✓	✓	✓
LA Metro	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
MnDOT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
City of Oakland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CalSTA/CTC/ Caltrans	✓	IP	✓	✓	✓	✓
Oregon Metro	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CMAP	✓	IP	✓	✓	✓	✓

IP – In Progress

**Defining Equity** - The agencies we interviewed all noted the importance of defining equity as a key component of establishing an equity initiative. All agencies interviewed either have an approved or working definition of equity.

**Committees/Working Groups** - All of the agencies we interviewed had either an internal committee made up entirely of staff or working group including members of the public that focused on external and internal agency policies related to equity.

**Community Based Organizations (CBOs) Involvement** - All agencies interviewed found ways to pay for input from CBOs on agency planning work and projects. Agencies often encourage consultants to include CBOs on project teams as direct expenses. Establishing protocols with CBOs was highlighted as a best practice to establish clear roles and responsibilities and protocols between the agency and CBO.

**Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DE&I) Training** - Nearly all agencies interviewed had DE&I trainings for staff. Trainings focused on implicit bias training, recruitment, and retention strategies. Most agencies have created “equity liaisons” for each department that directly work with staff on racial equity trainings. All agencies we interviewed or researched participated in GARE.

## 4. What Inclusive Engagement Strategies Are Used by Other Agencies?

### 4.1. Why Is Inclusive Engagement Important?

Equitable engagement should be considered a holistic, “living”, and evolving process that begins with establishing agency specific equity goals, objectives, and desired outcomes. One critical goal and a desired outcome of equitable engagement is the **establishment of trust and long-standing partnerships among diverse community representatives**. The ability to connect, establish trust, and maintain strong relationships is critical to Alameda CTC success in delivering projects and programs that reflect, and **are responsive to, community needs**. This delicate, equitable relationship takes time and effort to understand the many unique communities within Alameda County, recognize their “lived experience” and perspectives, and understand how those experiences shape their daily lives. Establishing and maintaining positive relationships demands consistent focus and attention which requires internal Agency buy-in for external execution.

There is a greater likelihood of engagement from underserved communities when organizations or agencies like Alameda CTC take direct steps to create, enhance and maintain relationships with those populations. This begins with understanding who the target populations are and working collaboratively with trusted community leaders to identify meaningful ways to share information, learn, build understanding, and create opportunities for effective engagement.

While equitable engagement starts and ends with active listening, there are five key pillars (represented in Figure 3) that can be applied when seeking effective and equitable engagement. Developed by the City of San Jose as their community engagement spectrum, these pillars represent various frameworks for how to approach, define, and set expectations around the specific engagement an agency is implementing. For example, there are some projects that may focus on just informing a community as a result of the project scope, while others require much more robust community participation and involvement such as projects located in Equity Priority Communities, or projects that traverse multiple jurisdictions. These projects would be included in the involve and collaborate pillars.

**Figure 3. Five Key Pillars of Community Engagement**



Alameda CTC has a diverse transportation portfolio that includes infrastructure projects, programs and services, countywide planning efforts, project development and delivery, and programming funding. All efforts should consistently apply equitable engagement goals and strategies, including: inclusive information, frequent consultation, convenient involvement, effective collaboration, and positive empowerment. Equitable engagement must be integrated into the technical work, be scalable, and prioritized for schedule and budget. The engagement efforts at Alameda CTC would be scalable to the type of project or program and it would be likely that not all five key pillars would be part of every engagement effort.

## 4.2. What Are Considerations for Inclusive Public Engagement Programs?

Successful planning and project development cannot be done within a technical vacuum but requires a **collaboration with the community**. Alameda County's diverse population demands multi-faceted approaches to engagement that could require unique practices from one neighborhood to the next. Given this localized diversity, key to understanding how to engage effectively is the direct collaboration with representative community partners to aid in **identifying targeted strategies and tools** for Alameda CTC engagement on projects, planning, and program implementation. Because Alameda CTC is often working in close partnership with local jurisdictions and/or transit agencies, working closely with partner agencies to develop engagement approaches in a collaborative manner is also important. Local jurisdiction staff often have existing relationships within communities or agency engagement policies that can inform the overall engagement approach.

More inclusive engagement requires removing barriers and going where people already are. This can take time and requires earmarked budget for execution. Identifying appropriate budgets for Equitable Engagement is a critical step when agencies are considering budget distribution. Several agencies focus their outreach efforts and budget in reaching the hard-to-reach populations.

