

PLANNING & MODAL PROGRAMS

STRATEGIC PLAN

Caltrans

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Term	Meaning
Action Plan	Planning and Modal Programs Action Plan
AERO	Division of Aeronautics
CTSP	Caltrans Strategic Plan
DLA	Division of Local Assistance
DOTP	Division of Transportation Planning
DRISI	Division of Research, Innovation and System Information
DRMT	Division of Rail and Mass Transportation
HQ	Caltrans Headquarters
P&MP	Planning and Modal Programs
P&MP SP	Planning and Modal Programs Strategic Plan
SME	Subject matter expert
VMT	Vehicle miles traveled

MESSAGE FROM THE P&MP LEADERSHIP TEAM

Dear Team Planning and Modal Programs,

We are pleased to share with you the 2021–2024 Caltrans Planning and Modal Programs Strategic Plan (P&MP SP). This updated Strategic Plan was developed in 2021 with extensive collaboration by the Planning and Modal leadership team and input from staff across the program. Thank you to the hundreds of staff who contributed to the focus groups and responded to the survey to help shape this plan.

The last couple of years have been a lot wildfires, a public health pandemic, drought, a national reckoning with issues of equity and social justice, and more. Thank you all for your hard work in such challenging times. As we continue to face many challenges, it is obvious the world is changing. Therefore, Caltrans needs to change as an organization to meet the needs of the communities we serve.

We envision an integrated multimodal transportation system that meets the needs and supports the aspirations of all Californians. To get there, we need to recruit and retain a highly qualified workforce; prioritize climate action, environmental justice, and transportation equity; advance equity and accessibility; practice meaningful engagement; improve collaboration and customer service for our stakeholders; and increase data-driven decision making. We will also integrate our various program efforts to meet our organization's vision and mission. This strategic plan update re-defines the P&MP goals and accompanying strategies to align with the new Caltrans Strategic Plan, California Transportation Plan 2050, and the CalSTA Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure; and demonstrates P&MP's critical role in leading Caltrans in a new direction. This plan articulates what is important moving forward and will inform your individual performance plans and how P&MP makes organizational changes in the coming months and years.

Thank you for all you do for the people of California.

Sincerely,

Your P&MP Leadership Team

P&MP LEADERSHIP TEAM



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INTRODUCTION

Background

The mission of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is to provide a safe and reliable transportation network that serves all people and respects the environment. Caltrans Planning and Modal Programs (P&MP), a group of five multimodal, interdisciplinary divisions and three innovative new initiatives, plays a critical role in helping set the course for Caltrans to achieve its mission. P&MP provides supportive services to local agencies and transit operators and integrates local, regional, and state multimodal networks to maximize efficiency and connectivity, today and into the future.

Historically, Caltrans planned and built the State Highway System, and then continued to expand the system through projects that added vehicular lanes to support the rapid growth of population and development. Expanding the system addressed both congestion and increased movement of people and goods on the State Highway System, and provided critical access to rural communities.

However, Caltrans' focus on increasing vehicle movement through highway investments over many years has contributed to a dependence on automobiles, providing access to land at the edges of urbanized areas and supporting development patterns that have made walking, cycling and transit use inefficient and challenging in many parts of the state. Highway investments also contributed to the displacement and division of some neighborhoods, predominately communities of color. Further, adding lanes has not resulted in long-term congestion relief and in some cases has worsened congestion, particularly in urbanized and fast-growing regions due to induced demand.

Therefore, P&MP is updating its goals and strategies to focus on maximizing use of the existing system to improve accessibility for people and goods to reach their destinations through innovative solutions and alternatives to adding lanes that increase single occupant vehicle use. We must understand and articulate clearly how the objectives of today differ from the objectives of yesterday, and urgently address the increasing impact of global climate change. P&MP must shift its work in concert with the demands of a changing world to enable people to drive less, thereby improving public health associated with lower pollutant exposure as well as more active lifestyles, while reducing serious injuries and fatalities, resource consumption, and demands on both Caltrans and household budgets.

