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Assessing the Status of Transportation Equity Work in California



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This report assesses equity work within transportation in California by analyzing the expert perspectives of transportation professionals who also identify as Black or people of color. Key findings centered around a distinction between "performative" equity work and "authentic" equity work. Performative equity work privileges the comfort and perspective of dominant groups, reinforces status quo, stays in the realm of rhetoric, and often results in superficial changes only. Authentic equity work centers the experience of Black people and people of color, embraces discomfort, transforms dominant culture, and results in measurable changes to the lives of those historically oppressed. Key recommendations include supporting action-oriented equity work, especially around resource allocation and redistribution of decision-making power to communities. The report includes case studies of how to apply findings to new mobilities and policing, as well as visions for more equitable transportation futures.

Sarah Reboloso McCullough is the Associate Director at the Feminist Research Institute at UC Davis. She is PI on two NSF studies that integrates justice-oriented frameworks from feminist/critical race science studies into STEM graduate education. She researches mobility justice and applies her expertise in ethnographic methods, cultural analysis, and power dynamics to create community-driven research partnerships that span the disciplines, and earned her PhD in Cultural Studies at UC Davis.

C. Sequoia Erasmus has nearly two decades of experience working in communities to promote safer streets for pedestrians and cyclists, improved connection to nature and parks, access to quality education, and an intersectional approach to public health. Her research, focused on assessing equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives in California transportation agencies, helps guide her work as she supports interagency and community-based equity initiatives and policy/funding development.