U.S. Department of Transportation

Equity Action Plan 2023 Update

September 2023

A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

Access to transportation is a basic necessity that all Americans need in order to thrive. But transportation—and the economic opportunities that come with both building and using America's transportation systems—has not been equitably available to all in this country. Our Department is mindful of the importance of fair access to transportation, a powerful force for opportunity as Americans of all backgrounds in all kinds of communities seek safe and affordable means to get to work, school, and everywhere else we need to be. **Ensuring equity and accessibility for every member of the traveling public is one of the Department of Transportation's highest priorities.**

We acknowledge that some past federal transportation investments have failed to address transportation-related disparities, or even made them worse. Here is just one example: the Hamlin Park neighborhood in Buffalo, New York, was once a vibrant, diverse, and prosperous area complete with tree-lined streets and public park space. That changed with the construction of the Kensington Expressway in the 1960s. The highway sliced the neighborhood in two, razed hundreds of homes, and forced local businesses to shutter.

The Kensington Expressway is one example of how some past infrastructure investments served to divide rather than connect or create shared prosperity—and how the effects of that infrastructure still harm communities today, contributing to cumulative burdens and disparities in economic opportunity, health impacts of pollution, roadway fatalities, access to reliable transportation, the jobs and contracts from transportation work itself, and more. In other cases, we see inequities in our failures to invest, as with transit deserts that leave out the communities that most need affordable transportation options, or contracting opportunities for transportation projects that fail to engage and utilize the talents of women and people of color.

The generations of Americans making transportation decisions today are not responsible for the origins of these problems—but all of us are responsible for what we do, today, to repair it. And that's exactly what we're doing—addressing the key transportation-related disparities facing our nation.

In March, the U.S. Department of Transportation announced a $55 million grant to help Buffalo cap the Kensington Expressway—effectively moving it underground—and build new crossings and park space on top of it, making it safer, reducing pollution, and reconnecting residents to grocery stores, schools, and jobs. That was one of 45 projects we awarded through the Reconnecting Communities program, the first-ever federal program dedicated to this work. Across the country, we're expanding rail and bus lines to reach more people. And we launched the new Thriving Communities Program, providing tailored technical assistance to 64 under-resourced and disadvantaged communities, helping them better access historic infrastructure investments and deliver transformative projects.

We are also addressing racial disparities in roadway deaths. I met a woman who told me the heartbreaking story of how she lost her niece and her niece's three children in a terrible crash on Roosevelt Boulevard in Philadelphia. That one road is responsible for almost 15% of crash-related fatalities in the city. We awarded $78 million to rebuild Roosevelt Boulevard, improving safety for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists alike. And this is one of hundreds of projects we're advancing that will reduce crashes on our roads in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

The building of all this infrastructure creates good paying jobs and contracts, and spurs additional private sector investment, all of which can build generational wealth for Americans with and without college degrees. We have met skilled transportation workers across the country, some of whom were previously working at much lower wages, now able to buy a home in the neighborhoods they grew up in, and able to greet their kids with pride when they come back from work every day. We have a range of efforts underway ensuring that people and businesses that have not been fully included in past federal infrastructure investments have a fair chance to help us deliver this one.

All of these efforts stem from President Biden, who committed the full force of the federal government to advance equity and opportunity when he signed Executive Order 13985 on his first day in office. DOT is acting across our department, and with partners across every level of government on issues from land use to environmental justice, to deliver on that directive.

In the 2023 update to the Equity Action Plan, you will find additional detail on the ways in which we are making good strides, as well as our roadmap to continue advancing transportation equity. The road to a truly equitable transportation system is long but we are on our way and moving in the right direction. We embrace the role of stakeholders and the public at large in holding us accountable for progress and invite all to join us as we work to deliver on this vision.

Secretary Pete Buttigieg

Advancing Equity Through the DOT Mission

Smart and inclusive transportation investments transform economies, connect people to opportunities and each other, and empower communities to build generational wealth for the future. The current transportation system distributes benefits and burdens that vary greatly by location due to historical and systemic patterns of disparity.

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT or Department) is working to ensure that all communities receive the benefits that transportation brings and are not left out or made to shoulder disproportionate burdens caused by transportation infrastructure.

By making equity a priority and supporting that priority with the historic funding provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), DOT is working to make a system that meets the Department's mission to deliver the world's leading transportation system, serving the American people and economy through the safe, efficient, sustainable, and equitable movement of people and goods.

THE BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW (BIL) AND INFLATION REDUCTION ACT (IRA)

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) provide historic opportunities to advance equity through DOT programs. BIL authorized a total of up to $660.8 billion for DOT over five years across dozens of programs and DOT received a total of $5.6 billion for four programs under the IRA. DOT is embedding equity across BIL and IRA programs through the various strategies outlined in this Equity Action Plan, including a focus on meaningful public involvement, technical assistance, and data and tools to inform decision-making. Together, BIL and IRA will help create more livable communities and further advance transportation equity.

Executive Summary

DOT is committed to pursuing a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all. The first DOT Equity Action Plan, in response to Executive Order 13985, was finalized in January 2022 as a major milestone for the Department that represented a shift in how the agency exercises its existing authorities and delivers transportation programs. Executive Order 14091 (Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government) directs all federal agencies to update their Equity Action Plans by September 2023, and on an annual basis thereafter. As required by Executive Order 14091, this 2023 update of the DOT Equity Action Plan includes:

- An update on the progress made by DOT on the Equity Action Plan released in 2022.
- Potential barriers that underserved communities may face in accessing and benefiting from the agency's policies, programs, and activities and strategies to address those barriers.
- Information on how DOT has and will continue to meaningfully engage with communities.
- Key actions that DOT will undertake to continue to expand access and opportunity to all communities while focusing on underserved, overburdened, and disadvantaged communities.

This 2023 update to the DOT Equity Action Plan (the Plan) highlights actions being taken across DOT to address key disparities, including disproportionately high traffic fatality rates among Black people, high transportation insecurity and cost burdens experienced by low-income households and rural communities, and underrepresentation of Black-, Hispanic-, and women-owned small businesses receiving DOT direct contracts. The Plan advances equity in alignment with related Executive Orders, including Executive Order 13988 (Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation), Executive Order 14008 (Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad), and Executive Order 14020 (Establishment of the White House Gender Policy Council). The highlighted actions in the plan are also in alignment with DOT's June 2022 Equity and Access Policy Statement and include providing technical assistance to small and disadvantaged businesses, reinvigorating programmatic enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, implementing the Justice40 Initiative, and promoting mobility justice including environmental, gender, and disability rights efforts. The highlighted actions fall under five focus areas, or "Pillars", including four that carried over from the original Equity Action Plan and one new "Institutionalizing Equity" pillar:

Wealth Creation: Upgrade skills, grow entrepreneurs, increase incomes, expand net asset ownership, and foster social well-being for underserved communities through direct procurement, infrastructure projects, community wealth building, and industry at large.

Power of Community: Ensure individuals and communities have a greater voice in transportation decisions affecting them.

Proactive Intervention, Planning, and Capacity Building: Ensure historically overburdened and underserved communities in urban and rural areas benefit from access to generational investment in the nation's infrastructure through direct, hands-on technical support for transportation projects with local impact.

Expanding Access: Increase social and economic opportunity for disadvantaged and underserved communities from the provision of affordable multi-modal transportation options close to affordable housing and the development of a transportation cost burden measure.

Institutionalizing Equity: Continuously provide resources to embed equity, civil rights, and social justice initiatives into the Department's decision-making processes – including meaningful public involvement – and ensure that equity is a core part of the Department's mission and culture.

DOT utilized ongoing DOT program engagements, a public request for information (RFI), and in-person and virtual public meetings to solicit inputs to the update process. This resulted in refinements to some of the Department's equity performance measures and prioritization of actions in the plan. The new DOT Equity Council—a group of more than 30 multi-modal career staff and political appointees from across the Department chaired by the Secretary and co-managed by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy and the Departmental Office of Civil Rights – has overseen this process and broader DOT efforts to address historical and systemic patterns of disparity in the transportation system.

