



## SCAN TEAM REPORT

NCHRP Project 20-68, Scan 22-03

# Leading Practices in Equitable Decision Making to Support Societal Goals within Transportation Agencies

*Supported by the*  
National Cooperative Highway Research Program

The information contained in this report was prepared as part of NCHRP Project 20-68 U.S. Domestic Scan, National Cooperative Highway Research Program.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** This report IS NOT an official publication of the National Cooperative Highway Research Program, Transportation Research Board, or the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

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The purpose of each scan, and of Project 20-68, is to accelerate beneficial innovation by facilitating information sharing and technology exchange among the states and other transportation agencies and identifying actionable items of common interest. Experience has shown that personal contact with new ideas and their applications is a particularly valuable means for such sharing and exchange. A scan entails peer-to-peer discussions between practitioners who have implemented new practices and others who are able to disseminate knowledge of these new practices and their possible benefits to a broad audience of other users. Each scan addresses a single technical topic selected by AASHTO and the NCHRP 20-68 Project Panel. Further information on the NCHRP 20-68 U.S. Domestic Scan program is available at

<https://www.trb.org/NCHRP/USDomesticScanProgram.aspx>

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# Disclaimer

The information in this document was taken directly from the submission of the authors. The opinions and conclusions expressed or implied are those of the scan team and are not necessarily those of the Transportation Research Board or its sponsoring agencies. This report has not been reviewed by and is not a report of the Transportation Research Board or the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.



# Scan 22-03 Leading Practices in Equitable Decision Making to Support Societal Goals within Transportation Agencies

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# Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgments.....</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>List of Figures .....</b>	<b>VIII</b>
<b>Acronyms and Abbreviations.....</b>	<b>IX</b>
<b>Executive Summary.....</b>	<b>ES--1</b>
<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>1-1</b>
1a. Scan Purpose and Scope.....	1-1
1b. Scan Team .....	1-1
1c. Scan and Selection Criteria .....	1-2
1d. Definitions .....	1-2
<b>2. Scan Findings and Highlights .....</b>	<b>2-1</b>
2a. Approaches to Organizational Structure.....	2-1
2b. Approaches to Equity & People .....	2-2
2c. Approaches to Programming.....	2-3
2d. Approaches to Policies .....	2-5
2e. Approaches to Partnerships .....	2-6
2f. Approaches to Performance Measures.....	2-7
<b>3. Recommendations .....</b>	<b>3-1</b>
<b>4. Conclusion.....</b>	<b>4-1</b>
<b>5. Implementation and Dissemination Plan .....</b>	<b>5-1</b>

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**Appendix A: Scan Team Contact Information.....A-1**

**Appendix B: Scan Team Biographical Sketches..... B-1**

**Appendix C: Key Contact Information .....C-1**

**Appendix D: Amplifying Questions ..... D-1**

**Appendix E: Southeastern Transportation Research, Innovation, Development,  
and Education Center (STRIDE) Report ..... E-1**

# List of Figures

Figure 1: WSDOT Diversity Roadmap.....	2-4
Figure 2: Oregon Executive Order 22-15 .....	2-6
Figure 3: MnDOT Safety Dashboard .....	2-8
Figure 4: KDOT Performance Dashboard with Workforce Highlight .....	2-8



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# Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>AASHTO</b>	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
<b>Caltrans</b>	California Department of Transportation
<b>CORE</b>	Caltrans Office of Race and Equity
<b>DBE</b>	Disadvantaged Business Enterprise
<b>DEI</b>	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
<b>DOT</b>	Department of Transportation
<b>EJ</b>	Environmental Justice
<b>GDOT</b>	Georgia Department of Transportation
<b>KDOT</b>	Kansas Department of Transportation
<b>MnDOT</b>	Minnesota Department of Transportation
<b>MPO</b>	Metropolitan Planning Organization
<b>NALB</b>	Native American Liaison Branch
<b>NCHRP</b>	National Cooperative Highway Research Program
<b>NJDOT</b>	New Jersey Department of Transportation
<b>ODOT</b>	Oregon Department of Transportation
<b>SCDOT</b>	South Carolina Department of Transportation
<b>STRIDE</b>	Southeastern Transportation Research, Innovation, Development, and Education Center
<b>USDOT</b>	United States Department of Transportation
<b>WSDOT</b>	Washington State Department of Transportation



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# Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of a domestic scan of equitable decision-making within transportation agencies. The purpose of this scan is to examine noteworthy practices and methods to develop and activate organizational missions centered on advancing safety and equity in transportation. Team members used amplifying questions to explore innovative safety and equity practices, stakeholder engagement, successful implementation of workforce and project equity plans, and specific organizational factors that lead to successful organizational mission implementation of advancing societal goals.

For the first time, USDOT has integrated equity as a central, department-wide strategic goal. This represents a timely shift in the transportation planning industry and the way DOTs view and deliver transportation programs. Definitions of equity in transportation vary across DOTs, illustrating the need for best practices and models for integrating this concept.

Using a domestic scan model, team members conducted a desk scan of Departments of Transportation from across the United States to identify innovative practices in equitable decision-making. Upon review of the desk scan compilation, the scan team invited eight DOTs to participate in a virtual scan meeting and provided a series of amplifying questions to reflect upon prior. See **Appendix A** for team member information and **Appendix D** for amplifying questions.

This report discusses best practices and recommendations in a case study approach to reflect the variety of perspectives and approaches to equity in transportation agencies. Case studies are presented through five overarching approaches identified by the scan team:

1. organizational structure, equity, and people,
2. programming,
3. policies,
4. partnerships, and
5. performance measures.

Recommendations and guiding conclusions are presented as part of the scan findings.



# Introduction

As part of the War Games workshop at the 2021 TRB Annual Meeting, a specific theme emerged on how transportation agencies can revisit their organizational missions to create a safer, more equitable society. The domestic scan program was identified as a program that would provide an excellent opportunity to initiate conversations and sharing on how transportation can support societal needs in safety and equity. Participants would be able to share best practices and leading strategies through conversations and interviews that provide organizational and geographic context that will be more meaningful and valuable than a standard research project or synthesis.

## 1a. Scan Purpose and Scope

This domestic scan will be used to examine noteworthy practices and methods to develop and activate organizational missions centered on advancing safety and equity in transportation. Team members used guiding questions to explore innovative safety and equity practices, stakeholder engagement, successful implementation of workforce and project equity plans, and specific organizational factors that lead to successful organizational mission implementation of advancing societal goals.

The scope of the scan is to focus on the implementation of safety and equity for public transportation agencies at any level. These include (but are not limited to): State DOTs, MPOs, locals, and public transit agencies. To learn best practices from a broader range of agencies for this implementation, the scan will investigate successful practices and methods in addition to transportation agencies across sectors and including private agencies and national committees.

The information that will be gained and shared from this domestic scan will provide information on what data inclusive of socioeconomic and sociodemographic metrics are being used by agencies in transportation funding decisions and project prioritization. The scan will be of interest to transportation agency CEOs and leadership in approaches being taken by high-performing agencies to make strategic decisions that support societal goals. The scan results are likely to be of interest to all AASHTO's committees but particularly to the AASHTO Executive Committee and several committees in the Agency Administration, Program Delivery and Operations, and Enterprise/Cross Discipline areas.

## 1b. Scan Team

The scan team represented various DOTs and subject matter experts from across the country, including the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Indiana Department of Transportation (InDOT), Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), and Fairpointe Planning. Each member brought a diverse array of experiences, knowledge, and expertise in transportation planning, equity and justice, and policy and data analysis. Jeremy Thompson, Safety Engineer at the Highway Safety Program at the Ohio Department of Transportation, chaired the team. The scan team's contact information and biographical sketches can be found in **Appendix A** and **Appendix B**.

