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2025 Southeast Bakersfield
TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ROADMAP

This project was funded by the Sustainable Transportation Equity Project, or STEP, a [California Climate Investments](#), a statewide initiative that has put billions of cap-and-trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment — particularly in disadvantaged communities.



Executive Summary

Southeast Bakersfield stands at a transformative moment in its transportation future. The Southeast Bakersfield Transportation Equity Roadmap represents a groundbreaking initiative that fundamentally reimagines how transportation systems can serve all community members equitably and sustainably. Led by the Circle of Life Development Foundation (COLDF) aka MLKCommUNITY Initiative, in collaboration with the City of Bakersfield Economic and Community Development and community partners, this comprehensive roadmap marks the first time in Southeast Bakersfield's history that community voices, technical expertise, and institutional resources have united to address systemic transportation inequities.

This roadmap, supported by the California Climate Investments Sustainable Transportation Equity Project (STEP), goes beyond traditional transportation planning to create pathways for economic opportunity and environmental sustainability. Through extensive community engagement, it addresses longstanding disparities that have historically limited residents' access to jobs, education, healthcare, and essential services.

Vision Statement

To create an equitable, integrated, and sustainable transportation system that enhances mobility, promotes economic opportunity, improves environmental health, and strengthens quality of life for all Southeast Bakersfield residents through community-driven solutions and lasting partnerships.

Vision Framework

The Vision Framework for Southeast Bakersfield's Transportation Equity Roadmap establishes four interconnected pillars that together create a comprehensive foundation for transformative change. These pillars—Equity in Motion, Community Empowerment, Economic Vitality, and Environmental Justice—reflect the community's holistic understanding that transportation equity extends far beyond mere mobility. Each pillar addresses critical aspects of systemic change, recognizing that true transportation equity must simultaneously advance social justice, economic opportunity, environmental health, and community self-determination. This framework, developed through extensive community engagement and grounded in local experiences, serves as both a guiding philosophy and a practical structure for decision-making. It ensures that every initiative, investment, and policy decision advances multiple community priorities while maintaining focus on the fundamental goal of creating an accessible, affordable, and sustainable transportation system that serves all residents. By interweaving these four pillars, the framework creates a resilient structure that can adapt to changing circumstances while maintaining its core commitment to equity and community empowerment.

Equity in Motion

Transportation as a bridge to opportunity

- Ensuring all residents have reliable access to economic opportunities
- Creating affordable, accessible transportation options for every community member
- Building inclusive decision-making processes that amplify community voices
- Removing barriers to mobility for underserved populations

Community Empowerment

Residents as architects of change

- Fostering community leadership in transportation planning
- Building local capacity for long-term engagement
- Creating pathways for direct community influence on decisions
- Establishing sustainable community ownership models

Economic Vitality

Transportation as an economic engine

- Connecting residents to employment opportunities
- Supporting local business development near transit
- Creating transportation-related job opportunities
- Reducing household transportation costs

Environmental Justice

Health and sustainability for future generations

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions through improved transit options
- Creating green spaces integrated with transportation infrastructure
- Improving air quality through sustainable transportation solutions
- Building climate resilience in vulnerable communities

Strategic Objectives

The roadmap pursues four interconnected strategic objectives designed to create comprehensive, sustainable change in Southeast Bakersfield's transportation landscape:

1. **Transportation System Enhancement:** This objective focuses on creating a reliable, accessible, and integrated transportation network that serves all residents.
2. **Economic Opportunity Advancement:** The roadmap prioritizes transportation's role in economic mobility and community prosperity.
3. **Environmental Justice and Sustainability:** Environmental objectives focus on creating healthier communities.
4. **Community Empowerment and Governance:** This objective ensures lasting community control and influence.

Implementation Approach

This roadmap serves as both a strategic action plan and a living document that will guide investment, inform policy, and ensure accountability. Through its integrated approach to transportation, economic development, and environmental justice, it establishes a foundation for lasting change in Southeast Bakersfield. The accompanying Transportation Equity Toolkit provides practical guidance, actionable strategies, and resources to address local transportation challenges, promote equity, and improve access to opportunity and essential services.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
Vision Statement.....	1
Vision Framework.....	1
Strategic Objectives	2
Implementation Approach	2
Chapter 1: Introduction and Background	6
Statement of Truth.....	6
Project Overview	6
Geographic Focus Area	6
Key Findings	7
Historical Context and Current Challenges	7
Current Transportation Landscape Assessment.....	8
Service Analysis.....	10
Chapter 2: Community Engagement Process	12
Engagement Methodology	12
Project Team	12
City of Bakersfield Economic Development.....	12
CALSTART.....	13
ShePower San Joaquin Valley Community Shared Mobility.....	13
Jerusalem Mission Church and Kingdom Activists	13
Transitional Youth Mobilizing for Change (TYM4Change).....	14
Othering & Belonging Institute (OBI).....	14
Project Consultation.....	14
Equity Mobility Neighborhood Advisory Committee (EMNAC).....	14
Chapter 3: Strategic Recommendations and Implementation Framework	16
Overview	16
Recommendation 1: Enhance Transportation Access and Mobility	16
Recommendation 2: Prioritize Environmental Justice, Health, and Community Sustainability ...	17
Recommendation 3: Support Economic Opportunity	18

Chapter 4: Implementation Strategy.....20

- Overview20
 - Phase 1: Foundation Building - Quick Wins and Early Actions20
 - Phase 2: Capacity Building and System Enhancement21
 - From Community Voice to Community Action.....22

