

Introduction

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Welcome to my introductory message; thank you for stopping by. I'm thrilled to reach transportation-minded people from such an accessible communication format, and, ideally, I look forward to sparking thoughts, ideas and impactful conversations on all things California transportation and quality of life for people. Each blog will pull in my personal reflections, considerations and the occasional overshare about or adjacent to the important work overseen by the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA).

To familiarize you with what matters to CalSTA—and why I personally take to heart the important work we do—I'd first like to start at the foundation: Who we are and why we are in place. At CalSTA we are tasked with an enormous responsibility, that of overseeing eight very distinct transportation departments, boards and commissions within the state. In its own right, each department is a facet of CalSTA's overarching commitment to the California transportation network, the largest in the nation. These vital departments are the Board of Pilot Commissioners, California Highway Patrol, California Transportation Commission, Department of Transportation, Department of Motor Vehicles, High-Speed Rail Authority, Office of Traffic Safety and New Motor Vehicle Board. Significant purposes, processes and applications set each of the eight apart in their respective roles and, although the varying and specific functions differ greatly from department to department, there is an unmistakable, essential common denominator binding us as a single organization—and that is our focus on people.

Talking about people being central to everything we do is not a platitude. Some may argue that the platform of the people-first concept is well-worn, overused and, quite possibly, may now fall on deaf ears. I firmly dispute that. In fact, my uncompromising position is that heavy saturation of such an

important principle—again, the prioritization of people—will only result in good. Further, my belief is that there is only one way for a practice to become woven into the fabric of society and to become the norm—said practice must be embedded into every plan, project, policy and interaction being carried out. No exceptions. Unquestionably, our ultimate vision for both the public and private sectors is this: Putting people before all else eventually will become unremarkable. At CalSTA, we break down this critical focus into four core categories that drive the work we do. We call these our [Core Four](#).



Secretary Toks and CHP officers at the celebratory event for the \$150 million grant, the largest INFRA grant in the nation - November 18, 2022, Otay Mesa East Port of Entry



Our [Core Four](#) encompass Safety, Equity, Climate Action and Economic Prosperity—all areas that contribute to the delivery of optimal quality of life. We hold ourselves accountable for serving all who live in and visit our great state, and, in upcoming blogs, I look forward to diving in and discussing the meaning behind the inspiring, innovative work being done on behalf of our communities. With historic funding, policy shifts, incredible partnerships and unwavering perseverance, we've been making some tangible headway, and it's an exciting time. Our goals, vision and funding have powerfully

aligned during this unprecedented window of opportunity.

Though it's far too early to take any grand victory laps, we certainly have reached important markers. Momentum is strong, progress is apparent, and we look forward to seeing continued, impactful results play out in our communities across the state. We celebrate our impressive accomplishments—and have only cracked the surface of what achievements lie ahead. The only thing I'm more excited about than last year's achievements is what's to come this year.

Pushing ahead towards our goals requires agility coupled with innovation. We will continue to be confronted by challenges—and, as we do, we'll continue to subdue them.

Each of us, as individuals and as organizations, has a role to play in improving the lives of others. As world-renowned conservationist Jane Goodall stated so well:

“You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference—and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.”

Please view [this video](#) for a brief look at some of our accomplishments from last year and exciting achievements to come in 2023:



Thanks again for being here. More to come.