

Memorandum

To: MEMBERS

Roundtable Meeting: February 3, 2022

From: MITCH WEISS, Executive Director

Reference Number: Tab 3

Prepared By: Brigitte Driller,
Assistant Deputy Director

Published Date: January 24, 2022

Subject: October 28, 2021 Equity Advisory Roundtable Meeting Minutes

Summary:

The meeting minutes for the October 28, 2021 Equity Advisory Roundtable (Roundtable) meeting are provided in Attachment A. At the upcoming February 3, 2022 Roundtable meeting, the California Transportation Commission (Commission) staff will ask for any suggested edits to the meeting minutes from Roundtable members or the public.

Background:

The meeting minutes for the October 28, 2021 Roundtable meeting (Attachment A) are intended to summarize that Roundtable meeting and are provided as information. Following the meeting on February 3, 2022, staff will finalize the meeting minutes and post on the Commission's website at www.catc.ca.gov.

Attachment:

- Attachment A: October 28, 2021 Equity Advisory Roundtable Meeting Minutes

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
EQUITY ADVISORY ROUNDTABLE
MEETING #4 OCTOBER 28, 2021 1PM - 4PM
MEETING MINUTES

Tab 1: Roll Call

Connie Stewart

Ivette Torres- *Absent*

Jacob Babauta- *Absent*

Jasmine Leek

Jerard Wright

Keith Bergthold

Kiana Valentine- *Absent*

Lena Morán Acereto- *Absent*

Leslie Sanders

Nailah Pope-Harden

Randy Torres-Van Vleck

Rio Oxas- *Absent*

Rodney Fong- *Absent*

Ruby Acevedo- *Absent*

Russell Rawlings- *Absent*

Stephanie Ramirez

Tamika Butler

Tab 2: Welcome and Reflections from Previous Meetings

C. Sequoia Erasmus (Commission Staff): Led the meeting by sharing her gratitude for her position within the CTC and for the support of her team and agency partners, as well as reflected that everyone within the Equity Advisory Roundtable was doing the hard work of improving equity in transportation outcomes for all of the agencies. Ms. Erasmus also personally thanked the Commission members and other esteemed guests who joined the meeting.

Jeanie Ward-Waller (Caltrans Staff): Stated a heartfelt “Thank You” for the work and discussion generated by the Equity Advisory Roundtable and stated the discussion and dialogue is already being incorporated into action by Caltrans.

Tab 3: Meeting Minutes from September 16, 2021

Brigitte Driller (Commission Staff): Presented the meeting minutes from May 26, 2021 Roundtable meeting. These minutes were posted online on September 3rd and sent out to Roundtable members and stakeholders. The minutes summarize the May 26th meeting. No suggested edits or comments were received. Meeting minutes will be posted on the Commission's website at the following [link](#).

Tab 4: Discussion Topic- Accountability and Effective Communication between Non-Governmental Organizations and Government Agencies

Stephanie Ramirez: Began by expressing her privilege and gratitude to be involved in this process and for the responsibility of moderating the discussion. She expressed her desire for this conversation to not be a top-down exercise and thanked all the participants who sent in questions beforehand. She acknowledged that questions were not limited to those sent prior to the meeting and encouraged more questions be asked in real-time. The following questions, which were sent prior to the meeting, were shared with the group:

Question #1

- a) Have you seen models of accountability that work particularly well?
- b) Who are government agencies accountable to?

Question #2

- a) Do you think agencies understand the importance of accountability as opposed to blame?
 - a. If not, how can we help them understand? Whose job is it?

Question #3

- a) How can government agencies improve transparency?

Question #4

- a) How does history influence what accountability looks like in the present day? (The example listed included the state of California's relationship with tribal governments. Part of accountability is not only responding to things in the moment but being continually accountable to past harms and how those actions reverberate forward.)

Question #5

- a) As government agencies make efforts to atone for past harms, what are the best ways to ensure that efforts reflect true allyship and avoid performative actions?

Question #6

- a) How can advisory committees help improve communication pathways between agencies and non-governmental organizations?
- b) What should true partnerships look like?

