

## California Department of Transportation

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### CALTRANS' REFORM EFFORT CONTINUES

*Department Announces Significant Progress  
One Year After Call for Sweeping Changes*

**SACRAMENTO** – Caltrans today announced significant progress toward becoming a more modern, efficient, transparent and accountable organization one year after an external department review called for stronger management and performance and a better match between policy goals and transportation investments.

“It was our hope that the January report would not [sit] on the shelf, and we have been gratified to be part of the initial implementation effort,” wrote external department reviewers from State Smart Transportation Initiative in a recent progress report on the status of Caltrans reforms. “These actions all are positive, potentially very powerful initial steps, and both department and agency staff who worked on them deserve credit and thanks.”

The Caltrans Improvement Project is the result of honest assessments that described significant challenges and issued a call for change. Caltrans is committed to working closely with the California State Transportation Agency as it seeks to modernize the department and enhance transportation options in California. Some of the key achievements to date include the following:

#### **Performance Management & Human Resources**

Caltrans has adopted [a new mission, vision, and set of goals](#) that encompasses a larger set of outcomes around economy, livability, and environment in addition to the traditional goals of improving mobility. Further reform efforts focus on accountability, including the release of [new management and employee handbooks](#) and the launch of an [ethics hotline for employees](#)

#### **Smart Investment & Resource Alignment**

In an effort to increase the construction of multimodal local streets and roads, Caltrans [endorsed National Association of City Transportation Officials guidelines](#) that include innovations such as buffered bike lanes and improved pedestrian walkways. Last year, California made the list of the [Top 10 most bike friendly states](#) in the nation. California also launched the \$350 million [Active Transportation Program](#). Meanwhile, [Amtrak California is setting record ridership numbers](#), even as gas prices fall.

#### **Strategic Partnerships & Communication**

To improve communication and community outreach, Caltrans now publishes a [periodic performance journal, The Mile Marker](#), which tracks how Caltrans is performing and where it needs to improve. [Routine YouTube “News Flash” videos](#) go behind the scenes to show how Caltrans is improving transportation in California. Caltrans is increasing partnerships in transportation by focusing on mutual goals and benefits. For example, Caltrans and the San Diego Association of Governments worked extensively with the Coastal Commission to receive one of the largest consolidated permits for multimodal improvements on Interstate 5. Caltrans is also supporting California’s high-speed rail project by integrating the system into state rail planning and working with the Air Resources Board on sustainable freight planning. Numerous outreach efforts to communicate the culture change process underway at the department have also been made, including at the 2014 National Association of City Transportation Officials conference.

#### **Innovation & Sustainability**

In addition to promoting active transportation and public transit, Caltrans is also [embracing sustainability and reduced greenhouse gas emissions](#) strategies to fight climate change. Caltrans and the Transportation Agency are hosting [public](#)

[workshops on the state's low-carbon transit programs](#), which are part of a statewide effort to invest cap and trade proceeds in ways that reduce emissions and improve air quality. Caltrans is also cutting greenhouse gas emissions by improving transit, increasing opportunities for [active transportation](#), and embracing new technology in construction materials, alternative fuels, efficient lighting and renewable energy.

These policy changes are already improving relationships between Caltrans and transportation stakeholders. Caltrans is implementing a new state law that empowers local governments to establish their own standards for local bicycling facilities, rather than relying on a single statewide standard. This allows local agencies the flexibility to make innovative design decisions incorporating alternative modes of transportation, as well as the tools and support necessary to make the best planning and design decisions for their local area

Caltrans is also working to address the safety and mobility needs for all modes of transportation by incorporating the “complete streets” principle into every aspect of what the department does, from the earliest stages of system planning through project delivery and maintenance and operations. This move to integrate this principle into all Caltrans functions and processes includes updating the state’s “Highway Design Manual” to incorporate the idea that streets and transportation systems are made “complete” when they address the needs of all users of the transportation system in a way appropriate to the local community. Caltrans engineers and attorneys are also working together to mitigate risk aversion when considering new, innovative designs.

These improvements are just the beginning. Director Malcolm Dougherty has hired Dr. Steven Cliff as Assistant Director of Sustainability who is helping incorporate sustainability into all programs, policies, and projects. The department’s forthcoming Strategic Plan will incorporate the department’s new objectives with performance measures to improve multi-modal transportation corridors and preserve existing assets with a “fix it first” approach. Caltrans is also testing a performance management method, known as Lean Six Sigma, which improves management by systematically fixing wasteful or unnecessary practices and processes.

For more information on the Caltrans Improvement Project, visit: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/CIP>. A copy of the [Caltrans Improvement Project 2015 Report](#) is attached. The [SSTI follow-up progress report](#) is also attached.

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