## 1c. Scan and Selection Criteria

Utilizing a domestic scan model, team members conducted a desk scan of Departments of Transportation from across the United States to identify innovative practices in equitable decision-making. The desk scan informed team members of policies, programs, and organizations that reflected the continuum of DOT approaches, creating a list of potential host agencies for further study. Upon review of the desk scan compilation, the scan team invited eight DOTs to participate in a virtual scan meeting and provided a series of amplifying questions to reflect upon prior to the interview (**Appendix D**).

The team hosted virtual webinar meetings from May 16–May 31, 2023. Over the course of the first four days, members heard presentations from eight state DOTs and one subject matter expert: South Carolina, California, Georgia, Oregon, Kansas, New Jersey, Minnesota, Washington State, and Dr. Mehri Mohebbi, author of a Southeastern Transportation Research, Innovation, Development, and Education Center (STRIDE) report. Team members had the opportunity to question agency representatives on their equity practices and follow up on items needing clarification. Following the presentations, team members met on the final day to discuss and compile their findings, formulate recommendations, and identify best practices. The team then discussed the dissemination of findings and documentation of report findings. The rest of this report discusses these findings and recommendations in a case study approach to reflect the variety of DOT perspectives and approaches to equity. In **Appendix E**, a detailed analysis of Dr. Mohebbi’s STRIDE report is presented to acknowledge a framework for integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion principles into transportation agencies. The case studies are presented through five overarching approaches identified by the scan team: organizational structure, equity and people; programming; policies; partnerships; and performance measures.

## 1d. Definitions

The definition of equity varies across the available body of literature, but can be defined by Executive Order 13985 as the “consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; 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.”<sup>1</sup> In its most basic definition, equity can refer to fairness, justice, or the equal distribution of resources and costs, including the fairness and appropriateness of the distribution.<sup>2</sup>

Most recently, transportation equity has emerged as a sub-definition of equity for consideration in planning and policy-making decisions. The U.S. Department of Transportation defines equity in transportation as seeking “fairness in mobility and accessibility to meet the needs of all community members.”<sup>3</sup> For the first time, USDOT has integrated equity as a central,

1 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government/>

2 <https://www.vtqi.org/equity.pdf>

3 [https://www.planning.dot.gov/planning/topic\\_transportationequity.aspx#:~:text=Equity%20in%20Transportation%3F,What%20is%20Equity%20in%20Transportation%3F,needs%20of%20all%20community%20members.](https://www.planning.dot.gov/planning/topic_transportationequity.aspx#:~:text=Equity%20in%20Transportation%3F,What%20is%20Equity%20in%20Transportation%3F,needs%20of%20all%20community%20members.)

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department-wide strategic goal. This represents a timely shift in the transportation planning industry and the way DOTs view and deliver transportation programs. However, the literature notes that there are various types of equity and approaches to equity integration in transportation planning, including but not limited to public resource allocation; costs that travel activities impose on others; inclusive transportation services; how transportation systems affect or impact lower-income individuals, and social justice impacts. The definition of equity within transportation planning looks different to every DOT, illustrating the need for further research on the subject. The following scan findings highlight the need to consider various perspectives, potential impacts, and methods of analysis to avoid perpetrating further harm to underserved, overburdened, and disadvantaged communities.





# Scan Findings and Highlights

## 2a. Approaches to Organizational Structure

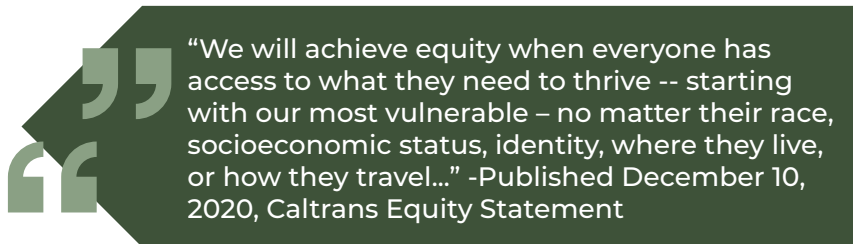
Across DOTs, equity may be present in the structure of the organization via dedicated branches, officials, or guiding language for the organization. As the scan was conducted, it was evident that many DOTs demonstrated a commitment to equity by creating a branch or committee whose sole purpose was to advance initiatives centered around this concept. These structures varied in size, staffing, and funding but were created with the same goal in mind.

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has centered various offices around enhancing equitable transportation.

Equity is integrated into their structure via two branches; the

Native American Liaison Branch (NALB) and Office of Race & Equity

(CORE) both create points of contact for engaging the community and individually work to coordinate and execute equity objectives. Launched in 2020, CORE exists to advance racial equity through departmental programs, policies, and internal and external operations. This equity-focused branch provides leadership, guidance, training, and support to all Caltrans divisions, districts, and programs to improve diversity and equity in the workforce. NALB was created as a branch of CORE to improve government-to-government relationships between Tribal Governments and Caltrans, as staff serve in a liaison capacity for the 109 federally-recognized Tribes in California, key stakeholders, and local and regional transportation agencies.



Similarly, *MnDOT* has created a dedicated Office of Equity and Diversity that offers internal organizational development, training, and programming. The office first created a Diversity Council back in 2013, now known as the Executive Inclusion Council, to operate as a decision-making body of senior leadership centered around diversity and inclusion. This structure has allowed the DOT to strategically advance their diversity and inclusion plan while managing staff accountability around diversity and inclusion efforts. With six diversity and inclusion committees and 11 teams throughout the agency, MnDOT has created an organizational structure entrenched with staff members dedicated to advancing diversity and inclusion efforts.

Some DOTs take differing approaches and work towards standardizing their organizational values prior to structural advancement. Within the scan, the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) emphasized the importance of a standard definition of equity, to ensure highway safety investment is inclusive of traditionally underserved populations and considered more deliberately, that is used organization wide. The New Jersey Strategic Highway Safety Plan has incorporated equity

as the fifth “E” to complement the traditional four traffic safety pillars. This designation means all partners in this area are equally important to partners from the education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency medical “E” disciplines. These efforts ensure equity is consistently applied across the DOT, from environmental justice programming to the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and NJ Infrastructure Bank grant recipient selection criteria. NJDOT works in collaboration with its three regional MPOs to more effectively ensure standards of equity meet both federal and state requirements for grant funding distribution.

These approaches reflect the spectrum of organization-wide realignment and consistency in staffing, both ensuring that equity is effectively present in a DOT structure. For some DOTs, the first approach needs to be training of current staff on what equity means to the organization, whereas others may be ready to create formal extensions of the current structure to conduct equity integration.

## 2b. Approaches to Equity & People

Across the scan, DOTs emphasized the importance of centering people in the equity conversation. Whether this included intentional public engagement efforts, education and outreach, or a reevaluation of internal staffing and past planning decisions, people, and specifically disadvantaged communities, were made central to agency discussions on equity.

With people as their central focus, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) has cultivated positive and inclusive relationships both internally and externally through exceptional outreach, customer service, and program compliance. Equity is the decision-making factor for Oregon transportation and contract decisions, with people from all backgrounds working together to solve state and federal transportation goals. The Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program, for example, works to enhance relationships between transit providers and DBE-certified firms. ODOT’s Office of Equity and Civil Rights uses its dedicated funding to support DBE through small business management courses, partnerships, outreach and networking, and a mentoring program. This initiative is given the same priority as other obligations for compliance efforts as required under USDOT agreements. Across these efforts, public engagement was crucial to equitable decision-making and determining barriers to entry in participation in DOT programs. Engagement was described as the building of a lasting relationship as opposed to a traditional meeting structure; this centers people as the focus of equity programming and policymaking. Through efforts like the DBE Program, Intermodal Civil Rights Program, Workforce and On-The-Job training and apprenticeship programs, and Emerging Small Businesses, Oregon has established extensive efforts to build positive and inclusive relationships with their constituents and external partners.



