



**Developing the Climate Action Plan for Transportation
Infrastructure (CAPTI)
Stakeholder Workshop Summary**

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I. Introduction

On October 20, 2020, the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) brought together about 140 stakeholders from across California to discuss actions that can leverage state funding to achieve state goals related to climate change. Along with state agency staff, the participants included representatives from local and regional transportation agencies, mobility advocates, and climate change- and environmental justice-focused organizations. Workshop participation was by invitation, with one invitee representing their agency or organization. A broader audience was able to view the plenary sessions via livestreaming on YouTube.

II. Background

CalSTA is leading a stakeholder outreach campaign as part of a broader effort to develop an implementation plan for Governor Newsom's Executive Order (EO) N-19-19, issued on September 20, 2019. The EO directs CalSTA to leverage more than \$5 billion in annual state transportation spending for construction, operations, and maintenance in an effort to help reverse the increasing consumption of fossil fuels and to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with the transportation sector.

To meet the objective of the EO, CalSTA convened an interagency Working Group, which included staff from: the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the California Transportation Commission (CTC), the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), the California Air Resources Board (CARB), Department of Finance (DOF), Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), the Strategic Growth Council (SGC), and the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz). The Working Group jointly drafted ten investment strategies to reduce emissions and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Between April and June 2020, CalSTA engaged over 200 public agency and advocacy stakeholders and held individual meetings with a number of these groups to get their input on the investment strategies. CalSTA also conducted a survey to learn about topics that warranted further discussion. Two topics were identified as warranting additional stakeholder input: equity considerations and VMT reduction, and two dedicated discussion sessions were included in this workshop. In addition, the stakeholders identified 229 action item ideas for CalSTA to consider in implementing the EO. These action items are in addition to those suggested by the interagency Working Group. This workshop continues CalSTA's efforts to engage stakeholders.

III. Workshop Agenda, Format and Presentation Summary

The three-hour interactive workshop was conducted on-line using Zoom videoconferencing. Secretary David Kim offered a welcome and opening remarks, followed by Darwin Moosavi, Deputy Secretary for Environmental Policy and Housing Coordination, who provided a presentation that explained the process and vision for creating the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI). Avital Barnea, Deputy Secretary for Transportation Planning, then described the updated investment framework which focuses on:

- Building towards an integrated, statewide rail and transit network
- Investing in networks of safe and accessible bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure
- Including investments in light, medium, and heavy-duty zero-emission-vehicle (ZEV) infrastructure
- Reducing public health harms and maximizing benefits to disproportionately impacted disadvantaged communities
- Making safety improvements to reduce fatalities and severe injuries
- Assessing physical climate risk
- Promoting projects that do not increase passenger vehicle travel
- Promoting compact infill development
- Developing zero-emission freight transportation system
- Protecting natural and working lands

Next, participants were introduced to examples of action items that had been suggested by stakeholders. The feedback provided by the group in the following break-out groups would be used to further develop the CAPTI.

Following the presentation, the workshop continued with a series of three breakout sessions, each focused on a specific topic. To begin, participants were directed to one of 14 pre-assigned digital break-out groups. Each group had a professional facilitator and note taker along with two agency staff who were available to answer questions. During each breakout session, participants had 30 minutes to respond to the discussion questions. A note taker recorded the comments in a shared Google document that provided a complete record of the discussion for each group. At the end of each session, participants were asked to select two points from their group's notes that would be highlighted in a summary presentation. The break-out groups were conducted consecutively with a short break in between to allow for transition time and to reassign participants to different groups.

The breakout sessions and discussion questions were as follows:

Breakout Session #1: Feedback on the Action Plan

The pandemic and recession have had a compounding effect on transportation through changing travel patterns and reduced revenue. While VMT has returned to near pre-pandemic levels, transit agencies and other shared modes of transportation continue to face declines, and some streets have been reprioritized and repurposed to accommodate active transportation modes.

Given this reality, what actions are most urgently needed to help the transportation sector recover in a way that addresses the state's climate goals?

Do you see transportation needs changing in response to the pandemic? If so, how do we address those changes through this action plan?

Breakout Session #2: Equity Considerations

Transportation policies and decision making have historically played a role in exacerbating racial inequities. The early stages of land use and transportation planning

are rife with racism against BIPOC. Exclusionary zoning, redlining, urban renewal practices, development of highways through black and brown communities, and lack of investment in public transit have combined to create continuing inequities in the transportation network throughout California.

Understanding that addressing many equity issues will require long-term systemic change, what are some key implementable near-term actions in transportation planning, programming, or mitigation we can take to reduce negative transportation impacts and increase the voices of low-income communities and BIPOC in transportation decision making and outcomes?

Are there specific tools or methodologies that can be developed or strengthened in the action plan to ensure that transportation investments meaningfully benefit and provide affordable transportation access to low-income and BIPOC communities?

