

# A GUIDE TO



## LEADING WITH

# EQUITY

IN

## FLEET

# Electric vehicle

## DEPLOYMENT

“Leading with Equity in Fleet Electric Vehicle Deployment” is a comprehensive guide for public and private fleet management to advance environmental sustainability while addressing the historical environmental injustices tied to transportation and environmental systems.

**gwrecc.org**



## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy, the transportation sector accounts for more than 28% of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States (Carbon Pollution From Transportation | US EPA, 2024). Light-duty vehicles as well as medium- and heavy-duty vehicles contribute 37% and 23% respectively, the highest among transportation sector emissions.

With over 18 million diesel-powered vehicles on U. S. roads and less than 10% of cars purchased being powered by electricity, investments like the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act, along with numerous state and local laws, are critical to ramping up vehicle electrification efforts.

Fleet managers are pivotal in ensuring the efficient and equitable deployment of electric vehicles across various industries, including heavy-duty freight trucks, light-duty delivery vans, public transit buses, and private ride-sharing vehicles. They optimize vehicle utilization, manage charging infrastructure, and implement sustainable practices to support the transition to a cleaner transportation future.

Fleet vehicles used for freight, utility services, and delivery vans significantly contribute to air pollution. Deploying electric solutions for these vehicles can lead to substantial public health benefits. However, electric vehicles, charging stations, and electricity generation infrastructure must be distributed equitably to ensure vulnerable populations are not unduly burdened during the transition. Historically, highways, bus depots, warehouses, and other transportation infrastructure have often been sited in communities of color, resulting in disproportionate rates of asthma and other respiratory illnesses.

## UNDERSTANDING FLEET EQUITY

Fleet equity provides the benefits of sustainable transportation and electric vehicle (EV) adoption is accessible to all community members, regardless of socioeconomic background or geographical location.

Companies must strategically deploy vehicles and charging infrastructure to deliver operational and societal advantages. Fleet equity spans every step of the process, from EV planning to deployment, retirement, and even the disposal of electric vehicles.

*Fleet equity is not just about reducing carbon emissions; it's about fostering a more equitable and just society.*

# STRATEGIES FOR EQUITABLE CLEAN TRANSPORTATION

Simply purchasing and deploying electric vehicles will not improve public health or address racial disparities among groups that suffer from exposure to toxic air from gas- and diesel-powered vehicles.

However, fleets can actively alleviate historical scars by ensuring that the benefits of sustainable, zero-emission EVs reach these communities.

Fleet managers must take purposeful actions to prioritize equity in fleet electrification efforts

**1. Community Engagement:** Engage with historically marginalized communities to understand impacts your fleet operations may have and their unique transportation needs, concerns, and preferences. Prioritize their input in the planning and implementation of clean transportation projects. Develop community partnerships with the NAACP, National Urban League, local diverse communities and Clean Cities organizations.

- **Engage Early & Often**

- The earlier communities are involved in the planning process for clean transportation projects, the better. No one knows what a community wants or needs better than the people who are on the ground working already. Getting their input at the beginning of the planning process will ensure that equitable clean transportation projects reflect the needs of the targeted community, and will be accepted once implementation begins.

- **Listen to Community Expertise:**

- Malcolm Gladwell popularized the “10,000-hour” rule of thumb that one must invest 10,000 hours of practice in a subject in order to become an expert in it. People invest far in excess of 10,000 hours living their lives among their communities; approach them as you would any other expert when seeking to understand their needs. This means entering conversations prepared to listen, acknowledging that community members know best, and adhering to their suggestions to the greatest extent possible.

**2. Strategic Deployment:** Strategically deploy clean transportation solutions, such as electric vehicles (EVs) and EV charging infrastructure, by prioritizing areas overburdened by pollution as site locations (garages, bus depots). If deploying publicly accessible resources, ensure that underserved communities have equitable access to these resources.



# STRATEGIES FOR EQUITABLE CLEAN TRANSPORTATION CONTINUED



- **Mapping Is Essential**

- Consulting environmental justice maps, or conducting your own own mapping exercises, is critical to understanding precisely where overburdened and underserved communities are and developing a strategy to maximize the impact of deployed clean transportation. By utilizing these maps, fleets can ensure that their transportation solutions are making a difference in communities that need them most.

