

# Memorandum

**To:** CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

**CTC Meeting:** October 17-18, 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:**

Staff will provide a recap of virtual ad hoc subcommittee convenings of the interagency Equity Advisory Committee (Committee) and ongoing equity-related work. 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 California Transportation Commission (Commission), the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and the California State Transportation Agency (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.

At the April 5, 2024, virtual meeting of the Committee, the Committee approved the formation of three ad hoc subcommittees. These are, (1) Safety and Climate, (2) Housing, Infrastructure, and Broadband, and (3) Walkability, Disability, and Complete Streets. Each ad hoc subcommittee met during the first week of August, prior to the August 22, 2024, virtual meeting of the full Committee, to discuss ad hoc subcommittee scope and meeting schedules.

At the May 15, 2024, executive meeting of the Committee, the Committee requested the formation of an ad hoc subcommittee dedicated to developing recommendations for CalSTA's update to its Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI). On July 1, 2024, the ad hoc CAPTI Subcommittee held its first meeting virtually, where it discussed recommendations to include in a formal letter to CalSTA. In early August 2024, the ad hoc subcommittee reconvened to finalize the content of the letter and recommend it for approval at the August 22, 2024 meeting of the full Committee. The letter was approved by the full Committee on August 22, 2024, and formally submitted to CalSTA on September 4, 2024. The ad hoc CAPTI Subcommittee will dissolve now that the purpose of the subcommittee has been met.

*Updates from the August 22, 2024 Virtual Committee Meeting*

On August 22, 2024 the Committee held a virtual meeting. Members heard from the San Diego-based Mid City Community Advocacy Network, received updates from interagency staff regarding the 2025 meeting schedule and interagency workplan, received updates from ad hoc subcommittee chairs, discussed and took action on CAPTI recommendations, held a preliminary discussion on a Committee vision, mission, and policy principles for transportation equity, received an update on the Senate Bill 1121 State and Local Transportation Needs Assessment, and held a discussion of member reports and future meeting topics.

Committee members continue to request informational presentations on topics such as broadband and High-Speed Rail. Presentations on these topics will be brought to the October 24, 2024 meeting of the Committee which will take place in Suisun City.

Further, Committee members discussed the kickoff process for the development of a vision, mission, and policy principles for transportation equity. Committee members discussed several options for facilitating this conversation, and most members preferred convening a retreat or workshop to begin the process. Many members preferred seeking an outside facilitator to help guide the process, acknowledging that it may take some time and great effort to finalize. Other members expressed hope to finish the process expediently and intentionally, and that the final product represents a meaningful and connected vision.

Members will have an opportunity to convene in person and continue to discuss the development of a vision, mission, and policy principles for transportation equity during a focused, Bagley Keene compliant retreat-style workshop during the morning of October 24, 2024. This workshop will be held prior to the full Committee meeting that afternoon.

*Ad Hoc Subcommittees Updates*

Ad hoc subcommittees met in August 2024 to elect ad hoc subcommittee chairs and discuss the subcommittee scope and meeting schedules.

Ad hoc subcommittee chairs will work with interagency staff to develop agendas and materials for subcommittee meetings, facilitate ad hoc subcommittee meetings, report back on ad hoc subcommittee activities at each full Committee meeting, and introduce any recommendations or actions the subcommittee would like the full Committee to consider.

The ad hoc subcommittees decided to meet monthly for the remainder of the year, with meetings currently scheduled for October, November, and December. Subcommittee chairs have asked staff to recommend items from the interagency workplan that are well-suited for each of the subcommittees based on their focus area and expertise. Subcommittee chairs are also interested in educating the members about relevant efforts related to their subcommittee focus area to increase their awareness and understanding about concurrent efforts being led by other agencies and groups working in the transportation equity space.

The current ad hoc subcommittees, chairs, and 2024 meetings include:

- Safety and Climate
  - Chair: Martha Armas-Kelly
  - Upcoming meetings: October 30, November 25, and December 16
- Housing, Infrastructure, and Broadband
  - Chair: Cheryl Viegas-Walker
  - Upcoming meetings: October 15, November 19, and December 17
- Walkability, Disability, and Complete Streets
  - Chair: Michelle Rousey
  - Upcoming meetings: October 7, November 18, and December 16

### *Committee Outcomes*

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 <https://catc.ca.gov/-/media/ctc-media/documents/ctc-meetings/2022/2022-06/16-4-3-a11y.pdf>.

The Commission, Caltrans, and CalSTA have developed an interagency workplan that outlines the programs, policies, or processes that each agency is seeking counsel on from the Committee. Opportunities for involvement include:

- Provide recommendations for updates to CalSTA's Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure.
  - Approved by the Committee on August 22, 2024
- 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 members attended and provided feedback on updates to the Active Transportation Guidelines, Senate Bill 1 Programs, and the State Highway Operation and Protection Program Guidelines.
  - Committee members will be invited to review forthcoming Senate Bill 1 Programs funding applications.

### *Committee Member Requests*

Committee members continue to provide interagency staff with input about future meeting topics. Discussion items are listed and updated in Committee meeting minutes and added to future agendas for discussion or action.

*Updates on Committee Opportunities for Advising the Commission*

## State Highway Operations and Protection Program Guidelines

- Committee members will continue to provide equity-focused input as the guidelines are finalized throughout the Fall.

## Equity and Road Charge Statewide Outreach

- In August 2024, Caltrans launched a pilot program to identify and evaluate issues related to the collection of revenue for a road charge program per Senate Bill 339 (Wiener, 2021). To inform the continued study of road charge in California, identify equity issues for consideration, and support a diverse participant base for the upcoming pilot, Caltrans is planning a one-day hybrid outreach event focused on equity and road charge.
- Lauren Prehoda, Road Charge Program Manager at Caltrans, presented a program status update to the Committee at the August 22, 2024 meeting.
- Commission and Caltrans Road Charge Program staff will continue to engage the Committee through a series of briefings regarding equity and road charge.

## State and Local Transportation Needs Assessment

- Senate Bill 1121 (Gonzalez, 2022) requires the Commission to develop a state and local transportation system Needs Assessment that identifies the cost to operate, maintain, and plan for future growth over a ten-year horizon. The Needs Assessment will provide an in-depth summary of the ten-year projection of transportation revenues and projected multimodal transportation needs. Gaps will be identified to inform policy recommendations for securing a long-term sustainable funding structure for transportation infrastructure and operations. The first Needs Assessment is due to the Legislature on January 1, 2025 and will be updated every five years thereafter.
- Committee members offered initial input for the development of the Needs Assessment during a briefing that was held by Commission staff in November 2023. Commission staff also provided a direct overview and solicited feedback from Committee members on the Full Needs Assessment Policy Recommendations Workshops in June 2023. Commission staff continue to engage the Committee through regular briefings.

The Committee will hold two more meetings in 2024, finishing up the year with an in-person Executive meeting in December in Riverside. The Committee will meet on the following dates:

- October 24, 2024, Suisun City (hybrid in-person, virtual)
- December 4, 2024, Riverside (hybrid in-person, virtual)

## Attachments:

- Attachment A: Interagency Equity Advisory Committee Chair Report

# Report from EAC Chair William Walker October 17, 18 Commission Meeting



District 9 Traffic Surveyor Greg setting up a survey along US Highway 395 in downtown Bridgeport, Mono County, CA. *Credit: William Walker, September 26, 2024.*



Looking west from Sonora Pass, 9,624 feet above sea level on State Route 108 at the Mono-Tuolumne County Line. *Credit: William Walker, September 26, 2024*

Here is a quick rundown of events that we have attended over the past month or so.



Commission Photo Op at the Olancho-Cartago Four Lane Expressway Safety Project. Inyo County, CA. Pictured from left: EAC Vice Chair Martha Armas-Kelly, CTC Commissioner Clarissa Falcon, Caltrans District 9 Director Ryan Dermody, CTC Immediate Past Chair Lee Ann Eager, District 9 \_\_\_\_\_, District 9 Sr. Engineer Brian Wesling, CTC Director Tanisha Taylor, CTC Chair Carl Guardino. Credit: William

On Wednesday September 25 and Thursday, September 26, California Transportation Commission Chair Carl Guardino, Immediate Past Commission Chair Lee Ann Eager, Commissioner Clarissa Falcon, Interagency Equity Advisory Committee Chair William Walker and Vice Chair Martha Armas-Kelly, Caltrans Headquarters and District Staff, California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) staff, and Commission staff all attended a Commission Town Hall

Meeting in Bishop, California, hosted by Caltrans District 9 staff (located in Bishop), Inyo County and Mono County Local Transportation Commission Staff, Inyo and Mono County Boards of Supervisors, and staff representing the local tribal communities, the Tribal Chair of the Fort Independence Paiute Tribe, and representatives of the cities of Bishop and Mammoth Lakes.

The Town Hall began Wednesday with a tour of the US Highway 395 Olancha Cartago Four Lane Bypass and Safety Project, a reception that evening provided by the Town Hall Host Committee and a town hall discussion Thursday morning led by local transportation commission staff, project managers and elected officials of the region. California Highway Patrol, City of Bishop Police Department, and representatives from Kern and Alpine counties were also in attendance.



Commissioners, Caltrans Staff and Local Transportation Commissioners and LTC Staff at the Town Hall. Credit: William Walker, September 26, 2024.

Safety was a critical part of the discussion. For many of the communities, Main Street is a state owned facility that is often four lanes, without the safety features that are possible on locally controlled streets. Caltrans project managers and local transportation commission public works directors presented a number of projects that were either in the planning, funds programming, or construction implementation phase.



Local Transportation Commission Staff Presenting at the CTC Bishop Town Hall on September 26. Credit: William Walker

Many of these projects were done through either competitive or formulaic funds awarded by the Commission. They included active transportation programs such as the car free trails in Mammoth Lakes, safe street pedestrian bulb outs and traffic calming in several jurisdictions, or the transportation projects connecting the Fort Independence Paiute Reservation to the larger Independence community. These projects demonstrate how each community developed a plan with the concerns of different diverse stakeholders in mind.