Conclusion: From Vision to Action - A Community-Driven Transportation Equity Framework .24

- The Power of Integrated Tools for Change24
- Transportation Equity Toolkit: A Living Resource24
- Building a Legacy of Change27

Transportation Equity Toolkit28

Appendix A: Southeast Bakersfield Community Profile29

Demographics and Transportation Patterns29

Appendix B: Comprehensive Engagement Methodology32

Appendix C: Community Engagement Plan36

Appendix D: Community Engagement Report37

Appendix E: Comprehensive Survey Data38

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Ultimately, achieving transportation equity requires a multifaceted approach that goes beyond short-term investments and addresses the systemic inequities embedded in our transportation systems.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

Statement of Truth

By Dr. Arleana Waller, Founder and Visionary, Circle of Life Development Foundation



The profound impact of historical inequities on transportation access and mobility in our communities cannot be ignored. Many of California's most disadvantaged neighborhoods continue to bear the consequences of discriminatory policies and disinvestment, resulting in systemic barriers to transportation equity.

Understanding the current challenges requires acknowledging this legacy of inequitable policies and investments. Decades of neglect, redlining, and discriminatory land use practices have entrenched barriers that limit mobility, deepen economic hardship, and perpetuate social inequities. This legacy underscores the urgency of addressing these structural issues through intentional, community-centered approaches.

While a \$200,000 investment in community engagement is an important step, such funding alone cannot dismantle deeply rooted inequities in our transportation systems. Achieving comprehensive, lasting solutions demands sustained investments and a long-term commitment to equity, accessibility, and inclusion. Only through ongoing, collaborative, and equitable efforts can we work to reduce these systemic inequities.

By prioritizing transportation equity and reducing carbon emissions, we aim to improve air quality in Southeast Bakersfield and foster a healthier, more sustainable environment for all. Investing in carbon reduction initiatives will not only benefit the present generation but also create a legacy of sustainability for generations to come.

Project Overview

Geographic Focus Area

The Roadmap focuses on a compact 1.7-square-mile area in Southeast Bakersfield, spanning three census tracts and addressing the complex challenges faced by this underserved community. This area is predominantly Latinx, comprising approximately 79% of the population, with Black residents representing another 10%. The community also includes a significant number of non-English speakers and undocumented residents, underscoring the diversity and unique needs within this population.

- **1.7 SQUARE MILE RADIUS IN SOUTHEAST BAKERSFIELD**
- **TOP 5% OF DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES (CALENVIROSCREEN 3.0)**
- **SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CONCERNS**
- **LIMITED TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE**
- **FRAGMENTED TRANSIT CONNECTIVITY**

Classified among the top 5% of disadvantaged communities according to CalEnviroScreen 3.0, this area confronts a range of socio-economic hardships. The median household income is approximately \$34,000 per year, designating the community as low-income. Moreover, an alarming 45% of residents live below the poverty line, illustrating the pervasive economic challenges and the daily struggle for financial stability.

Key Findings

Through extensive community engagement reaching over **600 residents**, our assessment revealed:

1. Transportation Patterns

- 80% of households own cars but face maintenance challenges
- 20% rely on public transportation as primary mode
- 60% serve as primary caretakers for non-drivers
- Significant job opportunities lost due to transportation barriers

2. Economic Indicators

- Approximately 50% earn less than \$50,000 annually
- 45% of residents below poverty line
- Median household income of \$34,000
- High transportation cost burden relative to income

3. Community Engagement

- 81% willingness to participate in future planning based on trusted messengers
- 47% felt communities were heard in these processes
- 49% believed individual input would lead to action
- Strong desire for improved transit reliability

Historical Context and Current Challenges

Historical Development Patterns

Infrastructure Development Legacy (1950s-1990s)

The transportation landscape of Southeast Bakersfield has been significantly shaped by historical infrastructure decisions that have created lasting impacts on community mobility and access. During the post-war period, major transportation infrastructure projects, particularly highway construction, often divided established neighborhoods and created physical barriers within the community. These decisions were typically made without meaningful community input or consideration of their long-term social and economic impacts on residents.

The placement of highways and major arterial roads frequently prioritized regional connectivity over local community needs, resulting in the disruption of existing neighborhood patterns and the creation of physical barriers that continue to impact resident mobility today. For example, the construction of major thoroughfares created challenges for pedestrian movement, separated residential areas from commercial centers, and contributed to the isolation of certain neighborhoods from economic opportunities.

Transit System Evolution

The development of public transit services in Southeast Bakersfield historically followed a pattern that often underserved the community's needs. Initial transit routes were designed with limited community input, resulting in service patterns that didn't fully align with resident travel needs or work schedules. The focus on automotive infrastructure during the latter half of the 20th century led to decreased investment in public transit options, creating a legacy of limited service frequency, coverage gaps, and inadequate facilities that continues to impact the community today.

Land Use and Zoning Impact

Historical zoning decisions and land use policies have played a crucial role in shaping Southeast Bakersfield's current transportation challenges. The separation of residential areas from commercial and employment centers, combined with industrial zoning decisions, created patterns of development that necessitate longer travel distances for basic needs and services. These decisions have particularly impacted low-income residents and those who rely on public transit, walking, or cycling as their primary modes of transportation.