Breakout Session #3: Low VMT Projects

Transportation investments are often driven by local decision makers and require long lead times for project development, making it difficult to influence transportation priorities from a statewide level.

Given these challenges, what are some ideas for action and collaboration the state can take to encourage further prioritization of low VMT transportation projects and policies?

How is this different for rural or less urbanized communities where there might be fewer alternatives to driving? How do we address the promotion of low VMT projects in these areas?

IV. Summary of Key Points from the Break-Out Groups

This section summarizes the major themes and comments from the three breakout sessions which focused on the Action Plan, Equity Considerations and Low VMT Projects. Given the overlap in comments between the three topics, the results are presented in aggregate to reduce redundancy and show the inter-relationships between the issues and strategies that were discussed. The comments are grouped by a statement that describes the topic followed by related comments. A full transcription of the comments for each question can be found in a separate appendix.

Funding

Many participants commented that several goals in the Action Plan could be achieved by looking at current funding streams and redirecting, modifying, or reprioritizing how monies were allocated. Stated another way, along with additional funding, flexibility for how funds could be used was needed. Participants also discussed streamlining and modifying the application process. Pricing was also considered a core strategy that could be used to influence VMT.

- Needed Investments
 - Re-evaluate legacy projects for consistency with climate/equity goals
 - Do not fund projects that harm BIPOC
 - Focus on current State Highway System (SHS) and making it more efficient rather than expanding
 - Invest in infrastructure to support active transportation to achieve VMT reduction and improved safety
 - Invest in intercity rail & implement state rail plan
 - Provide delineated funding for low-VMT projects to spur competition
 - Fund green infrastructure
 - Scale transportation funding and projects to different sized communities in both urban and rural regions
 - Consider new funding streams
 - Funding for climate change adaptation planning
- Funding Flexibility
 - Allow funding of regional priorities (defined by the regions)
 - Allow cities to apply for funds before scope is completely worked out
 - Allow plans to shift once funding has been secured to respond to community input; allow for flexible implementation

- Need funding that is not a road user charge or based on the gas tax
- Provide for services that serve vulnerable populations
- Look at access to funding and remove barriers; i.e., reimbursement process for non-profits
- Shape programs to meet both state criteria and local or regional needs
- Program Application Process
 - Fast track projects in the planning phase
 - Streamline applications
 - Provide technical assistance
 - Make application processes easier and more accessible
- Pricing
 - Use pricing mechanisms for transit, roadways, goods/deliveries
 - Consider equity implications of congestion pricing
 - Consider reduced pricing for low-income drivers

Equity

While equity concerns were discussed in each group and noted in numerous topics, there were definitions and metrics that could be used throughout the CAPTI.

- Define equity and think about what it means for certain populations and communities
- Clarify definitions to take into account regional differences
- Consider geographic equity- in the context of urban, rural, and suburban communities
- Consider that projects of a certain size require an equity analysis
- Consider how return on investment is calculated- social versus financial metrics
- Prioritize scoring for projects that impact low-income and BIPOC communities
- Rethink the tools we are using; revisit Cal EnviroScreen

Community Engagement

Many participants commented that improved and enhanced community engagement was essential, especially regarding the engagement of BIPOC and to respond to inequities and reduce negative transportation impacts.

- Ensure robust community engagement program to ensure local needs are reflected

- Conduct public education programs so that residents understand the benefits that can be achieved through VMT reduction
- Complete an analysis of organizations including discussions with staff; be intentional about anti-racism education and discussions
- Have direct representation from BIPOC and low-income communities from the beginning of the process. Include multilingual engagement
- Work with BIPOC regarding displacement/gentrification in advance of transportation investment decisions
- Engage with the community early in the planning process and before projects are funded; consider local needs assessment and context
- Provide support for CBOs in disadvantaged communities
- Prioritize funding for stakeholder engagement to include under-represented communities
- Consider how to be intentionally anti-racist in community engagement
- Consider participatory budgeting practices

Collaboration and Partnerships

Participants commented that collaboration and increased partnerships would be needed to effectively plan, engage the community, and secure the full range of resources needed for implementation. Suggestions included:

- Work with broad range of partners including state, local and regional agencies, businesses, and organizations representing broad interests including but not limited to health, environment, social justice, youth, and others
- Encourage cities to work together on active transportation with guidance from State
- Approach planning from a holistic framework to serve the most vulnerable populations
- Collaborate with land use/housing groups
- Ensure the support and involvement of the business community

Helping Transit Agencies Survive

The pandemic has had a devastating impact on transit. Service reductions provide limited options for those dependent on transit, especially those who are low-income and BIPOC.