P&MP looks at transportation as a complex and dynamic system rather than project by project; a system that impacts land use, the environment, and access to quality of life for people in every community. P&MP looks into the future and creates plans for multimodal corridors and connected networks, conscious that travelers do not see state vs. local roads and cannot travel easily across a disaggregated transit landscape. Guided by research and innovation, P&MP envisions a seamless system no matter the mode or jurisdiction, supporting local agencies in improving their plans and delivering a program of projects to improve their system.

Strategic Planning Framework

The initial P&MP SP (2019 P&MP SP) was developed in April 2017 through January 2019, with input from all P&MP Divisions. A team of key stakeholders from all P&MP divisions also developed an action plan to support implementation, and both the 2019 P&MP SP and its Action Plan were published together in January 2019.

Outcomes of the 2019 P&MP SP Action Plan

Implementation of the 2019 P&MP SP's Action Plan made progress in several outcome areas, most notably:

- Improved communication among P&MP Divisions through a monthly Modal Coordination meeting allowing attendees to hear updates from cross-division planners.
- Integrated employee development best practices across P&MP into the Professional Development Liaison group, improving how training opportunities are dispersed.
- Elevated recruitment efforts by leveraging social media platforms.
- Implemented a statewide rotation process that enables employees from two different divisions an opportunity to walk in the other's shoe for a twelve month cycle.
- Improved collaboration methods through the development of the P&MP online meeting collaboration tool.

Aligning to the Caltrans strategy

The 2020 – 2024 Caltrans Strategic Plan was rolled out in the spring of 2021 and prompted the P&MP Strategic Plan update effort.

The purpose of the P&MP SP update is two-fold:

- Update P&MP Goals and Strategies to reflect new goals in the 2020 – 2024 Caltrans Strategic Plan as well as current P&MP business needs; and,
- Provide clear direction to collectively guide the P&MP Divisions and initiatives to meet P&MP goals and prepare for the future.

P&MP Strategic Plan development process

This update of the P&MP SP was supported in part by the same consultant who assisted with the creation of the 2020-2024 Caltrans Strategic Plan (VMS). The P&MP Leadership Team scoped the initial vision, and then all P&MP employees had opportunities to provide feedback through a survey and virtual focus groups.

- Virtual focus groups were hosted by VMS and the P&MP Leadership Team June 21 – 25, 2021.
- 210 P&MP employees participated in a virtual focus group and took the feedback survey.
- 99 P&MP employees independently completed the feedback survey, for a total of 309 survey respondents.

The feedback was considered, and the draft P&MP SP was edited into the following document.



PLANNING AND MODAL PROGRAMS STRATEGIC PLAN

The P&MP SP sets the strategic direction and consists of the P&MP Goals and strategies. The updated goals and strategies contained within this report will drive the actions of P&MP for the next three years.



P&MP Vision

A multimodal transportation system that meets the needs and supports the aspirations of all Californians.



P&MP Mission

Planning and Modal Programs shapes the future of multimodal transportation across California by envisioning, articulating, and implementing desired outcomes.



Goals and Strategies

Details on the following pages.



Goal 1 — Workforce Equity and Excellence

Attract, cultivate, retain, and inspire a diverse, highly qualified, motivated, and talented workforce that is representative of the communities we serve.

P&MP consists of a workforce with a wealth of talent and knowledge. To continue supporting and growing our workforce, P&MP aims to expand subject matter expertise, develop leadership skills, and grow as a team who motivates and supports one another. Additionally, P&MP seeks to attract incoming talent that bring new skills and a diverse array of perspectives. To develop a pipeline of incoming talent, the team must ramp up and target recruitment in educational programs and to additional communities, including recruitment activities that provide guidance on how to apply to jobs through the state's application system. Emphasis must be placed on inspiring and fostering leaders who care about improving the transportation network and on conducting outreach to youth to get them involved early in learning about choices, mobility, and the environment.

Strategy 1.1.

