

EQUITY ADVISORY ROUNDTABLE MEETING #2  
5/26/2021

Laura Pennebaker (CTC): Meeting facilitator, provided brief logistical introduction.

Spanish interpreter: Presented options for Spanish interpretation services and provided a telephone number for Spanish language listeners to access the meeting.

Justin Hall (CTC): Provided instructions on how to provide public comment.

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**Agenda Item 1: Attendee Roll Call**

Carolyn Abrams  
Ruby Acevedo  
Jacob Babauta (*absent*)  
Keith Bergthold  
Tamika Butler  
Rodney Fong (*absent*)  
Nailah Pope-Harden  
Jasmine Leek  
Lena Morán-Acereto (*absent*)  
Rio Oxas  
Stephanie Ramirez  
Russell Rawlings  
Leslie Sanders  
Connie Stewart  
Elizabeth Thompson (*absent*)  
Ivette Torres  
Randy Torres-Van Vleck  
Kiana Valentine (*absent*)  
Jerard Wright

Laura Pennebaker(CTC): Provided the meeting agenda overview and began the meeting with a moment of silence for those who lost their lives or were injured at the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) Railyard in San Jose.

The Roundtable effort is being led by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) in partnership with the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) and Caltrans. The reason we are able to do this work is because of Roundtable members like you all, who have generously agreed to provide your time and input. Topics that will be discussed today include: draft Roundtable charter, Listening Sessions, and public engagement practices.

Roundtable members participating in their first Roundtable meeting were given an opportunity to introduce themselves:

Jerard Wright: Government Affairs Director of the Greater L.A. Realtors, before that with L.A. County Business Federation working on Land-use, Housing, Policy, CEQA; before that was policy analyst for Move L.A.; been engaged in a lot of housing and transportation issues in the Los Angeles area and look forward to learning more about this process and providing feedback not just for the LA area but for the State.

Commission Chair Norton: Asked fellow Commissioners to introduce themselves.

Commissioner Inman: Been on Commission since 2010 and was former Chair.

Commissioner Lyou: On Commission since January 2020. Trying to make equity a high priority.

Commissioner Martinez: Commissioner since August 2020. Equity is important for all of us on the Commission. Thanked those involved.

Commissioner Davis: Been on Commission since this time last year. Interested in what we can do to make it right where we haven't gotten it right previously. In his day job, he has 60,000 members he represents within the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA).

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## **Agenda Item 2: Welcome**

Laura Pennebaker: Provided some brief welcoming remarks and highlighted feedback received last time regarding GotoWebinar and concerns of accessibility. Noted that staff has been working with Caltrans' Disability Advisory Committee to ensure technologies we use are accessible and contracting with real-time vendor for closed-captioning. Commission staff is also working on contracts for translation services for multiple languages, including sign language. Continuing evaluation of use of GotoWebinar for Roundtable meetings.

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## **Tab 3- Agenda Item: Meeting Minutes**

Meeting minutes from the April 21, 2021 Roundtable meeting were provided via email to roundtable members and posted online for stakeholders. Any suggested edits from roundtable members?

Laura Pennebaker: Hearing no comments, we will finalize the meeting minutes

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## **Agenda Item 3: Revised Charter**

Brigitte Driller: Summarized high-level feedback from first Roundtable meeting and presented changes that were made to Charter.

Connie Stewart: [Under Purpose] In light of Governor's bold proposal on broadband, "recommend transportation and economic development."

Russell Rawlings: Remove "communities comprised of" – because individuals with disabilities are in all communities.

Commissioner Inman: Add word “reliable” in sentence with “support safe, affordable, and efficient transportation...”

Leslie Sanders: Piggybacking on Connie’s statement. For tribal communities, transportation planning is integrated with economic development, housing, etc. Broaden it to “integrated transportation”? Encompass everything that communities have to include in planning.

Brigitte Driller: The first piece of feedback was around “disparate impacts” to transportation. Sounds like there is a desire to broaden to “integrated transportation” or “economic development”. Is there general support around using “integrated transportation”?

Jerard Wright: I’m mulling it...but it shouldn’t hurt because everything will flow into it, going into Commissioner Inman’s comment on reliability. You have to have reliability at the heart of everything.

