

EQUITY ADVISORY ROUNDTABLE MEETING 1
APRIL 21, 2021

Agenda Item 1: Attendee Roll Call

Carolyn Abrams

Ruby Acevedo

Jacob Babauta (*not present*)

Keith Bergthold

Tamika Butler

Rodney Fong (*not present*)

Nailah Pope-Harden

Jasmine Leek

Lena Morán-Acereto

Rio Oxas

Stephanie Ramirez

Russell Rawlings

Leslie Sanders

Connie Stewart

Elizabeth Thompson (*initially present, technical difficulties*)

Ivette Torres

Randy Torres-Van Vleck

Kiana Valentine

Jerard Wright (*not present*)

Agenda Item 2: Welcome and Opening Remarks

California Transportation Commission Chair, Hilary Norton noted concerns regarding the impact of transportation systems on vulnerable populations and how there is an opportunity to move transportation forward to address these issues. Chair Norton went on to note there will be a discussion of the draft charter and best practices for public engagement. She closed her remarks by saying how she feels encouraged by how the federal government is prioritizing equity concerns.

Secretary Kim began his remarks by sharing a brief history of the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), which was born in 2013. The idea was to place all transportation entities under the same agency and bring Cabinet-level attention to all important policy challenges facing transportation systems in California. CalSTA tries to focus on meeting the mobility needs of all and believes transportation should be designed and delivered to address equity. Secretary Kim states that he believes transportation systems should be about the people. Last summer, CalSTA released a racial equity statement which condemns systemic racism and acknowledges that many decisions of the past have had a devastating impact on communities of color. CalSTA will work to provide safe and equitable access to opportunities, especially to people of color and disadvantaged communities. CalSTA works to bring these visions to life with action and believes all work should be executed through an equity lens.

Jeanie-Ward Waller highlighted Caltrans' new Office of Race and Equity, which will be working with the Roundtable. She discussed Caltrans' 4 Ps: People (our staff and changing practices in recruitment and promotion to be reflective of communities served); Programs & Projects (how we engage communities in planning and development, changing policies that prioritize projects); Partnerships (small business, minority owned); and Planet (climate change work, resiliency for those impacted by climate). She also touched on the 2050 Draft Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan.

Agenda Item 3: Equity Advisory Roundtable Member Introductions

Carolyn Abrams: Research Data Analyst at UC Davis Center for Regional Change, policy-oriented research, urban planning and land use, use research to inform policies, conducted in partnership with communities.

Connie Stewart: Executive Director for Initiatives, Humboldt State University, appointed as rural representative, former mayor of Arcata, did a lot of planning with Caltrans at District 1, passion is broadband access and Caltrans Right-of-Way (ROW) broadband opportunities, unstable roads due to geology and access issues.

Ivette Torres (pronouns are she/they): from Inland Empire (Moreno Valley), UC Assistant Scientist, California Air Resources Board (CARB) funded research, looking at railyards, indirect sources rule, transportation and housing.

Jasmine Leek: Managing Director at Third City Coalition in Stockton. Civic innovation and urban sustainability. Local community engagement partner.

Keith Bergthold: Fresno Metro Ministry, used to work with City of Fresno, General Plan Update. Now: Better Blackstone – Placemaking, transit-oriented development.

Kiana Valentine: Executive Director for Transportation California. Coalition of labor and management organizations. Advocate for revenues for transportation infrastructure. Lives and works in Sacramento. From Tracy.

Lena Morán-Acereto: From Oxnard, Ventura County. CEO of Bridging Voices – Uniendo Voces. Passion for language justice. Creating multi-lingual spaces. Communicate across language and cultures.

Leslie Sanders: Transportation and Land Use Manager for Trinidad Rancheria, Humboldt County. On behalf of NCTTC (North Coast Tribal Transportation Commission, consists of 12 tribes). Northern California Intertribal association formed for the purpose of fostering collaborative dialogue on transportation issues. A majority are tribes in Caltrans District 1, where transportation is minimal and roads are horrendous. Here to raise awareness of tribal transportation issues.

Nailah Pope-Harden: Policy Manager at ClimatePlan, works on intersection of climate, transportation, and land use. Vision that while reaching climate goals, equity is part of the vision.

Randy Torres-Van Vleck, pronouns are he/they. Director of Policy & Planning, at City Heights CDC, a community-based organization based in San Diego County. Randy's organization formed in response to plans by Caltrans to extend a freeway through the City Heights neighborhood, which prompted residents to define a collective vision for the corridor, later developing into this organization.

Rio Oxas: Uses they/them/their pronouns. Born and raised in Echo Park (in Tongva lands), Co-founder of RAHOK (Race Ancestors Health Outdoors and Knowledge). Looking forward to working towards being more mindful of design to honor indigenous tribes and native flora and fauna.