- More funding is needed
- Give operators maximum flexibility

- Meet the needs of underserved and vulnerable populations; transit is critical for many essential workers
- Focus on the communities that do not have other transportation options
- Consider free or reduced transit fares; partner with business community
- Conduct education campaigns to build confidence in the health/safety of transit
- Move away from a sole focus on farebox recovery
- Focus on bus service in the immediate term over longer term projects
- Look at the increased ridership on micro-transit during the pandemic
- Consider transit loops to local, regular destinations
- Continue use of emergency transit only lanes
- Offer incentives for alternative transportation (e-bikes, etc.)

Active Transportation Investments

Active transportation improvements can make travel safer and easier for people without access to a vehicle, especially those living in underserved communities. These investments can also provide alternatives for those who drive, especially for shorter trips.

- Focus active transportation improvements in disadvantaged neighborhoods
- Invest in safety improvements
- Improve connectivity and fill gaps
- Strengthen and fill gaps in first- and last-mile connections
- Implement traffic calming and safety measures
- Ensure safer streets by filling gaps in sidewalks, adding lighting and improving the pedestrian environment
- Focus on Complete Streets so that active transportation is integrated into project planning and implementation
- Take advantage of increased interest in walking and bicycling

Land Use Planning

Participants noted that better aligning housing with transportation decisions will be needed to achieve progress.

- Consider locating housing near transportation options to achieve VMT reductions
- Look at role of development and housing affordability
- Build more infill housing
- Discourage urban and suburban sprawl

Prioritize VMT Reduction in Program Guidelines

Alternatives and incentives within program guidelines could promote VMT reduction projects.

- Strengthen requirements and provide incentives for actions
- Look at different partnerships -- healthcare, seniors, employers, youth, schools -- for transportation solutions
- Provide alternatives for first- and last-mile trips and trips close to home

Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEVs)

Public education and policy action could accelerate the adoption of ZEVs.

- Support faster ZEV transition (particularly for transit and freight)
- Conduct education campaign and develop appropriate messaging to clarify why reducing VMT and increasing electrification must take place concurrently

Reprioritization/Reallocation of Modes Within the Right of Way

Available space in the right of way can be reallocated and used for low-VMT projects.

- Repurpose road space and right-of-way for public transit/active transportation

Workforce Development and Job Training

Employment and job training could play a direct and indirect role in achieving program goals.

- Provide training programs to shift workforce development paradigm
- Phase out fossil fuel jobs; ease transition
- Achieve goals to hire people in the communities where the projects are being implemented
- Attract more BIPOC to the transportation planning profession

Rural Considerations

Participants discussed how many of the metrics and processes did not take into account the needs of rural communities.

- Change grant eligibility requirements and scoring criteria to make rural projects more competitive
- Recognize that rural areas are being impacted by the pandemic and transforming travel patterns
- Mobilize partnerships across regions and in between regions
- Consider Main Streets as Highways in small towns; look at making them multimodal and provide improvements that serve those who live there

- Consider impacts of visitors and second home users on transportation needs and travel patterns

Education

Participants commented that education was needed to support agency staff and to help the public and elected officials understand the needs and benefits of CAPTI

- Conduct education campaign so that the general public and elected officials understand the importance of VMT reduction and the greater benefits that can be achieved
- Encourage robust public discussion, socializing VMT (and road pricing) as benefit
- Help members of state legislature hear the case
- Focus on project co-benefits, not just climate/VMT, particularly around public health

CEQA Modifications and VMT Mitigation Banking

CEQA modification can help speed up implementation, and mitigation banks can provide options for projects where VMT reductions cannot be achieved

- Streamline CEQA
- Explore implementation of mitigation bank on a state-wide level
- Provide support for local jurisdictions to implement SB 743

Telecommuting/Broadband Availability

The pandemic accelerated the use and acceptance of telecommuting for many job types. Policies encouraging telecommuting will need to respond to inequities in areas where broadband is not available, or where people cannot afford the service.

- Encourage telecommuting to achieve significant VMT reduction while addressing the inherent inequities and transportation needs of those whose jobs require them to go to a work site
- Many service workers need reliable transit and mobility options; otherwise driving becomes only choice
- Need to address gaps in broadband network, especially in rural areas, so these areas can capture VMT reduction

Pandemic-influenced travel changes

The pandemic has significantly influenced how we travel, and in some areas communities may want to continue to capture the benefits that have been achieved.

- Continue slow streets and implement quick-build pedestrian and bike improvements

- At the community and regional level, analyze how VMT reductions are being achieved
- Respond to need for increased safety; drivers are now travelling at high speeds due to reduced congestion

V. Next Steps

The recording of the workshop report-out from breakout sessions is available. A follow-up presentation will be conducted at the CTC-CARB-HCD Joint Meeting on November 4, 2020. Information from the Joint Meeting will inform the upcoming draft of the CAPTI.

The Draft Action Plan is scheduled to be released in early 2021, and an additional workshop and comment period will be held after release of the draft plan. Spring 2020 is the targeted timeframe for adoption of the final Action Plan.