Jerard Wright: Expressed that whenever fiscal/fiduciary responsibilities are attached to an action, accountability is incorporated into the action. As an example, Mr. Wright indicated a good model of accountability can include continual follow-up and engagement with voters.

Nailah Pope-Harden: Recognition of power structures, and how power is conferred, is important in taking steps in accountability. Certain power structures make sharing of power difficult, and advisory bodies are important avenues for that power to be more equitably accessed. The question of accountability versus blame is important because in order to truly have honest conversations around accountability, there must be an acknowledgement of past harms and wrongs. Without that step, communities will not recognize the power of that governing body, which harms the overall future actions and trust of that power structure. Accountability is most authentic when there are regular check-ins, without waiting for those harmed communities to come to you. Building, maintaining, and strengthening those relationships are key to accountability.

Jasmine Leek: These conversations around accountability are not able to be completed in a single session, because continual follow-up and actions are what really make people pay attention. The State has an opportunity to work with local governments, because despite the delicate balance of power between those two entities. The proof of accountability is when government entities take the initiative to align implementation, follow-up, and engagement efforts before taking their vision to the community. It's one thing to say, "This is where we are going." But if local agencies aren't also going in that direction, then people in the public cannot have faith in either state or local government. The State can bridge that gap in an equitable way.

Stephanie Ramirez: Detailed her experience on a regional scale navigating discussion where there is not consensus between local and regional governments on the path forward. For example, a regional agency may develop a great equity initiative to fund transportation projects but then the local government is in opposition. There isn't any real leadership to bridge the gap, instead Stephanie Ramirez indicated her belief that back room deals take place, leaving the community feeling disenfranchised and distrustful.

The Roundtable transitioned to discussing Question #5 - As government agencies make efforts to atone for past harms, what are the best ways to ensure that efforts reflect true allyship and avoid performative actions?

Jerard Wright: Relationship building between disconnected agencies can start the healing process for communities who are used to those agencies talking past each other and not to each other.

Randy Torres: Success in SANDAG from engaging with CBOs who lend support for every phase of a project, which helps build in accountability. They are funded to sit at the policy table and give input. Engaging them early and often is key.

Stephanie Ramirez: I would like to invite the Commissioners to speak.

Commissioner Lyou: Important to note that the position of Commissioner is unpaid and a small group, so the labor of the commissioners must be from a place of commitment and experience.

Commissioner Norton: Our focus has been to signal in the project development phase, how we want to see each project resonate with communities. I have learned how great the staff are at CTC and at Caltrans in helping to identify where money is spent and how it's spent, so that we can keep tracking of funding while looking at where the need is for equity, parity, and reparations in funding mechanisms. This is an opportunity for us to continue to look at giving those powerful tools to everyone here in the Roundtable and in the community to show how these projects are working. Then we can get feedback from the community:

- a) Was it built the way they told the community it was going to be built?
- b) Is this going to be a project that is meeting the needs of the community as you hoped?
- c) Can we highlight where projects are really working and serving equity?

Using the tools, we can highlight those projects, that you see as most important for equity, as the model example for other agencies to follow.

Jasmine Leek: There exists examples of agencies that come up with really great plans for projects that help the community, but then instead of engaging those communities, typically the unhoused, they instead immediately turn to, and have an over-reliance of, utilizing local law enforcement to get them moved out of the way, typically without advance notice or consideration. Immediately turning to law enforcement to resolve disputes, rather than engaging the community-based organizations that have a history and positive relationship with those community members, is a misstep government take that reduce their allyship to those communities as performative. Governments that utilize the law over conversation and remediation breed distrust and miss opportunities to do better by their constituents or communities.

Nailah Pope-Harden: The Equity Advisory Committee can help the California Transportation Commission move from a reactive to a proactive agency because it has the resources for people to work deeply in these issues and to hold space for emotions from communities. Language simplification should be a focus to break down barriers of entry. The “wins” of an agency should be highlighted to demonstrate actions moving the agency in the right direction.