Ruby Acevedo: Staff Attorney, land use issues, represent tenants, habitability violations, environmental laws and developments. Worked at a community organization in 2011, and on SB 375 Transportation Land Use issues. Works in the Bay Area. Worked in the Central Valley as well.

Russell Rawlings (pronouns are he/him): Statewide Community Organizer, California Foundation for Independent Living Centers (CFILC), build capacity for Independent Living Centers (support organizations for people living with disability). Here to ensure work is accessible. Grew up in North West Texas, relies heavily on public transportation. Interested in implementation of plans for Electric Vehicles and autonomous vehicles conversation as well as development of plans for transportation for those with disabilities (access to COVID-19, disaster preparedness).

Tamika Butler: Lives in Los Angeles on Tongva land. Is extremely committed to this work for personal reasons and experiences faced in the past as a Black person and a parent of a Black son and daughter. Additionally, as a gender queer person, understand experiences of transportation vary from person to person based on who we are and how other people perceive us.

Stephanie Ramirez: Associate State Director for American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), advocates for support for older adults. Recognize that transportation is a vital link for older adults to their communities. 3rd generation public transportation user, immigrated from Nicaragua, grandma never learned how to drive, other family members rely on public transportation, fears for undocumented folks getting on public transportation, trauma. All this knowledge is shared...but nothing changes. We've accumulated enough knowledge. I think we know what we need to do. Solutions from community members, bring it up to forefront. Trickle down to commission and others in the transportation system.

Agenda Item 4: Overview of the California Transportation Commission, California State Transportation Agency, and Caltrans

Avital Barnea provided the CalSTA Overview highlighting Secretary Kim is leading an effort to look at things through an equity lens.

Laura Pennebaker provided the CTC Overview, highlighting CTC as an independent state agency while speaking to the following Why an Equity Roundtable? (Slide 16). Develop charter and scope of work for this group.

Jeanie Ward-Waller provided the Caltrans overview speaking to the following: Caltrans embracing its role as a multi-modal transportation agency, and participation in Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE) which provided opportunities to form an internal workgroup, and develop & adopt the Race & Equity Action Plan. She also spoke to the following topical areas:

- The creation of a new Office of Race and Equity (CORE)
- Training, virtual meetings and discussions, education to Caltrans staff
- The development of an Equity Index Tool: equity indicators for new project prioritization metric (socio-economic indicators), right now just at conceptual phase (access to vehicles, transit, fatalities)
- Renaming facilities associated with names with racist history
- Subcontracting with community based organizations

Questions from Roundtable Members:

Russell Rawlings: Accessibility, there is some work that can be done to this space. Zoom has improved accessibility, and is there caption and ASL translation. This should be a priority.

Keith Bergthold: Continuum of community engagement. Models or platforms to increase ownership. Laura Pennebaker: Share graphic? Avital Barnea can share graphic.

The graphic referenced by Keith Bergthold during the meeting is available here: https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/communityengagement/pce_what.html

Agenda Item 5: Equity Advisory Roundtable Charter- Discussion Draft

Brigitte Driller: Co-creating scope of work, purpose, and expectations for this body.

Discussion:

Connie Stewart: Under topics, I don't see...we have rural communities that rely on multimodal facilities along Caltrans highway. Add Safe Multi-Modal and Broadband to Scope which this group might advise on.

Leslie Sanders: Purpose section: "Elevate diverse perspectives in transportation process...local, non-profit, and advocacy partners." Where do you assume tribal partners fit in that? Advocacy partners? Definitely not local.

Commission Staff, Brigitte Driller: Can add Native American tribal governments.

Rio Oxas: Name the actual communities (Black, low-income, disabled, peoples of color). People not agencies.

Stephanie Ramirez: Supports Rio and Leslie's feedback. Opportunity to hone in on the items Rio highlighted. Thank you for sending this out prior to the meeting. Assuming this will be done once committee is put into place. The absence of an equity definition, the heart of the work is to think about systemic racism the system is perpetuating. Purpose is not just to elevate perspectives. Also, what is the work that needs to be done. That is the purpose of the roundtable.

Commission Staff, Brigitte Driller: Received a similar comment for Equity definition prior to meeting.

Rio Oxas: Purpose: Great that we recommend, but there is no actual accountability to follow through. Doesn't have teeth beyond advising. More hurtful and damaging than fostering relationship. We need to see forms of accountability that can be met. Beyond advising.

Nailah Pope-Harden: Verdict yesterday, now what. A shame that it could just be a plan. Not equity for equity sake. Implementation needs to be written in.