ODOT DBE Annual Goal = 23.43%  
17.33% race conscious and 6.10%  
race neutral

Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) serves as an example of a DOT working towards including equity in future projects by prioritizing Equity Priority Community members in the planning process. For their Managed Lanes System Plan, GDOT conducted a Social Equity and Environmental

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Effect Evaluation in 2010 that continues to guide planning decisions. Now that a decade has passed, current planners implementing managed lane projects are reassessing and evaluating equity criteria with an evolving equity framework to guide future project decisions. In the case of some DOTs, reconsidering how equity is integrated into public engagement is a critical step for acknowledging past harm in the planning process and the best way to move forward with people at the center of transportation decisions.

The presented findings bring equity to the forefront of DOT agencies, centering it within current and future engagement and practices. Regardless of location, DOTs consistently define equity as central to their approaches to public engagement and planning decisions, recognizing how the two are intrinsic to each other.

## **2c. Approaches to Programming**

DOT programming is dependent upon external factors and funding that control the trajectory of the agency. In this scan, it was consistently mentioned that the caliber at which programming is carried out or developed is linked to budget constraints, state and agency politics, and staffing. However, even with these limitations, the scan findings demonstrated how equity can easily be integrated within program goals, objectives, and priorities.

The Kansas Department of Transportation improved upon its Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programming eligibility under the Transportation Alternatives Program authorized under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act. This program, through available funding, educates children on transportation alternatives, bicycling, and walking safety skills and works to establish safer infrastructure and accessible crosswalks and walkways. The agency has plans to advance programming into even more communities, understand the demographic vulnerabilities of populations reached by SRTS programming and center equity within their program design.

The Environmental Justice (EJ) Program through New Jersey's Department of Transportation (NJDOT) works to develop standardized policies and procedures to ensure environmental justice is effectively and consistently implemented department wide. With areas of impact in civil rights, project management, capital program support, local aid and economic development, and transportation operations, the EJ Program is an interdisciplinary effort to address concerns of low-income and minority populations in transportation planning. In compliance with Environmental Justice Executive Order 12898, NJDOT's EJ programming has designated a Task Force that facilitates all EJ/Title VI efforts across NJDOT external program areas, in addition to collecting census data that impacts EJ communities.

In response to the disparity between federal and state funded service contracts in DEI elements, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) created a Diversity Roadmap that mandates race- and gender-conscious measures in conjunction with a capacity-building mentorship program. This supports small-, minority-, women-, and veteran-owned small businesses in a comparable manner to the state's DBE program. The program, formally known as the mentor-mentee program, works to improve and augment existing mentoring relationships both within and across DOT regions, offices, and disciplines. This program also integrates DEI learning moments, whenever possible, between the mentor and protégé, encouraging exposure to areas that may not be available across the state. Since its launch in 2017, WSDOT has paired over 150 mentors and protégés and continues to grow.

# State Funded Contracts - Diversity Roadmap

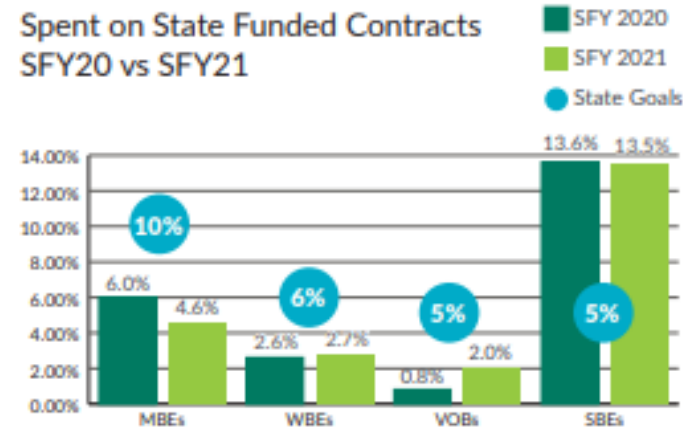
## 2017 Current Voluntary Measures:

- Goals and Contract Language
- Inclusion Plans
- Community Engagement
- Technical Assistance
- Capacity Building Mentorship Program

## Progress is currently defined as:

- New WSDOT subcontracts and subcontractors
- New private sector contracts
- Increased bonding
- Increased gross receipts
- Increased bidding
- Decreased disparity

## Spent on State Funded Contracts SFY20 vs SFY21



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**Title VI Notice to Public:** It is the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) policy to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any of its programs and activities. Any person who believes his/her Title VI protection has been violated, may file a complaint with WSDOT's Office of Equity & Civil Rights. For additional information regarding Title VI complaint procedures and/or information regarding our non-discrimination obligations, please contact the Office of Equity & Civil Rights Title VI Coordinator at (360) 705-7080.

22-04-0096

## MORE INFORMATION

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Figure 1: WSDOT Diversity Roadmap

Approaches to programming tend to be contextual and are highly dependent on the DOT's available funding, staffing, and current programming capacity. As the findings show, DOTs take varied approaches towards integrating and assessing equity within either existing programming or create interdisciplinary task forces to facilitate programming efforts. In the case of WSDOT, staff had to adjust existing program offerings to align with DEI objectives. NJDOT, in response to the state's EJ policy, created a Task Force in addition to their EJ programming that monitors progress, engages the community, and conducts data analysis to further equity efforts.

## 2d. Approaches to Policies

Policy and legislative decisions, both internal and external, tend to drive a significant amount of DOT work around equity. In the scan, many states remarked that policy, including budgetary constraints and language, dictated the trajectory of their equity efforts, either hindering or encouraging the process.

Some states implemented department policies that positioned equity within organization wide approaches to transportation solutions. In South Carolina, the Department of Transportation (SCDOT) has adopted a Complete Streets Policy that promotes a data-driven framework to determine multi-modal accommodations across the state-owned highway transportation network. The policy requires SCDOT to work collaboratively with state regional transportation planning partners to include biking, walking, and transit needs within regional visioning plans. The policy states that Complete Streets projects must be contextually sized, having varied upstream and downstream impacts. "Contextually sized" communicates that projects must adhere to their locations' size, population needs, and priorities. SCDOT acknowledges its capabilities and capacity with multimodal accommodations through Complete Streets and offsets the potential impact of its limitations by conducting statewide communications, training, and support. Equity is intrinsic to the department's public engagement strategies, especially within regional pilot bike-ped programs, per direct requirements from the Complete Streets policy.

In some cases, departments such as Oregon's Department of Transportation (ODOT) are required to integrate DEI values into their procurement processes due to state policy mandates. This is a policy external to the DOT but impacts the actions taken by the organization in response. Executive Order 22-15 requires Oregon's state departments to improve data collection and outreach, provide a Five-Year Action Plan, and conduct Equity Working Groups to enhance equity measures. Within ODOT's DBE branch, dedicated efforts have been made by the DBE Advisory Committee to conduct research and analysis around racial disparities, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) barriers, and DBE barriers as a direct result of the DEI policy.

**1. Statement of Policy:** The executive branch of government of the State of Oregon is committed to taking active steps toward increasing and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) values and outcomes across procurement processes to ensure a level playing field for all businesses, including minority-owned, women-owned, emerging small, and service-disabled veteran-owned businesses, to receive equitable opportunities to compete for, and be awarded, state procurements.