**Examples of practical implementation for reducing barriers to engagement:**

- Attending established meetings (i.e., Chambers luncheons, Neighborhood meetings)
- Hosting booth at community events (i.e., farmers markets, festivals)
- Intercept tables at community gathering places (i.e., community centers, transit hubs)
- Distribution of information digitally and in hard copy (i.e., email, mailers)
- Promotion materials distributed via trusted communications outlets (i.e., posters, flyers, community newsletters, ethnically diverse media)

**Examples of practical implementation for accessibility:**

- Offering engagement in multiple languages using plain speak
- Developing tools for compliance with Americans with Disability Act and Section 508, the federal requirement for websites to be safe and accessible for people with disabilities
- Utilizing digital and in-person engagement forums to reach audiences in their preferred medium (i.e., telephone town-halls, virtual meetings, online chats)
- Identifying meeting facilities that are accessible by transit and offer ADA amenities
- Providing a variety of ways for the public to learn and provide input back (i.e., hotlines, emails, website comments, meeting forums, comment cards)

**Examples of practical implementation for budgeting Equitable Engagement:**

- Targeting 70% of outreach towards Equity Priority Communities
- Identification of Outreach Goals, Objectives, and Purpose to establish level of effort to determine appropriate budget

**Examples of practical Equity Engagement Assessment:**

- Establishing desired goals and outcomes prior to implementation
- Documenting engagement reach, participation, and conversation/comments to assess success
- Assessing engagement milestone activities throughout program implementation to measure success

Lastly, as communication practices, technology, and the evolving societal culture continues to change, it is critical to remain diligent in assessing Equitable engagement results and adjust as needed. Agencies should look to review their Equity Engagement Program every few years for enhanced strategies and tools to remain successful in reaching all desired audiences.

### 4.3. How Do Other Agencies Engage Community-Based Organizations?

One resounding industry change that has occurred over the last several years is the **elevation of CBO participation in transportation planning and project development**. Historically, CBO participation in planning projects has been part of a broader stakeholder strategy for engagement that forms after the project is in progress. However, due to changing community needs, increased awareness of the importance of early engagement with communities, and cultural and societal understanding of the need to have communities have a voice in defining what they want and need,

CBO roles in developing transportation projects and connecting with communities in an inclusive way has evolved. For example, recent planning efforts in the Bay Area (SFCTA Congestion Pricing Study and Link 21) have shown that contracting with CBOs creates better access to voices and perspectives that have traditionally not been present in many planning and project development processes. They are able to do this by utilizing their organizational connection and direct relationships and trust with target audiences to open doors and start, or in some cases drive the conversation between Agency and audience. CBOs can provide clear and often first-hand knowledge of constituent concerns and issues, as well as share ideas for best engagement strategies, prior to Agency connection which allows for creation of meaningful information and tools to have conversations and interactions that will resonate with the target audience. As trusted resources, CBOs can open doors to communities that otherwise remain closed.

Many agencies have now shifted towards contracting with CBOs as part of the Consultant Project Management Team or incentivizing their time and efforts as part of the Stakeholder Outreach Programs, which occur early in project development. CBOs now play a much more active role in the development of transportation projects and programs.

There are key benefits to working with CBOs as partners and integrated team members of the Project Development Team:

- CBOs are trusted leaders within the community and can reach beyond an agency to facilitate conversations and discussions
- CBOs can partner with agencies to lend credibility, increase accountability, and drive transparency
- CBOs can provide guidance on who target audiences are, strategies for reaching them, effective tools and messaging that will be culturally sensitive and resonate
- CBOs can aid in reviewing community feedback and needs to identify recommendations for Project and Stakeholder solutions leading to a better result that is supported

As their role and higher involvement expectation has changed so too has their potential for compensation of their efforts and time. Compensation allows individuals to commit to the Project or Program and avoid schedule tradeoffs that might otherwise lead them to not participate or share information.

## Steps to Successful CBO Partnership

1. SECURE budget source for CBO compensation
2. ESTABLISH process to effectively identify community organizations that truly represent the target community(s) and have capacity to conduct the work
3. SOLICIT participation
4. ESTABLISH expectations and contracting mechanisms
5. TRAIN and share information to onboard them to the Project
6. COLLABORATE throughout planning
7. PROVIDE timely compensation

While transportation agencies continue to pilot and execute a variety of CBO incentive programs, one commonality amongst approaches is the need to establish clear process, protocols, and associated expectations which include compensation of CBO partners for their important role in executing Equitable Engagement Programs.