Current Transportation Landscape Assessment

Traditional Transit Infrastructure

Bus Stop Facilities (127 Total):

- **Sheltered Stops:** 42 (33%)
- **Bench-only Stops:** 53 (42%)
- **Sign-only Stops:** 32 (25%)

Safety Features:

- **Adequate Lighting:** 57 stops (45%)
- **Security Cameras:** 12 stops (9%)
- **Emergency Call Boxes:** 8 stops (6%)
- **Clear Sightlines:** 89 stops (70%)

ADA Compliance:

- **Fully Compliant:** 74 stops (58%)

- **Partially Compliant:** 32 stops (25%)
- **Non-Compliant:** 21 stops (17%)

Clean Transportation Infrastructure

Electric Vehicle (EV) Support:

- **Level 2 Chargers:** 8 locations (15 ports)
- **DC Fast Chargers:** 2 locations
- **Public Charging Coverage:** 35% of service area
- **Average Utilization Rate:** 45%

Transit Fleet Composition:

- **Electric Buses:** 2 (5.7%)
- **CNG Buses:** 18 (51.4%)
- **Diesel Buses:** 15 (42.9%)
- **Planned Electric Additions:** 12 by 2025

Active Transportation Network

1. Pedestrian Infrastructure

Sidewalk Network (Total: 47.3 miles):

- **Complete Sidewalks:** 34.5 miles (73%)
- **Partial Sidewalks:** 8.2 miles (17%)
- **Missing Sidewalks:** 4.6 miles (10%)

Crosswalks and Intersections (85 Major):

- **Modernized Signals:** 27 (32%)
- **Pedestrian Countdown Signals:** 42 (49%)
- **Audible Signals:** 15 (18%)
- **High-Visibility Markings:** 37 (44%)

2. Bicycle and Micromobility

Traditional Bike Infrastructure:

- **Protected Bike Lanes:** 0.8 miles
- **Painted Bike Lanes:** 1.5 miles
- **Shared Routes:** 3.2 miles

- **Off-Street Paths:** 0.6 miles

Clean Mobility Options:

- **E-Bike Share:** 25 vehicles, 5 stations
- **Electric Scooters:** 50 units, 12 parking areas
- **Monthly Alternative Transport Users:** 435
- **Service Area Coverage:** 65%

Service Analysis

Transit Operations

Coverage Metrics:

- **Population within 1/4 mile of transit:** 68%
- **Average Walking Distance to Stops:** 0.4 miles
- **Route Coverage of Key Destinations:** 55%
- **Evening/Weekend Service:** 40% of weekday levels

Performance:

- **On-Time Performance:** 72%
- **Average Wait Times:** 23 minutes
- **Service Gaps:** 4 identified areas
- **Frequency:** 35-45 minute headways

Clean Mobility Programs

Access Programs:

1. Clean Cars 4 All

- **Program Participants:** 75
- **Vehicles Deployed:** 45
- **Waitlist:** 120 residents
- **Average Subsidy:** \$9,500

2. EV Car Share

- **Vehicles Available:** 6
- **Service Locations:** 3

- **Monthly Users:** 85
- **Program Satisfaction:** 87%

Economic Access and Equity

Transportation Costs (Household Impact):

- **Average Transportation Costs:** 15% of income
- **Vehicle Ownership Costs:** \$5,800/year
- **Transit Pass Costs:** \$780/year
- **Alternative Transport Costs:** \$420/year

Support Programs:

- **EV Purchase Incentives:** 75 households
- **Charging Cost Subsidies:** 120 users
- **Transit Subsidies:** 450 participants
- **Bike Share Subsidies:** 85 members

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Chapter 2: Community Engagement Process

Engagement Methodology

The Southeast Bakersfield Transportation Equity Project employed a comprehensive engagement strategy designed to ensure meaningful community participation and lasting impact. Our approach focused on three interconnected elements: information sharing, active participation, and thorough documentation.

Strategic Approach

Our multi-faceted engagement strategy reached over 600 community members through:

1. **Information-Sharing and Communication**
 - Regular public meetings and town halls reaching 80+ participants per session
 - Dedicated project website with resource library
 - Multi-platform social media engagement
 - Strategic partnerships with local media
 - Targeted outreach materials distributed within the community
2. **Active Participation Mechanisms**
 - Community workshops and focus groups
 - Interactive mapping exercises
 - Surveys in English (547 responses) and Spanish (50 responses)
 - Community action teams
 - Volunteer engagement programs
3. **Documentation and Evaluation**
 - Systematic progress tracking
 - Multi-media documentation of activities and outcomes
 - Regular performance evaluation
 - Community feedback analysis
 - Impact assessment to measure project effectiveness

Project Team

Overview

The Southeast Bakersfield Transportation Equity Roadmap represents a collaborative effort that brings together diverse stakeholders, each contributing unique expertise and perspectives. This intentional partnership structure ensures comprehensive community representation and technical capability in addressing complex transportation equity challenges.