Randy Torres: In 2012, a project in San Diego was unveiled with almost no public input, which was a major issue for our communities, so we mobilized the communities and came up with a publicly led alternative that incorporated transit stations, not just a car-oriented alternative. Lessons learned from that experience were:

1. Community members need to be involved with the alternative selection process
2. Communities get overlooked in the Design phase, but this phase is critical for community input.

Tamika Butler: Folks cannot hold agencies accountable unless they know what is happening. Communities need to be informed of the entire process, timelines, where input is sought and where it is implemented. Organizations also need to be completely open to whatever solutions communities come up with.

Public Comment:

Angelo Logan: When private businesses that support goods movement, such as Ports or Rail lines, use public funding for projects they should develop a standard or be held to a standard, like the funding guidelines, that address public inclusion and environmental justice, and should operate with those goals in mind.

Tab 5: Future Opportunities for Involvement in Interagency Equity Initiatives

C. Sequoia Erasmus (Commission Staff): Introduced Avital Barnea, Deputy Secretary for Transportation Planning, California State Transportation Agency, to describe recent California State Transportation Agency efforts pertaining to the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure, or CAPTI.

Avital Barnea: The California State Transportation Agency's CAPTI is a holistic framework to leverage state transportation spending, programming, and policymaking with our climate, health, and social equity goals. The CAPTI seeks to establish a transportation, equity, and environmental justice advisory committee. CalSTA, alongside CTC and Caltrans staff, is currently developing the structure of the Transportation, Equity, and Environmental Justice committee, which will be informed by the Equity Advisory Roundtable. The CAPTI Equity Advisory Committee will also be informed by the statewide community listening sessions. We welcome your ideas on the committee structure. Once the application period opens, please apply to become a part of that committee.

C. Sequoia Erasmus: We want to mention that there may be multiple committees, but staff is looking at the feasibility of that.

Amar Cid (Caltrans Staff): Our three agencies are reviewing possible committee structures including committee scope and who should be involved.

No Roundtable member feedback or public comment received for this item.

Tab 6: Update on SB1 Transportation Funding Programs Guidelines Development and Opportunities to Engage with Commission Activities

Matthew Yosgott, the Deputy Director of SB1 Programming at the California Transportation Commission, gave a presentation on the following SB1 funding programs that are undergoing updates to their guidelines:

1. Local Partnership Program,
2. Solutions for Congested Corridors Program, and the
3. Trade Corridors Enhancement Program

Each program will have two workshops through March or April 2022. Proposed changes to the guidelines will be presented in draft form to the California Transportation Commission meeting, and the final guidelines will be presented for adoption at the subsequent meeting in late summer 2022. The adopted guidelines will govern the project selection and program implementation in the upcoming program cycles.

Commission staff is seeking interested Roundtable members to help brainstorm guidelines recommendations, provide input on proposed revisions to the guidelines, and support efforts to improve equitable outcomes through the guideline development process. Longer term commitments to this process would involve participation past the Roundtable meeting today.

No Roundtable member or public comment received for this item.

C. Sequoia Erasmus: Commission staff will reach out to the roundtable members to ask for interested volunteers to assist with the guideline updates.

Tab 7: Caltrans Office of Race and Equity Updates

Equity Index Tool Presentation

Amar Cid: The Caltrans Office of Race and Equity, with support from the executive body at Caltrans, is developing an Equity Index (EQI), which aims to identify communities that are underserved, referred to as Equity Priority Populations, and/or burdened by transportation using environmental, accessibility, and socioeconomic indicators. In developing this tool, the visual representations are being considered. To create the visual aspect of the tool, the equity indicators will be mapped, layered, and weighted to produce transportation equity scores that can be used in funding programs to prioritize projects in underserved communities. This tool is intended to mitigate harm to those historically underserved and/or overburdened communities. The Equity Index Tool is not a modeling tool that can help explain or project future burdens. Instead, the team will work in tandem with other programs within Caltrans to build out an analysis model. Equity Index Tool efforts were kicked off June 2021 and meets bi-monthly and has over 50 staff members that are participating from various divisions and districts within Caltrans. The data being collected are already existing but are being prioritized to fit transportation planning needs.

Commissioner Lyou: What is the transportation commute indicator?