Equity Progress Update and Accomplishments

This section highlights many of the programs, grant initiatives, internal improvements, and accomplishments by the Office of the Secretary (OST) and individual Operating Administrations (OAs) to advance the goals of the 2022 Equity Action Plan, as well as the impacts they have made.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN WEALTH CREATION

- **January 2022:** Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) integrated the Small Business Program Manager into the Acquisition Strategy Review Board for procurement planning and coordination to help identify small business contracting opportunities.
- **January 2022:** OST launched a DOT-wide procurement dashboard to raise awareness of contracting opportunities and drive accountability for meeting small and disadvantaged business goals.
- **February 2022:** Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) began tracking the number of residential and non-residential displacements to ensure displacements, especially in communities with Environmental Justice (EJ) concerns, are reduced across all projects and that mitigation measures are in place to minimize impacts of relocation.
- **July 2022:** OST issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to modernize the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and Airport Concession DBE (ACDBE) program regulations to help further level the playing field for small disadvantaged businesses.
- **November 2022:** Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) held the first meeting of the Women of Trucking Advisory Board, whose work will support women pursuing careers in trucking, expand scholarship opportunities for women in the trucking industry, and enhance trucking training, mentorship, education, and outreach programs for women.
- **December 2022:** Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) launched the Master Capacity Building Series - Federal Contracting 101.
- **April 2023:** Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) established a Small Business Program to increase participation of small businesses, including minority and woman-owned small businesses in publicly funded rail projects.

LAUNCHING EDUCATION SEMINARS TO SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS SEEKING DOT CONTRACTS:

Small and minority-owned businesses can face hurdles in obtaining federal contracts. Many businesses without the capacity or resources to receive primary contracts are also unaware of opportunities to work as a subcontractor. To address these concerns, OSDBU launched the Master Capacity Building Series. The initial session hosted more than 500 participants, and the program has reached over 6,400 small and disadvantaged business owners as of June 2023. Technical assistance has contributed to an increase in small disadvantaged business utilization, from **18.2% of DOT direct contract dollars in FY 2021 to 21.25% in FY 2022.**

EXPANDING OUTREACH FOR HAZMAT TRANSPORTATION AWARENESS, PREPAREDNESS, AND RESPONSE IN UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES:

The Pipelines and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) has made ensuring that underserved communities are prepared to respond to hazardous materials transportation emergencies a top strategic priority. PHMSA expanded its outreach efforts to vulnerable communities by utilizing new strategies, including conferences, workshops, direct stakeholder meetings, and compliance assistance visits. This included a three-day workshop attended by representatives from all 50 states and five U.S. territories. PHMSA's comprehensive stakeholder list will be used to provide targeted grant funding, emergency special permits, technical assistance, and access to data.

EJ SCORECARD

In the EJ Scorecard, DOT highlights how the Department is further integrating environmental justice (EJ), including advancing EO 14096 *Revitalizing Our Nation's Commitment to Environmental Justice for All,* into its programs and activities. For example, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) worked with the project sponsor to revise designs for the West Santa Ana Branch Transit Project tracks and sound wall to avoid adverse impacts to nearby areas of EJ concern. Changes resulted in access to communities, minimized parking loss, limited traffic across certain streets, and maintained existing traffic flows for safety. Additionally, the entrance to the Maintenance and Storage facility was shifted for pedestrian safety.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN POWER OF COMMUNITY

- **October 2022:** DOT released a guide on Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making to help funding recipients meaningfully involve the public in various stages of transportation decision-making and build their organizational capacities to do so.
- **December 2022:** FHWA surveyed State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) on their inclusion of quantitative equity screenings and meaningful and representative public participation in their Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Programs (S/TIPs) in order to help develop a baseline and work toward achieving the related Key Performance Indicator (KPI).
- **February 2023:** The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) published a final rule, as required by BIL, updating the Uniform State Highway Safety Grant Program to require NHTSA grant recipients to conduct meaningful public engagement among affected communities, particularly those most significantly impacted by traffic crashes resulting in injuries and fatalities.
- **April 2023:** Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (GLS) and the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation, convened the first ever Green Shipping Corridor Network Collaborative Forum with a variety of stakeholders to promote green shipping and environmental justice for the Great Lakes region.
- **September 2023:** DOT issued a fact sheet on Title VI and discrimination on the basis of shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN PROACTIVE INTERVENTION, PLANNING, AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- **February 2022:** OST published a toolkit for planning and funding rural and Tribal electric mobility infrastructure. An updated version of the Charging Forward toolkit was published in May 2023, which includes expanded content on electric transit and micromobility.
- **March 2022:** DOT piloted a new approach of releasing combined Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) to streamline the process for applicants applying for multiple discretionary grant programs.
- **April 2022:** OST launched federal partnerships with key agencies making place-based technical assistance investments.
- **June 2022:** OST released the DOT Navigator, a new one-stop shop for communities to access DOT technical assistance and capacity building resources and to get more information to help them apply for DOT funding.
- **July 2022:** OST calculated baselines of benefits distribution for Justice40 covered programs with at least one round of funding awarded.
- **October 2022:** OST launched the Thriving Communities Program to provide hands-on technical assistance and capacity building support to underserved and overburdened communities using DOT funds and issued a call for projects for place-based initiatives that are co-designed with communities most impacted by poor access and climate change.
- **February 2023:** DOT awarded $185 million to disadvantaged communities as part of the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program to provide planning and construction grants to communities who have been cut off from opportunities by infrastructure projects.
- **February 2023:** OST announced $800 million in grant awards for the Safe Streets and Roads for All program to help communities improve roadway safety, especially for the most vulnerable roadway users, benefitting disadvantaged communities who are disproportionately impacted by roadway fatalities.

EXPANDING OUTREACH AND PLANNING CAPACITY IN RURAL COMMUNITIES:

DOT launched the Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success (ROUTES) initiative to address concerns and identify transportation challenges facing rural communities. Department officials hosted a series of webinars and informational sessions to solicit input and increase awareness of DOT programs for rural communities and convened a council dedicated to addressing rural and Tribal initiatives. ROUTES offers comprehensive technical assistance to rural communities across a variety of transportation-related topics, including grant funding, electric vehicles, safety, and infrastructure development and maintenance.

In April 2023, DOT awarded $21 million to four Thriving Communities capacity builders to support 64 communities in 42 states, including 6 Tribal Nations and Puerto Rico. Support will be provided in the following areas:

- **Main Streets:** 20 communities
- **Complete Neighborhoods:** 29 communities
- **Networked Communities:** 15 communities

INCREASING DOT DISCRETIONARY GRANT APPLICANTS FROM DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES:

In FY 2022, applicants representing disadvantaged communities accounted for about a quarter of new applicants to DOT programs. This sets the baseline for increasing the number of new applicants from disadvantaged communities **by 5% by FY 2025.**

- **May 2023:** OST launched an online DOT Discretionary Grant Dashboard to make it easier for communities to search the full set of federal transportation grant programs and find those that may align with local needs.
- **June 2023:** DOT announced a first-of-its-kind philanthropic collaboration with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to leverage and expand technical assistance opportunities for DOT grantees and potential applicants to deepen community engagement, resource community-based organizations, and build local capacity.
- **July 2023:** OST published the joint FY 2023 NOFO for the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program, making up to $3.16 billion available for planning activities and capital construction projects that that advance community-centered connection.
- **September 2023:** September 2023: DOT participated in a convening of the interagency Thriving Communities Network, bringing together governmental, non-profit, academic, community-based and philanthropic partners to leverage and align place-based technical assistance efforts.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN EXPANDING ACCESS

- **March 2022:** FHWA advanced Complete Streets as the default design approach and as a transformative strategy in which the transportation network is planned, designed, built, operated, and maintained to enable safe mobility and access for all road users.
- **October 2022:** DOT announced the "TIFIA 49 Program" that offers low-cost and flexible financing for transit and Transit-oriented Development (TOD) projects at up to 49% of eligible project costs through DOT's Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program, a higher level of financing that will help more projects get off the ground.
- **December 2022:** FTA announced 15 projects in 9 states that will receive approximately $686 million under the new All Stations Accessibility Program to make transit rail stations built before passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) fully accessible to people with disabilities.
- **January 2023:** DOT encouraged discretionary grant project sponsors to identify how their project will reverse or mitigate how the community is experiencing disadvantage.

ADVANCING RESEARCH TO EXPAND ACCESS FOR PREGNANT TRANSIT RIDERS:

One challenge pregnant women can face is access to safe, reliable, and accommodating transportation. This challenge is especially pronounced for women who are experiencing low incomes, living with a disability, or have limited English proficiency. FTA conducted a comprehensive study that identified several challenges for pregnant women riding transit, including limited availability of accessible seating, challenges accessing health care, and exposure to health and safety risks. FTA will continue to study and raise awareness of these issues and work with stakeholders, including transit providers, health agencies, and riders to develop innovative solutions and increase access to transit for pregnant women.