- **Strategize with Community Champions**

- Community-based organizations (CBOs) exist throughout underserved communities, and can be highly effective partners in developing strategies fit to their communities and that secure buy-in from the local population. Identifying and working with CBOs early in the deployment process will allow them to offer suggestions at critical stages of strategy development, and secure their influential support throughout the implementation.

**3. Equitable Workforce Development:** Offer training and employment opportunities related to clean transportation within historically marginalized communities. Empower residents to participate in the clean energy workforce and benefit from job opportunities.

- **Jobs Promote Trust**

- By offering employment and training opportunities to members of the communities where clean transportation will be deployed, community members are more likely to view those projects as beneficial. Too often, “economic development” efforts result in pushing out low-income communities of color, leading to reasonable misgivings about such projects. Ensuring that residents have opportunities to participate in the clean energy workforce will build trust and help guarantee a strong foundation for equity gains.

# STRATEGIES FOR EQUITABLE CLEAN TRANSPORTATION CONTINUED

- **Engage Communities in Workforce Planning**

- To ensure workforce initiatives are relevant to community needs, form advisory boards that include local residents, workforce development agencies, and industry representatives to guide the creation of training programs and job opportunities. Implement mechanisms for ongoing feedback from community members about the effectiveness of training programs and job placements to continuously improve initiatives and ensure alignment with local aspirations. Provide your current workforce with equitable access to training opportunities in the EV industry as technicians, drivers, and managers.

**4. Policy Advocacy:** Advocate for policies, standards, and incentives that promote equity in clean transportation. This includes supporting legislation that addresses transportation disparities and enables your fleet to equitably deploy clean zero-emission vehicles.

- **Coalition Building is Critical**

- To amplify efforts and increase visibility, collaborate with local organizations, environmental groups, and community leaders to create a unified voice advocating for equitable transportation policies. Foster relationships with elected officials that represent target communities, and ensure they're aware of the importance of policy in equitable clean transportation. Participate in and support advocacy efforts for more local, state and federal funding for grants and loans for the deployment of light, medium to heavy-duty electric vehicles for fleets.

- **Accountability is Key to Success**

- Advocate for the establishment of oversight bodies to collect data and report on the implementation of clean transportation policies and ensure they are meeting equity goals. Encourage transparent reporting of data related to EV deployment, air quality improvements, and health outcomes, particularly in underserved areas. Tracking

the data monthly, quarterly, and annually to measure and quantify your organization's success in the equitable distribution of EVs is critical to your success. **"What gets measured, gets done."**



## STRATEGIES FOR EQUITABLE CLEAN TRANSPORTATION CONTINUED

5. **Education and Outreach:** Launch educational campaigns to raise awareness about the benefits of clean transportation in your fleet vehicles. Educate your team, organization, and the community on how clean transportation initiatives can address historical injustices. This is particularly important for public-facing fleets. Here are some enhanced strategies and initiatives:



- **Community-Centric Education Programs**

- Design education programs specifically for residents in communities affected by transportation inequities. These programs can include interactive workshops, hands-on demonstrations of EVs, and educational seminars highlighting the impact of transportation pollution on health and how electrifying your fleet can help address these issues. Showcasing or displaying electric vehicles at community events, festivals, schools, parks, and supermarkets in EJ communities are excellent opportunities for education and outreach. Emphasizing the environmental and economic benefits of EV adoption in community contexts will allow residents to better understand the changes in their neighborhoods and feel more connected to these initiatives.

- **Collaborative Awareness Campaigns**

- Partner with local organizations, schools, and community centers to develop awareness campaigns that resonate locally. Campaigns could use neighborhood gatherings, town hall meetings, or community events to provide real-life insights into your EV initiatives and discuss its role in reducing pollution and improving air quality in their community. Culturally relevant content messaging on EVs and fleet electrification on social media targeted to EJ communities in your area is a plus!

- **Storytelling and Historical Context in Outreach**

- Use storytelling to connect EV transition efforts to the history of transportation-related environmental injustices in impacted areas. Sharing stories of individuals and communities affected by air pollution due to traditional fleet operations can illustrate how electrification aims to remedy these historical wrongs. Highlighting positive stories of

# STRATEGIES FOR EQUITABLE CLEAN TRANSPORTATION CONTINUED

- **Storytelling and Historical Context in Outreach continued**

- improvement can show tangible benefits to these communities and foster greater support. Also, utilizing people of color from the local community and your workforce can help make sure that stories are real and authentic.

