



Key Takeaways and Program Highlights

April 25, 2025



Over 400 transportation and urban planning leaders and practitioners dedicated to advancing transportation equity participated in the New York City Department of Transportation's (NYC DOT) second annual Equity in Motion Summit. The event fostered candid conversations in a unique, invite-only setting that brought together diverse perspectives. Attendees convened in New York City from five continents, including 16 countries and over 30 cities, to engage in a full day of programming through several plenaries, panel discussions, and workshops.

Transportation equity is both an iterative process and outcome that leads to all people having unburdened access to reliable and safe transportation. The Summit reinforced transportation equity as a commitment to learning from people's lived experiences alongside data, listening to and working with communities, and implementing solutions that uplift underserved populations.

Building on the legacy of the inaugural event last year, the 2025 Summit advanced three goals:

- Elevate the importance of centering equity in transportation and urban planning.
- Provide space for leaders to exchange best practices.
- Establish partnerships with governments, nonprofits, and industry stakeholders.

For the first time, attendees also participated in StreetTalks, specially curated tours the day before the Summit, which showcased NYC DOT's transformative and innovative on-the-ground projects. NYC DOT practitioners provided insights into congestion pricing, traffic management, bike infrastructure projects, and public realm enhancements on the tours. The day after the Summit, several attendees also joined a guided bike ride through car-free Broadway for NYC DOT's annual Car-Free Earth Day before engaging in workshops, fitness classes, and art activities across the five boroughs.

Opening Plenary

Welcome Remarks. NYC DOT Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez began the day by providing remarks on how the agency has reimagined the public realm to prioritize safety, equity, and reconnecting communities for all people. Among the initiatives the Commissioner highlighted were:

- **Comprehensive Street Redesigns:** Equitable investments into street improvement projects and street redesigns, including increased pedestrian space and bicycle lanes, create safer, accessible streets for all. NYC DOT's recent report, "[Equity and Street Safety: How Communities of Color and Low-Income Communities Have Become Safer](#)" shows how corridors in [Priority Investment Areas](#), like Soundview Avenue in the Bronx, have been made more livable.
- **Community-driven Planning to Reconnect Communities:** NYC DOT has engaged with hundreds of constituents who live along the [Cross-Bronx Expressway](#) and the [Brooklyn-Queens Expressway](#) to build proposals that reconnect communities divided by those highways. A vital piece of that process has been funding community-based organizations to engage local populations, especially multilingually.
- **Release of New Plans:** On the day of the *Equity in Motion* Summit, NYC DOT released "[Connected NYC: A Vision for Safer and More Equitable Streets](#)" and the fourth edition of the "[Street Design Manual](#)" (SDM). Connected NYC provides an overview of the agency's work, including several equity initiatives implemented in areas such as safety, mobility, the public realm, infrastructure, and workforce development. The SDM, a resource for street design standards, guidelines, and policies, similarly includes equity as an essential principle of New York City's street design.



Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez kicked off the 2025 Equity in Motion Summit with welcome remarks.



Director Raquel Díaz Caro delivered remarks representing an international perspective during the Opening Plenary.

International Remarks. Raquel Díaz Caro, the Director of Social Responsibility, Women, and Diversity at Transports Metropolitans de Barcelona (TMB), provided an international perspective on organizational change efforts that can advance equity. She emphasized the importance of developing inclusive organizational cultures, highlighted TMB's initiatives to promote equity and accessibility, and presented three phases of inclusion as a pathway to fostering belonging: compassion, admiration, and normalization.

Keynote Address. Veronica O. Davis, Professional Engineer, the National Practice Director of Planning & Environment for AtkinsRéalis, grounded participants in the work of pursuing change in the transportation field. She highlighted some important approaches that help bring people along and ensure practitioners can effectively advance transportation equity.

- **It's About People:** Leverage narratives alongside statistics to humanize transportation safety and spur action; remember that 39,345 lives lost in 2024 to crashes were preventable.

Simplify Jargon: Use everyday terms so broader audiences grasp and champion equity initiatives (e.g., “Healthy LA” instead of “multimodal transit”).

- **Do Your Part:** Focus on what you can do to advance equity, work hard and be sure to rest, and accept that you may not be the one to get something to the finish line, but that it may get there in the future in part due to the work of you and your team.



Veronica O. Davis presented the keynote address to the full Summit audience about strategies for approaching transportation equity.



Quemuel Arroyo, Tiffany-Ann Taylor, Feniosky Peña-Mora, Naomi Doerner, and Emily Weidenhof (left to right).

“Where We Meet: Collaboration, Equity, and the Future of Transportation.” The Opening Plenary also featured a panel conversation of leaders from academia, advocacy, and the private and public sectors. Panelists shared their perspectives on equity and the challenges and successes of pursuing equity work.

Quemuel Arroyo, Chief Accessibility Officer of the Metropolitan Transportation Agency, co-moderated the discussion, contributing his definition of equity as “giving people the tools...to be successful.” Co-moderator Emily Weidenhof, Assistant Commissioner of the Public Realm at NYC DOT and co-host of NYC DOT’s **Curb Enthusiasm** podcast, added that in a collaborative field such as transportation and planning, work happens in a continuum, noting that professionals are not so much starting work as they are “jumping in.”

Naomi Doerner, Principal at Equivolve, mentioned that equity is an action and a feeling – “we know when we are accepted.” Part of ensuring people feel accepted means using language that is clear to the public. As Feniosky Peña-Mora, Executive Vice President and Dean at Tecnológico de Monterrey, stated, the responsibility lies on the speaker to clearly explain, not on the listener to immediately understand. Likewise, when discussing data, Tiffany-Ann Taylor, Vice President for Transportation at the Regional Plan Association, emphasized that it’s vital to recognize that lived experience can be completely different from what the data “shows.” Ultimately, although equity can be defined differently, language and narrative are crucial tools for connecting with people and promoting a sense of belonging.