Strengthen and inspire our internal relationships that foster leadership, professional, and personal development via rotation opportunities, new skill development, and succession planning.

Strategy 1.2.

Expand recruitment, hiring, application assistance, and support efforts to advance multimodal transportation careers in Tribal and underserved communities, schools, universities, and community colleges.

Strategy 1.3.

Conduct early outreach to schools and youth organizations, especially in underserved communities to promote multimodal transportation.

Strategy 1.4

Work with the California Chapter of the American Planning Association to identify ways to maintain pay parity for Caltrans planners with the rest of the Caltrans workforce and other public jurisdictions in the transportation planning industry.

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Goal 2 — Multimodal and Multi-Benefit Transportation

Prioritize and coordinate climate action, environmental justice, and transportation equity into every Planning and Modal Programs business practice for a transparent and resilient transportation network.

With a good understanding of access (people's existing ability to obtain desired goods, services, and activities), we can strategically coordinate Planning and Modal business practices and actions to improve climate and equity outcomes for all Californians. Having convenient, safe, and reliable access across a range of mode choices will incentivize people to use zero-or-low-carbon modes of transportation. As a result, greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled will be reduced, two essential components of meeting our state climate goals. To address access, climate, and equity through a context-sensitive lens, P&MP will need more advanced tools and information for analysis such as the Equity Index Suite, accessibility tools, and performancebased metrics to prioritize future transportation projects and service improvements.

Strategy 2.1.

Develop an integrated process for updating and implementing transportation plans to address all mobility needs to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) for climate action.

Strategy 2.2.

Develop and implement an Equity Index Suite to analyze environmental justice and transportation equity.

Strategy 2.3.

Develop and implement an accessibility tool and leverage it to monitor and analyze California's mobility needs.

Strategy 2.4.

Facilitate continuous engagement and outreach across all phases of a project—from planning through implementation—to enhance accountability and responsiveness to the dynamic needs of a community.

Strategy 2.5.

Develop a performance-based project prioritization tool(s) that values access, equity (using Equity Index Suite), climate, fiscal stewardship, and safety.



Goal 3 — Streamline Business Processes

Advance equity and accessibility through innovative coordination of Planning and Modal business processes and assets.

P&MP is a large program with several hundred employees, each with diverse backgrounds, knowledge, and skillsets. When our team members work together effectively P&MP can positively impact and model, within day-to-day operations, the outcomes we wish to cultivate, such as equity and accessibility. A business process contains all structured steps taken in sequence to complete a customer's request, regardless of the number of organizational units or departments that request crosses. Business processes may or may not be visible to the customers. For every business process there is a customer and a performer. Once the customer and their habits are known, P&MP can streamline business processes by anticipating a customer's request in lieu of treating requests as one-off projects. Once business processes are streamlined, they can be regrouped to achieve financial resource or policy objectives. One example of this would be coordinating grant programs across divisions, creating a seamless experience for our grantees (customers). DRMT is engaged in consolidating multiple grant programs into a common application, which will streamline customer interactions and save time across the division. In addition, by consolidating program data, DRMT will be able to assess program capacity, identify opportunities to leverage multiple funding streams, and offer improved technical assistance to transit operators.

Where possible, technology and data assets should be harnessed to streamline work and facilitate internal, innovative collaboration.

For instance, the DOTP has successfully piloted the use of Smart Sheets so that multiple offices are able to contribute to the same version of a document. Through collaboration, data assets may also be leveraged for streamlining business processes.

Strategy 3.1.

Develop standardized processes and tools for efficient and strategic P&MP resource and funds management.

Strategy 3.2.

Implement project management best practices and train staff to streamline business processes and improve our work.

Strategy 3.3.

Develop a culture of comprehensive critical thinking by encouraging cross-divisional and interdisciplinary teams, with District involvement, for solving system issues with an equity lens.



Goal 4 — Engagement and Customer Service

Improve stakeholder customer service and collaboration through meaningful engagement, with a focus on elevating and prioritizing the needs of underserved communities.