*Figure 2: Oregon Executive Order 22-15*

Policies, differing from programs in that they are regulatory or legislative mandates, are quite common in many DOT approaches to equity integration. Programs are the vehicles by which policies are carried out. Thus, many organizations find themselves with a starting point when presented with a new policy. In the scan findings, it is shown that policy may vary widely in its requirements, regulations, or expectations and are contextually dependent upon the home state of the DOT. In the case of SCDOT, equity was integrated into their Complete Streets policy, effectively mandating collaboration across state departments to achieve the stated equity and multimodal goals. Because of extensive public engagement opportunities, the policy is reflective of a good portion of SCDOT constituents, especially within pilot projects. Within Oregon, government leadership played a major role in determining the extent and criteria for equity across state departments. With equity coming to the forefront of government conversations, it becomes likely that more DOTs will see similar policy decisions in their home state.

## **2e. Approaches to Partnerships**

Partnerships proved to play a critical role in advancing equity measures across the domestic scan findings, whether it be between transportation agencies or between the agency and members of the public. These partnerships displayed the power, and the necessity, that strategic collaboration plays in advancing equity measures.

Caltrans hosts collaborative interagency and external partnerships to enhance their equity efforts. The Native American Advisory Committee was created in 1996 to coordinate the needs of Tribal nations in planning efforts. This committee of elected Tribal leaders works in partnership with the transportation agency to improve government-to-government relations. By offering direct advice from the community, members can contribute to the Tribal government's ability to take advantage of transportation planning decisions. Members are elected to serve in two-year terms, nominated by Tribes and Indian organizations recommended by the NAAC and appointed by the Director, and are advocates for Native Americans across California. As with every collaborative effort, members have identified key barriers, including contracting with tribal governments, funding for tribal transportation, meaningful collaboration on state and regional policy actions, and program monitoring, and are actively working towards alleviating them.

Additionally, within Caltrans, the Race and Equity Branch works to establish communication and build trust with community members, partners, and stakeholders, and identifies and coordinates resources that support the equity work of Caltrans. In response to heightened collaborative efforts, the branch has formulated an interagency partnership titled the Interagency Equity Advisory Committee to elevate marginalized voices in the planning process. The Committee consists of up to 15 members serving two-year staggered terms with representatives from California Transportation Commission, California State Transportation Agency, and Caltrans. As of October 2022, the Committee has conducted Transportation Equity Listening Sessions with the public with the goals of building trust and communication with communities, understanding the impact of transportation planning and policies, identifying opportunities, needs, and challenges, and documenting the findings to support and guide transportation agencies in elevating diverse voices. This collaborative partnership between transportation agencies intends to serve as a guide to other transportation agencies in how to implement equity and justice with an attunement to the needs of transportation planning.

These findings illustrate the diverse approaches to partnerships within just a single organization. Caltrans has created a vast network of partners to advance equity department-wide with committees responsible for managing and evaluating these partnerships. These partnerships not only include agency representatives, executives, and leaders but bridge the gap for community members to engage in meaningful equity work. This collaborative network of voices, both internal and external, extends a seat at the table for marginalized groups and seeks to remediate harm from past transportation planning decisions.

## **2f. Approaches to Performance Measures**

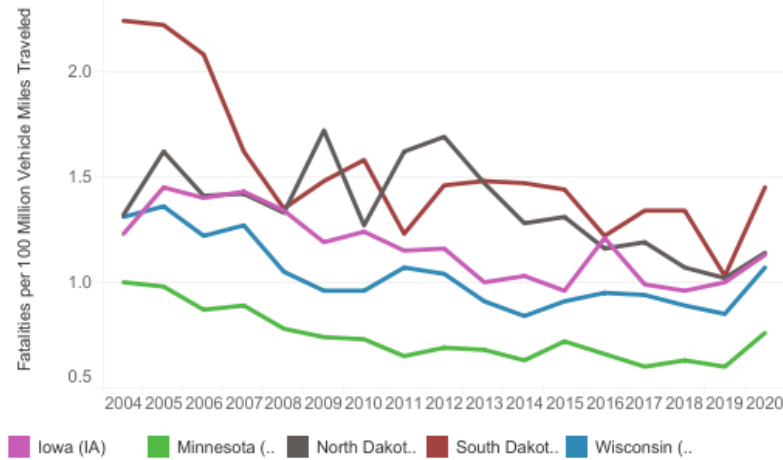
Performance measures refer to the way a specific task, program, system, or component is performed and whether it is performed up to a certain standard. Often, equity is left out of the discussion, as it becomes increasingly difficult to operationalize and quantifiably measure. Scan findings determined that equity and its progress can be measured in terms of multiple variables pertaining to equity, as seen within MnDOT.

As part of their comprehensive Performance Measures Dashboard, MnDOT has created a suite of dashboards that track trends in individual users and the safety of certain communities. These include tracking of ADA compliance, job accessibility by mode of transportation, transit on-time performance, fatalities, and serious injuries. Equity in this sense is measured via access to transit, geographic and demographic descriptions of the fatality and injury network, and job accessibility. These measurables are intrinsic to the equity discussion as all are disproportionately felt by disadvantaged populations and communities. Additional Dashboard topics measured include the environment, customers, aviation, transit, bicycle/pedestrian, freight/rail, bridges, and roads. Some additional equity measures are already under development, including multimodal access and impact, and transportation and housing costs. MnDOT also anticipates developing measures on community and built environment factors that influence ADA accessibility, user experience and local context, zero emissions vehicle access, and inclusion/representation.

Transportation safety is a **top priority** for Minnesota. It includes the **safety of individual users** and the **safety of the communities** connected by the system. Understanding the number, causes, type, and locations of fatal crashes vital in MnDOT's efforts to develop effective countermeasures.