Identification of the appropriate CBOs as partners starts with understanding who the agency is trying to reach. Once target audiences are identified then research and analysis of connected leaders and organizations can begin. Initial assessment of each possible CBO candidate should consider who they are, what their mission and goals are as an organization, and how they connect the community with their constituents. If these initiatives complement and are consistent with the agency's community commitment, then they can be considered as a potential and valuable partner.

### Examples of CBO Collaboration and Partnerships include:

- Distribution of CBO partnership applications, calls for proposals, and interviews
- Inclusion of CBOs as part of Consultant or Sub-Consultant Management Team
- CBO hosted workshops to engage targeted populations, assistance in audience identification, strategies, tools, community needs and solutions
- Creation of incentive program that offers varying levels of gift-cards for targeted activities or pays CBO for time and materials directly



## 5. What Are Example Equity Analyses and Applications?

### 5.1. What Factors and Thresholds Do Other Agencies Use to Identify Equity Populations?

There are several different technical methods for defining disadvantaged or equity communities for use in projects, plans, and programs. Equity populations are named and defined differently by each agency. Some relevant terms are defined below and the demographic variables and thresholds used to define them are shown in Table 5.

#### **AB 617 Communities**

- used by California Air Resources Board to identify and select communities with high cumulative exposure burden for the deployment of community air monitoring systems and/or community emissions reduction programs will see additional focused action to build on the broader statewide efforts

#### **Areas of Persistent Poverty**

- used by USDOT to determine eligibility for funding, defined as counties with 20% living in poverty over the last 30 years

#### **BIPOC - Black, Indigenous, People of Color**

- used to recognize that Black, Indigenous, and other people of color are severely impacted by systemic racial injustices

#### **CARE - Community Air Risk Evaluation Program**

- used by BAAQMD to identify areas where air pollution contributes most to health impacts and where populations are most vulnerable to air pollution

#### **CoC - Communities of Concern**

- used by MTC (2001-2021) for the identification of communities with significant concentrations of historically underserved populations

#### **Disadvantaged Communities**

- designated by CalEPA under authority from SB 375 to be the top 25% of communities experiencing a disproportionate amount of pollution, environmental degradation, and socioeconomic and public health conditions

#### **EDA - Economically Disconnected Areas**

- used by CMAP to identify areas around Chicago that are least connected to prosperity and experiencing disinvestment

#### **EFC - Equity Focus Communities**

- used by LA Metro to identify communities most heavily impacted by gaps in inequity in the LA area and to direct investments where they can have the greatest impact on reducing disparities in access to opportunity

#### **EPC - Equity Priority Communities**

- used by MTC since 2021 to replace Communities of Concern for use across all MTC's work products and programs

#### **Frontline Communities**

- used by the City of Oakland to describe those hit first and worst by the impacts of environmental injustice and the climate crisis

#### **Opportunity Zones**

- designation and investment program created by the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act allowing for certain investments in lower income areas to have tax advantages

#### **Priority Population**

- used by CalEPA and California Air Resources Board to identify communities that are the first and hardest hit by the effects of climate change, including disadvantaged and low-income communities, and must receive at least 35% of Cap-and-Trade funding

**Table 5. Matrix of Equity Definitions and Demographic Thresholds by Agency**

Agency	MTC	Cal Enviro-Screen	CalEPA / CARB	CARB Community Air Protection Program	Public Health Alliance of Southern California	USDOT	BAAQMD CARE Program	City of Oakland	LA Metro	CMAP
<b>Equity Metric Name</b>	<a href="#">Equity Priority Community</a>	N/A	<a href="#">Priority Populations / Disadvantaged Communities</a>	<a href="#">AB 617 Communities</a>	<a href="#">California Healthy Places Index</a>	<a href="#">Area of Persistent Poverty</a>	<a href="#">Cumulative Impact Area</a>	<a href="#">Priority Neighborhoods</a>	<a href="#">Equity Focus Communities</a>	<a href="#">Economically Disconnected Area</a>
<b>Low Income/ Poverty<sup>1</sup></b>	Yes (28%)	Yes	Yes (< 80% of CA median)		Yes	Yes (20%)		Yes (25%)	Yes (40%)	Yes
<b>Minority/People of Color</b>	Yes (70%)							Yes (25%)	Yes (80%)	Yes
<b>Linguistic Isolation</b>	Yes (12%)	Yes	Yes							Yes
<b>Seniors</b>	Yes (8%)							Yes (10%)		
<b>Zero Vehicle HH</b>	Yes (15%)				Yes				Yes (10%)	
<b>Single Parent Families</b>	Yes (18%)				Yes			Yes (10%)		
<b>Disability</b>	Yes (12%)							Yes (10%)		
<b>Rent-Burdened Households</b>	Yes (14%)	Yes	Yes		Yes			Yes (10%)		
<b>Educational Attainment</b>		Yes	Yes		Yes			Yes (10%)		
<b>Unemployment</b>		Yes	Yes		Yes					
<b>Air Quality<sup>2</sup></b>		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes			
<b>Environmental Effects<sup>3</sup></b>		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes			
<b>Neighborhood<sup>4</sup></b>					Yes					
<b>Sensitive Populations<sup>5</sup></b>		Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes			