Rio Oxas: Definitely reliability. As far as disparate impacts in transportation, agrees with Connie and Leslie, with economics...there are so many ways to think about it. We were having a conversation in another roundtable. Often costs are seen as people have to catch up to, when there are economic structures that were created that prevented people from even accessing the resources.

Nailah Pope-Harden: Looks good in general. I have an overall concern that the purpose of this roundtable is focused on how equity is sustained in these conversations regarding transportation. Suggested adding: “and figure out ways to sustainably include equity”

Jerard Wright: Agree with Leslie’s comment. Agree with reliability component.

Brigitte Driller: Based on chat, looks like most agree with comment by Nailah.

Randy Torres-Van Vleck: Regarding last sentence, would love to add “dignified” to list (usually related to access to bathrooms, lighting, shelter) in purpose.

Brigitte Driller: Thank you, Randy. Any others?

Russell Rawlings: Comment about disparate impacts: Feels like we are talking around the words “equity” or “lack of equity.” Want to approach it head on. Disparate impacts can be almost anything. Transportation justice doesn’t exist in many communities.

Jerard Wright: End result of where we are trying to go...is solving equity issues, correct? The goal should include something along the lines of: “This roundtable effort will produce sustainable, implementable actions that support safe, affordable, reliable and efficient, and equitable transportation for underserved communities” I think that could address it head on and still punch up what is needed here. Actions are what will get us there to bridge forward.

Brigitte Driller: Moving to Scope, we have expanded to include public engagement empowerment and tribal governments.

Tamika Butler: I’m having trouble with “empowerment.” It implies, somehow government is giving others power. Feels colonial. Is there a better way to articulate? We want to recognize power inherent in these communities, maybe “shift” power and walk with them. As opposed to we are the ones giving power down.

Brigitte Driller: Consider the word “co-powerment”? Any other recommendations?

Rio Oxas: Co-empowerment could work. For text “identification of best practices for leadership by tribal governments” and then naming the...Black, indigenous, people of color, underserved communities, however we want to do that. “Public” feels a little funky. Wondering if there are other ideas.

Nailah Pope-Harden: Instead of empowerment, give communities agency over decision-making. Acknowledging communities’ agency. Feels more comfortable to me.

Ivette Torres: Taking it a step further with public engagement: immersion of the community. Including the community in the process, not just to engage with them. That’s how I envision that statement.

Randy Torres-Van Vleck: Participatory planning. Working together to identify solutions to achieve public policy goals.

Connie Stewart: We’ve been talking about generalized concepts of the way meetings are. It’s very white supremacist. Example: You have 3 minutes. We don’t want it to be: You have 4 minutes! More about feeling that we have a role. And how *you* engage in *our* meetings is more of a critical piece. We have sort of fallen in the white supremacist trap of, we are going to listen, but we are going to do it in the way we always conduct things, but we’re going to do it more compassionately.

Russell Rawlings: Thanks Connie for bringing that up. Earlier today a meeting—the chair of that body said public comment is recommended at 3 minutes, but if need additional time, it will be granted. Ablest practice.

Brigitte Driller: We’ll take these comments, may have to email back and forth. Trying to keep Scope succinct. Trying to get language right in charter, but there will be other places where we can provide more context.

Commissioner Lyou: With certain hearings, there is a requirement that people are treated equally. Quasi-judicial and giving people equal time. Staff might have to be cognizant of that.

Brigitte Driller: Reviewing two bullets under Roles and Responsibilities. There is a standing agenda item at regular Commission Meetings and we will develop recommendations. Produce report and list out tangible actions from roundtable meetings.

Regarding the equity definition, if roundtable members are interested in reading CalSTA, Caltrans, and CTC statements, we can provide a link. Asking if we can pull from those statements to develop equity definition. What key words or concepts? Resources? Is there anything else?

Tanisha Taylor: A suggestion, we’ve heard a lot during discussion of the Charter. Start putting pen to paper starting from charter.

Brigitte Driller: If roundtable is OK with this, we will draft. Email any resources you may have.

Randy Torres-Van Vleck: This doesn’t get at the full definition but the framework that the City Heights Community Development Corporation (CHCDC) advocates found valuable in San Diego is what former DOT secretary Anthony Foxx (from about 5 years ago) announced the Ladders of Opportunity initiative, which recognized wrongs of the past and worked to ensure they don’t happen again. This framework the San Diego social equity working group found very valuable.