### Fatal Accident Rates of Nearby States

Source: Federal Analysis Reporting System

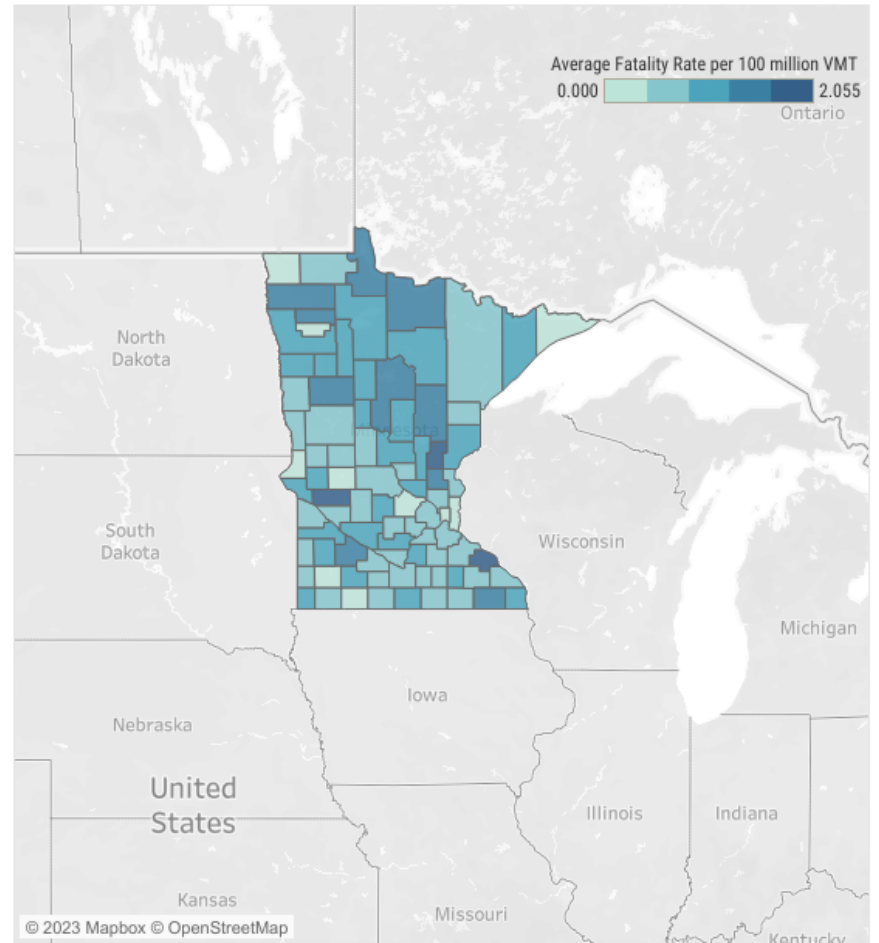


**MINNESOTA HAS THE LOWEST FATALITY RATES COMPARED TO NEARBY STATES**

**RURAL COUNTIES EXPERIENCED HIGHER FATALITY RATES THAN THE METRO AREA**

### Average Fatality Rate per 100 Million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), 2016-2020

Source: MnDOT TDA and MN DPS Crash Facts



**PASSENGER VEHICLES AND LIGHT TRUCKS ARE MOST COMMONLY INVOLVED IN FATAL CRASHES**

### Type of Vehicle Involved in Fatal Crashes, MN

Source: NHTSA

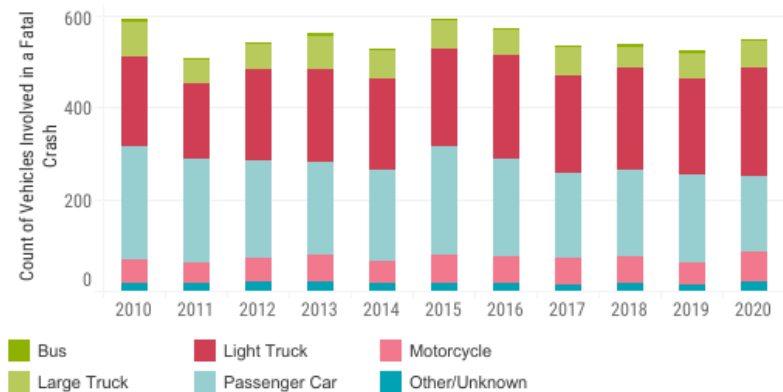


Figure 3: MnDOT Safety Dashboard



While many DOTs in the scan had measures to track equity through dedicated offices, personnel, and committees, few had existing robust performance measures quite like KDOT. The Kansas Department of Transportation's mission statement is to provide a safe, reliable, innovative transportation system that works for all Kansans today and in the future. KDOT prides themselves on transparency and accountability to ensure their plans enhance transportation choice for all populations. With a Pavement Performance Management tool, Performance Dashboard, and an Infrastructure Hub that disseminates information about funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, KDOT creates programs and policies that are easy for the public to keep accountable. Like the aforementioned best practices, improved communication with the public remains a crucial part of the overarching equity conversation. Elements of goals and strategies of the policies are tracked via the Performance Dashboard to promote accountability in department-wide decision-making and reaching of equity goals. With the public holding the DOT accountable, this ongoing review of Performance Dashboard metrics supports the agency's decision-making in safety and security, transportation system management, workforce policy, asset preservation, economic vitality, and proper stewardship of resources.

# Workforce

Get the best from our workforce by attracting and retaining talent, modeling diversity, supporting professional development and inspiring action.

[Click on a task to view metrics.](#)



**KDOT 6-1: Promote a pride in public service through roles that empower staff and work that calls for innovation, flexibility, and stewardship.**

**KDOT 6-2: Build diversity through recruitment and processes that seek, engage and value different opinions.**

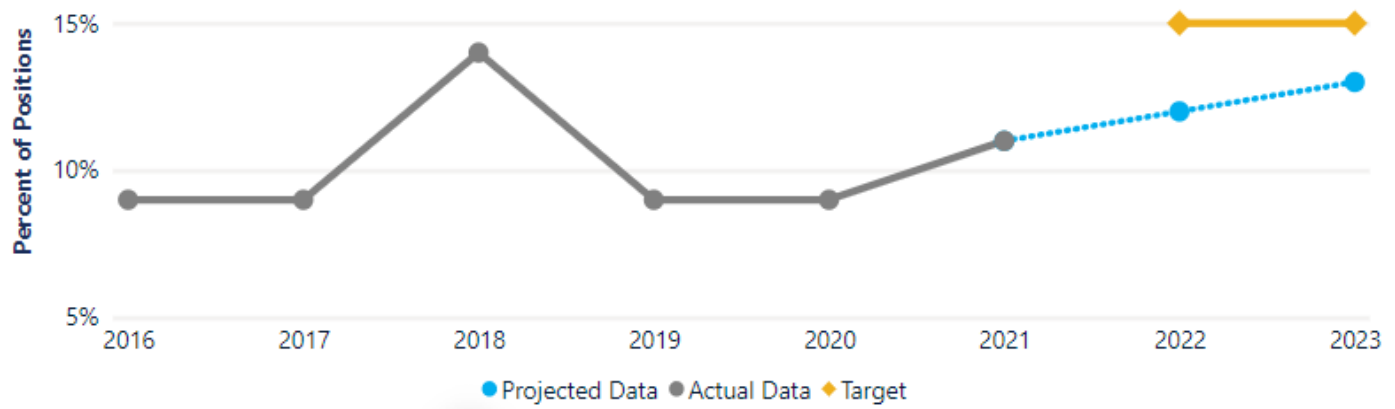
**Percent of Advertised Positions Filled with a Minority**

- Percent of Women in Senior Management
- Percent of Minorities in Senior Management

## Percent of Advertised Positions Filled with a Minority i

Date Updated  
3/31/2022

Desired Trend ↑



**KDOT 6-3: Foster a culture and environment that makes safe decisions the first, best and most rewarding option.**

**KDOT 6-4: Enhance the values and performance of our workforce by contracting diverse and experienced vendors.**

Figure 4: KDOT Performance Dashboard with Workforce Highlight

Across the domestic scan, performance measures were most often presented through performance dashboards and management tools. Equity did not appear to be a specific measurable, but elements of it were present through the tracking of DEI progress and community-specific safety measures. As present at MnDOT, tracking safety-related measures may reduce the number of fatalities or injuries associated with the transportation network and identifies individuals or groups more at risk for serious injuries or fatalities. Historically, these groups tend to be underserved or vulnerable populations that rely on walking, biking, or public transportation, positioning safety within the scope of equity.



# Recommendations

Upon further discussion of the scanned material, the team identified various barriers that prevented agencies from advancing equity in their organization:

First, equity can be interpreted differently between organizations, departments, and individuals. This may translate into inconsistent planning scenarios and duplicate efforts that are incongruous with the mission of advancing equity.

Additionally, extensive conflict exists between federal and state priorities, undermining multimodal and equitable solutions. Without proper communications and persistent planning efforts, these solutions may never come to fruition. As the political climate fluctuates, leadership changes and the culture of an organization evolves, a DOT must grapple with new priorities, funding, and approaches to equity—if any such approaches are considered. This goes hand-in-hand with conflicts between the priorities of state and federal agencies; as leadership within the agency changes, the priority of equity has the potential to advance or fall to the wayside.

Financial structures and funding decisions, by association, also have a major impact on the ability to integrate equity in an organization. Funding decisions determine an agency's ability to create programs, restructure, or hire more staff.

After these barriers were identified, the scan team identified the following themes and best practices to employ equitable decision-making in any transportation agency.

## Recommendations



Identify and create an Equity Communications Plan to broadcast equity goals and transparency



Follow-through with frequent and consistent public engagement



Conduct engagement with outside partners and organizations



Conduct external training in equity practices



Remove the 'right thing to do' from political motivations



Identify redundancies and the overlap of integration of equity in guiding agency plans and policies that support and sustain equity as a priority through shifting political climates



Consider the evaluation of organizational structure for potential realignments to address equity in the organization



Create dashboards to measure progress and accountability



Just do something...start where you are

*Identify and create an Equity Communications Plan:* Creating an official communications plan will assist in the broad dissemination of agency-wide equity goals. Providing such a plan will hold the DOT accountable for reaching set goals and maintain transparency both within the agency and with the public. Agencies with a formal equity plan or statement, such as Caltrans, can communicate with the public that they are an agency committed to advancing equitable societal goals.