City of Bakersfield Economic and Community Development

Role: Co-lead for STEP Application

Responsibilities:

- Strategic direction and oversight
- Inter-agency coordination
- Municipal alignment
- Resource allocation
- Implementation support

Key Contributions:

- Policy framework development
- Resource coordination
- Strategic partnerships
- Project sustainability

Community-Based Organization Partners

CALSTART

Role: Clean Transportation Technical Lead

Focus: Sustainable mobility solutions and Implementation planning

ShePowerRole: Community Engagement and Empowerment Lead

Expertise:

- Women’s empowerment and educational programming
- Community advocacy and leadership development

Project Contributions:

- Integration of gender equity
- Community outreach and youth engagement

San Joaquin Valley Community Shared Mobility

Role: Mobility Solutions Lead

Expertise:

- Shared mobility systems and accessibility planning
- Service integration and community transportation options

Project Focus:

- Enhancing transportation alternatives and connectivity

Jerusalem Mission Church

Role: Community Representatives

Strengths:

- Deep community connections and local knowledge
- Trust-building and grassroots mobilization

Project Role:

- Representing community voices and needs
- Supporting program feedback and implementation

Transitional Youth Mobilizing for Change (TYM4Change)

Role: Youth Engagement Lead

Focus Areas:

- Youth development (ages 16-24), skills-building, and community action

Project Contributions:

- Advocating youth perspectives and skills development

Technical Support

Othering & Belonging Institute (OBI)

Technical Assistance Provider

Role: Technical Assistance Provider

Expertise:

- Advancing social justice, inclusive policy development, and equity frameworks

Project Role:

- Providing technical guidance, equity assessments, and policy review

Project Consultation

Veronica Smith, Lead Consultant

Expertise: Community development, stakeholder engagement, and project management

Support Provided:

- Oversight of operations and strategy development
- Guiding implementation efforts

Equity Mobility Neighborhood Advisory Committee (EMNAC)

Committee Purpose

EMNAC serves as a cornerstone of community-driven transportation equity, bringing together diverse perspectives to guide the STEP initiative and ensure inclusive decision-making.

Committee Composition

1. **Max Bacerra** – *Development Expert*
 - Expertise in urban planning, infrastructure, and land use
2. **Tina Bengston** – *Community Advocate*
 - Focus on social justice, community organizing, and equity advocacy
3. **Jovon Dangerfield** – *Media Representative*
 - Public engagement and media strategy to amplify community voices
4. **Emprezz Nontzikelelo** – *Grassroots Organizer*

- Mobilization of residents and social equity programming
5. **Illene Sanchez** – *Community Voice*
 - Representing Latino community perspectives and local needs
 6. **Pastor Freddie Thomas** – *Faith Leader*
 - Providing spiritual guidance and advocating for resident dignity

Committee Impact

Key Contributions:

- Amplifying community voices and guiding strategic decisions
- Overseeing implementation and monitoring progress
- Ensuring accountability throughout the project

Outcomes Achieved:

- Enhanced community engagement and inclusive decision-making
- Equitable program design and sustainable implementation

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Chapter 3: Strategic Recommendations and Implementation Framework

Overview

The following recommendations provide a framework for improving transportation equity in Southeast Bakersfield. These recommendations are designed to be scalable and adaptable, allowing for implementation based on available resources, funding opportunities, and community priorities. While comprehensive in scope, these recommendations can be implemented incrementally, with each component contributing to the broader goal of transportation equity.

Recommendation 1: Enhance Transportation Access and Mobility

Current Context

Southeast Bakersfield's transportation system currently faces several challenges, including limited service frequency, gaps in coverage, and reliability issues. Community feedback indicates that 20% of residents rely on public transit as their primary mode of transportation, with many experiencing extended wait times and limited service hours that impact their ability to access jobs, healthcare, and essential services.

Recommended Approaches

Transit Service Improvements

We recommend a phased approach to transit service enhancement that can be scaled based on available resources. Priority improvements could include:

- Identifying high-demand routes for increased frequency during peak hours
- Exploring opportunities for flexible service options during off-peak times
- Implementing targeted schedule adjustments to better align with major employer shifts
- Developing partnerships with employers and institutions for shared service solutions

Implementation of these improvements could begin with pilot programs on key routes, allowing for evaluation and adjustment before broader implementation. This approach minimizes initial resource requirements while demonstrating impact and building support for expanded services.

Multi-modal Connectivity

Recognizing budget constraints, we recommend an incremental approach to improving multi-modal connections:

- Starting with low-cost improvements such as enhanced signage and wayfinding
- Identifying strategic locations for mobility hubs that can be developed in phases
- Prioritizing bike and pedestrian improvements in high-traffic areas
- Exploring additional partnerships with shared mobility providers to expand transportation options

These improvements can be implemented gradually as funding becomes available, with each phase building on previous improvements to create a more connected network.

Recommendation 2: Prioritize Environmental Justice, Health, and Community Sustainability

Current Context

Southeast Bakersfield experiences disproportionate environmental impacts from transportation infrastructure, with higher levels of air pollution and limited access to green spaces. Community members have expressed strong interest in environmental improvements that support mobility, public health, and food security. The recent community engagement process has highlighted opportunities to integrate transportation improvements with community-based environmental initiatives, particularly through the development of community gardens and cooperative environmental projects.

Recommended Approaches

Environmental Impact Reduction and Community Green Spaces

We recommend developing integrated spaces that combine transportation access with community environmental benefits:

- Identifying strategic locations for community gardens near transit stops and along active transportation routes
- Creating multi-use spaces that serve as both transit waiting areas and green spaces
- Developing walking and biking paths that connect residential areas to community gardens
- Installing bike racks and rest areas that support garden access and maintenance

These integrated spaces can start small and expand based on community interest and resource availability. Initial pilot projects could focus on:

- Converting vacant lots near bus stops into productive green spaces
- Installing basic garden infrastructure with room for future expansion
- Creating simple shade structures that serve both transit users and gardeners
- Developing basic wayfinding systems connecting transportation routes to garden spaces

Community Cooperative Initiatives

Building on the community garden foundation, we recommend exploring cooperative environmental programs:

- Establishing a community-run composting program that reduces waste and provides garden resources
- Creating a tool-sharing program for garden maintenance and transportation (shared bikes, carts, etc.)