Jasmine Leek: In addition to equity, what are the specific equity activities. CTC investments? Programs? Internal operations in agency itself? How would we apply this work? What are the metrics to assess progress?

Connie Stewart: How is the impact going to be measured over time?

Commission Staff, Brigitte Driller: Impact will be measured through Equity activities-what is covered under the scope, but we can make that more obvious.

Connie Stewart: What is the definition of the equity activities sentence in the charter? Perhaps adding an evaluation metric, maybe around the four Ps? We can help you come up with structure for evaluation.

Rio Oxas: Scope-there is more massaging to be done. The public engagement practices—get nervous about if things don't get codified, we may lose. Public empowerment, what does it look like? Exploration around power and shifted to public's hands so disparities don't continue.

Leslie Sanders: While I agree it needs to get back into the hands of the public, we need to be very careful as far as the public having power with regards to tribes. The majority of the tribes I represent—we have so much division and racial inequity within our communities that if we allow too much public power, the tribes will never be able to

secure a better future for their people. We'll never be able to protect the sovereignty, never be able to move forward with our project. So much racial inequity within communities. A lot of the rancherias are surrounded by cities and towns. We are small communities. There is still a lot of division within communities. Careful where we put the public power.

Ivette Torres: Indigenous vs rural. It would be helpful for the charter to identify what is the relationship between us as an advisory committee with the Commission. What does the back and forth look like? As an advisory committee we want to do more than release a statement.

Rio Oxas: Precarious situation with public input. Fort Collins...proactively think about indigenous sovereignty. Work to protect communities. Tease out what those communities are and what their needs are.

Nailah Pope-Harden: Around the development of an advisory committee: Where does the roundtable work end and committee begin? How does this roundtable dissolve? Set clear boundaries.

Commission Staff, Brigitte Driller: Planning to discuss committee in future. Might leave some things open and closed. Currently 6 public round table meetings. Our vision is this roundtable body might flow into or inform a future committee.

Commission Staff, Laura Pennebaker: From Commissioner Lyou, his only recommendation is to add to the scope a section that includes the development of near-term actions. Example: community and equity advocates provide updates during policy portion of Commission meetings.

Commission Staff, Brigitte Driller: Asked for other "low hanging fruit" action items.

Public comments: One comment from Julia Jordan: How will the roundtable inform finalization and implementation of CAPTI?

Commission Staff, Laura Pennebaker: Appreciate if we could take the question back and discuss and provide you a response. Probably referring to specific strategy referring to advisory committee. We'll follow up either in writing or at next roundtable meeting. We have arranged to brief the roundtable on CAPTI.

Keith Bergthold: Our Central Valley Community Foundation has done work on defining equity...this equity committee would be informed well about those struggling. They are doing some trailblazing work. Might want to consult with Central Valley Community Foundation.

Commissioner Kehoe: Shared appreciation for Roundtable. Although Roundtable is moving forward...might not solve everything, but we can keep the process moving forward.

Commissioner Inman: Plus one to Commissioner Kehoe's comments. We can listen and learn from each other. I'm thankful for the comment about Zoom. Wanted to pick up on the digital divide discussion. ROW issues, is there something where we can get early successes?

Commissioner Davis: There will be an end-product that we can be proud of. Actionable.

Commissioner Eager: We have had these discussions on the Commission. We do plan to have an action plan at the end of this.

Chair Norton: Amplify something Stephanie said...this is not just to accumulate knowledge, but to implement change. Excited to *act*.

Commission Staff, Brigitte Driller: Any closing thoughts to roundtable members?

Tamika Butler: Center that this is for people. Defining the work, giving us the space, and not wasting this space; the potential impact is huge.

Public comment (Jillian Guizado): Planning and Programming Director, Riverside County Transportation Commission —since 2000 population has increased 56%, 10 jobs for every 20 people. Our county is housing rich but jobs poor. Commute out of the county more so than others. Dirtying our air and congesting roadways. Implore roundtable to use voices to ensure clean air doesn't come at expense of marginalized, underrepresented communities.

Public comment: (Naomi Iwasaki) From LA Metro. LA Metro Equity Platform. Extend partnership to the roundtable. Looking forward to statewide definition of equity, metrics.

Agenda Item 6: Public Engagement Best Practices

Kiran Parmar: Commission's current public engagement practices and examples of engagement in planning and program guidelines

Any questions? No public questions.

Discussion: Enhancing community engagement practices – public meetings, workshops, and planning and program guidelines

QUESTION 1: What barriers or challenges does your community, or the communities you work with, experience in engaging on transportation plans or projects?

Tamika Butler: In virtual times, barrier is the digital divide. Engaging with meetings like this, as well as access to information. Often technology is being leveraged. People can't attend meetings, and can't get information.