*Follow through with frequent and consistent public engagement:* Thorough public engagement, especially with underserved and underrepresented populations, achieves a multitude of equity goals at once. Engagement assures the public that their voices are heard and valued in the planning process and opens the doors for diverse voices to have a seat at the table. Frequent and consistent public engagement extends planning far beyond a single meeting; it fosters a healthy relationship with an agency's constituency that further builds trust and public confidence. Proactive engagement with the public informs DOTs of public values, goals, and needs, and has the potential to distribute positive

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outcomes of planning projects in a more equitable manner. KDOT's consistent engagement allowed the organization to identify who, what, and where was impacted adversely by their transportation system, and further defined equitable transportation through the lens of current and past inequalities identified by the public. This engagement fosters connection, relationships, and ensures accountability throughout transportation decisions.

*Conduct targeted engagement with community-based organizations:* Engagement with outside organizations extends the breadth of knowledge that transportation agencies can use in equity planning. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, external agencies; community organizations; elected officials; and other planning groups. Any outside engagement with community organizations allows the opportunity with closer-knit ties to the public, and elected officials may be able to extend their influence into their constituencies where DOTs may not have access. Garnering extensive knowledge about the community and other external agencies fundamentally increases the chances of achieving equity goals, admitting that a single agency may not possess all the answers alone. External collaboration, in the case of Caltrans, has only proved to be beneficial for building relationships, increasing trust, and extending their knowledge network.

*Conduct employee training in equity practices:* Prior to the integration of equity into a transportation agency, it is essential for employees to understand what equity is and what it means to the organization. External trainings are necessary to build a foundation for future planning decisions and allow an outside voice to come in and support the organization in their understanding of equity. Employees must be fully conscious of how their role is intrinsic to the agency-wide mission of advancing equity goals; sometimes, an agency must recognize they do not have all the answers and must call in an outside voice to offer their expertise on the matter. Dr. Mohebbi's model in **Appendix E** offers keen insight on how to get started with this training.

*Remove "the right thing to do" from political motivations:* In today's fluctuating political climate, different values and motivations get in the way of transportation planning decisions, let alone advancing equity goals. Though an agency can recognize that equity is the right thing to do, barriers persist as employees grapple with their own understanding and bias of what equity and inclusion mean. Just because an agency may decide that equity is a priority, this does not mean that every single employee will agree. Political motivations will continue to get in the way of equity goals, but by removing the phrase "the right thing to do" from the equity conversation, agencies can meet more people where they are and work with their employees to develop internal goals, bias trainings, and ensure definitions are consistent and standardized across staff. A more viable approach to pursuing agency-wide equity conversations may be grounding conversations in the purpose of the transportation network, providing and enabling all people to access places and opportunities comfortably, safely, and conveniently. This approach also includes recognizing how both current and past policies or planning decisions have played a role in both introducing and perpetuating harm and inequities.

*Identify redundancies and overlap in integration of equity:* Transportation agencies operate most frequently in a silo, with each sector or office working to advance their own goals, plans, or budgets. Individual plans may contain their own equity statements or objectives, often overlapping with other plans and their similar objectives. Additionally, transportation agencies create an individual

office dedicated to advancing equity initiatives, such as an office for diversity, equity, and inclusion. However, one office cannot be the singular driver towards equity; it is important to identify an overlap and coordinate ways in which offices can support one another in achieving these goals, especially when such collaboration can be grounded in the shifting of agency leadership and political ties. As politicians' priorities change and as funding or objectives for the agency fluctuate, it is of utmost importance that a DOT is interconnected and allied agency-wide in accomplishing equity goals. Several DOTs emphasized that their successful initiatives have been highly dependent upon interagency partnerships and collaborative efforts between departments to ensure that equity is at the forefront of their mission. Each agency has a different objective and operation, but all share a common thread of advancing equity goals in everything they do.

*Consider the evaluation of organizational structure for potential realignments:* Prior to the adoption of any equity-centered goals, a DOT must look inward to evaluate its mission, vision, and values, and analyze its current and potential for realignment. Though an entire organizational realignment is often unnecessary, an internal reevaluation of agency priorities—and maintaining that equity is one of them—it is the first step in ensuring equity is the basis for all future planning decisions. For example, funding and financial contribution to equity goals will always be an issue for transportation agencies, but the priorities of that agency have the capacity to influence how this money is spent and to where it is contributed. Clarification is needed to determine an agency's "why;" that is, what drives the agency towards advancement and what guides the agency in carrying out its daily activities. Consider evaluating the priorities of department leadership, and conduct internal training on equity, bias, and values. As discussed in Dr. Mohebbi's research, DEI principles are first reflected in agency leadership and are the face of the agency's priorities or dedication to equity. Shift the organizational structure as needed to reflect the organization's dedication to advancing equity goals.

*Create tracking systems to measure progress and maintain accountability:* The DOTs with increased public trust were revealed to be those with comprehensive performance dashboards designed to track progress in advancing organization plans and contained an element of tracking progress towards equity goals. Both KDOT and MnDOT tracked safety and evaluated for whom their transportation system was built and operated. This transparency identifies the risks faced by vulnerable and underserved populations and allows the agencies to make changes when their current systems are not working towards equitable outcomes. By using accurate data, the performance dashboard can serve as a tool to identify and describe who specifically the transportation system serves and create key indicators for tracking equity goals. Additionally, such a dashboard improves transportation access for those wishing to live a healthy and fulfilling life, making the transportation system more reliable and integrated into the needs of the wider population. It begins to create a safer system that serves everyone.

*Just do something...start where you are:* Many DOTs struggle to figure out where to begin in advancing societal goals and often freeze as other priorities take their place. Whether this looks like assembling an equity council, defining equity for the agency, or reevaluating how past planning decisions have harmed disadvantaged populations, every agency has their beginnings and must start somewhere that is attainable for them. A pilot program, low-risk opportunity, or setting some kind of baseline statement provides starting points for agencies looking to begin.



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Starting where you are also pertains to conducting data analysis to identify and prioritize transportation investments centered around equity. Some DOTs struggle to develop equitable initiatives because they do not have the “the right” data for analysis. In any case, it is most important to start somewhere, no matter how small and using the data that is currently accessible.



# Conclusion

Finally, the scan team developed the following guiding principles as more DOTs seek measures for equity advancement and begin to implement equity practices into their organization. These serve as practical steps and a call to action as equity becomes intrinsic to the future of transportation planning.

## Guiding Conclusions



Identify organizational structure and champions



Engage internal and external partners to address non-traditional issues



Address and measure equity across all divisions and modes using available data



Refine education, involvement, and training outputs for meaningful outcomes

*Identify organizational structure and champions:* Within your own agency, identify individuals and leadership that are already doing the work or are interested in advancing equity. These individuals can serve as champions of equity measures, advocate for more equitable decision-making, and bring external voices into the conversation. Once these champions are identified, join them.

*Engage internal and external partners to address non-traditional issues:* No one agency has a one-size-fits-all approach to advancing equity goals. Evaluate your current context, availability, and capacity, then engage with internal and external stakeholders to assist with your established goals. Across the domestic scan, collaboration was crucial to the longevity and sustainability of equitable decisions, and many could not have happened without the creation of various partnerships. Equity, in addition, is people-centric, meaning advancing it is highly contingent on the context of an agency and people engaged within the planning process. Agencies are likely to face a variety of barriers to advancing equity measures, whether it be their own political climate, funding, or differing priorities. However,

a successful partnership may be able to look at a certain situation in a different way, offer insight, or serve as a sounding board for working through these barriers.