Keith Bergthold: In Fresno, we have an advanced group dealing with trauma informed frameworks. This might be appropriate for us to discuss.

Brigitte Driller: What is the format that you think will be helpful? Is “Definition” what we want? Or framework? Putting this out there for consideration.

Nailah Pope-Harden: A framework might actually work better. Key words and concepts: acknowledgement of historic discrimination and oppression. *Not* righting historic wrongs. Words like transformative are really important.

Leslie Sanders: Not just historically what happened, but what is continuing today. It may have evolved, but it has never stopped.

Brigitte Driller: Looks like what is desired is a little more than an equity definition. We will look at resources and feedback and draft.

Rio Oxas: I want to underscore—equity is naming those things (white supremacy, structures, ableism) we are working to take out. Those just need to be spelled out clearly even if they are uncomfortable. On the flip-side, want to identify things and work towards making a shift. (like trauma and informed).

Brigitte Driller: We’ll make revisions to draft charter, will circulate via email, will let you know of changes we are proposing, and will bring back to next roundtable meeting. Also, will bring back equity definition or framework for the group.

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#### **Agenda Item 4: Listening Sessions**

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Laura Pennebaker: The purpose of our introductory slides is to convey our agency’s commitment and effort.

Avital Barnea (CalSTA staff): CalSTA has embraced using equity and racial justice as a lens for our transportation decision-making. At the last Roundtable meeting, CalSTA Secretary, David Kim spoke about CalSTA’s public commitment to values promoting racial equity, inclusion and diversity as being foundational to achieving our vision of safer, more connected transportation for the future. CalSTA also vows to work with stakeholders and engage them, including collaboration efforts such as this Roundtable and the upcoming Community Listening Sessions.

Laura Pennebaker: From top down, we will need to name the things we all need to work on and better understand structural racism and ableism.

Amar Cid (Caltrans Staff): Thanked everyone for providing their time and efforts to help guide this work. Acknowledging this week has been challenging for all - The shooting at VTA this morning; the one year anniversary of the death of George Floyd; and the continuing pandemic. Our three agencies are pressing to show up in the race and equity space. We have documented this through our respective racial equity statements. How we are committed to engaging with community, general public, to provide us their thoughts and experiences as related to transportation. Caltrans is recognizing our role in this and aims to do better. This is our foundation for decision-making. I wanted to make note over the last year: Improving and releasing the Caltrans Strategic Plan. This plan pivoted from the previous plan to

participate in a way that is reflective of our communities; equity is a core value now. Commitment through community engagement and partnerships. Looking to advance equity and livability.

We're not only engaging in collaborative processes. Community Listening Sessions are meant to provide a safe space for personal testimony and experiences; to foster meaningful relationships and build trust; and to document the needs and challenges our communities are vocalizing.

Within our listening sessions all three agencies, executive staff will be participating. Caltrans is leading contracting work for the sessions. Want to produce a document or report that will guide equity-oriented changes.

Will have sessions, virtually or possibly in person depending on COVID. May be localized for targeted participants, partner with community based organizations, report findings.

How could we design sessions to ensure that a targeted representation of neighborhood, community-level, and Native American experiences and perspectives will be heard?

Maybe sessions in areas where there is a history of equity issues?

Maybe in tribal areas?

Maybe targeted towards youth?

You can also send us your thoughts later.

Russell Rawlings: Be cautious of very large meetings. Encourage neighborhoods, especially those that are underserved, as granularly as possible. Acknowledge that every community doesn't need to connect to transit. Partnering with community-based organizations (CBOs) is where you'll probably get best input. Independent living facilities serve communities as well as those adult populations. I like the idea of targeted meetings.

It's important to know that CBOs lack funding.

Ruby Acevedo: Priorities should be rural and unincorporated. There are specific needs. For big cities, we need to partner with those organizations (CBOs) so that we can get the turnout we are looking to target.

Ivette Torres: Adding to Ruby's comment, I think rural and unincorporated areas are important and they are left behind. Locally specific meetings are important. It goes beyond the listening sessions. It is important to have an established relationship with CBO staff before needing to collaborate. In the Inland Empire, staffing might be at capacity; ad-hoc meetings might be better. Finding ways to build on existing meetings. For example, CARB AB 617 meetings. Finding different ways to participate. Community listening sessions should be intentional.