- **Workforce and Technical Training Information Sessions**

- Host information sessions on career pathways within your organization, focusing on technical training opportunities, apprenticeships, and job openings. Providing direct links to career development resources ensures that outreach not only informs but empowers community members to actively participate in the economic opportunities that fleet electrification offers.

6. **Partnerships:** Collaborate with local organizations, government agencies, and stakeholders to leverage resources and expertise in addressing the effects of redlining. Partnerships can enhance the effectiveness of remediation efforts. Below are collaborative pathways that can strengthen equity-driven EV fleet deployment:

- **Local Government and Public Agency Collaborations**

- Build partnerships with city councils, transportation authorities, and public health departments to streamline the deployment of EV fleets in areas with the greatest environmental and health needs. Working with public agencies can help prioritize communities overburdened by pollution, while coordinating efforts in infrastructure development, land use planning, and public awareness.

- **Community-Based Organization (CBO) Partnerships**

- Partner with community-based organizations such as neighborhood councils, environmental justice groups, and local advocacy networks. These organizations often have deep insights into community needs, historical inequities, and key contacts. Collaborations could focus on hosting educational events, gathering community feedback, and planning EV deployment locations to benefit residents.

- **Educational and Vocational Institutions**

- Collaborate with technical schools, community colleges, and workforce development programs to create training pipelines for careers in EV technology,



## STRATEGIES FOR EQUITABLE CLEAN TRANSPORTATION CONTINUED

- **Educational and Vocational Institutions continued**
    - maintenance, and infrastructure support. These partnerships can enhance local hiring practices, supporting job creation and economic growth within communities impacted by environmental inequities.
  - **Utility Companies and Energy Providers**
    - Establish agreements with local utility companies to enhance grid capacity, manage demand from charging stations, and create pricing models that benefit low-income neighborhoods. This can help to mitigate the cost burden of EV charging and ensure power reliability.
  - **Clean Cities and Regional Environmental Groups**
    - Collaborate with Clean Cities Coalitions and other regional environmental networks to pool resources, share data, and advocate for region-wide initiatives supporting EV adoption. Clean Cities Coalitions can offer expertise in clean transportation technologies and help develop regional charging corridors that prioritize equitable access and assist with community engagement, education and outreach services.
7. **Data-Driven Decisions:** Utilize data analysis to identify areas with the highest need for clean transportation solutions and prioritize investments accordingly. Data can help ensure that resources are directed to the communities most affected by redlining.
- **Data-Sharing Partnerships for Accountability**
    - Form data-sharing partnerships research institutions and government agencies to monitor and evaluate the impacts of fleet electrification on emissions, public health, and equity outcomes. Transparent reporting on EV deployment and community impact can increase public trust and inform future policy development. This guide provides and the GWRCCC website provide a list of EJ mapping tools.

- **Equity-Focused Metrics for EV Deployment**

- Develop metrics specifically aimed at measuring the success of fleet electrification efforts in terms of equity. These metrics might include the percentage of EV infrastructure in underserved areas, reductions in local air pollution levels, and accessibility improvements for low-income residents. Tracking such data enables transparent reporting and helps fleet managers adjust strategies to improve outcomes.



# STRATEGIES FOR EQUITABLE CLEAN TRANSPORTATION CONTINUED

- **Real-Time Data for Fleet Operations Optimization**

- Equip EV fleets with real-time monitoring systems that collect data on vehicle emissions, battery performance, route efficiency, and charging station usage. Analyzing this data allows fleet managers to optimize routes, reduce emissions, and strategically place additional charging stations where utilization is high. This can ensure efficient resource allocation and demonstrate the immediate benefits to community members.

- **Utilizing Geographic Information System (GIS) Mapping Tools**

- The U.S. Climate Vulnerability Index helps you see which communities face the greatest challenges from the impacts of a changing climate. This mapping tool combines collective environmental, social, economic, and infrastructure impacts that shape a community's ability to respond and adapt to climate change. Better understanding of the intersection of vulnerability and climate change risks is key to effectively building resilience because it helps define where climate action and investments are needed most.

[https:// climatevulnerabilityindex.org/](https://climatevulnerabilityindex.org/)

8. **Accessibility:** It's important to consider accessibility in your fleet planning. This includes ensuring electric vehicles and charging stations are accessible to all fleet drivers, including those with disabilities and limited means.

- **Strategic Placement**

- Identify optimal locations for EV charging stations, considering factors like existing load capacity, proximity to fleet operations, accessibility for drivers, and proximity to historically marginalized communities.