*Address and measure equity across all divisions and modes using available data:* Organizations cannot wait for new technological advancements or data tools to analyze their current trends. In doing so, this only puts off advancing equity and stamps a timeline of infeasibility on the equity discussion. DOTs have data at their fingertips that can indicate discrepancies and shortcomings in populations served by transportation initiatives or programs. Begin by analyzing current data indicators, such as safety-related measures, to track community-specific demographic trends and compare this to past planning decisions or programming. This may indicate areas of growth and opportunities for equity advancement outside of needing new data measurements and technology.

*Refine education, involvement, and training outputs for meaningful outcomes:* Begin by identifying objectives for training and education initiatives within your agency. By creating an end goal, it will be much easier to adjust if needed in the moment to reflect equity objectives. Define the organization's trajectory, and refine the time, programming, and effort to reflect these priorities. Streamlining the resources, time, and energy needed to achieve the most fruitful and meaningful long-term outcome.



# Implementation and Dissemination Plan

This section presents strategies and supporting actions for disseminating the outcomes of this scan. The scan team will identify strategies and actions for implementing recommendations and disseminating results of the scan. Potential categories of dissemination actions and examples of dissemination activities are listed below.

Audience - Organization	Date/ Location	Description/Notes	Lead Team Member
<b>COMPLETED ACTIVITIES</b>			
Ohio Association of Regional Councils (OARC) Transportation Safety Subcommittee Quarterly Meeting'	December 5, 2023 Virtual	Jeremy made a scan announcement to 35-40 attendees.	Jeremy Thompson
AASHTO DEI Task Force quarterly meeting	November 8, 2023	Liz presented on the scan to ? attendees.	Liz Williams
TN Planning Association meeting	October 26, 2023 Memphis, TN	Presentation to ? attendees.	Tanisha Hall
AASHTO Summit on Safety	October 17-19, 2023 Kansas City, KS	Scan announcement to ? attendees.	Jeremy Thompson
<b>FUTURE ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>Meetings – Local/State/Regional Level</b>			
MDOT Exec Leadership	August 2023 meeting		Amy Matisoff
ODOT Equity Task Force		Jeremy will try to start an Equity Task Force at ODOT in 2024. (Liz would like to do that at MassDOT and wants to learn from Jeremy's experience.)	Jeremy Thompson
<b>National/International Level</b>			
TRB Annual Meeting	January 2024, exact date TBD	Tanisha may present a brief summary of the scan at the Special Committee on DEI meeting.	Tanisha Hall
MAASTO Annual Meeting	August 2024	Not likely that Jeremy will be able to get on the agenda. Normally, only ODOT's administration staff attend normally.	Mackenzie Turner Bargaen Jeremy Thompson

Audience - Organization	Date/ Location	Description/Notes	Lead Team Member
TRB DEI Committee meeting	Virtual	The committee meets quarterly. She mentioned the scan at virtual meeting to 10 attendees.	Tanisha Hall
TRB Conference on Advancing Transportation Equity	July 15-18, 2024 Baltimore, MD	Liz may try to put together a panel of NCHRP studies (equity-orientated) at the conference. Liz would moderate.	Liz Williams
Assoc for Computer Transportation	August 2024 Denver, CO	Trying to increase their equity initiatives. Will submit a proposal to get on the agenda.	Tanisha Hall
AASHTO Equity Taskforce (They do have an annual meeting in-person. See if any other scan members attending that in 2024.)	November 8, 2024 Virtual	Will try to get on the agenda for the November call.	Liz Williams
<u>Council of Minority Transportation Officials</u>	July 9-12, 2024 Houston	Tanisha might attend and will submit a presentation proposal.	Tanisha Hall
World Road User Congress	2024?	Gloria Jeff (MN DOT) will be putting together an equity panel for the 2023 congress. Will there be another panel for 2024?	
Mini-Conferences			
<b>Potential Dissemination/Implementation Activities/Venues</b>			
<b>Webinars/Podcasts</b>			
Talking Headways		Jeff Woods – host. Streets Blog collaboration	Liz Williams suggested.
Arrested Mobility		Singular issue focused on trans equity. Charles Brown at Rutgers.	Liz Williams suggested.
AASHTO webinar			
TRB podcast			
<b>Training</b>			
<b>Research/Standards Development</b>			
<b>Articles/Journals</b>			
TR News		TR News – Tanisha has some ins and can reach out to them.	Tanisha Hall
<b>Workshops/Peer Exchanges</b>			

Audience - Organization	Date/ Location	Description/Notes	Lead Team Member
<b>Future Scan</b>			
<b>Other</b>			
MN – Internal work on Justice 40		USDOT/Federal government initiative – 40% of benefit of investment goes to disadvantaged communities. How can the scan tie into that. Get clarity from FHWA on this.	Mackenzie Turner Bargan





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# Appendix A

## Scan Team

### Contact Information

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# Appendix B: Scan Team Biographical Sketches

**Jeremy Thompson** (Team chair) has worked for the Ohio DOT for 6 years after obtaining his B.S. in Civil Engineering at The Ohio State University. His most recent four years at ODOT have been spent with the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). Within the HSIP group, his primary responsibilities include managing the Systemic and Local Safety Assistance Programs and reviewing HSIP projects and how they are prioritized. Recent efforts have led to incorporating socioeconomic and sociodemographic data into the decision-making and project prioritization process for Ohio's HSIP. He is a licensed Professional Engineer.

**Liz Williams** is the Director of Data and Policy in the Office of Transportation Planning at the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). In her current role, she is active in identifying opportunities to incorporate transportation equity and mobility justice in standard operating planning processes. She has over fifteen years' experience as a social scientist and policy coordinator and before coming to MassDOT in 2018, held positions with the MBTA, the UMass Donahue Institute, and the Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy. Liz is an urban sociologist with a Bachelor's degree from Clark University, a Master's degree from George Washington University, and a PhD from Northeastern University.

**John Martin** serves as the M2D2/CS/CSS Coordinator in Bureau of Development at Michigan Department of Transportation. He has a bachelor degree in Landscape Architecture and a master degree in Urban Planning from Michigan State University.

**Amy Matisoff** serves as the Strategic Alignment, Outreach Specialist & Tribal Liaison in the Executive Office of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). In her role, she plans and directs several specialized areas to align with the department's mission and strategic direction, assisting MDOT executive administration in developing and implementing highly complex and diverse approaches to changing rules, regulations, and procedures to meet the requirements of law or policy at a Federal, State and Local level. Amy works to advance collaborative initiatives between MDOT and other public and private organizations that have a substantial, direct impact on the department's goals by creating stronger connections, policies, programs, and training in the areas of mobility, equity, tribal sovereignty, tourism, and regional economic development. Previously, Amy was a grant coordinator for MDOT Office of Economic Development, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and North Carolina State Parks, focusing on helping local agencies acquire appropriate project funding to meet the needs of individual communities. She has a degree in Landscape Architecture from Michigan State University and is a proud advocate for mobility and people focused transportation networks.

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**Lyndsay Quist** currently serve as Deputy Commissioner for Capital Program Management for the Indiana Department of Transportation. In her area of responsibility for the agency is Planning, Environmental, Asset Management, Engineering, Multi-Modal and Capital Program Management the subject matter of the scan is work that can be incorporated into processes and procedures to impact the quality of life in our state. Her background is in Capital Program Management and she has also participated in NCHRP 20-05/Topic 53-01: DOT Practices to Promote Equity in Transportation Funding. Lyndsay is a professional engineer with a bachelors in civil engineering from Purdue University.