Amar Cid: Building those relationships needs to take place so listening sessions can have outcomes we are envisioning.

We are trying to do better in terms of how we work with our partners. How we resource. Everyone is at capacity. We want to do a better job of providing space. Not just a one-time thing.

What type of stakeholders should we partner with for support and how do we best utilize their expertise in these listening sessions?

Not just partnering with those in transportation community advocacy work, but those who are working in other spaces (health, food access). Youth-centered approach? Organizing with schools so that we are not removing power from our youth.

Nailah Pope-Harden: How to get the most impact: change the framing. Should be specific, neighborhood level and then draw the larger themes. Listening sessions need to be rooted in outcomes first. Set the frame of the sessions to say: "We are doing this to impact XYZ document." The sessions should be very specific, need to have checks and balances. Don't want feedback to go into abyss. Want to know the info will be used. Engagement is overload and duplicative sometimes for communities. There needs to be "identity" and neighborhood groups (e.g.: culturally those that are similar will be more comfortable talking in their same group).

Amar Cid: Thank you, Nailah. We will be diving in to how these sessions are going to change the space.

Leslie Sanders: While I agree with the points that were just made, in some communities it may really work, however, within the tribal communities, if you go in with "this is the outcome"...and you have everything pointed, you are not going to get any engagement. Tribal communities have been told how to do this, how to live, etc. If you try to have a workshop without going on the ground first and garnering support from the tribe and the community, you will have issues. You can show them using illustrations, not just words. Give them an opportunity to voice their needs. Their needs do not always fit what a "normal" transportation plan is.

Tamika Butler: I don't think that ends at just tribal communities. Some stakeholders can be non-traditional folks. Depending on the community, in some, you partner with those doing voter outreach. Not only the traditional transportation partners. If you reach out to them and do a workshop, they'll get people out there and support it. But if you go to Central Valley, and we know that farm workers are reliant on transportation – why wouldn't we work with Rural Legal Aid? Depends on the community and who the leaders are. How do we talk about an issue that is relevant to them, instead of presenting what we want them to understand?

Connie Stewart: I'm frustrated, it's like, how do you become successful using the same framework. How do we get out of the white supremacist lens? How do we get out of that? Instead of deciding the best "6 meetings" and identifying stakeholders- how do we get beyond that? In my community, we are trying to get Caltrans to come to *our* meeting. Haven't even received a response letter from Caltrans. If you want to achieve equity in transportation policy, let US design how you do community outreach. Not "we are doing these 6 meetings and do our best to make them successful." We have trusted partners that help design these meetings. If you come in with a consultant, with this as the subject and you have 20 minutes to discuss it, it's not going to make change. Everyone wants to talk equity, but they really want to talk equity within a white supremacist lens.

Amar Cid: These conversations really help us change and shape what we're doing. We've had these conversations even offline, with our executive teams. So we are not just presenting, but how do we have a space for communities. Thinking about, why aren't other agencies showing up. I don't know if it's the best way, or just 6, but this is the best way we can try within this space.

Jeanie Ward-Waller: We scoped 6 sessions for an initial contract; the intent is this is a starting point. It is upsetting that you have been trying to connect with a district and they are not responding. That should

be easy and yet it's not in a lot of parts of the state. That is something we really want to follow-up on, but we want to shift the culture at Caltrans so those things are not happening so that we are responding and centering those needs in the work that we are doing. This is a starting point and I will acknowledge that on behalf of Caltrans that this is hard for us, but we want to dive deep into this issue. We want to document everything that we hear, I think there is attention, as both Leslie and Nailah outlined, we are serious and have that commitment but not want to pre-decide for communities. We've identified this as a way to show up and start that conversation and we fully acknowledge that that's just a start. We will take feedback as we design these, we have committed resources in our budget to document and understand it better. This is just one effort. It is not just a one and done listening session.

Russell Rawlings: The frustration is very real. I have participated in hundreds possibly thousands of hours in transportation advocacy work and have only been invited to 2 other spaces by Caltrans (5-10 years spaced out). Not surprising to hear this at all. The fact that Connie has reached out to Caltrans, especially considering those that don't have connections.

Randy Torres-Van Vleck: In San Diego, over the years we improved interface ...going into listening sessions, CTC might be so far removed. How can the agencies compensate those CBOs?