A customer can be an external or internal stakeholder — from partners or grantees to a supervisor or team member. In P&MP, a service can range from adhering to responsibilities as a SME in a particular field, to providing a quality data set to a colleague, or administering an award to a grantee. As stewards of customer service, P&MP has a duty to be accountable to all stakeholders, demonstrate respect for team members and the work produced, be responsive and timely, and ensure quality control. In delivering service relevant to the customer, P&MP must listen to the customer's needs and desires, and ensure the solicited input is reflected in our plans, projects and services (meaningful engagement). Emphasis must be placed on the feedback provided by the party engaged, as they determine whether the engagement process being facilitated is meaningful; thus, it is important to continuously check in with those providing input to evaluate effectiveness.

Strategy 4.1.

Leverage plans, programs, and projects to cultivate communication and collaboration across Programs, HQ Divisions, and Districts.

Strategy 4.2.

Expand and cultivate meaningful engagement, outreach, and technical assistance by strengthening partnerships with communitybased organizations, Tribal communities and governments, and stakeholders. Share engagement efforts at Headquarters more regularly with District staff.

Strategy 4.3.

De-acronym the Caltrans process—wherever possible, simplify the language we use to describe our processes and work products to promote engagement with people not as familiar with the transportation sector.



Goal 5 — Data-driven Decision Making

Increase data-driven decision making to achieve strategic goals supported by effective information management.

Data is a core asset that is a foundational part of P&MP's decision-making processes. Therefore, P&MP must carefully manage and maintain data to ensure it is in its correct location, reliable and accurate, and can be obtained when needed. Access to reliable and accurate data and its documentation is critical to performing duties and functions, must be compatible with diverse applications, and open to all. This enables Caltrans to evolve P&MP's capability to analyze and transform data into knowledge, enhance management of transportation programs and, in conjunction with staff development, leverage tools that support this goal. Cal-ITP's work to bring all transit agencies on the General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) data standard will support community-based users in developing tools and resources for transit users, and it will also provide grant managers with important compliance and performance information to ensure that transit needs are being met across the state.

Strategy 5.1.

Implement California's Open Data Policy, including inventorying, cleaning, and publishing all public data sets, and taking actions to maximize system interoperability and information accessibility using open standards and programmatic (automated) data access.

Strategy 5.2.

Develop and implement a data literacy and analytics training program at Caltrans that supports data stewards and analysts, teaches or amplifies their data skills, and helps them manage, visualize, and publish their data sets and identify and resolve data problems.

Strategy 5.3

Increase the number of data analysts, data scientists, and data engineers and resource them with state-of-the-art tools.

Strategy 5.4.

Create and implement a process to engage with data consumers to solicit help in identifying data sets of value to the public, prioritizing the release of public datasets, and determining the most usable and appropriate formats for release.

Strategy 5.5.

Nurture and grow internal and external partnerships supporting a "collect once, use numerous times" (COUNT) data creation approach that maximizes data usability and value.

ALIGNMENT TO THE CALTRANS STRATEGIC PLAN

While developing the five goals of the Strategic Plan, the team ensured that each goal aligned with and supported the Caltrans 2020 — 2024 Strategic Plan (CTSP). The table below shows the alignment between the P&MP SP and CTSP:

Caltrans Goals	P&MP Strategic Plan Goals
Safety first	P&MP supports "Safety first" through all Goals as the Program seeks to develop products and services of the highest quality.
Cultivate excellence	P&MP supports "Cultivate excellence" through Goal 1 which seeks to attract and retain a diverse and highly qualified workforce as well as Goal 5 which pursues the development of data literacy skills within the Program for new hires and existing staff.
Enhance and connect the multimodal transportation network	P&MP supports "Enhance and connect the multimodal transportation network" through Goal 2, which aims to develop a transparent and resilient transportation network that addresses all mobility needs.
Strengthen stewardship and drive efficiency	 P&MP supports "Strengthen stewardship and drive efficiency" through Goal 4 which seeks to improve stakeholder customer service and collaboration through meaningful engagement. Additionally, Goal 3 promotes stewardship, efficiency, and strives to standardize P&MP business processes through the implementation of project management best practices in service of more efficiently managing P&MP resource and funds management. In Goal 5, the Program aims to use data and effective information management as a basic part of decision-making processes and to perform duties and functions.
Lead climate action	P&MP supports "Lead climate action" through Goal 2 which works toward the prioritization and coordination of both climate action and environmental justice with the development of a performance-based project prioritization tool.
Advance equity and livability in all communities	P&MP supports "Advance equity and livability in all communities" through Goal 2, which aims to develop and implement an Equity Index Tool as well as an accessibility tool to analyze and measure California's transportation equity and mobility needs, Goal 3 which looks to standardize and coordinate P&MP business processes and assets in service of solving system issues with an equity lens, and Goal 4 which seeks to elevate and prioritize the needs of underserved communities.

GLOSSARY

Term	Definition	Index
Access (accessibility)	The ability of people to obtain desired goods, services, and activities.	Goal 2; Goal 3
Accessibility (data)	The degree to which data is made available in a useable form (e.g., machine-readable, mappable, documented).	Goal 5
Accessible	A person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use.	Goal 2; Goal 3
Accuracy (data quality)	The extent to which the data provides an unbiased representation of the true value.	Goal 5
Asset (data)	A data asset is a collection of data grouped or brought together for business purposes. A data asset can be a database, a whole system, the output of an application, a document, a web page, or a service built to extract/access data from an application. Each of these are assets due to their ability to have or take a form/structure in which data elements (data bits) are brought together by design.	Goal 3; Goal 5
Business practice(s)	The collection of information relating to the functions of a business. This information can include business plans, administrative bulletins, financial information, financial policies, accounting policies, manufacturing processes and methods, packaging, pricing strategy. It is a general term to describe rules or habits businesses build, or that are required of them, to operate.	Goal 2
Business process(es)	All structured steps a business takes in sequence to complete a customer's request, regardless of how many organizational units or departments that request crosses. In more abstract environments, business processes can be defined as a set of activities that accomplish an organizational goal. Business processes may or may not be visible to the customers. For every business process, there is a customer and a performer. Once we get to know a customer, we can streamline business processes by anticipating a customer's request. Once we have streamlined business processes, we can regroup them to achieve policy objectives.	Goal 3

Term	Definition	Index
California's Open	In March of 2019, California published an Open Data Policy to support this commitment statewide. At a high level, the policy requires state entities to:	
	 Prioritize and make data broadly available via open data portals under an open license, non-proprietary formats, and accompanied by documentation and metadata 	Goal 5
Data Policy	Create and maintain a data inventory	
	 Ensure that data is appropriately protected commensurate with privacy and confidentiality risks 	
	The policy is located here: https://data.ca.gov/pages/california- open-data-policy.	
Climate action	An effort that mitigates climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and/or an effort that strengthens our capability to withstand and recover from the impacts from climate change.	Goal 2
Corporate data	Data assets that have been prioritized for data governance, based on their value to Caltrans, its customers, and stakeholders. Wherever there is a lack of attention to data standardization, documentation, quality management, and coordination there is introduced inefficiency and risk to the Caltrans, its customers and stakeholders.	Goal 3; Goal 5
COUNT approach	A best practice of data stewardship that maximizes usability and value where data is collected once and used numerous times.	Goal 4
Customer service	The support offered to customers — both before and after the use of products or services — that creates an easy and convenient experience. Customer support is more than providing answers; it is representative of the brand and promise Caltrans makes to its customers. Customers can be internal or external to Caltrans and can include immediate teammates. Part of quality customer service is understanding the perspective and needs of the customer to best anticipate and tailor responses to meet their needs as well as organizational goals as we streamline our business processes	Goal 4
Data steward	A member of the workforce who is formally assigned (a role) and entrusted to be accountable for business (non-technical) responsibilities, ensuring effective control and use of data and information assets.	Goal 5