**Mackenzie Turner Borgen** currently serves as interim Director of Statewide Planning for the Minnesota Department of Transportation. In this role, she has the privilege of leading a team of talented transportation planning professionals who direct the policy planning, investment planning, and corridor planning units. Statewide Planning's responsibilities include developing and guiding the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan (SMTP), Advancing Transportation Equity, regional planning and grant coordination, the Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan (MnSHIP), 10-year Capital Highway Investment Plan (CHIP), Transportation Asset Management Plan (TAMP), and establishing statewide corridor planning prioritization and guidebook processes. Prior to Statewide Planning, Mackenzie was MnDOT's Metro District Multimodal Planning Director, where she worked to operationalize MnDOT's statewide policies, modal plans, Complete Streets approach, ADA Transition Plan through partnership with the MPO and local partner agencies and program prioritization, in support of safe and equitable transportation options for all users. Mackenzie is a proud University of Minnesota alumni where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Geography, and returned some years later and earned her Master of Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs.

**Tanisha J. Hall** (Subject Matter Expert), AICP, TDM-CP is the Founding Principal and CEO of Fairpointe Planning, a woman-owned, DBE-certified transportation planning firm based in Nashville, Tennessee. Tanisha has over 25 years of experience in transportation planning. She is a recognized industry leader known for her dynamic leadership and innovative strategic planning skills, prioritizing people and engaging diverse stakeholders early in the planning process. Tanisha's expertise in transportation planning is a culmination of her educational experience at the University of Iowa's Urban and Regional Planning program and her extensive work in the public and private sectors throughout her career. She gained invaluable knowledge and leadership opportunities as the Director of the Tennessee Department of Transportation's Long Range Planning Division leading critical initiatives that improved the state's transportation infrastructure.



**Kristen Jud** (SME Assistant) is a Transportation Planner at Fairpointe Planning, LLC, a woman-owned, DBE-certified transportation planning firm based in Nashville, Tennessee. As a transportation planner, Kristen is responsible for managing research projects, conducting plan analysis, and community engagement efforts for various clientele. She has served in a variety of roles in the past that centralized her focus on equity and social justice issues, including public and non-profit sector experiences in sustainability and public policy. Following a year of service with the federal AmeriCorps VISTA program, she was hired at Fairpointe to develop and cultivate transportation and mobility planning solutions. She holds a B.A. in Social Justice and Public Policy and an M.A. in Public Administration, with her thesis focused on the relationship between green development and planning, displacement, and the potential for community engagement to combat it.



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# Appendix C

## Key Contact Information

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# Appendix D

## Amplifying Questions

Tell us about your organization:

Statistics on Jurisdiction

Agency size and organization

Applicable Legislation, Rules, Standards, Policies, and Mandates

Number of MPOs, RPOs, and Transit Agencies (urban/rural)

Scope of your transportation network

Responsible for building state highways only or state and local roads?

What kinds of infrastructure do you operate and maintain (different modes)?

Is your transportation network primarily urban or rural?

How do you balance needs and approaches between urban and rural areas?

Describe your equitable decision-making process

Describe your process for project prioritization

What are your organization's vision, mission, and core values?

When were these elements last updated?

Do you have plans to refresh in the future? If so, why?

Do you have a current strategic plan?

What are the stated goals/objectives/priorities for your organization?

What are your performance indicators?

When will you next update your strategic plan?

Do you have elements that you want to include in future strategic planning?

Do you have transportation long-range policy plans?

What are the stated goals/objectives/priorities included in that plan?

What are your performance indicators?

When will you complete the next update?

Do you have elements that you want to include in future plans?

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Do you have specific plans related to societal goals (i.e., Equity Action Plans, DEI Plans, Climate Action Plans, ADA Transition Plans)?

Are these plans required at the federal, state, or agency level?

Why were these plans created?

What are the goals, priorities, and performance measures?

Do you have internal committees (steering teams, advisory councils, etc.) focused on advancing societal goals?

What are the committees, and what are their roles?

Who is involved in the committees?

What kind of authority do they have within your organization?

Do you have positions dedicated to researching, designing, and implementing activities related to these societal goals?

Examples: These could be leadership positions (i.e., Chief Culture Officer), managerial positions (Director of Sustainability and Public Health) or staff positions (Transportation Equity Fellow).

Does your organization have staff training resources to advance equity and safety? Are there any in development?

If equity and safety training programs are in place, is there a requirement for refresher courses?

Can certifications be earned?

What does your organization do to advance equity and safety initiatives?

What measures are you using and developing to measure safety and equity in your organization?

Do you have examples of performance measures?

What happens if the goals are not met?

How does your organization incorporate considerations of societal goals into your policies or procedures?

Have you developed criteria or assessment tools?

Do you have internal review processes?

Have you seen any challenges or barriers to changing your policies and procedures accordingly?

Have you seen any successes or positive impacts from incorporating these considerations into your policies and procedures?

How does your organization incorporate considerations of societal goals into your procurement or contracting?

Do you have contracting or procurement goals or targets?

Do you have innovative contracting or procurement processes?

How is your organization responding to requirements and opportunities related to the federal Justice40 initiative?

How are you interpreting this guidance in your current processes and procedures?

How are you conducting public engagement and outreach differently?

Are you identifying new funding opportunities?

### **Additional Information**

What barriers has your organization faced when addressing transportation and societal goals?

Possible Successful Examples/Case studies

Lessons Learned

Mohebbi, M., Sisiopiku, V., Michalaka, D. & Brown, K. (2023). A Framework to Promote Diversity &



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# **Appendix E: Southeastern Transportation Research, Innovation, Development, and Education Center (STRIDE) Report**

Mohebbi, M., Sisiopiku, V., Michalaka, D. & Brown, K. (2023). A Framework to Promote Diversity & Inclusion in Workforce Development in the Southeast States, USDOT Southeastern Transportation Research, Innovation, Development and Education Center (STRIDE), D.C.

Dr. Mohebbi, Principal Investigator and the author of a STRIDE report entitled: *A Framework to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in Workforce Development in the Southeast States*, presented to the scan team on the final day. Separate from the statewide domestic scan, the presented framework proposes a model for transportation agencies to integrate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion into the workplace and identified the role professional agencies have in promoting diversity and inclusion within the workforce. The scan team noted that Dr. Mohebbi’s work was intrinsic to the scan discussion and thought it was wise to integrate their findings in this domestic scan.

Notable state DOT practices identified within Dr. Mohebbi’s work include leading examples from KDOT in attracting women to their workforce and North Carolina DOT and Michigan DOT in attracting racial/ethnic minorities. These initiatives contributed to hiring gains and retaining a more diverse employee pool while simultaneously increasing community engagement with the transportation industry.

The team developed the following workforce development framework following an extensive methodology:

- Promote employee engagement in diversity planning
  - Evaluation-based time dedication to diversity planning efforts
  - Tools for constant communication with employee groups
  - Transparent communication on existing internal opportunities
- Prioritize investments in areas lacking diversity
  - Career mobility opportunities
  - Time dedication and funding for internal/external training
  - Opportunities for engagement in professional organizations
- Provide non-monetary incentives and benefits
  - Dignity-infused engagement plan
  - Flexibility and case-by-case accommodation
  - Transparent structural shift and policy revisions

Dr. Mohebbi’s research highlights the pronounced need for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace, especially among higher levels of decision-making and executive leadership. The research notes that any advancement will be contextually dependent upon the type of transportation agency service and geographical location, critically impacting an agency’s ability to attract and retain a diverse workforce. Many agencies in the Southeast region are in the early stages of diversity and inclusion practices, ultimately positioning them within the early stages of their equity goals. This



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does not, however, undermine the ability of an agency to carry momentum for equity advancement by revisiting or initiating their own efforts with the presented framework. In a concluding statement, Dr. Mohebbi acknowledged state DOT's ability to learn from their neighboring states, with a prime opportunity to visit and build a strong relationship with their peers to collectively solve similar workforce issues in the region.