The full video recording of the Opening Plenary is available online at **EquityinMotionNYC.info**.

Breakout Sessions

Transportation equity should be viewed as both outcomes and processes. The Summit program was designed to emphasize this point by providing a roadmap for envisioning, creating, implementing, and iterating equitable initiatives. Guiding questions framed the breakout discussions held simultaneously within each session, focusing on how it is that practitioners “ideate,” “co-create,” and “effectuate” for a better transportation landscape.

Session I. Ideate

Guiding Questions

- How do we normalize equity systemically and institutionally?
- How do we envision equitable practices where they do not exist?

Key Takeaways

- **Enhance Culture and Practice:** Equity is an ongoing process and should be baked into systems with a diverse workforce, internal metrics dashboards, and public digital platforms that enhance transparency and feedback.
- **Involve Community Early On:** Create an ongoing dialogue that informs decisions, including bringing accessibility into the early stages of planning to address diverse needs more effectively and build trust.
- **Reflect a Greater Vision:** Transportation equity is interconnected with health, environment, housing, and more, so broader goals about quality of life should be aligned and embedded into budgets and policy frameworks.

Breakout Discussions



“A Holistic Approach to Universal Design”



“Maximizing Impact with Limited Resources”



“Developing Equity Action Plans”



“Innovating Towards Healthier Urban Neighborhoods and Ecosystems”

Session II. Co-Create



“Planning With, Not For, Communities”



“Empowering Communities: Expanding E-Bike Access”



“Equity Metrics: Measuring Success, Impact, and Outcomes”

Breakout Discussions

Guiding Questions

- How do we approach creating equitable programs, projects, plans, and initiatives?
- How do we engage communities to develop outcomes responsive to their needs?

Key Takeaways

- **Center People and Be Flexible:** Continually meet people where they are with multilingual outreach and partnerships with community organizations, and adapt to their needs based on their lived experiences.
- **Fund Community Partners:** Invest in co-creation by paying community-based organizations up-front to ensure authentic, sustained engagement; be creative when resources are scarce by working with the private sector to sustain and scale programs.
- **Track Equity Metrics:** Align equity metrics for both project needs and community needs, starting with problem identification; iterate on conversations with communities to strengthen the precision and impact of metrics.

Session III. Effectuate

Guiding Questions

- How do we effectively put plans into action, so they are lasting and iterative?
- How do we measure progress and success?

Key Takeaways

- **Lasting Change Requires Buy-in:** Equitable implementation of projects is best achieved through ongoing community engagement, cross-sector collaboration, and support from leadership, whether in enhancing hiring and procurement practices or constructing a capital project.
- **Leverage Technology and Data:** Track data and utilize technology in ethical ways to innovate toward safer, more efficient transportation systems for underserved populations, including people with disabilities.
- **Get Local to Be More Responsive:** Successful implementation depends on hyper-local listening and an ecosystem of partnership between community groups and governments.

Breakout Discussions



“Beyond the ADA: A Dialogue Between Agencies, NGOs, and Disability Advocates”



“Equity and Impact: Exploring the Realities of Congestion Pricing”



“Operationalizing Equity Through Hiring and Contracting”



“Vision Zero: Protecting Vulnerable Street Users”

Mid-Day Plenary

Summit attendees congregated for a post-lunch plenary featuring leaders from Cape Town, Rome, and New York City focused on access to bicycling. The speakers shared successful strategies they have used to expand bicycling in their respective countries.

- **Engage Early:** Introduce children, especially those from underrepresented communities, to cycling to nurture lifelong riders and advocates who promote better infrastructure and quality of life.
- **Close Infrastructure Gaps:** Protected bike lanes, wider lanes, better lighting, and repair stations and services along routes are critical to equitable cycling access.
- **Boost Economic Accessibility:** Make cycling affordable, through equipment subsidies, shared bikes, or digital apps offering car-free routes, to broaden participation.

Closing Plenary

The Summit concluded with reflections from NYC Deputy Mayor for Operations Jeffrey Roth, NYC Chief Equity Officer Sideya Sherman, Director of the Region 2 University Transportation Research Center Camille Kanga, and HNTB Vice President and Director of Infrastructure and Mobility Equity Emily Gallo. The speakers shared some of their takeaways from the convening, including on behalf of the 2025 Summit Host Committee and Partners.

- **Use Shared Language:** A common vocabulary bridges practitioners and residents; stripping out jargon ensures equity conversations include, not exclude.
- **Treat Budgets as a Reflection of Values:** Funding priorities signal what cities and organizations truly value, so invest in initiatives that address historical disparities and improve lives.
- **Commit to Equity:** Beyond outcomes, equity is an ongoing process of understanding, inclusion, and care to drive action; in other words, equity is a long-term commitment.

Resources

Visit the following websites to access additional resources for advancing equity in transportation and urban planning, and for more examples of transportation equity in NYC DOT's projects.

- [PolicyLink](#)
- [Race Forward](#) / [Government Alliance on Race and Equity \(GARE\)](#)
- [Connected NYC: A Vision for Safer and More Equitable Streets](#)
- [Street Design Manual \(Fourth Edition\)](#)
- [Curb Enthusiasm \(podcast\)](#)



Thank You to the 2025 Equity in Motion Summit Host Committee, Partners, and Sponsors!



NYC DOT transformed the venue by bringing the outside indoors with the help of partners. Featured elements, including a pop-up plaza, highlighted NYC DOT programs and the power of public spaces as a means for community connection.

Visit EquityinMotionNYC.info to explore past events, programming, and more.

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