

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: June 27-28, 2024

From: TANISHA TAYLOR, Executive Director

Reference Number: 1.13 Information

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Subject: Equity Initiatives Updates and Interagency Equity Advisory Committee Chair's Report

Summary:

On May 15, 2024, the interagency Equity Advisory Committee (Committee) held an Executive meeting in Orange, California. Committee members and interagency staff from the California Transportation Commission (Commission, the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) held discussions and received various presentations from local and regional partners, Committee members, and interagency staff. Commission staff will provide a recap of the May 15 meeting and other updates on ongoing equity-related work, and Committee Chair William Walker will offer verbal remarks in addition to the Chair's written report which is included in Attachment A, unedited.

Background:

The Committee is a priority for the Commission, Caltrans, and CalSTA. The Committee elevates diverse and historically marginalized voices to advise agencies on how to achieve meaningful outcomes in transportation equity, environmental justice, and equitable economic opportunities, especially as related to transportation planning and programming.

On May 15, 2024, the Committee met in Orange, California with Commissioners and Executives from the Commission, CalSTA and Caltrans. Vice Chair Armas-Kelly and Member Gonzales opened with an acknowledgement of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's Awareness Month, and Chair Walker recognized Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Several items on the agenda focused on the tools and practices that can support efforts to make the state transportation system more inclusive and equitable for people with disabilities. Meeting attendees received welcoming remarks from representatives of the Dayle McIntosh Center, Santa Ana Active Streets, and the Orange County Transportation Authority. Members discussed equity and Committee outcomes with Commissioners and Executives, and gauged interest in supporting upcoming interagency efforts including a pathway to develop recommendations for updates to the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure, facilitated by CalSTA. Member Peggy Martinez shared recommendations for enhancing pedestrian safety and accessibility at roundabouts, focusing on those with blindness, low-vision,

and other vulnerable populations. Member Michelle Rousey shared recommendations from the Disability and Aging Community Living Advisory Committee regarding the recently released Accessible Transportation Policy Blueprint materials and recommendations for statewide accessible transportation.

Interagency Work Streams for Committee Involvement

In 2022, the Commission, Caltrans, and CalSTA approved the Committee scope, which states the Committee is to review, advise, and make recommendations to our agencies on transportation related plans, programs, and policies. The full Committee scope can be found online at www.catc.ca.gov/programs/interagency-equity-advisory-committee.

Upcoming opportunities for Committee member and ad hoc subcommittee involvement include:

- Provide recommendations for updates to the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure.
- Advise on the development of use cases for the Caltrans Equity Index.
- Provide guidance to support the development of Caltrans community engagement guidelines, tools, and templates.
- Engage with Caltrans to understand the current Caltrans System Investment Strategy and participate in future updates.
- Participate in the review and evaluation process for the Commission's Active Transportation Program and Senate Bill 1 Programs, and in the Commission's update to its State Highway Operation and Protection Program Guidelines.

Committee Member Requests

Committee members provided several requests to the three agencies. These requests are captured in the following list. Moving forward, discussion items will be listed and updated in Committee meeting minutes and added to future agendas for discussion or action. Committee members will determine short-term and long-term priorities at the August meeting and within ad hoc Subcommittees.

- Create a shared vision statement of transportation equity for the Committee.
- Develop a communications medium for external and public-facing updates such as a newsletter for agency actions that relate to equity.
- Create space and time for members to debrief and reflect after participating in various interagency collaboration activities. Members requested a forum to talk about how activities are going and get reactions and feedback from other Committee members.

Next Steps – Ad Hoc Subcommittees

- Interagency staff released a member survey to determine member interest and availability to serve on one of the ad hoc subcommittees.
- Nine Committee members responded.
- Ad hoc subcommittee members will meet with CalSTA staff to develop recommendations for updates to the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure prior to the August Committee.
 - The full Committee will consider approval of the ad hoc Subcommittee recommendations at the August Committee meeting.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Interagency Equity Advisory Committee Chair Report

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1. EAC Committee Recap of Actions and the Agency Workplan

Meeting Date	Item Description	Action Taken	Item Type	Information or Action
9/26/2023	Approve EAC Charter	Approved	EAC Structure	Action
11/17/2023	Elect Chair and Vice Chair	Approved	EAC Structure	Action
2/13/2024	Approve EAC Meeting Schedule	Approved	EAC Structure	Action
4/5/2024	Approve Subcommittee Structure	Approved	EAC Structure	Action
5/15/2024	Discussed Subcommittee Structure	Discussion only (w/ referrals to subcommittees)	EAC Structure	Information