Jerard Wright: Where are the other local agencies in terms of this conversation? In LA County, Metro, specific agencies. Structurally is there anything like that within Caltrans? There's something to consider, in future budget. In advocacy world, you have to be proactive. To not get a response, it sounds like there is no structure for that in Caltrans. Or if there is, it is not being well utilized. What does that structure look like? Where are the pieces that are working and where are they not? Bring equity into light.

Rio Ocas: I thought about my own experience in advocacy, we've racked our brains. Connie, thank you for bringing that up. First, we need a listening session to transform CalSTA, Caltrans, CTC. It's supposed to be these agencies serving what the community needs, rather than telling us what we need. Trust has already been breached. How do we come back to this? Yes, to Amar and Jeanie. We know decisions can have a negative impact. There does need to be a space, but there needs to be another piece.

Nailah Pope-Harden: There is a backlog of projects that are currently doing harm. We need to communicate that to communities as early as possible. Be really clear. (Not touch those current projects? Change things moving forward?)

Ruby Acevedo: At the outset of any meeting or listening session, it is important for people to know what feedback is needed and how it will be used. Some accountability. Government staff will give presentations, do surveys, poster boards, and then the community never hears back from them. It really feels like checking a box. Let them know what to expect to see next. They should be able to look forward to something.

Keith Bergthold: Human-centered design has been around for about 10 years. It seems like we design meetings for people who we don't consult with first as to how they'd like the meetings designed. Asking what would be the most meaningful format for *them*. That pre-work would set up framework for equity and community engagement. The other idea is this group picks up on the fact that people seek out opinions and don't follow up. If you aren't going to follow-up, don't have the meeting.

Jerard Wright: What is there now? Is there a department or do they not have the diversity? Maybe something to discuss for next session or via email. Is it all consultant driven? Is there someone in-house



working on those steps? If consultant, they might try, but beholden to key staff lead. Maybe just checking a box. sessions without results...that would be a disaster. I need to understand what is currently structured at Caltrans and CTC.

Russell Rawlings: I want to recognize the idea of connecting the thoughts and feelings. Communities feel traumatized—we are in a different world. There are people who have been extremely marginalized over this past year due to accessibility. How do we build trust? We need to see responsive and committed relationships. Want to be disruptive.

Amar Cid: How to engage from staff at all of our levels. Engagement differs within each project, district, etc. at Caltrans. What is that space, where do we go? We are not just trekking down the path. Want to show back up. I'm personally invested through lived experiences...committed to showing up and following through.

Russell Rawlings: You are all committed to this work. But one of the things you are saying is the labyrinth you have to deal with. There should be a no wrong door approach—there should not be a wrong way to get input. It is frustrating. There isn't a door now, there needs to be a way for people to provide input.

Jerard Wright: To Jeanie, from past relationship with Move LA, I know with the staff here, your heart is in the right space. How do we make that path easier? I remember wearing my hat for Move LA, and there will be people who will flip you off. It starts with a conversation; there will be building blocks. How do we improve upon and create the equity and inclusion? How do we make the process better?

Stephanie Ramirez: A lot of us have been in this space for a long time. This is such a heavy discussion; we are trying to move the direction of transportation to freedom and justice for people to move around in their bodies to go where they need to thrive. I think about what Russell said, how do you design engagement in a world where so much has happened? I think about community members, organizers, community organizations that are trusted to look at people holistically. Government is coming to my community to extract what they need and move on. Maybe the community doesn't want to talk about your transportation project. We need to provide that flexibility. Meeting people where they are is really important. Caltrans and CTC need to understand the humility and compassion piece. Community might not really care about that project (even though it is a political pet project or budget needs to be allocated). How do you do your own homework to understand what the needs are? Need to be accountable for what you are going to hear. Do you need other services? Might not be able to provide, but can make those connections.

Amar Cid: That is spot-on. This space is going to be provided, but it's not necessarily just transportation. We are trying to lead with and acknowledge harms and trauma. I appreciate the comments so far. Thank you. We still have time before this kicks off.

Laura: Covering next steps. We appreciate the honesty and vulnerability that was a part of this conversation. We also appreciate all of the great feedback and have diligently taken notes, which we will reflect back in our meeting minutes for you all to review. Our agencies will analyze what we heard and provide an update on where we are going with the Listening Sessions at the next Roundtable meeting. Given the complicated contracting process, we see that there will be more opportunities to adjust the development of the listening sessions.

