

# Driving Change to Modernize Caltrans

In Caltrans' early days, our main role was to build highways, but times have changed, and so have our state's transportation needs. Transportation is evolving, and we need to evolve with it. We took time to look closely at our department. We asked others to do the same, and those reviews helped us realize that we needed a new mission, vision, and goals so we can become an even better transportation department for California's people and environment.

*"Asking others to publicly critique one's own operations certainly takes guts."*

~ Assembly Transportation Committee Chair  
Bonnie Lowenthal, March 5, 2014, California State  
Assembly Transportation Committee Hearing

## A Call for Modernization

To further the in-depth review of our operations, the California State Transportation Agency commissioned the [State Smart Transportation Initiative](#) to provide an external assessment of our practices. SSTI, housed at the University of Wisconsin, promotes transportation practices that advance environmental sustainability and equitable economic development, while maintaining high standards of governmental efficiency and transparency. SSTI released their report in late January. It included the results from more than 100 interviews with people inside and outside of Caltrans, and it identified many ways to modernize our department. The SSTI report was critical of Caltrans in some areas, but it also validated changes we had already started in our 2012 Program Review.

# New Mission,

## A Critical Look from Inside

Caltrans employees must make good business decisions and be good stewards of taxpayers' dollars. We must also foster a culture of professionalism and ethics throughout our ranks, and we must embrace change and sustainability. We are committed to transparency and improving the way we do business. In early 2012, we undertook the [Caltrans Program Review](#). The review was a critical internal look at how we do business. We also asked our external transportation partners to critique us. Through the review, we found ways to be more effective and efficient. Some of the changes that came from the Program Review include:

- Developing the Caltrans *Mile Marker* to improve communication and transparency on departmental performance in achieving key goals.
- Creating the Office of Enterprise Risk Management to help managers identify potential issues and possible solutions to become more effective and efficient.

We are integrating the recommendations from the final Program Review and the SSTI reports into a single effort to modernize Caltrans. We've made some changes, but others, such as developing sustainable funding mechanisms, will take more time. As we improve, transparency and accountability will be cornerstones of our operations, and we will appropriately measure our performance and share it with the public, legislators, and the media.

## New Mission, New Vision

The Caltrans Executive Board, which includes the Caltrans Director, Chief Deputy Director, Deputy Directors, and District Directors, worked with the California State Transportation Agency and used employee input to craft our new mission and vision statements that better describe our activities and our purpose. While our old mission statement, "Caltrans improves mobility" was concise, it did not truly reflect all of Caltrans' diverse transportation expertise. Our new mission statement says what

we do, why we exist, and exactly what kind of transportation system we will deliver to the people of California: We “provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California’s economy and livability.”

Similarly, our new vision statement says what we want to become and that we want to be seen as “a performance-driven, transparent and accountable organization that values its people, resources and partners, and meets new challenges through leadership, innovation and teamwork,” and our values: integrity, commitment, teamwork, and innovation support our mission and vision.

*(continued on page 36)*



**Mission**

Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California’s economy and livability

**Vision**

A performance-driven, transparent and accountable organization that values its people, resources and partners, and meets new challenges through leadership, innovation and teamwork

Revised April 2011

# Vision, Goals

*Meeting new challenges through leadership, innovation, and teamwork is part of Caltrans’ new vision.*