Notes:

1. MTC's methodology determines a census tract as an EPC if more than 28% of the population is below 200% of the federal poverty level; USDOT uses 20% of the population living in below federal poverty level as a metric; City of Oakland uses <50% Area Median Income as a threshold and 25% of the composite score is based on this factor; LA Metro defines low-income as lower than county average, and uses 40% of low-income households within a census tract as a threshold; CMAP Tracts were flagged for high low-income household concentrations if 5% or more of households are living below the 60% of the Chicago MSA median income by household size.
2. Pollutant concentrations of TAC, PM2.5, and ozone etc.
3. Cleanup effects, groundwater threats, hazardous waste, impaired water bodies, solid waste sites and facilities
4. Retail Density, Park Access, Tree Canopy, Supermarket Access, Alcohol Outlets
5. Asthma Emergency Department Visits, Cardiovascular Disease (Emergency Department visits for Heart Attacks), Low Birth-Weight Infants
6. In general, percentages within brackets indicate a value threshold for which a census tract is flagged for a disadvantaged demographic factor (MTC, LA Metro), or in cases of a composite score methodology (City of Oakland), the value for which that demographic factor is part of the score.

## 5.2. What Equity Analyses Are Used by Other Agencies?

After equity is technically defined for a certain effort with the demographic variables described in Table 5, equity can be included in the subsequent analyses in a variety of ways. The following section briefly describes applications of equity frameworks for analysis and applications that can be considered for Alameda CTC efforts. The applications in this section describe equity in the following applications:

- General Equity Framework for Analysis
- Equity Analysis in Planning
- Equity Analysis in Programs
- Equity Analysis in Funding

Details on equity applications by type used by agencies are available in a separate technical memo by request.



### GENERAL EQUITY FRAMEWORKS – OAKLAND’S RACIAL EQUITY IMPACT ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

At the beginning of any effort, the City of Oakland's Department of Race and Equity recommends answering a set of questions. These are included in worksheet called the [Racial Equity Impact Analysis worksheet](#) to help City staff, policymakers, elected officials, and community advisory bodies apply an equity focus and analysis to key deliberations:

1. **Set Equitable Results and Outcome(s):** Be specific about what are the desired racial equity conditions your department wants to see for Oakland residents.
2. **Gather the right information:** What does the data tell us? Identify known racial inequities that could be impacted by this effort, Define the most important racially equitable indicator(s) for your Department
3. **Identify and engage your stakeholders:** gather demographic data to identify racial/ethnic groups living, working and or socializing in the area impacted by the policy /proposal- see [Inclusive Engagement Guide](#) as a resource
4. **Identify equity gaps:** What is the history of the racial/ethnic group(s) in Oakland? How has past public policy impacted disparities in their current conditions? How might those disparities factor into their ability to benefit from this proposal?
5. **Fill in equity gaps:** What steps could be taken to prevent or minimize adverse impacts or unintended consequences?
6. **Implementation:** Based on this analysis, what are the recommendations for the most equitable policy option(s)? Does the policy and any equity-enhancing measures related to this policy have adequate funding? If not, how might this be addressed?
7. **Evaluation and Accountability:** How will success/equity be measured? Who will be better off and how will we know?

These questions can be adapted to Alameda CTC efforts during scoping of analysis, for example, along multimodal corridors and for communities affected by the I-580 corridor strategy.