- **January 2023:** FHWA released the Speed Safety Camera Program Planning and Operations Guide for state and local governments aimed at reducing traffic fatalities and serious injuries resulting from speeding related crashes as part of a broader speed management program – especially in school areas and construction zones.
- **February 2023:** FTA awarded its Mobility, Access & Transportation Insecurity: Creating Links to Opportunity Research and Demonstration Program to explore strategies to improve people's mobility and access to daily needs and evaluate outcomes and impacts upon individuals and communities.
- **May 2023:** OST launched the Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer tool, an interactive mapping tool to understand where transportation insecurity, defined as limited transportation access and safety combined with high cost burden, is most acute across the country.
- **May 2023:** OST began piloting a transportation cost burden measure, using existing data sources in the ETC Explorer, to prioritize transportation investments.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN INSTITUTIONALIZING EQUITY WITHIN DOT

- **March 2022:** DOT established equity as one of the Department's fiscal year (FY) 2022-2026 Strategic Goals.
- **April 2022:** DOT released the Department's Equity Action Plan, establishing a foundation for DOT's path towards building a transportation system that works for all people.
- **May 2022:** DOT reestablished the Advisory Committee on Transportation Equity to provide independent advice on DOT equity programs.
- **December 2022:** Issued a Department-wide Secretarial Order formalizing the Equity Council via DOT Order 1000.17 to institutionalize equity in DOT's policies and programs.
- **June 2023:** DOT hosted a Department-wide equity summit for DOT employees, organized by the DOT Equity Community of Practice to share best practices to advance equity.

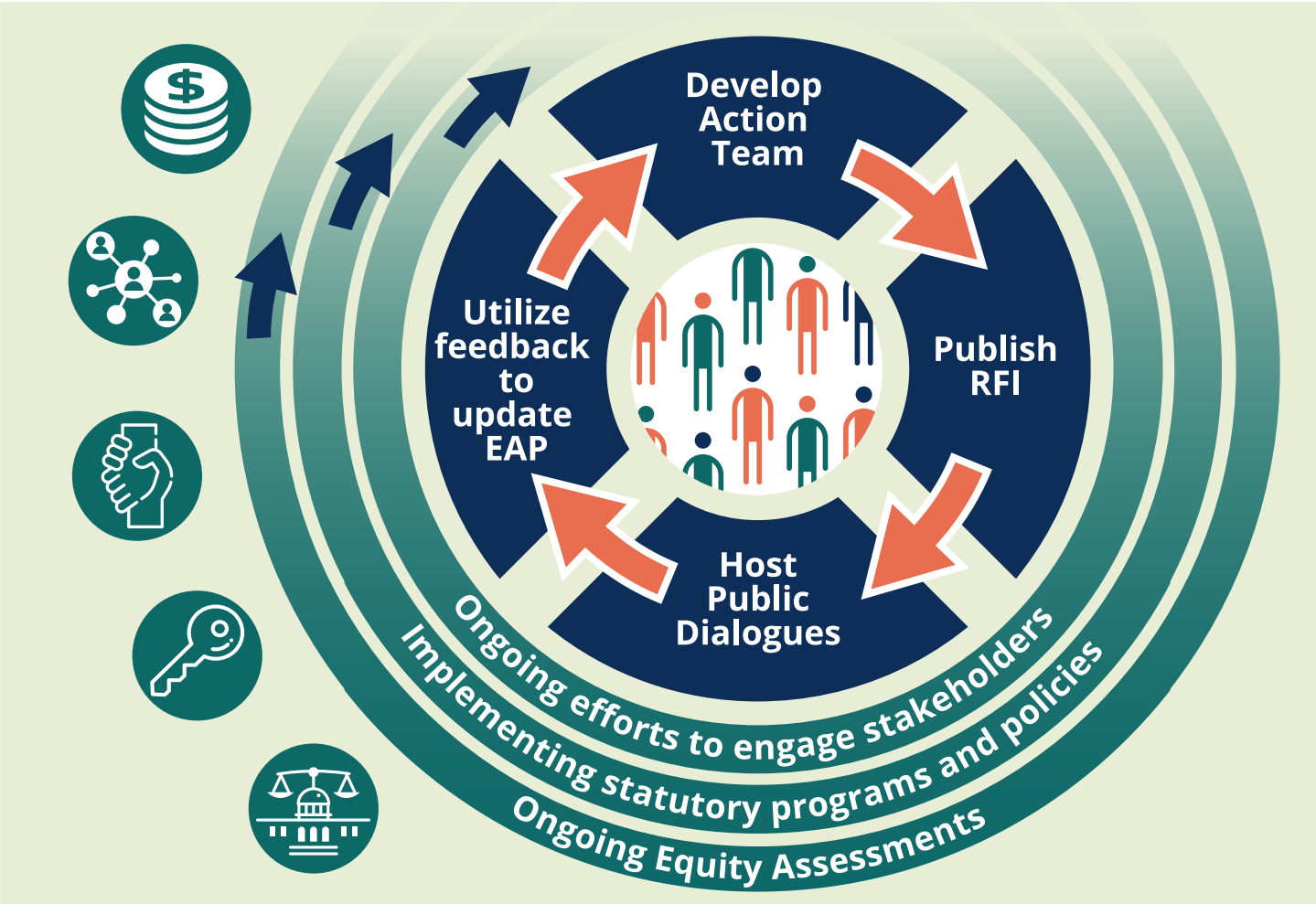
RAILROAD CROSSING SAFETY:

In June 2023, FRA awarded $570 million in project funds under the Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program. With the proximity of rail infrastructure to minority and low-income areas, there often is a correlation between grade crossing delays and negative impacts to those communities.

EQUITY IN LEADERSHIP TRAINING:

FMCSA has embarked on an Equity in Leadership training with a wide array of training for all staff that will conclude with an Equity Town Hall led by the Agency Leadership.

Equity Action Plan Update Process



Internal agency staff and external input both shaped the 2023 update to the DOT Equity Action Plan. An internal Action Team with representatives from different DOT modes reviewed the status and lessons learned from the existing Equity Action Plan and identified future activities that could help further address transportation disparities. Team members drew on insights from ongoing stakeholder engagement and evidence-building work within their programs—critical to establishing relationships and context—before launching a series of public engagement activities focused on the 2023 update to the DOT Equity Action Plan.

The Action Team utilized a variety of strategies to engage the public on the Equity Action Plan Update process. Those strategies included:

- **Request for Information (RFI):** The RFI comment period occurred from June 5, 2023, to June 30, 2023. The RFI asked for public comment on four questions related to equity performance metrics, data sets, tools, research, and examples of impacts and partnerships. DOT received 69 comments from organizations, government agencies, companies, and individuals across the country. Some key themes from responses to the RFI included:
  - DOT should take a more ambitious approach to setting actions and performance measures regarding equity. DOT's goals in the Equity Action Plan should address safety, climate change, community engagement, accessibility, and workforce development.

- Measuring access and system condition should be further developed in DOT's ETC Explorer and other tools that can help increase availability of information. By disaggregating data, DOT and stakeholders could better analyze impacts and equity concerns at a local level. It can be challenging to compare results of different equity tools because of differences in definitions, datasets, scales, or measurements.
- Technical assistance is important in supporting underserved communities, local community-based organizations, and first-time grant applicants to successfully secure and administer federal grants.

- **In-Person and Virtual Public Dialogues:** DOT held an in-person public dialogue at DOT Headquarters in Washington, D.C., on June 20, 2023. The event included participation by 65 external attendees. The event was open to the public and included remarks from DOT leadership, a question and answer (Q&A) session, and an "open house" period wherein attendees had an opportunity to meet DOT staff who work across modes in the equity space. A virtual public dialogue was held on June 23, 2023, and followed a similar format. The virtual dialogue had 562 attendees, with attendees from all 50 states and the District of Columbia, from government agencies, trade associations, community advocacy groups, educational institutions, private companies, and other types of organizations. The events helped participants better understand DOT's equity work and respond to the RFI.

The Action Team helped guide the engagement process by reviewing and providing feedback on the RFI, promoting the Equity Action Plan update process to stakeholders, and staffing the in-person and virtual dialogues. The Action Team discussed feedback received through the process and funneled feedback to the relevant teams for consideration and follow up, as appropriate. An overview of themes from this engagement can be found on the DOT's website.