Term	Definition	Index
Dataset(s)	A collection of data elements prepared for posting on a data portal or sharing with others. May be provided in various formats including comma-separated-values (CSV) file, spreadsheet, document, KML, shapefile, file geodatabase, and API.	Goal 4; Goal 5
Engagement	The processes, methods, and activities whereby Caltrans shares transportation planning information and actively solicits input from a wide range of stakeholders and constituents (see also "meaningful engagement" and "outreach").	Goal 1; Goal 2; Goal 4
Environmental justice	The fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and income with respect to the development, adoption, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.	Goal 2
Equity	Fairness and the quality of being fair; in order for equal outcomes to be achieved, people may need different resources, especially within transportation. The quality of being fair and impartial.	Goal 2; Goal 3
Equity Index Suite	The Equity Index Suite will be developed initially as a pilot. Primarily, this pilot research will demonstrate how quantitative analysis and data-driven methodology can be used by the Caltrans to identify underserved communities statewide based on a series of transportation and equity indicators. Second, this pilot research endeavor will give Caltrans a process which produces a comparable, benchmark metric that can be used to rank and prioritize projects through an equity lens.	Goal 2
Innovative Coordination	The practice of harnessing technology to streamline work necessary to facilitate collaboration (Smart Sheets, Teams, etc.).	Goal 3
Interoperability (data)	The ability to share or exchange common data elements.	Goal 5
Management (of information or data)	Acquisition, cleaning, control, protection, delivery, and enhancement of the value of data.	Goal 5

Term	Definition	Index
Meaningful engagement	The processes, methods, and activities whereby Caltrans shares transportation planning information and actively solicits, considers, and incorporates input from a wide range of stakeholders and constituents. Engagement can only be considered "meaningful" if the solicitor of input demonstrates that input received is considered with an equity lens and incorporated in a way that has influenced the planning process or decision making. The party engaged is the only party that can truly say whether the engagement process has been meaningful for them. As such, it is important to continuously check-in with those providing input to see if the engagement," "outreach," and "customer service").	Goal 4
Open data	Open data is public data collected by the state through its routine business activities and published in a format that is easy to search, download, and combine with other data sets from other sources. It does not include private or confidential data about individuals.	Goal 5
Outreach	The processes, methods, and activities whereby Caltrans shares transportation policy and planning information with a wide range of stakeholders and constituents. Outreach is not the same thing as engagement as outreach does not include the solicitation of input (see also "meaningful engagement" and "engagement").	Goal 1; Goal 2; Goal 4
Resilient (resilience)	The capacity of any entity — an individual, a community, an organization, or a natural system — to prepare for disruptions, recover from shocks and stresses, and adapt and grow from a disruptive experience.	Goal 2
Succession planning	A strategy for passing on leadership roles to employees. It ensures that P&MP continues to run smoothly after members move on from the workforce.	Goal 1
System issues	An issue that is dynamic in nature and is interdependent on a number of variables controlled by a variety of diverse interests or forces, and typically manifests in societal or cultural impacts.	Goal 3
Transparent	Information about the network is intentionally shared outside of P&MP in an effort to build trust, to benefit the organization, its workforce, and the public.	Goal 2

Term	Definition	Index
Transportation equity	The fair distribution of transportation benefits and burdens, outcomes, modes, and resources for the entire population regardless of race, ability, age, gender, social standing, or any other factor. Transportation equity analysis can be challenging due to the various types of equity and ways to measure and categorize impacts and people.	Goal 2
Transportation network	The comprehensive package of all systems and modes that can be used for traveling from one destination to another.	Goal 2
Underserved communities	Underserved communities refer to 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.	Goal 1; Goal 4
VMT (vehicle miles traveled)	The number of miles traveled by motor vehicles on roadways in a given area over a given time period.	Goal 2
Workforce	The existing group of people engaged or available for work in P&MP.	Goal 1