

Memorandum

To: EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

EAC Meeting: October 24, 2024

From: STATE AGENCIES' EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

Reference Number: Tab 8, Information

Prepared By: C. Sequoia Erasmus
Associate Deputy Director
California Transportation Commission

Published Date: October 14, 2024

Subject: CalSTA Status Update: Committee Recommendations for the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure

Summary:

Darwin Moosavi, Deputy Secretary for Environmental Policy and Housing Coordination with the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), will provide updates on the status of the comment letter featuring recommendations from the Interagency Equity Advisory Committee (Committee) on updates to the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI).

Background:

CalSTA has sought input from the Committee on updates to CAPTI. Several members of the Committee attended the CalSTA CAPTI listening sessions at the end of April and early May 2024. At the May 15, 2024 meeting of the Committee, eight members chose to participate in an ad hoc subcommittee, with the addition of Committee Chair William Walker as an ex officio non-voting member. The objective of the ad hoc subcommittee was to provide input on future CAPTI actions.

Committee members participating in the ad hoc subcommittee included:

- Martha Armas-Kelly
- Alexandria Contreras
- Ana Gonzalez
- Amber Novey (Chair)
- Andres Ramirez
- Michelle Rousey
- Randolph Torres-Van Vleck
- William Walker
- Kristine Williams

On July 1, 2024 and July 31, 2024, members of the ad hoc subcommittee met virtually to discuss the update to the CAPTI and provide feedback to CalSTA. The first meeting of the subcommittee included an overview of CAPTI provided by CalSTA staff and a discussion amongst the subcommittee members on what should be included and/or addressed within the CAPTI update. Based on the initial discussion, interagency staff drafted a comment letter for the subcommittee members to review and refine. The draft letter was brought before the subcommittee for further discussion at its second meeting. The letter was subsequently revised by staff to reflect additional feedback from the subcommittee members. The subcommittee brought the letter before the full Committee on August 22, 2024, and the Committee voted to approve the recommendations put forward by the subcommittee. With approval, the letter was formally submitted to CalSTA for consideration.

ATTACHMENT A:

- EAC CAPTI Comment Letter, August 22, 2024

Interagency Equity Advisory Committee
1120 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
TransportationEAC@dot.ca.gov

September 4, 2024

Mr. Toks Omishakin, Secretary
California State Transportation Agency
915 Capitol Mall, Suite 350B
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Omishakin:

On behalf of the Interagency Equity Advisory Committee (EAC), thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the update to the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI).

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

Our priorities in engaging with the CAPTI update are as follows:

- To set concrete goals and guidance to achieve carbon reduction and equity,
- To provide a deep and meaningful understanding of the economic impact on historically underserved communities when discussing transportation investments, including Black, Indigenous, people of color, and people with disabilities,
- To integrate housing and land use actions with transportation goals for the purpose of achieving transportation equity, and
- To align and coordinate the goals of the various state agencies involved in climate planning.

To advance these priorities, we offer the following process recommendations to strengthen CAPTI, based on our expertise as equity-centered professionals and community leaders:

Streamline and standardize community engagement to ensure reaching populations and geographic regions who have not yet been engaged.

CalSTA should analyze which populations and geographic regions have received the most direct engagement and those who have not been engaged adequately. CalSTA should continue to work with the EAC to develop and establish criteria for identifying these communities and conduct meaningful engagement.

Considering the varying levels of transportation staffing throughout the state, many under-resourced communities are likely to not be aware of CAPTI or receive opportunities for direct engagement. Improved engagement strategies can better capture ideas directly from communities about how to advance sustainable, equitable, and healthy modes of transportation, including walking, biking, transit, and rail, and accelerate the transition to zero-emission vehicle technology.

- **Community engagement efforts should be a collaborative endeavor between state agencies and local community-based organizations (CBOs).** The state agency should take the lead, leveraging its resources and administrative capacity to manage the engagement process. This approach alleviates the burden on already under-resourced CBOs while ensuring robust support from organizations that possess crucial knowledge of the community, including the cultural competency and language skills to engage with them in a meaningful way. By combining the strengths of both state agencies and local CBOs, community engagement efforts can be more effective, equitable, and sustainable. Key strategies include:
 - Joint Efforts: State agencies should lead administrative tasks and logistical planning, while CBOs are compensated to provide local insights and training on best practices for state staff.
 - Training and Capacity Building: State staff should receive training on equitable community engagement practices.
 - Local Hiring: Implement local hiring requirements for state staff involved in community engagement to ensure representation and cultural relevance of the staff working directly in those communities.
- **Allocate funding to community groups working on displacement mitigation strategies similar to those included in the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) program.** It isn't always clear to jurisdictions why state program applications include questions about housing and displacement mitigation strategies for transportation projects. Directing funding to community groups can help increase engagement specifically around the nexus of housing and displacement mitigation with transportation projects. Jurisdictions should be encouraged to partner with and compensate CBOs to co-develop the program applications and inform the ongoing displacement mitigation efforts.

We also offer the following strategic recommendations:

- **Outline goals to make our transit systems as integrated as the state highway system.** The state should consider how procurement, payment systems, and other operations can be coordinated so that transitions between transit agencies are seamless for the user.
- **Deepen goals for ensuring equity of access, especially for those living in rural, low-income, or Tribal areas.** For those who don't drive, access to destinations is substantially limited throughout the state. Many areas can't be reached due to lack of or limited public transit and active transportation infrastructure. Decisions to address these inequities should be data-driven and backed by transportation- specific and socioeconomic metrics, including screening tools such as the Caltrans Equity Index which identifies transportation-based priority populations at a granular level.
- **Establish equity of fees across the state.** Transit affordability must be considered when addressing matters of transportation equity.

Thank you for your consideration of our recommendations. We appreciate the opportunity to inform the updates to CAPTI and we encourage CalSTA to continue engaging with the EAC's ad hoc CAPTI subcommittee once the list of draft actions has been released. An opportunity to provide feedback on that list will ensure that our recommendations remain focused. Please contact William Walker directly at wiyum@wiyum.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



[William Walker \(Sep 4, 2024 19:02 PDT\)](#)

- William Walker, Committee Chair Interagency Equity Advisory Committee