Leading Change: The DOT Equity Council

In response to Executive Order 13985, DOT issued DOT Order 1000.17 and formed the DOT Equity Council (Council) to guide and oversee the process for institutionalizing equity across the Department's policies and programs, and compliance with related EOs and authorities.[1] The Council convenes quarterly; it will continue to guide DOT's Equity Action Plan and its implementation. Additional areas overseen by the Council include:

- **Disability Policy Priorities:** The DOT Disability Policy Priorities highlight work that DOT is undertaking to increase access for people with disabilities across four focus areas: safe and accessible air travel; multimodal accessibility of public transportation facilities, vehicles, and rights-of-way; access to good-paying jobs and business opportunities for people with disabilities; and enabling accessibility of electric vehicles and automated vehicles.
- **Justice40:** The government-wide Justice40 Initiative establishes the goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities. At DOT, Justice40 is an opportunity for both the agency and our stakeholders to understand the burdens that result from the lack of affordable, safe multimodal transportation options and how to identify transportation investments that will create benefits that will reverse or mitigate those burdens, inclusive of a meaningful public engagement process that spans a project's lifecycle.
- **Gender Justice:** DOT has identified Gender Justice priorities in response to EO 14020. These priorities include strategies to advance gender diversity in certain segments of the transportation sector, address gender disparities in transportation safety, combat human trafficking, improve DOT utilization of small disadvantaged businesses that are both women- and minority-owned, and, increase gender diversity within the DOT workforce.
- **Asian American, Native Hawai'ian, and Pacific Islander Action Plan:** DOT's plan, created as part of a government-wide initiative, focuses on assessing perceptions of public transportation; promoting Title VI awareness; improving competitiveness of businesses for federal contracts; and increasing workforce participation rates.

DOT EQUITY COUNCIL LEADERSHIP

Secretary of Transportation, Chair

Deputy Secretary of Transportation, Vice Chair

Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy and Director of the Departmental Office of Civil Rights, Co-Managers

Council members include modal Administrators, leaders within the OST, and career members of the Senior Executive Service from each Operating Administration and OST

DISABILITY POLICY PRIORITIES SPOTLIGHT:

NHTSA is researching ways to help automatically secure wheelchairs in vehicles while maintaining occupant safety. NHTSA also continues to identify the needs of people with disabilities and diverse needs to use the automated vehicles of the future safely and comfortably.

GENDER JUSTICE SPOTLIGHT:

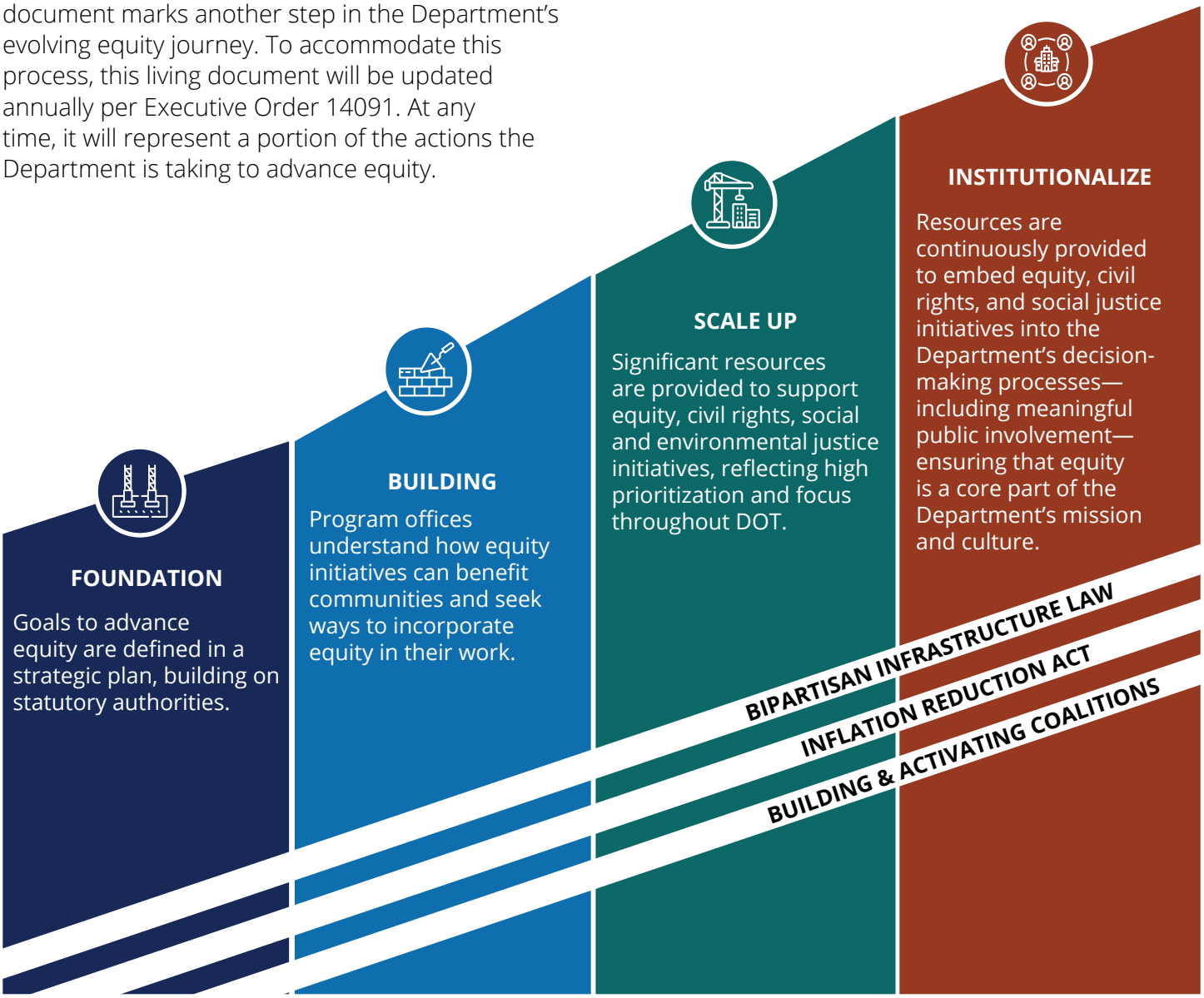
The Maritime Administration (MARAD) and U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) released the Every Mariner Builds A Respectful Culture (EMBARC) standards to implement Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (SASH) prevention standards on all U.S.-flag vessels. These standards foster a community of mutual respect, support, and accountability and provide resources to support appropriate reporting of sexual misconduct, impacting not only individual midshipmen but the industry culture as a whole. Fourteen companies have fully enrolled and adopted a SASH policy as of July 2023.

Strategies to Advance Equity

DOT's Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-2026 Strategic Plan and the 2022 Equity Action Plan laid the foundation for advancing and institutionalizing equity across DOT's programs and policies, and this year's Equity Action Plan builds on that foundation. The strategies described on the following pages fall under five focus areas, or "Pillars", including four that carried over from the 2022 Equity Action Plan and a new pillar that highlights additional steps DOT is taking to institutionalize equity. In some cases, DOT is still working to develop baselines and targets for the provided metrics. Completion of any future-facing activities are subject to availability of funds.

Rather than being a complete synopsis, this document marks another step in the Department's evolving equity journey. To accommodate this process, this living document will be updated annually per Executive Order 14091. At any time, it will represent a portion of the actions the Department is taking to advance equity.

- Wealth Creation
- Power of Community
- Proactive Intervention, Planning, and Capacity Building
- Expanding Access
- Institutionalizing Equity



Wealth Creation

Upgrade skills, grow entrepreneurs, increase incomes, expand net asset ownership, and foster social well-being for underserved communities through direct procurement, infrastructure projects, community wealth building, and industry at large.

METRICS:

- Reduce the number of direct displacements resulting from federal-aid highway projects.
- Increase the number of entities using local and economic hiring preferences on highway and transit projects.
- Increase DOT direct contract dollars to small disadvantaged businesses from 18.2% in FY 2021 to 22% by FY 2026.

WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT EQUITY OBJECTIVES:[2] Economic Justice, Housing Justice, Community Investment.