Amar Cid: Looking at the ownership of personal vehicles and commute travel times in order to ensure rural communities/Tribal communities are not left out, such as in the CalEnviroScreen tool.

Commissioner Lyou: Do we have a dataset for bicycle lane mileage per road mile or something? What about VMT statewide?

Amar Cid: We have a team at Caltrans that is creating a statewide VMT dataset.

Commissioner Lyou: Recommended Professor Manuel Pastor of University of Southern California as a researcher who would be helpful in the creation of the Equity Index Tool.

Jerard Wright: Gave a word of caution, based on past experiences, that academic researchers may overstep and prescribe recommendations instead of assisting with tool creation.

Nailah Pope-Harden: Can we include access to parks/green spaces?

Amar Cid: That is a possibility and potentially that indicator could take place in another tool that could interface with this one. Green space/public use spaces are on our Equity Index Tool.

Randy Torres: Would staff see value in a displacement indicator?

Amar Cid: We have it on the tracker with a host of research for certain urbanized areas. Another aspect is how transit development might induce displacement or gentrification.

Statewide Community Listening Sessions Presentation

Carolyn Abrams (Caltrans Staff): Presented on a partnership between Caltrans, CTC and CalSTA, who are planning to hold six virtual equity-focused sessions to be held early 2022 in conjunction with the consulting firm ICF. The Listening Sessions will be limited in space to 30 participants to create an intentional space for dialogue.

District 4 Wood Street (West Oakland, District 4) Presentation

Andrea Pugh (Caltrans Staff): Equity Program Manager: Wanted to highlight the listening session that was created in response to the previous Equity Advisory Roundtable. The Wood Street Community and the unhoused in-house advocates shared with the last roundtable session that they wanted to request a listening session from Caltrans District 4 (Oakland). The purpose of this listening sessions was to ensure engagement with the community on issues relating to Caltrans' plans for the area, particularly regarding policies and resources for the unsheltered community. The session served to bring more transparency, dialogue, equity, and humanity to Caltrans' processes, particularly in the area of evictions and encampment removal. The session also focused on the leasing process, health disparities, impacts to quality of life, and safety protocols as they relate to Caltrans plans and decisions. The pre-planning session also had representatives from other agencies such as Public Health and California Highway Patrol, in addition to unhoused advocates and community members Three convenings to facilitate conversation will be hosted: pre-planning, information, and engagement sessions.

Carolyn Abrams: CBOs will be compensated to support this effort.

Leslie Sanders: How is Tribal involvement tokenization avoided?

Carolyn Abrams: Important for the efforts to clarify why tribal governments are being included, so the Native American Liaison Branch at Caltrans HQ is being leveraged since they have a standing relationship.

Leslie Sanders: With so much emphasis on Southern California, Northern Tribes are completely left out and it's important to recognize they are not the same entity.

C. Sequoia Erasmus: Amar is having technical difficulties but wanted me to convey that tribes are not being lumped together with separate communities and would love to connect with Leslie Sanders to further discuss issues/concerns.

Commissioner Norton: How are successes of a project being tracked and how are we measuring whether the goals of the project have been satisfied?

Amar Cid: Tracking is centered around how the project met the project goals from the outcomes.

C. Sequoia Erasmus: Mitch Wiess asked, "Is the compensation for CBOs that Carolyn mentioned, being done directly by Caltrans or through a contract with the listening session facilitator?"

Carolyn Abrams: This effort for direct coordination with Community Based Organizations will be financed and overseen by Caltrans' contract processes.

Tab 8: Public Comments

None.

Tab 9: Meeting Recap and Next Steps

C. Sequoia Erasmus: Extended gratitude for the honest discussions that were shared today.

Major takeaways and action items:

- Continue to reflect on what was said today by the roundtable members in the conversation around accountability and transparency. Roundtable members elevated the importance of power dynamics, atonement of past harms, building relationships, and democratizing language. We will reflect on the feedback roundtable members shared on the EQI and community listening sessions.

Next steps:

- CTC staff will create minutes of this meeting and the CTC website will have the YouTube link and meeting minutes.