- Developing a seed library and plant exchange program at transit hubs
- Organizing community workdays that combine garden maintenance with transportation infrastructure improvements

Health and Environmental Programs

Food Security and Transportation Access

We recommend integrating food access considerations into transportation planning:

- Creating direct transit routes between residential areas and community gardens
- Developing mobile market programs using clean transportation options
- Establishing produce pickup points at major transit stops
- Supporting bike-based food delivery programs

Educational Integration

Recommended educational components include:

- Developing environmental education programs at garden-transit hubs
- Creating signage about environmental benefits and opportunities
- Organizing workshops on sustainable transportation and urban agriculture
- Supporting youth programs that combine transportation safety with garden education

Recommendation 3: Support Economic Opportunity

Current Context

Transportation barriers significantly impact economic opportunities for Southeast Bakersfield residents, with many reporting missed job opportunities due to limited transit access. Current data shows that 45% of residents live below the poverty line, making affordable transportation access crucial for economic mobility.

Recommended Approaches

Access to Employment

We recommend focusing on cost-effective strategies to improve job access:

- Identifying key employment centers for targeted transit improvements
- Developing partnerships with major employers for transportation solutions
- Creating pilot programs for job-focused transit services
- Exploring carpool and vanpool programs

These approaches can be implemented incrementally, starting with partnerships and pilot programs that demonstrate value and build support for expanded services.

Workforce Development

Recommended workforce initiatives include:

- Creating training programs through existing educational institutions
- Developing partnerships with transportation-related employers
- Identifying apprenticeship opportunities in transportation services
- Exploring grant funding for job training programs and youth paid interns

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Chapter 4: Implementation Strategy

Overview

The implementation strategy for the Southeast Bakersfield Transportation Equity Roadmap provides a flexible, phased approach that acknowledges resource constraints while maximizing impact. This strategy prioritizes actions based on community needs, available resources, and potential for early successes that can build momentum for larger initiatives.

Phase 1: Foundation Building - Quick Wins and Early Actions

Priority Project: Community Garden Transportation Hub

The Community Garden Transportation Hub represents a groundbreaking integration of mobility access and environmental justice in Southeast Bakersfield. This project, born from the STEP planning process and developed through partnership between the Circle of Life Development Foundation and the City of Bakersfield, demonstrates how transportation equity initiatives can create multiple community benefits. The hub will serve as both a vibrant community space and a model for future integrated transportation projects.

Detailed Project Components

Garden Infrastructure and Design

The garden's physical infrastructure is designed to create a welcoming, productive space that serves multiple community needs while supporting transportation access. Central to the design is a series of raised garden beds, strategically arranged to maximize growing space while maintaining clear sightlines and easy pedestrian flow. The layout incorporates ADA-accessible pathways that connect to transit stops and surrounding neighborhoods, ensuring the space is welcoming to all community members.

A small orchard area will feature carefully selected fruit trees that provide shade, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and produce food for the growing food insecurities in the community. The tree placement plan considers both immediate benefits and long-term growth patterns, ensuring that shade coverage enhances rather than interferes with transportation infrastructure. The composting system will be positioned for easy access while minimizing any impact on transit operations.

Transportation Integration Elements

Transportation amenities are seamlessly integrated throughout the site, creating natural connections between garden activities and mobility options. The enhanced bus stop includes weather protection, comfortable seating, and real-time transit information displays. Bicycle parking is positioned to provide secure, visible storage for both garden participants and transit users. Clear wayfinding signage helps visitors navigate the space while learning about both transportation options and garden activities.

Rest areas are strategically placed to serve multiple users – transit passengers waiting for buses, garden volunteers taking breaks, and community members enjoying the space. These areas include shade structures, seating, and informational displays about both transportation services and garden activities. The entire site is designed to demonstrate how green infrastructure can enhance the transit user experience while providing environmental benefits.

Community Programming Framework

The hub's programming strategy focuses on building community capacity while maximizing the site's benefits. Educational workshops will cover both practical gardening skills and broader topics like environmental sustainability and transportation system navigation. The programming schedule is coordinated with transit service times to maximize accessibility and participation.

Leadership development is integrated throughout all activities, with community members taking increasing responsibility for site operations and program delivery. This approach builds local capacity while ensuring long-term project sustainability. Regular community events will bring together diverse participants, fostering social connections and strengthening community bonds.

Phase 2: Capacity Building and System Enhancement

Overview

Building on the successful implementation of the Community Garden Transportation Hub, Phase 2 focuses on expanding impact through capacity building, system enhancement, and program development. This phase leverages lessons learned from Phase 1 to create broader community benefits while strengthening institutional relationships and community leadership.

Transportation-Environmental Integration

Expansion of Garden-Transit Hub Model

The successful integration of transportation and environmental benefits demonstrated in Phase 1 provides a foundation for strategic expansion. Based on community feedback and transit system analysis, we recommend:

Site Development Strategy

The expansion of the garden-transit hub model should prioritize locations that:

- Connect to existing transit routes with high ridership
- Serve areas with limited access to fresh food
- Provide opportunities for active transportation connections
- Demonstrate potential for community partnership

Initial expansion should focus on 2-3 additional sites, selected through a community-driven process that considers:

- Geographic distribution across Southeast Bakersfield

- Proximity to key community facilities
- Potential for environmental impact
- Existing community activity

From Community Voice to Community Action

Our implementation strategy directly responds to the clear mandate from Southeast Bakersfield residents, revealed through comprehensive community engagement reaching nearly 600 community members. Key survey findings drove our implementation framework:

- **Transportation Access:** With 70% of residents relying on automobiles and 20% on public transit, our multi-modal strategy targets a 25% increase in transit ridership and 30% increase in active transportation options.
- **Economic Impact:** Responding to the 45% of residents below the poverty line and 31% missing job opportunities due to transportation barriers, our implementation plan prioritizes connecting 5,000 additional jobs within 45-minute transit trips.
- **Community Leadership:** The strong 81% willingness to participate in future planning has shaped our capacity-building approach, aiming to train 100 community leaders and achieve 75% sustained participation rates.