## STRATEGIES FOR EQUITABLE CLEAN TRANSPORTATION CONTINUED

- **Universal Design for Charging Stations**
  - Make sure EV charging stations deployed are designed with accessibility features that accommodate all fleet users, including people with disabilities. This includes installing ADA-compliant parking spaces near chargers, using easy-to-reach interfaces, and providing accessible paths to and from the stations. Stations should also be designed with features like audio guidance, high-contrast screens, and easy-to-use payment options to assist users with visual or cognitive impairments.



*Take Action and Make a Difference:*

*You hold the power to drive change and promote fleet equity, clean transportation, and environmental justice in your community. Implement the strategies outlined in this guide to create a more equitable and sustainable future for all.*

*Join us in our mission to rectify historical injustices, foster equitable access to clean transportation, and build healthier communities. Together, we can make a lasting impact and ensure a brighter tomorrow for everyone!*

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

## Equity-centered FAQs for fleets making the shift to more sustainable, clean transportation

The aim of these FAQs is to provide accurate and informative answers to dispel misconceptions and offer clarity on the following topics:

- Emphasizing accessibility
- Cost and affordability
- Inclusion of disadvantaged communities



### What is equity in clean transportation, and why is it important?

Equity in clean transportation means ensuring that everyone, regardless of their background or location, has access to and benefits equally from shifts to sustainable transportation. Transportation corridors move people and goods and are essential to connecting communities and commodities. Historically, the roadways built bisected redlined communities of color, who today bear an inequitable share of transportation-related burdens. Prioritizing these communities to experience the benefits of fleet shifts to clean, zero-emission vehicles is essential to rectifying historical disparities and creating a fair and just transportation system.

### How can fleets ensure that clean transportation shifts directly benefit and are more accessible to underserved communities?

Fleets can support equitable air quality improvements and health outcomes through accessible clean transportation by strategically deploying EVs and charging infrastructure in historically marginalized areas. Fleets should work with communities, community-based organizations, and other partners to quantify and understand the impact fleet operations have in the areas in which they operate. Creating a community advisory board or partnering with local organizations like the National Urban League, NAACP, and Clean Cities and Communities organizations can be a step in the right direction.

### What role does affordability play in promoting equity in clean transportation?

Affordability is a key component of equity. To make clean transportation accessible, it's crucial to offer financial incentives, subsidies, and financing options to lower the upfront costs of EVs and charging infrastructure. Grant program administrators assisting fleets, local governments, small businesses, faith-based organizations, and nonprofits in understanding the incentives available can encourage fleets to deploy electric vehicles in impacted areas by including grant "plus-ups" in priority communities, further accelerating equitable deployment. Fleets can increase the affordability of their EV deployments by utilizing these grants and incorporating their work to deliver equity for priority communities in funding applications.

### How can we ensure that minority communities are included in clean transportation initiatives?

Inclusion involves engaging with minority communities in the planning and decision-making process, offering training and employment opportunities, and addressing specific concerns and preferences. Building trust and involving community members is essential for developing transportation solutions that meet their specific needs. Displaying electric vehicles at community events like festivals, block parties, schools, community centers, malls, conferences, churches, trade shows, and cultural events can help educate community residents about EVs. It's important to have a workforce that includes diverse workers and fleet operators.

### How do we communicate success on fleet equity, internally and externally?

Communication and storytelling about the successes in listening to and implementing feedback from the community build trust both inside and outside of your organization, especially in underserved communities. Inviting residents to press announcements about new EVs, charging stations, and launch events in underserved communities is great for community engagement and building goodwill. Showcasing workforce development initiatives, highlighting collaboration with community-based organizations, and tracking and reporting on outreach and community engagement efforts is critical to maintaining a consistent narrative of inclusion and equity.

*By addressing these FAQs, we aim to provide clarity and promote understanding of equity in clean transportation and the use of EVs. These answers are designed to empower individuals and communities with accurate information to make informed decisions and actively participate in the transition to clean and equitable transportation solutions*

Produced with financial support from the Environmental Defense Fund.





## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

**For inquiries, support, and further assistance, please reach out to:**

**Greater Washington Region Clean Cities Coalition**

PO Box 1055 | Washington, DC 20013

**202-671-1580 | [antoinethompson@gwrccc.org](mailto:antoinethompson@gwrccc.org)**

**Website: [www.gwrccc.org](http://www.gwrccc.org)**