## EXAMPLE PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The following planning applications illustrate different elements of incorporating equity into analysis:

- Using equity populations for elevating issues and benefits (Link 21)
- Using a series of transportation equity considerations to create actions that reduce particular barriers (US 101 MAP)
- Using equity demographic assessment to prioritize transit service (SFMTA Equity Toolkit application)
- Using income-based analysis to determine impacts of pricing by income (SFCTA congestion pricing)

What follows are brief descriptions of these efforts. More detail is in a separate technical memo that can be shared by request.

### BART LINK 21






BART's Link21 utilizes Priority Populations throughout planning to as a way to place extra weight on benefits and impacts in these areas. Link 21 defines **Priority Populations** as census tracts that are designated as either State of California Priority Populations (as identified through the [CalEnviroScreen 3.0](#)), MTC Communities of Concern (now referred to as Equity Priority Communities), and/or individual county Congestion Management Agencies' Communities of Concern.

### US-101 MOBILITY ACTION PLAN

The US-101 Mobility Action Plan builds on infrastructure projects underway along US-101 between San Francisco to Silicon Valley and identifies “near-term policies, programs, and technological solutions that address unreliable access and mobility challenges on the corridor today”. The MAP utilized the [STEPS equity framework](#), which was developed by the Federal Highway Administration, to develop actions that holistically advance equity areas.

The **STEPS** equity framework categorizes equity barriers to accessing transportation (see Table 6). Users of STEPS analyze through a **Spatial, Temporal, Economic, Physiological, and Social** lens to evaluate whether the strategy reduces or eliminates a barrier, exacerbates or creates a barrier, or could either eliminate or create a barrier, depending on implementation details. Equity actions of US-101 MAP are [here](#).

**Table 6. STEPS Equity Framework**

Transportation Barrier/Benefit	Definition
<b>Spatial</b> 	Spatial factors that compromise daily travel needs (e.g., excessively long distances between destinations, lack of public transit within walking distance).
<b>Temporal</b> 	Travel time barriers that inhibit a user from completing time-sensitive trips, such as arriving to work (e.g., public transit reliability issues, limited operating hours, traffic congestion).
<b>Economic</b> 	Direct costs (e.g., fares, tolls, vehicle ownership costs) and indirect costs (e.g., smartphone, Internet, credit card access) that create economic hardship or preclude users from traveling. Indirect economic effects also include changes in property values, rent, wages, and risk of displacement due to transportation infrastructure projects or parking changes.
<b>Physiological</b> 	Physical and cognitive limitations that make using standard transportation modes difficult or impossible (e.g., infants, older adults, and disabled).
<b>Social</b> 	Social, racial, cultural, safety, and language barriers that inhibit a user's (e.g., women, immigrants, minorities) comfort with using transportation (e.g., neighborhood crime, poorly targeted marketing, lack of multi-language information).

**SFMTA EQUITY TOOLKIT – TRANSIT ASSESSMENT**

The SFMTA's **Equity Toolkit** aims to help the agency improve Muni service for the area's most transit-dependent residents and essential workers. The [SFMTA Equity Toolkit - Transit Assessment](#) evaluates access to jobs in essential industries via transit during the pre-Covid period and present-day for each of the nine equity areas identified in the Muni Service Equity Strategy. The toolkit uses data layered with mapping in order to enable the agency to improve access to jobs and key destinations by identifying and fixing gaps in service.

**SFCTA CONGESTION PRICING STUDY**

The San Francisco County Transportation Authority is studying whether congestion pricing could help alleviate congestion when the economy recovers in downtown San Francisco. Using an income-based analysis, the congestion pricing study found that most of the drivers downtown during peak hours are in households making over \$100,000. This program plans to charge high-income drivers during peak hours a higher fee and provide discounts and exemptions to low-income and disabled drivers.

## EXAMPLES IN PROGRAMS

### OAKDOT PAVEMENT PROGRAM

In OakDOT's three-year, \$100 million paving program, OakDOT prioritized funding for paving both by road condition and by the proportion of residents in a neighborhood who are in underserved communities. These communities were identified by including people of color, low-income households, people with disabilities, households with a severe rent burden, people with limited English proficiency, and youth/seniors.

### SAN JOSE VISION ZERO AND WALK N' ROLL PROGRAMS

San Jose's [Vision Zero](#) program focuses on reducing fatal and severe injury traffic incidents. Equity is one of the program's six main action items, and the city focuses resources on high-KSI (killed and severely injured) corridors and districts. Priority corridors would also overlap with communities of concern. The city targets safety improvements, programs, and messaging at the communities and locations that need it most, not just those with the most requests. The city also has publicly available and user-friendly dashboards that allow residents to easily engage with data that could facilitate effective engagement.