COLLABORATING AGENCIES: Department of Education, Department of Justice, Department of Labor, Small Business Administration

BARRIERS TO EQUITY:

Displacements

- Government programs designed to benefit the general public, including the federal-aid highway program administered by FHWA, often result in acquisition of private property and sometimes in the displacement of people, schools, businesses, community resources, houses of worship, or farms. Even though the general public may see benefits from these programs, these displacements may undercut efforts to build community wealth and ensure communities directly benefit from investments.

Underrepresentation in Transportation Workforce

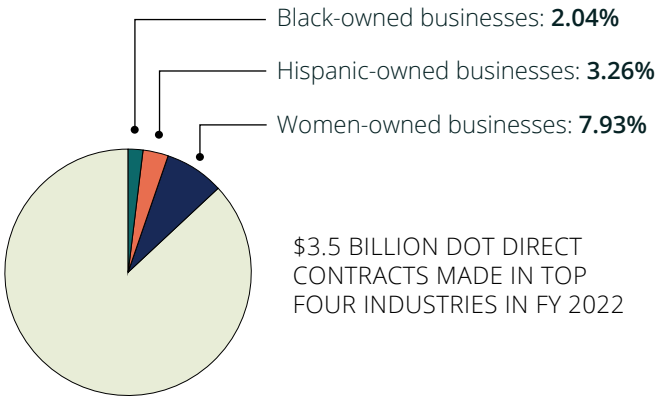
- Barriers for underrepresented populations in the infrastructure workforce, such as women and individuals with disabilities, vary by the specific subpopulation and the type of occupation. For example, in construction, barriers include a lack of transportation access to get to training and jobs, childcare, and cash assistance for emergency expenses. Another major barrier is harassment, hazing, and bullying on job sites.[3]

Uneven Resource Distribution

- Lack of access to capital sources means Black- and Hispanic-owned businesses have less growth capital. These businesses are half as likely as non-minority counterparts to be fully approved for loans, lines of credit, and cash advances.[4]
- Minority-owned businesses and small disadvantaged businesses often have inadequate bonding capacity and access to surety expertise. This makes it difficult to compete and perform in government contracts, which limits award opportunities for many small, disadvantaged businesses.[5]

EVIDENCE BASE TO SUPPORT STRATEGY:[6]

- In the top four industries receiving direct contracts from DOT, the following small and disadvantaged business enterprises were underrepresented in terms of total FY 2022 DOT direct contract dollars:



- Women and Black workers are significantly underrepresented in the construction workforce, a key job growth area from infrastructure investments. In 2020, women held about **1 in 10** construction jobs while non-Hispanic Blacks held **5.1 percent** of construction jobs, compared with their **11.8-percent** share of total employment.[7]

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE EQUITY:[8]

Promote environmental justice "do no harm" policy and capacity building framework through DOT funding programs and technical assistance. – **December 2023**

Strengthen partnerships with historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and MSIs through the Pathways to Entrepreneurship and Women in Transportation Internship to prepare for specific industries such as trucking. – **September 2024**

Expand DOT's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) programming and resources focused on federally assisted contracts, including a focus on access to capital and development of internal and external tools. – **September 2025**

Promote best practices, case studies, and other resources to diversify the transportation sector construction workforce. – **December 2023**

Finalize and implement the DBE/ACDBE final rule and support funding recipients with implementation through strategic communications and targeted technical assistance support. – **Ongoing**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS:

- DOCR hosted seven Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) outreach sessions related to DOT's DBE/ACDBE Program regulations, targeting different stakeholders, in July and August 2022.
- PHMSA has taken an active role in engaging more with MSIs and encouraging them to participate in the Competitive Academic Agreement Program (CAAP).
- DOT's Infrastructure Workforce Development team held a webinar with about 400 individuals focusing on how local and economic hiring preferences can be used to create a more diverse construction workforce. The webinar included case studies from Seattle, New York State, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Power of Community

Ensure individuals and communities have a greater voice in transportation decisions affecting them.

METRICS:

- **All** 50 State DOTs and Top 100 MPOs adopt a quantitative equity screening component to their S/TIP development processes by 2030.
- **90%** of DOT funding recipients have a DOT-approved and publicly available Community Participation Plan and Title VI Plan by 2026.

WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT EQUITY OBJECTIVES: Civil Rights, Environmental Justice.

COLLABORATING AGENCIES: Environmental Protection Agency, Council on Environmental Quality, Department of Justice

BARRIERS TO EQUITY:

Status Quo Thinking

- Public involvement is often treated as an event rather than a process.[9] In many cases, community members are not involved in early discussions to identify solutions with agency partners.
- Traditional print and radio reach limited audiences. Social media, pop-up events, and community meetings, used by some, are more effective at reaching diverse groups in rural and urban areas.[10]

One-Size-Fits-All Methods

- Public meetings are a common public involvement strategy but can be inconvenient or impossible to attend for some.[11] Physical meeting locations may be inaccessible for some, including those with disabilities or individuals with limited English proficiency. Virtual public meetings may be inaccessible for people without internet access or computer literacy. Across formats, public engagement may be inaccessible to individuals with limited English proficiency.
- Various methods may be needed to allow people with diverse circumstances to have a voice in decisions that affect their communities.[12] Adaptive engagement strategies can be a resource-intensive but valuable endeavor that is responsive to specific community needs, including different language and cultural backgrounds.

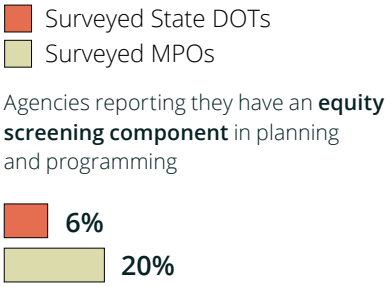
Lack of Accountability

- Measuring the effectiveness of public involvement is challenging and time-consuming.[13] The practical methods that have been developed to evaluate the success of public involvement activities often fall short of being able to measure the effectiveness of engagement activities and have not yet been applied at large scale.
- Agencies are often focused on compliance when it comes to public involvement. Measures of inputs, such as number of meetings, are not distinguished from measures of impacts, such as changes to a proposed plan or project.[14] In many cases, important resources such as S/TIPs may be difficult for the public to find and analyze.

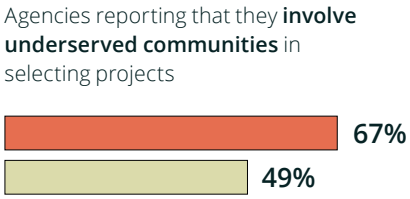
EVIDENCE BASE TO SUPPORT STRATEGY:

DOT's 2022 survey of State DOTs and MPOs found that:

- 6% of State DOTs and 20% of Transportation Management Area (TMA)[15]-serving MPOs self-report that they have an equity screening component in their transportation planning and programming processes for all funding sources. Equity screening involves determining and communicating equity priorities through meaningful public involvement and data-driven analysis, measuring equity impacts, and considering those impacts throughout all stages of the transportation planning process.



- 67% of State DOTs and 49% of TMA-serving MPOs self-report that they directly involve underserved communities in selecting projects in their communities. Some describe these processes in formal policies such as Community Participation Plans, which govern how an organization approaches public involvement in compliance with Title VI and other requirements.



ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE EQUITY:

Establish Department-wide monitoring of recipient compliance with Title VI and meaningful public participation obligations. – **December 2023**

Collect Title VI and Community Participation Plans (CPPs) from all major airports. – **December 2023**

Update DOT EJ Order and tools to support strengthening public involvement and EJ community protection. – **February 2024**

Release Guide on Equity Screening in the Transportation Planning Process, with accompanying training and support for digitizing S/TIPs. – **June 2024**

Implement at least three public engagement workshops to promote practices for effective and equitable public engagement in the transportation process. – **September 2024**

Promote resources available for meaningful public involvement including long-term public community engagement and partnerships. – **Ongoing**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS:

- DOT conducted research into how State DOTs and MPOs incorporate quantitative equity screenings into their transportation planning processes in 2022, including a survey of all State DOTs and MPOs.
- OST will continue to meet regularly with policy staff from national civil rights organizations and civil rights leaders in State DOTs to discuss Title VI and other civil rights program implementation.

Proactive Intervention, Planning, and Capacity Building

Ensure historically overburdened and underserved communities in urban and rural areas benefit from access to generational investment in the nation's infrastructure through direct, hands-on technical support for transportation projects with local impact.