The EAC was appointed and seated in the fall of 2022. We were able to approve actions items beginning in March of 2023. The EAC has met eight times since March of 2023. The EAC has taken four actions, all related to the structure of the EAC. From Article 2 of the Interagency Equity Advisory Committee Charter, the purpose is to:

elevate diverse and historically marginalized voices to advise [the California Transportation Commission, the California State Transportation Agency/CalSTA, and the California Department of Transportation/Caltrans] on how to achieve meaningful outcomes in transportation equity, environmental justice, and equitable economic opportunities, especially as related to transportation planning and programming

the Committee may review, advise, and make recommendations on transportation-related plans, programs and policies that include, but are not limited to:

- State transportation planning guidelines
- State transportation funding program guidelines
- State transportation plans
- Quantitative and qualitative metrics for evaluating equity benefits and outcomes
- Incorporation of meaningful community engagement practices into all aspects of transportation work
- Assessment of equitable outcomes in projects, policies and programs
- Assistance with future Racial Equity Action Plans, as applicable
- Development of recommendations regarding best practices to elevate equity in project planning and delivery
- Development of a public participation guidebook

Twenty months into this important undertaking, the EAC has only taken action on items in relation to its own governing structure, and has not as a 15-member body weighed in on a single decision of the California Transportation Commission. We also have not had a definitive way to engage with community members at the District level to provide context to EAC when it deliberates about statewide transportation issues that are faced by residents in a number of environments; rural, urban, suburban, tribal or reservation, military installation, among many others.

Agency executives shared the equity statements from each organization as well as opportunities for EAC members to engage in advising interagency leadership. That can all be viewed here: <https://catc.ca.gov/-/media/ctc-media/documents/eac-meetings/2024/2024-05/tab-6-presentation-v2-a11y.pdf>.

I shared with interagency executives at the EAC meeting and with Commissioners during my May 15 EAC Chair's Report to the Commission and Interagency Executives that the EAC needs to have more meaningful opportunities to share their input on the decisions made at Commission meetings and with Interagency Leadership. A more robust strategy regarding community engagement at the local level should also be implemented and I continue to work with Caltrans Chief Deputy Director Mike Keever on how this might be achieved over time.

2. EAC Chair Out and About — May 2024 Edition

As we toy around with the format of this report, here are a couple of events Vice Chair Armas Kelly and I attended this past month ...April 29-



a. May 1 2024 San Joaquin Valley Spring Policy Conference

It was truly an honor and privilege to share the stage with fellow EAC member Kristine Williams of Stockton as we presented to the annual Policy Conference that moves around the Central Valley each year. The 2024 edition was hosted by the Tulare County Association of Government. Along with the Secretary of Transportation Toks Omishakin and Governor's Office Central California Regional Director Abigail Solis, EAC Member Williams and I presented on the benefits and challenges of engaging with equity work at the State level versus how we both have performed this work in spaces other than representing the State of California. Many of us were also afforded a sneak peek at the High Speed Rail Authority construction site for Kings/Tulare. We are extremely thankful for Commissioners Lee Ann Eager, Jay Bradshaw and Vice Chair Darnell Grisby for their participation in what many deemed a very lively conference plenary session. We look forward to the 2025 edition to be held in Merced. I have already volunteered

EAC Vice Chair Martha Armas-Kelly as a conference planning team member and presenter. A big thank you to TCAG Director Theodore "Ted" Smalley and his team for providing the EAC an opportunity to share our experiences with other practitioners.

b. May 14 UC Irvine Urban Planning and Public Policy Career Fair



As a humble servant of the Interagency Equity Advisory Committee, I often seek out opportunities to lurk behind the shadows of my role and play Joe or Joanna Q. Public to see what happens for a typical Californian when engaging with our agencies. Among the two dozen public and private sector organizations seeking new talent, I approached the Caltrans table at the UCI Career Fair and was pleasantly surprised by the gentlemen who I attempted to approach as a mild mannered, internship seeking, first year master's of urban and regional planning student. Before I could even utter hello, District 12 Transit Partnership Program Manager Eric Corona and Planning Policy and Special Studies Branch Chief Cole Iwamasa both exclaimed, "You're William Walker!" Clearly the EAC's reputation

proceeds it. I was very grateful to hear that the work of the EAC, albeit nascent, is filtering through the many layers of the interagency layer cake that is Caltrans, CalSTA and the Commission. I was also very excited to see both Mr. Corona and Mr. Iwamasa interact with the many Anteaters seeking either summer or career level employment. Their explanation of the CalCareers portal was very thorough and should be recorded and posted to YouTube for the masses. It was a pleasure to meet two of the many team players that comprise the District 12 team. It was a great complement to my May Commission meeting experience and I am very thankful.