Lena Moran-Acereto: When people are able to overcome the barrier, a lot of the language used during meetings is not community friendly. Non-accessible language turns people away from wanting to engage. Suggests, when you are creating, you should create in multiple languages. Bring people to the table who work in multiple languages so they can address jargon, acronyms, idioms that don't necessarily translate in their respective languages. Engaging, meaning not just having bodies in the room or faces on the screen.

Jasmine Leek: Is there any existing written guidance the Commission uses for public engagement? Is it staff doing engagement based on particular needs of projects? Do you require business associates or agencies granting funds to, to also use these [guidance or policies]?

Commission Staff, Laura Pennebaker: Use long-standing state of practice. Follow Bagley-Keene, typical state commission board meeting. Also program Guidelines. There are opportunities to grow more in engagement. Regarding business associates, the Commission looks to local governments to have their engagement plans in place that meet federal and state standards. When it comes to project level work, that engagement is very localized. We operate pursuant to Title VI.

Nailah Pope-Harden: Me too with digital divide and language. Challenge is paradigm. Community engagement is reactionary. Experts come in and then communities have to react. Treated as if they are not experts. The public is given 2 minutes to comment and then that testimony is documented. There is never a time someone has to get back to you. Scope of conversation, we need holistic conversation. Compounding issues (e.g. one person is concerned about safety, another is concerned about trash). Can't just plug in more community engagement. Engagement in forefront, what would that look like? What do we have today? Now meet in the middle. The whole paradigm is broken.

Rio Oxas: Ditto on Lena, Tamika, Nailah. Narrative of their experience: Attended a CTC meeting in person in the past. Had youth and elders, when we walked in, everyone seemed shocked. Most people in the room were wearing suits, had a particular language. Felt that security and administrative staff on the side were questioning their presence at the meeting. Was a heartbreaking experience and ended up leaving. It was a very disparate situation. Going back to scope, some of this is naming power dynamics. Taxpayer money. How do we get it in the hands that most need it? Community coming to this spot...versus how CTC goes to community and boots on the ground to see what's going on.

Connie Stewart: Plus one on what everyone else said. But, in some ways the community is doing planning and the transportation agencies are not at that table. We have to come to your table for transportation planning. But you are not at our tables when we are talking about safety. We've invited you to the room this whole time.

One example of personal experience: As a Black woman who goes to a meeting with Caltrans staff, who are all white and they say "our Right of Way" and "our road systems", it impacts us all. It belongs to the State of California. The whole mindset

needs to change. People experience different things at different Caltrans Districts as if Caltrans does not participate until you are in their Right of Way.

Russell Rawlings: I also can recall many times participating in community engagement around projects...there is an environment that is not inclusive to those who are disabled. Charette-style configuration falls apart if no one is there actively to assist. Those who are public transportation dependent often have trouble accessing these meetings in the evenings; Infrastructure does not support their return trip home, meaning they would have to cut corners off personal lives to attend.

Leslie Sanders: Echoing others. Imperative that we look at the fact that all the existing planning analysis and guidance, it doesn't always align with the tribal community context and needs. It's not clear what the benefits of those planning tools will provide to transportation project selection and delivery in tribal communities. Look at shifting the whole paradigm. We won't get the engagement until there is some type of shift.

Commission Staff, Laura Pennebaker: Planners sometimes present as if they are presenting to other planners.

Randy Torres-Van Vleck: Language and technical analyses to disarm folks.

Keith provided link to document: <https://www.nationalcivicleague.org/ncr-article/human-centered-design-and-community-engagement/> (Human Design Around Community Engagement. The National Civic League works to provide stronger civic engagement to create more equitable communities.)

Jeannie Ward-Waller (Caltrans): In response to Connie Stewart's comment: Use of "Our ROW" is not the correct language Caltrans should use as Caltrans is serving the community. Just want to let you know we are here, and we are listening and there is a cultural shift happening at Caltrans. We want to be there in service to the community and we are trying to do better. Jargon is another personal pet peeve. We should be able to show up in a more meaningful way.

Commission Staff, Laura Pennebaker: Dig in on Questions 2 through 4 at future Roundtable Meeting.

Agenda Item 7: Public Comment

No public comments.

Agenda Item 8: Meeting Recap and Next Steps

Commission Staff, Laura Pennebaker: Thanks to everyone for contributing and being vulnerable to share personal stories. We value everyone's input and it's a great opportunity to build relationships with one another as we continue to discuss equity issues in the next couple of months. There is a big difference between doing public

outreach and actually engaging communities. We look forward to continuing the discussion on public engagement and are grateful for your comments and feedback on the draft charter we discussed. We will take the feedback that we heard from you all and in terms of next steps we will disseminate information before the next Roundtable meeting.