METRICS:

- By 2025, increase by 5% the number of DOT discretionary grant applicants from disadvantaged communities who have never applied for DOT funding before.
- Work to meet the Justice40 goal that 40% of the benefits of certain federal investments flow to transportation disadvantaged communities.
- Increase the number of new projects in disadvantaged communities utilizing formula funds from Justice40 covered programs.
- Increase the total federal transit grant dollars announced or allocated for rural or Tribal areas.

WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT EQUITY OBJECTIVES: Environmental Justice, Economic Justice, Housing Justice, Community Investments.

COLLABORATING AGENCIES: Department of Energy, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Health and Human Services, General Services Administration, Department of Commerce, Department of Agriculture.

BARRIERS TO EQUITY:

Limited Resources

- Due to historical and systemic patterns of disparity, underserved communities may lack resources needed to develop successful discretionary grant applications. Without assistance, many underserved communities may miss chances to compete for discretionary funding due to a lack of resources rather than a lack of need. Even if awarded a grant, underserved communities may also lack the necessary resources to finalize grant agreements, meet funding requirements, and conduct or implement the work.
- Community Based Organizations (CBOs) often represent and advocate for underserved and overburdened communities. However, CBOs face capacity challenges since coordinating with stakeholders, transportation agencies, and contractors can be both costly and time consuming.[16]

Systemic Barriers Remain

- Lack of affordable, safe, multimodal transportation options have over time created significant barriers accessing employment, education, health care and other opportunities in many communities. Members of underserved communities have often received less priority in infrastructure investments, often shouldering the burden of environmental and economic impacts.[17]

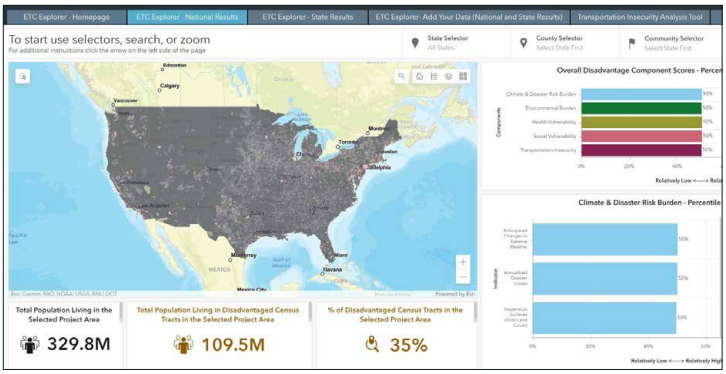
Income and Wealth Disparities

- Navigating the complex environment of federal grant opportunities requires specialized expertise and experience. Overburdened or disadvantaged communities in urban and rural areas may not have adequate resources to gain access to the necessary expertise and experience.
- Benefit-cost analysis (BCA) is a requirement for several major transportation discretionary grant applications. BCAs require specialized analysis tools and skills and are based on how benefits measure up to costs. When underserved communities do not have access to those tools or are located in areas where there are too few "benefits" to measure, potentially beneficial projects in underserved communities might not be selected due to incomplete or flawed BCAs.

EVIDENCE BASE TO SUPPORT STRATEGY:

- Between 2016-2021, DOT had approximately 3,500 total unique applicants to its funding programs. In 2022, **approximately 350 new applicants** from disadvantaged communities applied to DOT's discretionary funding programs, accounting for close to a quarter of new applicants to DOT programs. The volume of new applicants, and DOT's goal of further increasing the number of new applicants from disadvantaged communities, calls for a corresponding increase in technical assistance to help ensure new applicants' success in delivering transformative transportation projects.

- In the ETC Explorer, the majority of rural census tracts are experiencing transportation insecurity.[18] A significant portion also experience heath[19] and socioeconomic vulnerability.[20]



ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE EQUITY:

Provide hands-on technical assistance and planning grants to enable disadvantaged and under-resourced communities to advance infrastructure projects that will help them thrive. – **Ongoing**

Publish a Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) tool for grant applicants to use when applying for DOT grant opportunities with a BCA requirement. – **December 2023**

Develop a methodology to calculate the distribution of burdens (in addition to benefits) for Justice40 covered programs. – **September 2024**

Develop a resource to track funding investment and technical assistance in rural communities. – **December 2025**

Provide technical assistance for grantees and potential grantees under the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Program through the Reconnecting Communities Institute (RCI). – **October 2023**

Conduct quarterly DOT Navigator webinars to share information on successful grant writing strategies and spotlight new resources to assist those considering applying for grants. **– Ongoing**

Reduce burdens for low-capacity communities through streamlined grant application processes and match flexibility. – **Ongoing**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Through a series of webinars and national and regional convenings, the Thriving Communities Initiative will provide technical assistance to communities and capacity builders in the areas of climate and decarbonization strategies; equitable development to coordinate transportation and housing infrastructure; workforce development; and community wealth building.

- DOT received public comments on the draft ETC Explorer through an RFI in early 2023, and used the public feedback to enhance the final product to meet stakeholder needs. Public webinars will continue to be held on updates to the ETC Explorer and Justice40 Initiative at DOT.

DOT NAVIGATOR:

The DOT Navigator provides a comprehensive list of technical assistance programs as well as frequently asked questions on Navigating Grant Program Applications, What is a Benefit-Cost Analysis?, and more.

Expanding Access

Increase social and economic opportunity for disadvantaged and underserved communities from the provision of affordable multi-modal transportation options close to affordable housing and the development of a transportation cost burden measure.

METRICS:

- Reduce national transportation cost burden by 5%, including transportation travel cost as a percent of income, by FY 2030.
- Increase safe, affordable, multimodal access to key destinations, including: work, education, grocery stores, health care, affordable housing, and recreation
- Reduce the race fatality ratio by population. meaning the national percentage of roadway fatalities per race over the percentage of population per race.
- Decrease in number of passengers with disabilities whose wheelchairs are damaged during air travel and who are injured in transfers to/from aircraft.

WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT EQUITY OBJECTIVES: Civil Rights, Environmental Justice.

COLLABORATING AGENCIES: Department of Housing and Urban Development, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Justice, Department of Health and Human Services.

BARRIERS TO EQUITY:

Higher Transportation Costs

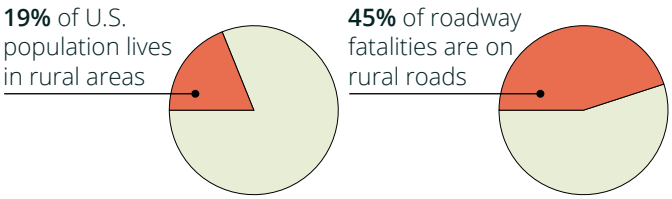
- The transportation cost burden experienced by an individual is influenced by numerous factors. Inadequate coordination of land use, housing, and transportation policy and investment leads to inefficient transportation options that negatively impact social, economic, and health outcomes. These factors can vary substantially across communities.[21]

Lack of Affordable Mobility Options and Access

- There are many "transit deserts" across the country, which are areas that have a demand for transit but lack the accessible transit services and infrastructure to meet that demand. The inability to access jobs, schools, health care, and social service organizations leads to higher rates of unemployment, poverty, chronic illness, and isolation.[22]
- Decades of transportation and land use policy have focused on mobility for automobile users making car ownership a necessity. This bias has limited mobility options for the 8% of American households[23] without access to vehicles. For many families, covering an unexpected car repair expense can also be a hardship.[24]
- Multimodal options and ensuring complete, network connections have been neglected. Policies that ensure that street networks (with sidewalks and bike lanes) and shared use multi-use trails are safe and accessible to pedestrians, bicyclists, and users of public transit gives residents more travel options and more control over their transportation expenses.[25] Land use policies that prevent people, jobs, goods, and services from being proximate to one another or near transit reduce the feasibility of low cost, environmentally efficient modes such as walking, cycling, and transit.