These statistics tell only part of the story. Through listening sessions, focus groups, and individual interviews, we heard powerful testimonies about missed job opportunities due to unreliable transit, challenges in accessing healthcare, and the desire for safer, more connected communities. As one resident shared during our community engagement: "Transportation is more than just getting from point A to point B—it's about accessing opportunities for a better life."

Our phased implementation approach, beginning with the Community Garden Transportation Hub and expanding through systematic capacity building and system enhancement, directly addresses the priorities identified by residents:

This strategy aligns with our vision, stated in the executive summary, of creating an equitable, integrated, and sustainable transportation system that enhances mobility, promotes economic opportunity, improves environmental health, and strengthens quality of life for all Southeast

Community Priorities → Implementation Response

- Job Access → Enhanced transit connections to employment centers
- Safety Concerns → Integrated design with clear sightlines and lighting
- Environmental Justice → Green infrastructure and emissions reduction
- Economic Opportunity → Skills training and cooperative programs
- Community Voice → Leadership development and decision-making

Bakersfield residents. The implementation framework transforms this vision into actionable steps, guided by the four core focus areas identified in our introduction:

1. Hard Conversations on Systemic Inequities

- Phase 1's quick wins demonstrate immediate commitment to change
- Phase 2's expansion builds systematic improvements
- Both phases prioritize transparent community engagement and feedback

2. Grassroots Community Empowerment

- Leadership development pipeline creates lasting capacity
- Cooperative programs build community ownership
- Decision-making roles ensure continued community voice

3. Economic Equity

- Skills training programs create immediate opportunities
- Infrastructure improvements enhance job access
- Cooperative programs generate economic activity

4. Expanding Access

- Multi-modal integration improves system accessibility
- Technology enhancements make navigation easier
- Service improvements respond to community needs

The success of this implementation strategy relies on the same community engagement that shaped it. As stated by a community member during our Transportation Equity Day: "We need meetings about transportation all year long because it ties into everything we want to change in our community." This implementation framework creates ongoing opportunities for community involvement, ensuring that each phase of development continues to reflect and respond to community needs and aspirations.

Looking forward, this roadmap provides a flexible framework that can adapt to changing circumstances while maintaining focus on core community priorities. The phased approach allows for learning and adjustment, ensuring that each step builds on previous successes and lessons learned. Most importantly, it keeps community voice and leadership at the center of implementation, transforming the extensive feedback gathered through our engagement process into tangible improvements in transportation equity for Southeast Bakersfield.

As we move from planning to action, we remain guided by the fundamental truth expressed in our introduction: achieving comprehensive, lasting solutions demands sustained investments and a long-term commitment to equity, accessibility, and inclusion. This implementation strategy provides the roadmap for that commitment, turning community vision into reality through deliberate, coordinated action.

Conclusion: From Vision to Action - A Community-Driven Transportation Equity Framework

The Southeast Bakersfield Transportation Equity Roadmap represents more than a plan—it embodies our community's collective vision for a transportation system that serves all residents fairly and sustainably. Through the development and implementation of our Transportation Equity Toolkit, which follows this chapter, we create a practical framework for turning this vision into reality.

The Power of Integrated Tools for Change

The Southeast Bakersfield Transportation Equity Roadmap, supported by its comprehensive Transportation Equity Toolkit, represents a new model for community-driven transportation planning. The toolkit, developed through extensive community engagement including canvassing, focus groups, listening sessions, surveys, and direct interviews, transforms the roadmap's vision into actionable change. This dual approach of strategic vision and practical tools ensures that our community's transportation future is both ambitious in scope and grounded in realistic, implementable solutions.

Transportation Equity Toolkit: A Living Resource

Our toolkit serves as a dynamic resource hub that democratizes transportation planning and empowers community action. Through its downloadable handbook and online resource portal, it provides:

Practical Implementation Tools

- Best practices for transportation equity initiatives
- Case studies of successful community interventions
- Step-by-step guides for program development
- Templates for community engagement
- Assessment tools for measuring impact

Community-Informed Resources

- Strategies shaped by local knowledge and experiences
- Solutions tested through community feedback
- Approaches validated by resident input
- Methods refined through stakeholder engagement
- Tools designed for local context

Capacity Building Elements

- Leadership development resources
- Community organizing guides
- Partnership development frameworks
- Project management tools
- Evaluation templates

From Planning to Impact

The success of our transportation equity initiatives relies on three integrated elements:

1. **Strategic Vision** (Roadmap)
 - Clear objectives and priorities
 - Comprehensive framework for change
 - Long-term sustainability focus
 - Equity-centered approach
2. **Practical Tools** (Toolkit)
 - Actionable strategies
 - Implementation guides
 - Best practices
 - Resource templates
3. **Community Leadership** (Implementation)
 - Local capacity building
 - Resident empowerment
 - Stakeholder engagement
 - Continuous feedback