## **Agenda Item 5: Public Engagement Best Practices: Meeting 1 Recap and Further Discussion**

Laura: Wanted to check in with you all. We had planned to continue discussion on public engagement best practices, but we've already heard a lot of very heavy things from you all regarding public engagement. I want to make sure we approach this item in a way that is responsive to what you would like to get from it. So we had framed out some discussion questions and we put those in the PowerPoint presentation, but I want to make sure that when we approach this topic, that we do so in a way that you are able to talk about what you want to talk about.

I want to poll the group essentially—are we fatigued on this topic? Are we trying to process? Do we need time to think more about this and come back fresh next meeting? Would you like to cover some of the questions? Or do we want to take this time to do open-ended feedback and discussion? Three options: 1) Allow ourselves to take a break, 2) Cover any of the questions you are interested in covering, or 3) Give folks the space to speak how they would like to on this topic and not be held to the questions.

Rio is voting for option 1 and continuing this talk after receiving updates from Amar's presentation. OK, is there any roundtable member that wishes to make any remarks regarding public engagement best practices in this space right now?

Nailah Pope-Harden: I wanted to say that I think what just happened is such a microcosm of the type of feedback and criticism and passion we're going to be seeing as we do public engagement and best practices. I want to commend the Commission for actively engaging in the conversation.

Tamika Butler: I think what just happened was important and hopefully exactly the type of space you all want to create. I hope someone other than Amar holds the weight of that. Often we hire folks of color, particularly women of color, in these equity roles and they really are trying to move the ball forward within the systems they are in. And so they get a lot of that push back and I want to thank her for holding that space for us. Lesser folks would have been super defensive in this space. I want to make sure everyone on the government side doesn't just see it as her job. I appreciated that, Jeanie, you jumped in and provide that support in real time and take some of that ownership in real time as a white woman. The only other thing I wanted to add, just this piece about best practices and pay. It's come up a lot. And I think you know, as members we got an email about pay. I know resources are limited and even though transportation is always viewed as something better resourced perhaps than other departments or parts of government, it's never enough and it's never enough for community. I encourage folks to realize that when you invite everyone to a space as experts and they are giving their time and their energy and their wisdom, you should figure out a way to compensate them. Asking them to be part of a competitive process where only some people get something but they have to do labor to get that—extra labor to get that—is not the way to think about equity. Sometimes focus is on equity outcomes, but we have to think about equity process and the ways to get there. I won't speak for every member of this roundtable, I'm going to be OK without compensation, but I want us to think about that when we're going to communities. Whether or not it is a grocery card or whatever it is, when people come to share something they are providing expertise, and everyone should feel like they are getting something for that. Whether or not we are providing dinner and free child care or whatever bureaucratic pieces we have to cut through, I think it's dangerous when—and especially where folks are particularly selected—it's dangerous to say you all have value but only some of you can be compensated for that value.

Rio Oxas: Thank you Tamika for laying all that out. Just to echo all those points Tamika just made I definitely found it off-putting seeing a competitive process on that for the points Tamika just mentioned. Going back to having Amar present—and this is for any situation or even partnering up with CBOs on the ground—I hope that agencies can understand that it is a big thing for people to stick their necks out on behalf of the agencies to help mend that trust. There is something to be said about that. I've talked about this with many different people. There is not only the labor of doing the presentation or creating the materials or getting to the place. There's emotional labor that comes with it; with having to process the aftermath when you go back home. Those are things that are very undervalued. To Tamika's point, how does CTC, Caltrans, how do you all collectively spread that. It's particularly on the decision-making powers. The people who can pull the strings because we've seen this over and over again, where people are put in these positions and they have no pull or power. I commend the efforts by Amar, Jeanie, and everybody here because it's not easy to hear our feedback. But it's a necessary step. But it comes with actual transformation. Lastly, CBOs offering their services to agencies as they work to fulfill engagement practices. Something to think about.