c. May 30 California Transportation Commission SB 1121 Transit Needs Assessment Policy Recommendations Workshop (South) – Los Angeles

I had the opportunity to attend the meeting to discuss Transit Needs Assessment and how it will align with the proposed Road Charge that is currently proposed to be phased in to replace the federal and state gasoline sales and excise taxes. My first observation was that the meeting was not well attended by members of the public. There was a ratio of two staff members for every one member of the public in attendance, including myself. The members of the public, like me, and Vice Chair Armas Kelly who was also in attendance, often were what one might see as gadflies or industry insiders. I stated at the meeting that a more robust effort needs to be made to include members of the general public. This will likely be done at many levels:



- Through public meetings and hearings convened by interagency leadership staff
- Through efforts at the District level led by District equity lead team members
- Through consultation of the Interagency Equity Advisory Council and stakeholder groups, especially groups that are connected to the communities most negatively impacted by transportation infrastructure

It was also agreed that in addition to the many grounding principles for a road charge, that sustainability and a minimum level of transit service and operations



Proposed First Principles

Proposed First Principles

- Equity and Accessibility
- Multi-Modal Mobility
- Maintaining Transportation System and Infrastructure
- Safety
- Economic Development
- Environmental Sustainability and Climate Resiliency
- Innovation and Technology

Questions

1. Initial thoughts?
2. Does this capture what you feel is important in framing what transportation investments need to accomplish in the future?
3. What may be missing?
4. Do any more First Principles need to be added?

funding might be included in the already provided principles.

d. May 31 Road Charge Technical Advisory Committee

EAC Vice Chair Martha Armas Kelly attended the Road Charge Technical Advisory Committee meeting. The Committee approved a road charge strategy that included charging 2 cents per mile per registered vehicle in California in place of the existing gas tax schema. Vice Chair Kelly noted that, like the SB 1121 Transit Needs Assessment Workshop held the previous day, that engagement from members of the public, whether from underrepresented groups or not, was scant. Questions posed about the road charge policy included:

1. who are the proponents of the policy?
2. what are the impacts of a commercial tolling policy on residents not used to tolling
3. How are the differences between toll rates in different jurisdictions mitigated (a toll rate in Los Angeles County versus Kern County and the impacts on lower income drivers)?
4. Why is it assumed that gas receipts are lower solely because of a transition to electric vehicles?
5. Are gasoline reliant internal combustion engine vehicles being driven less because of inflation and the increase in gasoline prices?
6. Are lower income drivers carpooling, bundling car trips, or driving less because of inflation and the increase in gasoline prices?
7. How has outreach been performed in monolingual non-English speaking communities?
8. Are outreach efforts related to this policy robust? Are members of the community equitably compensated when asked to participate in meetings?
9. Is there child care or food provided for those who need it to be present at meetings?
10. Has the public been fully educated on how the road charge will work?
11. What is the safety net for the road charge?
12. Are the assumptions made by the researchers applicable to a typical Californian driver?

Vice Chair Armas Kelly also mentioned that data sources used for the justification of the road charge often dated as far back as 2015, which might not be relevant to how many drivers function in a world post pandemic. A road charge might not be equitable if these considerations are not taken under advisement. It is important that the equity programs are considered at the inception of new programs and policies rather than added after a road charge pilot policy is already approved.

3. Transportation Equity Blog: <https://transitequity.substack.com>

The Chair maintains a personal blog that is an unofficial space to share events that members are attending and information about spaces where the community can engage with the EAC, Caltrans, CalSTA and the CTC. The chair is also available at this email: wwalker.cal@gmail.com.

4. Closing

That ends the report for the June meeting. Thank you!

Kind regards,

William Walker, Chair

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Martha Armas-Kelly, Vice Chair

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION