

WHO IS IMPACTED BY TRANSPORTATION INEQUITY?

People of color, people experiencing poverty, people with disabilities, and people who experience language barriers are disproportionately impacted by burdens of the transportation system but do not receive an equal share of the benefits. In this document, we will refer to these groups of individuals as ‘impacted communities’ or ‘impacted persons’.

1

Ensure equal access to essential goods & services, jobs & economic opportunities, and healthy foods & places.

We all rely on the transportation system everyday to get from home to school, work, and other destinations. Impacted persons, who are more likely to depend on public transit, often live in areas with poor transit service, fewer destinations, and poor connectivity due to historical underinvestment and disinvestment. These unfair burdens increase transportation costs, increase stress, and create unequal access to economic and educational opportunities, housing, healthy foods, and opportunities for physical activity—all of which have direct impacts on health.

Examples that support this principle include:

- Complete streets policies that meet the needs of all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit riders, children, older adults, and people with disabilities.
- Inclusionary zoning polices and transit-oriented development incentives to connect jobs to attainable housing and reduce commute times, congestion, and air pollution.



2

Engage & empower impacted communities early & often, with opportunities to have real influence during all stages of decision-making.

Meaningful public participation processes are open, inclusive, and provide participants with opportunities to shape transportation outcomes. Impacted communities are often underrepresented, tokenized, or are not offered meaningful opportunities to participate in public processes. As a result, impacted communities have been disempowered and disproportionately burdened by transportation projects that do not benefit their communities and that cause negative health and environmental outcomes.



Examples that support this principle include:

- Engaging transit-dependent groups in public processes, particularly for decisions about fares, service, and accessibility; budget for participant compensation.
- Outreach strategies, materials, and events that are tailored to the language, culture, media, location, and physical abilities of impacted communities.

3

Implement transportation funding & investment policies that address historical disinvestment for impacted persons & for underserved neighborhoods.

Funding for transportation investments must be equitably collected and distributed to impacted communities with the greatest disparities in access to affordable transportation. Transportation and housing costs make up the majority of a household’s budget, so transportation and housing policies and investments must be integrated to provide smart solutions for lower-income families.

Examples that support this principle include:

- Road-pricing policies, such as tolls or fees, which do not disproportionately burden low-income communities or limit access to goods, services, and opportunities.
- Increasing access to car sharing, carpooling, and other programs that limit the cost of car ownership for people who have few transportation options.

4

Promote access to jobs, including in the transportation sector.

Transportation has a significant impact on each person's ability to find and maintain a job, and transportation investments can be used to increase access to jobs in all industries for impacted communities. Training and employment opportunities within the transportation industry should be created to build leadership within impacted communities and to create stable, family-wage jobs. A stable, family-wage income directly improves health through reduced stress and through access to healthy food, health care, education, and other goods and services.

Examples that support this principle include:

- Prioritizing transportation investments that create jobs and economic opportunities for communities experiencing high unemployment and poverty rates.
- Prioritizing investment in education, training, and employment opportunities for groups traditionally underrepresented in the transportation sector.



5

Prioritize transportation investments that ensure healthy & safe communities.



The communities that we have identified as most impacted are often disproportionately burdened with unsafe transportation environments, including few safe crossings, too much high-speed traffic, and poor sidewalk and bicycle infrastructure. Investments that focus on making active modes of transportation safer for youth and families will make these choices more convenient and accessible—increasing physical activity levels, reducing air pollution, and making communities healthier.

Examples that support this principle include:

- Shifting the unjust balance of expensive, highway-dominated transportation investments to safe, reliable, and efficient alternatives that support impacted communities.
- Using Health Impact Assessments to evaluate how transportation planning and projects will impact health equity.

6

Adopt transportation policies that promote environmental justice & sustainability.

Impacted communities disproportionately suffer from transportation-related air, water, and noise pollution, all of which can have significant negative impacts on health. Efforts to address disproportionate environmental burdens and historic disinvestment must include strategies to ensure that impacted communities benefit from new investments and are not disproportionately burdened by displacement or disinvestment.

Examples that support this principle include:

- Strengthening and enforcing measures to improve air quality and reduce exposure to vehicle emissions, especially in impacted communities.
- Considering cumulative environmental impacts of past land use and transportation decisions in new plans and projects.