EVIDENCE BASE TO SUPPORT STRATEGY:

- People experiencing lower incomes spend a far greater percent of their income on transportation than households with middle or higher incomes. Reliable, safe, high-quality accessible multimodal transportation systems can help address these disparities and increase residents' upward economic mobility.[26]
- Nationally, 47% of the US population and 69% of the population living in rural census tracts spend more than 15% of their annual income on transportation.[27]
- Roadway fatalities among Black people increased by 23% between 2019 and 2020, compared to an overall increase in fatalities of 7.2%.[28] People who are American Indian and Alaska Native have roadway fatality rates more than double the national rate on a per population basis.[29] While only 19% of the U.S. population lives in rural areas, 45% of all roadway fatalities and 34% of all public highway-rail grade crossing fatalities occur on rural roads, and the fatality rate on rural roads is 2 times higher than on urban roads.[30]



- U.S. major airlines reported mishandling 11,389 wheelchairs and scooters in calendar year 2022 (1.54 % mishandling rate).[31] As of FY 2020, nearly 25% of all transit stations in the U.S. were not accessible.[32]

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE EQUITY:

Promote safety strategies targeted to reducing gender disparities in the transit space, including launching a study on the travel needs of women on public transit. – **April 2024**

Complete DOT-led rulemakings on Public Rights-of-Way, Equitable Access to Transit Facilities, and Transportation for Individuals with Disabilities—Adoption of Accessibility Standards for Buses and Vans. – **July 2024**

Improve understanding of pedestrian and transit access, system quality, and performance to better support State DOT progress eliminating legacy inaccessible infrastructure. – **September 2024**

Expand upon the current research and understanding of individual and household transportation cost, travel time, trips not taken, accessibility, and access to key resources across demographics. – **September 2024**

Empower transportation professionals to eliminate disparities in roadway fatalities and serious injuries by building knowledge and capacity for the equitable implementation of a Safe System Approach. – **September 2024**

Update the DOT ETC Explorer tool, including system condition and access data, to help States and communities advance projects that benefit underserved communities. – **September 2024**

Complete research to investigate the feasibility of enabling passengers to stay in their personal wheelchairs while travelling on commercial aircraft. – **December 2025**

Launch enhanced transportation insecurity measure as part of a transportation disadvantage index. – **December 2027**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS:

- FHWA engaged 16 stakeholder organizations in a Technical Review Panel to help inform a survey of Complete Street policies and implementation programs at State DOTs; conducted a National Complete Streets Assessment of all State DOTs and held findings webinar in April 2023; and posted six Complete Street Planning Case Studies covering MPOs and cities that are performing noteworthy efforts with Complete Streets Planning.
- DOT will publish Notices of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRMs) to provide an opportunity to comment on proposed rulemakings related to transportation accessibility, and promote them through agency communications such as emails, press releases, and social media posts.
- OST and FAA are engaging disability advocates, researchers, and the aviation industry on research, including through events with the Transportation Research Board, to enable passengers to stay in their personal wheelchairs on aircraft.
- OST hosted a workshop with DOT staff, academics, local agencies, non-profits, state agencies, advocacy groups, associations, and other federal agencies to inform next steps on DOT's model for estimating cost burden.

Institutionalizing Equity

Continuously provide resources to embed equity, civil rights, and social justice initiatives into the Department's decision-making processes—including meaningful public involvement—and ensue that equity is a core part of the Department's mission and culture.

METRICS:

- All DOT Operating Administrations (OAs) have adopted an equity analysis process throughout their program offices to increase meaningful public involvement in DOT-conducted virtual engagements by 2024.
- All DOT OAs have well-resourced Equity Teams led by career members of the Senior Executive Service who champion, coordinate, resource, and implement the OA's equity mission by 2024.
- DOT staff in key job functions, including and outside civil rights offices, have the core competencies and executive sponsorship to incorporate equity into their daily work by 2024.

WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT EQUITY OBJECTIVES: Economic Justice, Environmental Justice, Civil Rights, Community Investment.

BARRIERS TO EQUITY:

Limited Equity Expertise

- Equity is relatively new as a priority focus for DOT at the level of a Department-wide strategic goal. Many staff have limited experience and expertise applying an equity lens to their work. It can be challenging to access outside expertise through formal mechanisms such as contracting, hiring, and advisory groups.

Federated Organization

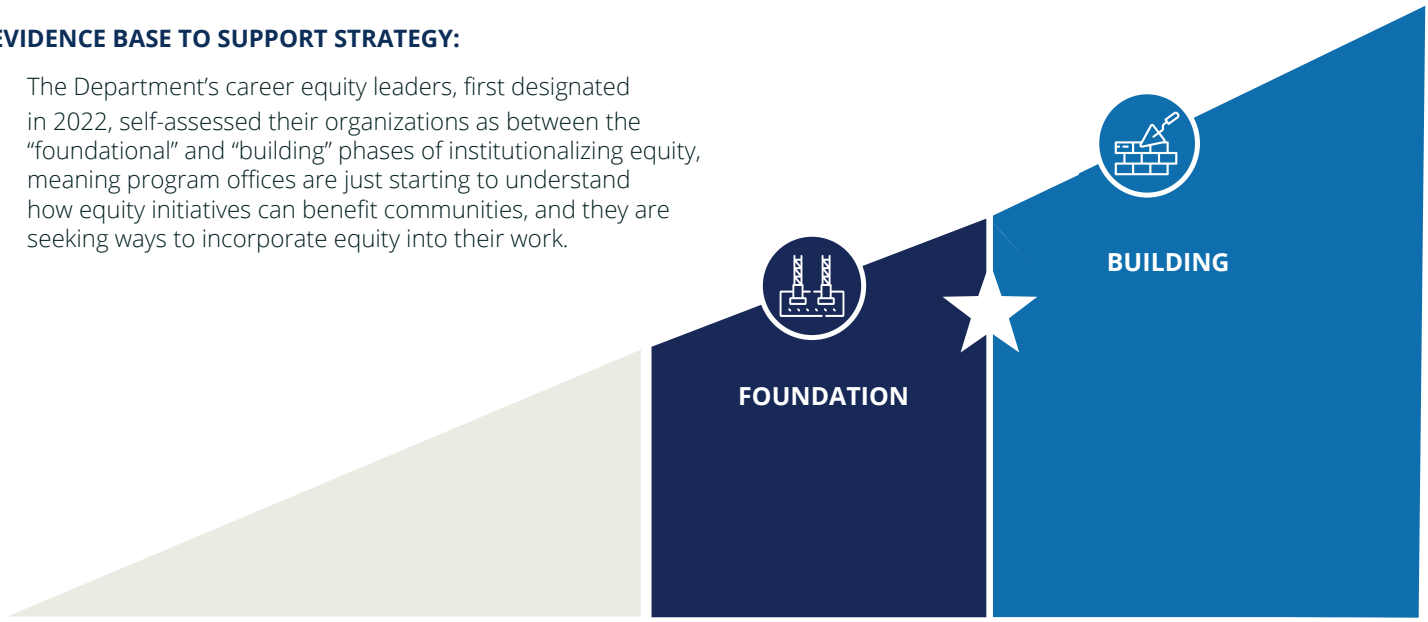
- DOT consists of nine modal OAs and multiple Secretarial offices with different statutory authorities, processes, and cultures DOT's workforce is also geographically distributed across many regional offices nationwide. This can make it hard to drive consistent practices, for equity and other areas, across the Department's policies and programs.

Assessing Meaningful Public Involvement

- Measuring the effectiveness of public involvement is challenging and time-consuming for DOT, as it is for our grantees and interagency partners. Practical methods that have been developed to evaluate the success of public involvement activities have not yet been applied at large scale.
- Building contact lists inclusive of underrepresented communities, including members of the public as well as representatives of non-profits, companies, and state, local, and Tribal governments, takes time.

EVIDENCE BASE TO SUPPORT STRATEGY:

- The Department's career equity leaders, first designated in 2022, self-assessed their organizations as between the "foundational" and "building" phases of institutionalizing equity, meaning program offices are just starting to understand how equity initiatives can benefit communities, and they are seeking ways to incorporate equity into their work.



ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE EQUITY:

Launch internal community of practice to drive adoption of meaningful public involvement practices across the DOT workforce. – **October 2023**

Kick off annual Equity Action Plan update process in consultation with the public. – **March 2024**

Receive public recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Transportation Equity (ACTE) on the Department's equity work. – **June 2024**

Ensure DOT supervisory and executive employees are meaningfully trained on equity and civil rights. – **July 2024**

Host Town Halls across the country to engage geographically diverse members of the public on priority transportation topics and policies. – **September 2024**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS:

- DOT distributes regular communications to the public and stakeholder groups, and seeks feedback on the effectiveness of engagement activities. In 2022, DOT re-established the ACTE to provide advice and recommendations to the Secretary of Transportation on comprehensive, interdisciplinary issues related to transportation equity.