The tour of the Olancha Cartago Bypass Project was a full circle moment for Vice Chair Armas Kelly and me. At the June 2023 Commission meeting, when the Olancha Cartago project was presented, it was very clear from the public comment provided and the staff presentation that there was not a consensus for the stakeholders involved. Both Vice Chair Kelly and me suggested that the project managers consider a more thorough stakeholder input process. The tour of the project demonstrated some of the features that were added to the original project to ensure that the tribal consultation truly took into consideration the desires of tribal leadership. Project compromises can rarely appease all stakeholders involved, but the further consultation provided the Commission with a model to codify and utilize as an example on how Caltrans can meet and confer with tribal nations throughout the 12 Caltrans Districts all over the State.



Vice Chair Martha Armas Kelly, as a token of her appreciation, presented Fort Independence Paiute Tribal Chair Carl Dahlberg with a traditional gift of Sage.



## High Speed Rail Open Houses and Caltrain Electric Train Launch

California High Speed Rail kicked off its open house series in mid-September. I was able to attend the Burlingame open house on Wednesday, September 18 and the Caltrain Electrification Service Launch that took place in Palo Alto on Saturday, September 21 and in downtown San Mateo on Sunday, September 22. Although a ride on high speed rail might seem a long time from now, the infrastructure needed to power high speed rail has already been installed along the Bay Area high speed rail corridor alignment, which is currently operated by Caltrain between downtown San Francisco and the Tamien Station just south of Diridon Station in downtown San Jose. If you missed the week of Caltrain and High Speed Rail open houses, there will be more in the month of October.



## US Department of Transportation Region 9 and Caltrans District 7 Career Fair - Los Angeles | September 19, 2024

Both the California and United States Departments of Transportation co-hosted a career fair at the Caltrans District 7 Office on Thursday, September 19. Federal Highway Administration Region IX Division Administrator Elissa Konove, and Caltrans District 7 Deputy Director of Planning and Local Assistance Marlon Regisford were on hand with many of their colleagues from the many divisions that comprise the two departments: planning, communications, engineering, Human Resources, among many others. Several workshops were led by both agencies, including resume writing workshops, feedback on resumes, a workshop on how to register for the CalCareers and USAJobs job portals, and several opportunities to speak with the hiring managers of vacant positions at both agencies. The Caltrans District 7 Office has a great building foyer or courtyard where the event was held. It can be held up as a great way to collaborate between agencies. I look forward to seeing more events like these throughout the State.





## Subcommittees Update

Our subcommittees are off to a great start. EAC members are excited to have a space to flesh out the ideas that are often limited at the larger Committee meetings. Staff will be working with committee chairs to develop templates to help subcommittees with developing their recommendations to the larger EAC more efficiently.

## Final Note — Purpose of the Interagency Equity Advisory Committee

According to the EAC Charter, Article 2, Section 1 - Purpose:

The Interagency Equity Advisory Committee (Committee) is a priority for the California Transportation Commission (Commission), California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The Committee is intended to elevate diverse and historically marginalized voices to advise our agencies on how to achieve meaningful outcomes in transportation equity, environmental justice, and equitable economic opportunities, especially as related to transportation planning and programming.

My experience in providing advice regarding the Olancho Cartago project in Inyo County, was very fraught. I could tell that there were people in the room that felt my feedback might not be well received, but as an appointed member of the EAC, it is my responsibility to provide this advisement, even if it is not well received. That advisement along with other public comment provided by other stakeholders that day encouraged the Commission to recommend that staff go back and consult regarding the project to ensure that stakeholder voices were heard.

At the August 2024 Commission meeting, a number of Commissioners stated that it was important that when meeting attendees who wished to disagree should do so civilly. Commissioners also chose to single out members of the community whom they felt were especially out of pocket with their concerns. There were no members of the public that had spoken that day regarding any item. But there was a member of the Equity Advisory Committee that shared some opinions in his monthly report regarding how he felt the work of the Committee had been going thus far. It was not my intention to attack any one in particular, and if my critique of how effective the work of the EAC has been over the past year was taken as an attack, I want to be the first to apologize. As Chair of the Committee, I take full responsibility for the Committee not meeting its responsibility to advise the Commission, CalSTA and Caltrans on how to achieve

meaningful outcomes in transportation equity, environmental justice and equitable economic opportunities.

I hope that when I point out that our Committee needs more support in feeling that what we do is meaningful, that I have the full support of the Commission, CalSTA and Caltrans staff and that we can work together to ensure that EAC members do feel that their work is meaningful and impactful.

I hope you all accept my apology. I also hope that the impact that Vice Chair Armas Kelly and I could have upon a project like the Olanha Cartago project can be replicated for our EAC members on a project or program that they all can select as a group. This can be in addition to the projects and programs that staff select for us to provide input on in an individual capacity.

Respectfully Submitted,

William Walker, Chair  
Interagency Equity Advisory Committee  
Caltrans | CalSTA | CA Transportation Commission