The city also has a [Walk N' Roll](#) program that is designed to encourage more students to walk and bike to school. The city incorporates equity in the administration of the program by proactively incorporating schools from disadvantaged communities with safety concerns by gathering info through the Vision Zero program.

### MINNESOTA DOT SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) [Student Transportation Equity for Priority Populations](#) (STEPP) tool was developed to support equitable scoring during the SRTS grant application process. The STEPP tool uses a variety of metrics related to reaching priority populations and allows grant applicants to quickly look up the equity score for schools identified in their application. The MnDOT SRTS Strategic Plan includes strategies to achieve equitable outcomes by developing and distributing tools, resources, and funding that prioritize communities who are more likely to rely on walking or biking for transportation, are more vulnerable to unsafe traffic conditions, or have experienced historic disinvestment.

## EXAMPLES IN FUNDING

### PORTLAND EQUITY SCORING IN FUNDING

The Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) uses a ranking index called an [Equity Matrix](#) to help make decisions on projects and programs. This matrix is used to rank internal lists that relate to projects, programs, and procedures to achieve Citywide Racial Equity Goals and Strategies.

PBOT's Equity Matrix assigns a score (maximum of 10) to every census tract using the demographic variables of race/ethnicity, income, and limited English proficiency. In the matrix census tracts are ranked from 1 to 5 for income level and race composition, then combined for an equity score of a maximum of ten. Census tracts with higher than citywide average populations with LEP are just outlined on the map due to a large margin of error in the data.

### **CITY OF OAKLAND CIP UPDATE**

In 2018, the Oakland City Council adopted a major update to the City's program for funding infrastructure projects by developing a new, inclusive forum for Oakland residents to incorporate their feedback and introduce project ideas to be considered for the CIP selection process. For the first time, community groups were able to submit project ideas for scoring by city staff and receive funding in the city budget. To score all projects suggested for the CIP, a new "**CIP Prioritization Model**," was adopted. Of 100 points, Equity and Health & Safety are the two factors in the prioritization model with the highest weighting; for example, 16 points are awarded to projects that "invest in underserved communities." Equity in project prioritization is also considered by identifying projects that address disparities within the health/safety, existing conditions, economy, environment, improvement, and collaboration factors.

## 6. Implementation Opportunities

The research compiled in this report identifies best practices and protocols for establishing key components of an equity initiative at Alameda CTC. There are four actionable next steps Alameda CTC can take to move this research forward as noted below.

1. **Create a Culture and Engagement Committee.** Alameda CTC created a Culture & Engagement Committee (CEC) which consists of staff volunteers from each department. The role of the CEC is to coordinate staff engagement. The CEC is also committed to being the clearinghouse for on-going equity at the agency. This could include exploring training opportunities, exploring the feasibility of creating a tailored definition for equity at Alameda CTC, and generally supporting on-going knowledge sharing of ideas for implementation across Alameda CTC workstreams. Continued coordination with the CEC on all equity related items is recommended to move this work forward.
2. **Explore Partnerships with Community Based Organizations.** Alameda CTC could continue to explore the feasibility of partnering with CBOs through smaller scale pilots in projects and plans. Currently, Alameda CTC is piloting outreach with CBOs for the San Pablo Corridor project.
3. **Develop and Implement a Racial Equity Action Plan.** Another actionable way of continuing equity work forward is to start with the development of a Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP). REAPs can drive institutional and structural change. Several of the agencies interviewed for this research effort developed their REAPs as a result of the GARE training, while the REAPs provide the framework for an agency's equity initiative. REAPs outline concrete actions that agency leadership and staff can take to advance racial equity in their respective organizations, operations, programs, and policies. The document generally includes actions folded into a three-year plan where progress is both monitored and reported annually.
4. **Develop and Implement an Agency-wide Inclusive Engagement Guide.** Develop and implement an agency engagement guide which could delineate agency-specific equity goals, objectives, and desired outcomes with respect to engagement across projects and plans. This could also include hiring CBOs to advise the agency on outreach efforts, utilizing MTC Planning funds for flexibility. The Engagement Guide could be Alameda CTC's blueprint of how to scope outreach for projects and plans in a way that aligns with equity goals, taking it out of individual projects. And finally, this guide could include key components of how to contract with CBOs that align with our contracting protocols.



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