Laura Pennebaker: Thank you. Those points were all very well taken. We are hoping to achieve those points through this body and our three agencies trying to come together and really support one another. We believe this work is critical, it's way overdue, and so whatever Avital, through her executive management, Jeanie and Amar, through their executive management, and Commission staff and our executive management - we want this to be a synergistic effort where it is the priority for all of our organizations. In particular, we want to ensure that the Caltrans Office of Racial Equity is not a tiny tugboat trying to pull a really big ship. Making sure that this work is integrated into what we do because that's how you can spread the labor around and I want to especially thank Jeanie and Amar for being so willing to cover this topic. We are still getting into the groove of coming to these meetings prepared with short turnarounds between April and this month. Looking forward to digging in and coming in July at a point where we can pick up where we left off and also show that there's been progress and consideration at the staff level between now and then.

I also want to acknowledge the point on compensation. We've taken those comments under advisement. We want to think through how we go about compensation in a manner that is properly valuing the expertise that we're seeking and how we can figure out how to deal with the bureaucracy that goes along with the State contracting and utilizing resources. I hope we can have a robust conversation about that in the future.

Russell Rawlings: We've reached a valuable point with Connie's acknowledgement...the whole system is broken fundamentally. I would love to find a way to continue to hear exactly how broken it's been. Having that opportunity to have it elevated in a level where it can be acknowledged and even really heard is so valuable. There's assumption that transportation has to be just about vehicles and there's so many people due to medical conditions aren't able to leave their homes in the traditional way. How much is it broken? How do we work towards leveraging this energy into other infrastructure that we need to be able to get folks to truly be able to truly access their communities. There's so much I can share from this last year personally, but I'm not going to do that because I acknowledge my own privilege within this system. There's got to be a way for folks who have really been harmed or possibly lost their lives this last year plus beyond that due to lack of transportation access. Transportation access is a major contributing factor to the health of folks in their communities.

Laura Pennebaker: Thank you Russell. Connie it's your birthday, but today you gave us a gift. Bringing us to a place—vulnerable space—to a conversation we needed to have. This won't be the only difficult conversation we have.

Connie Stewart: Often times when I go on a rant about white supremacy...I always tell people, I was a mayor of a city, I looked at people that were stressed that they had 3 minutes to talk. It's a system that many of us have bought into. Some of us have the privilege of understanding the rules. If you're really going to affect this, it's not about us teaching people the rules of coming to your meeting. People ask, what would the meeting look like? My meetings in tribal communities, we wait until everyone we know is coming has arrived. In case of Caltrans, Last Chance Grade is closed...it may be a 2-hour delay, but we all wait because we know they are willing to make the journey. When they come into the room, we don't rush them. Have food, tribal elder blessing, then - have meeting. Every culture has a different way of entering a meeting space. The concept of one consultant addressing all these cultures is problematic. That consultant is going to design what they think should be the rules for that table. That's why maybe the answer is to pick the six topics you want to start for and ask yourself, what is the best way in each of those areas to enter the space.

I was raised to let it all off...to succeed in a white supremacist environment. But questioning, maybe this effort we try to do something different. We try not to pick the people like me who can adjust, and come in and get our points on the board, or use our influence to get that meeting. Maybe this time, try to enter their space. Thank you for giving me the space to say that. I'm exhausted in the equity spaces...we start with "Let's start with the definition of equity" which we all can never agree to, so we never get beyond that point. Let's try to do something different.

Laura Pennebaker: Challenge accepted. We are going to take what we heard today and our agency staff will sit down and digest to figure out what we can do, and bring back to you in July topics to show we've heard and incorporated what you all have said. A general status on where we can land and what the trajectory might be. I want to identify key takeaways and action items: Use our charter and this effort to identify how the roundtable can sustainably incorporate equity into action, decision making processes, focus on transformative solutions. Need to move from an engagement/empowerment model to one that fosters culturally sensitive participatory planning, focusing on community leadership and co-powerment. Additionally, meeting communities and neighborhoods and individuals where they're at, and being accountable for the feedback that we receive. There is a desire to not lead with a definition of equity, but try to approach it as a framework.

I want to acknowledge the ask for us to think through our existing structures when it comes to engagement and be willing to recognize where things aren't working. This is something State agencies need to be constantly doing. We can think about that between now and the next meeting. Anything else?

Laura Pennebaker: Next steps will be preparing meeting notes and sharing them with you. Next meeting is scheduled for July 21, 2021, and we will bring back revised draft charter and equity framework and feedback on topics discussed today. Also, we will begin discussing the development of a standing equity advisory committee. Are there any final questions or comments from Roundtable members? Hearing none, thank you and see you all in July.