Moving Forward Together

As we transition from planning to implementation, our approach combines:

Immediate Action

- Utilizing toolkit resources for quick wins
- Implementing tested strategies
- Engaging community leaders

- Building early momentum

Sustained Progress

- Regular toolkit updates based on learning
- Continuous community feedback integration
- Adaptive strategy refinement
- Expanding resource library

Lasting Impact

- Building local capacity
- Strengthening community ownership
- Creating replicable models
- Ensuring sustainable change

Call to Action

The toolkit empowers every stakeholder to contribute to transportation equity:

1. For Residents

- Access to proven strategies
- Tools for effective advocacy
- Resources for community organizing
- Guides for program participation

2. For Community Leaders

- Implementation frameworks
- Engagement strategies
- Evaluation tools
- Partnership guides

3. For Local Organizations

- Program development resources
- Collaboration templates
- Impact measurement tools
- Best practice guides

4. For Government Partners

- Policy frameworks
- Community engagement guides
- Implementation strategies

Building a Legacy of Change

Together, the roadmap and toolkit provide a comprehensive framework for creating lasting transportation equity in Southeast Bakersfield. By combining strategic vision with practical tools, informed by deep community engagement and supported by actionable resources, we build not just better transportation systems, but stronger, more equitable communities. This integrated approach ensures that our efforts are both visionary in scope and practical in application, creating pathways to opportunity and prosperity for generations to come.

The journey toward transportation equity requires persistent effort, but with our shared vision, practical toolkit, and committed community leadership, we are well-equipped to create meaningful, lasting change in Southeast Bakersfield. As we move forward, the toolkit will continue to evolve, incorporating new learning, responding to changing needs, and supporting our community's ongoing journey toward transportation justice.

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Transportation Equity Toolkit

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Appendix A: Southeast Bakersfield Community Profile

Demographics and Transportation Patterns

Based on survey data (*the pool of individuals that completed the surveys specific to this project and process*) and community engagement, Southeast Bakersfield presents a diverse community with distinct transportation needs:

Population Characteristics

- **Ethnic/Racial Composition**
 - 58% White American
 - 20% Black or African American
 - 38% Hispanic or Latino
- **Economic Status**
 - Approximately 50% of households earn less than \$50,000 annually
 - Income disparities significantly impact transportation choices
- **Educational Attainment**
 - 30% hold bachelor's degrees or higher
 - Educational access may be affected by transportation barriers

Transportation Usage Patterns

- **Primary Transportation Modes**
 - 70% rely on personal automobiles
 - 20% use public transportation
 - 9% bike or walk
- **Secondary Transportation Modes**
 - 33% automobile
 - 40% public transit
 - 40% bike or walk

Special Considerations

- 60% serve as primary caretakers for non-drivers
- 20% require vision correction
- 6% report mental health conditions requiring consideration

Current Transportation System Assessment

Key Challenges Identified

1. Access and Opportunity Barriers

- Job opportunities lost due to transportation limitations
- Limited access to childcare/daycare facilities
- Long commute times affecting employment options
- Physical isolation from employment centers

2. Public Transit Issues

- Unreliable transit schedules
- Insufficient bus routes
- Schedule misalignment with community needs
- Maintenance concerns

3. Economic Barriers

- Vehicle maintenance costs
- Rising gas prices
- Single-vehicle household limitations
- Transportation costs burden on low-income families

4. Infrastructure Concerns

- Limited connectivity to outskirts
- Congestion issues
- Inadequate active transportation infrastructure
- Geographic isolation of certain communities

Community Engagement Analysis

Participation and Impact

- 31% have participated in transportation decision processes
- 47% felt communities were heard in these processes
- 51% believed communities benefited from engagement
- 81% willing to participate in future surveys

Areas for Improvement

1. Engagement Process

- 25% reported negative experiences in public engagement and lack of trust with government messengers.
- Need for more inclusive and diverse participation through trusted messengers
- Opportunity to leverage high willingness for future participation

2. Trust and Implementation

- 49% believe individual input will lead to action with transparent processes
- 53% confident in community-wide implementation
- Need to bridge gap between engagement and visible outcomes

Equity Considerations

- 80% acknowledge transportation system's impact on equity
- Need for better connections between isolated communities and opportunities
- Importance of affordable and accessible transportation options
- Technology barriers in adopting new mobility solutions

Recommendations for Data Collection

1. Expand survey participation to reach underrepresented groups
2. Develop quantitative and qualitative metrics for program evaluation
3. Track implementation outcomes and community impact
4. Regular assessment of changing transportation needs

Appendix B: Comprehensive Engagement Methodology

Detailed Engagement Framework

Information-Sharing and Communication

In February 2022, the Community Engagement Plan (CEP) was established as part of the Sustainable Transportation Equity Project (STEP) in collaboration with the City of Bakersfield. This CEP marked a significant milestone, setting a new standard for inclusive community engagement in Southeast Bakersfield. Its primary aim was to empower residents, workers, business owners, and property owners to become active, informed participants in the STEP process, ensuring that their voices were central to transportation equity decisions.

Through the CEP, the STEP team focused on fostering a deeper understanding of residents' diverse experiences, strengthening community partnerships, and building trust to drive equitable outcomes for all.

