



Via Transportation, Inc.
160 Varick Street, 4th Fl.
New York, NY 10013
www.ridewithvia.com

Dear CAPTI Working Group Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on California's developing Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI). We appreciate your efforts to develop a successful Action Plan to advance more sustainable, equitable, and healthy modes of transportation, as well as to accelerate the transition to zero emission vehicle technology. We believe the future of transportation must be shared, electric, accessible, and inclusive. We believe that if this Action Plan is implemented, it will play a critical role in pragmatically reducing congestion and dependency on single occupancy vehicles in California, while enabling a resilient economy.

Background on Via's Public Transportation Deployments in California

Via works with transit agencies and cities across California to provide on-demand transit systems to offer efficient and accessible public transportation options to supplement existing transit services. California cities and transit agencies have partnered with Via to launch services in urban, suburban, and rural areas that help reduce single occupancy vehicle trips, vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; promote economic mobility by connecting customers to businesses and workers to employment; build support for existing public transit by increasing ridership; and advance equity and accessibility by providing better access to jobs and critical appointments. Just recently in March 2021, Via acquired Remix, a California-based company that provides a collaborative mapping platform for transportation planning and decision-making, enabling cities and agencies to build transportation networks and design streets that elevate the quality of life for their residents. Via has a global reach which spans across more than 500 partnerships, 65 of which are in California, spanning 23 countries, and has provided over 100 million rides.

In each deployment, the goal of the services is to either complement or supplement existing transit or to offer a new public transportation option where none exists. In other words, at the core of Via's publicly funded microtransit services is reducing single occupancy vehicle trips and thereby cutting carbon emissions. In West Sacramento, for example, a survey by the city showed that 49% of riders of the microtransit service would have otherwise used a single passenger transportation network company (TNC) option, and another 34% would have driven a personal vehicle alone ("West Sacramento's On-Demand Rideshare Pilot: A Summary of 6-Month User Survey Findings"; February 2019).

The services also importantly make it easier for residents to access jobs, healthcare services, recreation, and other opportunities. Our services have enabled economic resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Henry Li, SacRT's General Manager, said in September 2020 of Via's SmaRT Ride service: "It is amazing to see an increase in ridership during a time when transit is expected to incur steep declines. This really speaks volumes about how important innovative public transit service is in the Sacramento region for essential travel, especially in our disadvantaged communities, to access food, healthcare and frontline jobs during the pandemic." Moreover, the services are made accessible to everyone, including wheelchair users, the unbanked, and those without smartphones

Via is also working with the state to counter congestion and to explore a road-use charge program that could, over time, replace traditional fuel taxes. To this end, Via works with Caltrans on the California Road Charge demonstration. Caltrans is doing this in 4 phases, and Via is working on two phases to demonstrate the



Via Transportation, Inc.
160 Varick Street, 4th Fl.
New York, NY 10013
www.ridewithvia.com

variability of collecting road charge using ridesharing vehicles and the ability to collect vehicle and occupancy data from AVs for road use charge purposes.

Support for CAPTI

Via is pleased with the focus of the Action Plan and encouraged by the State's efforts to make transportation investments that provide clean, safe, and equitable multimodal options to all Californians. We are particularly supportive of and interested in working with CalSTA to develop and implement the following:

- S1.1 Prioritize Solutions for Congested Corridors Program (SCCP) Projects that Enable Travelers to Opt Out of Congestion
- S2.1 Implement the California Integrated Travel Project (Cal-ITP)
- S2.5 Convene Discussion Regarding Sustainable Rural Transportation Solutions
- S6.1 Explore New Mechanisms to Mitigate Increases in Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) from Transportation Projects
- S6.2 Convene a Roadway Pricing Working Group to Provide State Support for Implementation of Local and Regional Efforts
- S7.3 Explore a "Highways to Boulevards" Conversion Pilot Program

We have one area of focus we respectfully request for consideration, as it relates to CAPTI's work to support Executive Order (EO) N-79-20 to accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels:

The Lack of Electric Shuttles/Vans and Electric Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles

Microtransit deployments typically use minivan or similar sized vehicles which allow for more sharing and occupancy than sedans or SUVs while being nimbler than a large bus. In the United States today, to our knowledge, there is no commercially available fully electric minivan (in Europe, there are a handful of new EV minivan models that we have deployed with transit agency partners there, but the supply is limited and they have yet to make it over to the U.S.) While other challenges certainly exist (e.g., the need for fast charging infrastructure which is key to any service running all or nearly all hours of the day), the lack of electric minivans is easily the most significant. Similar to minivans, to our knowledge, there is very limited supply of commercially available fully electric wheelchair accessible vehicles in the United States. We therefore ask that the CAPTI Working Group explores ways to accelerate the available supply of shuttle, minivan, and wheelchair accessible zero-emission vehicles in California.

Thank you for taking the time to consider these comments. We would be happy to answer any questions or discuss any of these points further as the CAPTI Working Group continues to work on this Action Plan.

Sincerely,

Megan Richer
Director of Policy
Via Transportation, Inc.
megan@ridewithvia.com