Glossary of Concepts and Endnotes

TERM	DEFINITION
Advisory Committee on Transportation Equity (ACTE)	This Federal Advisory Committee, chartered in 2022, provides advice and recommendations to the Secretary of Transportation on comprehensive, interdisciplinary issues related to transportation equity from a variety of stakeholders involved in transportation planning, design, research, policy, and advocacy.[33]
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	The ADA prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public.[34]
Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)	The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) commonly referred to as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), was signed into law by President Biden on November 15, 2021. The law makes historic investments in the transportation sector: improving public safety and climate resilience, creating jobs across the country, and delivering a more equitable future.[35]
Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)	A DBE is a for-profit small business concern that is at least 51% owned by one or more individuals who are both socially and economically disadvantaged, whose management and daily business operations are controlled by one or more of the socially and economically disadvantaged individuals who own it.[36]
Disadvantaged communities	For the purpose of this document, disadvantaged communities are communities that experience disproportionately high and adverse health, environmental, climate related, economic, and other cumulative impacts.[37]
Environmental Justice (EJ)	"Environmental justice" means the just treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of income, race, color, national origin, Tribal affiliation, or disability, in agency decision-making and other Federal activities that affect human health and the environment so that people: (i) are fully protected from disproportionate and adverse human health and environmental effects (including risks) and hazards, including those related to climate change, the cumulative impacts of environmental and other burdens, and the legacy of racism or other structural or systemic barriers; and (ii) have equitable access to a healthy, sustainable, and resilient environment in which to live, play, work, learn, grow, worship, and engage in cultural and subsistence practices.[38]
Equity	Equity mean 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.[39]
Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)	"Any historically black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of black Americans, and that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary [of Education] to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered or is, according to such an agency or association, making reasonable progress toward accreditation."[40]

TERM	DEFINITION
Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)	The Inflation Reduction Act was signed by President Biden on August 16, 2023. The goals of the legislation were to invest in domestic energy production and manufacturing and reduce carbon emissions all while working towards a historic deficit reduction to fight inflation.[41]
Justice40 Initiative	Executive Order 14008: *Tackling Climate Change at Home and Abroad* created the government-wide Justice40 Initiative, establishing the goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities.[42]
Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)	MPOs are organizations designated to carry out the metropolitan transportation planning process in urban areas with populations greater than 50,000 people.[43]
Meaningful Public Involvement	A process that proactively seeks full representation from the community, considers public comments and feedback, and incorporates that feedback into a project, program, or plan.[44]
Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs)	MSIs are institutions of higher education that serve minority populations and include Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Servicing Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Hispanic-Serving Institutions.[45]
Mobility Justice	For the purpose of this document, the concept of Mobility Justice includes equitable access to safety, public space resources, and transportation system accessibility for all under a justice framework.
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)	NEPA requires that prior to funding, authorizing, or implementing a federal action, federal agencies consider the effects that their proposed action may have on the environment and the related social and economic effects, as early as possible in any given decision-making process.[46]
Overburdened Communities	Overburdened communities are minority, low-income, Tribal, or Indigenous populations or geographic locations in the United States that potentially experience disproportionate environmental and/or safety harms and risks. This disproportionality can be a result of greater vulnerability to environmental hazards, heightened safety risks, lack of opportunity for public participation, or other factors.[47]
Small Disadvantaged Business (SBA)	A small disadvantaged business is a firm that meets the following criteria: 51% or more owned and controlled by one or more disadvantaged persons; the disadvantaged person or persons is socially disadvantaged and economically disadvantaged; the firm is small, according to the Small Business Administration's size standard.[48]
Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)	STIPs are federally mandated 4-year funding and scheduling documents for surface transportation projects (road, highway, pedestrian trails, bicycle facilities, bridge facilities, and transit projects).[49]
Thriving Communities Program	A DOT program to support planning, technical assistance, and capacity building in disadvantaged and under-resourced communities to advance a pipeline of transformative infrastructure projects and community revitalization activities.[50]
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964	Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any program or activity that receives federal funds or other federal financial assistance.[51]

TERM	DEFINITION
Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs)	TIPs are federally mandated 4-year funding and scheduling documents for surface transportation projects (road, highway, pedestrian trails, bicycle facilities, bridge facilities, and transit projects). They are approved and planned at the MPO level, and must be included in the STIP to receive federal funding.[52]
Transportation Management Areas (TMAs)	TMAs are urbanized areas with a population over 200,000, as defined by the Census Bureau and designated by the DOT Secretary, or any additional area where TMA designation is requested by the Governor and the MPO and designated by the Secretary of Transportation (23 CFR 450.104).[53]
Underserved communities	Underserved communities are 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 exemplified by the list in the preceding definition of equity.[54]

END NOTES

1 *Department of Transportation Equity Council | US Department of Transportation,* https://www.transportation.gov/mission/department-transportation-equity-council.

2 *Advancing Equity and Racial Justice Through the Federal Government. The White House,* https://www.whitehouse.gov/equity/.

3 Butrica, Barbara A, et al. *Women in Apprenticeships and Nontraditional Occupations in the United States.* Urban Institute, 2023. https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/Nieves-Cartagena%40DOL.GOV/WANTO-knowledge%20Brief/WANTO-knowledge-report-508%206.15.23.pdf. Note: the cited research was funded by the U.S. Department of Labor. DOT is conducting a fuller assessment of barriers to jobs in the construction industry as required by Section 25019 of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

4 *Small Business Credit Survey 2021: Report on Firms Owned by People of Color. Federal Reserve,* 2021. https://www.fedsmallbusiness.org/survey/2021/2021-report-on-firms-owned-by-people-of-color.

5 McCloud, Edith. Improving Minority Businesses' Access to Capital Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA). 2021, https://opportunity.census.gov/assets/files/2021-problem-statements/post-covid/MBDA_Improving%20Minority%20Businesses%20Access%20to%20Capital.pdf

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8 The White House. *Fact Sheet: Biden-Harris Administration Announces New Measures to Promote Equitable Community Development. The White House,* 27 Jun. 2023, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/06/27/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-announces-new-measures-to-promote-equitable-community-development/.

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11 Spivak, Jeffrey. *6 Tips for Inclusive Public Meetings. American Planning Association,* https://www.planning.org/planning/2019/mar/6tipspublicmeetings/.

12 United States Department of Transportation. *Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making.* Oct. 2022, https://www.transportation.gov/priorities/equity/promising-practices-meaningful-public-involvement-transportation-decision-making

13 Brown, Bruce, et al. *Measuring the Effectiveness of Public Involvement in Transportation Planning and Project Development. Transportation Research Board, 2019. National Academies Press,* https://doi.org/10.17226/25447.

14 Brown, Bruce, et al. *Measuring the Effectiveness of Public Involvement in Transportation Planning and Project Development.*

15 *Schedule - Census Urbanized Areas and MPO/TMA Designation - Census Issues - Planning - FHWA,* https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/census_issues/urbanized_areas_and_mpo_tma/schedule/. Notes: The percent of TMAs was designated as of Summer 2022, prior to the DOT Secretary designation of new TMAs based on the 2020 Census.

16 *Increasing Federal Funding to Community-Based Organizations Prepared for Organizations in the Strong Prosperous and Resilient Communities Challenge (SPARCC).* Enterprise, https://www.sparcchub.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Final-CBO-Memo-March-2022.pdf.

17 Archer, Deborah N. *Transportation Policy and the Underdevelopment of Black Communities.* 3797364, 4 Mar. 2021. *Social Science Research Network,* https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=3797364.

18 Notes: Transportation insecurity occurs when people are unable to get to where they need to go to meet the needs of their daily life regularly, reliably, and safely.

19 Notes: Health Vulnerability category assesses the increased frequency of health conditions that may result from exposure to air, noise, and water pollution, as well as lifestyle factors such as poor walkability, car dependency, and long commute times.

20 Notes: Social vulnerability indicators measure lack of employment, educational attainment, poverty, housing tenure, access to broadband, and housing cost burden as well as identifying household characteristics such as age, disability status and English proficiency.

21 US EPA, OP. *Smart Growth and Transportation.* 26 Apr. 2013, https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/smart-growth-and-transportation.

22 Jiao, Junfeng. *Understanding Transportation Related Infrastructure Access in 52 Major US Cities.* Cooperative Mobility for Competitive Megaregions, 2019, p. 42, https://sites.utexas.edu/cm2/files/2019/04/Year2_JJ_TransitDeserts.pdf.

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