Project Website



The dedicated project webpage, *Rebound the MLKCommunity | COLDf*, served as an essential tool for transparent communication, information dissemination, and community engagement. Key features included:

- **Vision and Purpose:** Provided an overview of the STEP initiative's vision, goals, and objectives in promoting transportation equity and sustainability in Southeast Bakersfield.
- **Desired Outcomes:** Clearly outlined the anticipated impacts and benefits of the STEP project for the community.

- **Updates and Opportunities:** Offered regular updates on milestones, events, and community involvement opportunities.
- **Community Engagement Activities:** Displayed details of upcoming engagement activities, such as public meetings, workshops, surveys, and volunteer opportunities.
- **Resources and Materials:** Hosted project-related resources, including reports, fact sheets, presentations, and multimedia content.
- **Contact Information:** Provided direct contacts for project organizers to facilitate inquiries and feedback.

By centralizing information, the webpage supported transparency, community participation, and active engagement in shaping Southeast Bakersfield's transportation future.

Listening Sessions

The **Kick-Off and First Listening Session**, held on May 31, 2022, was a pivotal event, drawing over 80 community residents and stakeholders. This event launched a platform for open dialogue about transportation equity and participation opportunities. Key components included:

- **Promotion Efforts:** The Circle of Life Development Foundation (COLDF) led promotion efforts with three email blasts, media outreach, and social media engagement, successfully attracting wide community interest.
- **Event Content and Objectives:** Detailed the STEP project's goals and outcomes, encouraging attendees to share perspectives, concerns, and ideas about transportation equity.
- **Participation Opportunities:** Introduced the transportation equity survey, encouraged joining the Equity and Mobility Neighborhood Advisory Committee (EMNAC), and promoted upcoming Rebound the MLKCommunity events.

The session built foundational enthusiasm and engagement for the STEP initiative, fostering a collaborative community spirit.

Social Media

Social media platforms, primarily **Instagram** and **Facebook**, played a strategic role in reaching a broader audience:

- **Information Sharing:** Shared regular updates, project goals, and progress reports.
- **Community Engagement:** Enabled two-way communication, allowing residents to engage with the project team.
- **Event Promotion:** Promoted events such as community meetings and listening sessions, providing essential event details.

This approach effectively broadened community awareness and participation, promoting collaboration and transparency in the STEP project.

Email Listserv

The STEP team utilized an **email listserv** to reach approximately 15,000 recipients, sending updates and newsletters. These communications helped foster ongoing community engagement and support for transportation equity initiatives in Southeast Bakersfield.

Surveys

An **online community survey** enabled the STEP team to capture diverse perspectives from 547 English and 50 Spanish responses. Four core questions guided the survey:

1. **How do you define equity?**
 - Explored personal interpretations of equity within the transportation context.
2. **What is your main mode of transportation?**
 - Identified primary transportation modes, informing targeted infrastructure investments.
3. **Do you feel heard regarding community-impacting issues?**
 - Assessed perceptions of representation in transportation planning.
4. **Have your opportunities been limited due to lack of transportation access?**
 - Identified barriers to essential services, employment, and opportunities.

These insights informed the development of targeted strategies for improving transportation equity.

Transportation Equity Day

Held on November 5, 2022, at Belle Terrace Park, **Transportation Equity Day** attracted over 130 attendees and 20 vendors. Key partners included:

- **CALSTART:** Coordinated the event, promoted through newsletters, and spoke on sustainable transportation.
- **ShePower:** Managed logistics, secured the venue, and led community outreach.
- **City of Bakersfield:** Supported with outreach tables and speakers highlighting city transportation equity efforts.

Individual Interviews

Conducted from January 27 to February 7, 2023, **individual interviews** provided firsthand insights from resident's dependent on public transportation. The interviews covered:

- **Experiences** with public transportation, such as frequency, affordability, and accessibility.
- **Barriers** to access and suggestions for improvements.

The interviews helped shape transportation equity strategies that address the real needs of the community.

Community Focus Groups

Two small **focus groups** hosted with Jerusalem Mission and TYM4Change provided a deeper look into community perspectives. Key lessons included:

- **Empowerment leads to ownership:** Enabling community members to lead initiatives fosters agency.
- **Collaboration enhances impact:** Partnerships amplify resources and expertise.
- **Inclusivity is essential:** Diverse perspectives strengthen engagement and ensure representation.

These focus groups provided valuable insights for refining engagement strategies.

Transportation Equity Webinar

The **Transportation Equity Webinar**, hosted on September 28, 2023, featured expert speakers discussing historical and current transportation equity issues. Notable speakers included:

- **Richard Aviles** on transportation equity history.
- **Simeon Gant** on the Green Tech Education Mobility Hub.
- **Catherine Thao** on the Valley Air ZEV Mobility Pilot Project.
- **Gregg Strakaluse and Zechariah Garcia** on city equity investments.
- **Dr. Arleana Waller** hostess

Though attendance was lower than expected, the webinar provided valuable information, inspired community action, and laid groundwork for future efforts, highlighting the significant digital divide within the community.

Transportation Equity and Education Campaign

In February 2024, the STEP team launched a **Transportation Equity and Education Campaign** using social media, tabling events, and on-ground education to raise awareness. Campaign highlights included:

- **Daily Social Media Posts:** Engaged audiences with graphics, videos, and interactive content.
- **Tabling Events:** Reached residents directly at transit hubs and community centers.

The campaign successfully engaged hundreds, fostering meaningful dialogue and promoting sustainable, equitable transportation solutions in Southeast Bakersfield.

Appendix C: Community Engagement Plan

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Appendix D: Community Engagement Report

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Appendix E: Comprehensive Survey Data

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