

Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: January 30-31, 2025

From: Tanisha Taylor, Executive Director

Reference Number: 1.13 Information

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Subject: Interagency Equity Advisory Committee Update and New Membership Recommendations

Recommendation:

California Transportation Commission (Commission) staff, in partnership with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), recommend that the Commission approve membership for the interagency Equity Advisory Committee (Committee) as outlined in Attachment A. Approving this recommendation marks another significant step in advancing equitable outcomes in Commission policies, projects, and programs.

Additionally, current Committee member Michelle Rousey will provide updates and insights into her experience with the Committee in 2024 and elevating policies that advance equitable outcomes for people with disabilities and aging populations in 2025.

Issue:

Currently, twelve of fifteen Committee seats are up for appointment. The interagency team has developed recommendations for candidates to fill these seats. The selection process prioritized elevating diverse and historically marginalized voices from throughout the state who represent diverse personal, professional, and lived experiences. Once approved, these members will provide recommendations to the Commission, Caltrans, and CalSTA on achieving meaningful outcomes in transportation equity, environmental justice, and equitable economic opportunities, particularly in transportation planning and programming.

Membership call and selection process

On October 15, 2024, the Commission, Caltrans, and CalSTA issued a call for applicants to join the Committee. The application period remained open until December 1, 2024.

A total of 45 individuals applied, representing diversity across California. Applications were received from applicants residing in each of the twelve Caltrans districts with the exception of districts two and nine which are located in Redding and Bishop respectively. Applicants also identify as or represent through professional experience the diversity of California. This includes the following groups: Black, Latinx, Indigenous,

Pacific Islander, Southeast Asian, or other community of color; Priority Populations (as identified in Senate Bill 535, De Leon, 2012) younger adults ages 18-35; people with disabilities; older adults (over 55); migrant or immigrant; rural communities; unhoused; farm or agricultural worker; and member of a Tribe.

The interagency team collaborated with staff members from an external state agency and a regional transportation agency to review and discuss applications for Committee membership. To achieve a balanced and representative Committee membership recommendation, the review team assessed applicants based on geographic, demographic, and professional or civic experience with a focus on elevating diverse and historically marginalized voices on the Committee. Once approved, these individuals will advise the Commission, CalSTA, and Caltrans on how to achieve meaningful outcomes in transportation equity, environmental justice, and equitable economic opportunities, especially as related to transportation planning and programming.

The team conducted 30-minute interviews with 20 top-ranked candidates and performed reference checks for the twelve individuals recommended to serve on the Committee.

While there was great diversity in the application pool, applications from individuals who represent labor, economic development, and/or commerce were minimal. One candidate applied and qualified to be interviewed. Unfortunately, they were deemed nonresponsive after several attempts to schedule the interview. In an effort to continue to bring the important perspectives of labor, economic development, and commerce to the Committee, staff will identify and work with outside individuals who can bring informational presentations, highlight priorities, and develop relationships to hopefully result in future applications submitted from individuals with this important demographic.

Background:

In June 2022, the Commission approved the creation of an interagency Equity Advisory Committee (Committee) and directed staff to issue a call for applicants during Summer 2022. Detailed information about the Committee can be found in the [June 2022 Commission agenda attachment](#).

Since then, staff from the Commission, Caltrans, and CalSTA have collaboratively developed membership recommendations. The original, founding membership recommendations were approved at the Commission's October 12-13, 2022, meeting, with additional approvals in March 2024 and May 2024 to fill vacancies.

Committee members are eligible to receive payment of \$100.00 for each day attending and supporting Committee related activities, as identified and pre-approved by interagency lead staff. Members are also entitled to reimbursement for actual travel expenses incurred, in accordance with the rules and regulations established by the California Department of Human Resources.

Attachment:

- Attachment A: Recommended Membership for the 2025-2027 Interagency Equity Advisory Committee

Recommended Membership for the 2025-2027 Interagency Equity Advisory Committee

Housing and Housing Justice

1. Keri Akemi-Hernandez
 - District 4, Bay Area/Oakland (Napa)
 - Professional or Civic Affiliation: 2022 Boards & Commissions Leadership Institute Alumni and Community Leader, Chair of Napa County Housing Commission.
2. Naomi Iwasaki
 - District 7, Los Angeles/Ventura (Los Angeles)
 - Professional or Civic Affiliation: Senior Planner and Transportation Equity Lead for HDR U.S. West Region. Member of the Los Angeles County Community Health Prevention and Population Task Force and City of Los Angeles Affordable Housing Commission.

Climate, Air Quality, and Environmental Justice

3. Martha Armas-Kelly
 - District 10, Stockton (Merced)
 - Professional or Civic Affiliation: Environmental Justice Program Coordinator, Catholic Charities Environmental Program, Diocese of Stockton. UC Davis Transportation and Environmental Justice Fellow.
4. Abimael Chavez-Hernandez
 - District 10, Stockton (Modesto)
 - Professional or Civic Affiliation: Local Policy Lab; Member of the California Public Utilities Commission Disadvantaged Communities Advisory Group and City of Modesto Salary Setting Commission.
5. Ana Gonzalez
 - District 8, San Bernardino (Rialto)
 - Professional or Civic Affiliation: Executive Director, Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice. Member of the South Coast Air Quality Management Environmental Justice Advisory Group, President of Chicano Latino Caucus of San Bernardino County, and K-12 Educator.

Accessibility and Disability Perspective - Older Adults

6. David Azevedo
 - District 3, Marysville/Sacramento (Sacramento)
 - Professional or Civic Affiliation: Associate Director for Advocacy and Community Engagement for AARP California. Previously served on the City of Pasadena Accessibility and Disability Commission, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) California Walk/Bike Technical Advisory Committee, and California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) Transit Transformation Task Force.

7. Howard Wong

- District 4, Bay Area, Oakland (San Francisco)
- Professional or Civic Affiliation: Retired architect. Served on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Policy Advisory Council and MTC Equity and Access Subcommittee focusing on a broader Transportation network to serve the aging population and growing disabled community.

Accessibility and Disability Perspective – Rural Area

8. Peggy Martinez

- District 1, Eureka (Arcata)
- Professional or Civic Affiliation: Founder and Director of Creative Inclusion, a company that focuses on improving accessibility for people with sight loss through technology, wayfinding, transit, recreation, travel, and entertainment.

Active Transportation

9. Lisa Marie Alvarado

- District 6, Fresno/Bakersfield (Visalia)
- Professional or Civic Affiliation: President of Womxnwise, a social justice based agency focused on place-based organizing and healing for people in the Valley. Member of City of Visalia Measure N Oversight Committee and Tulare County Associations of Governments Active Transportation Advisory Committee.

Injury Prevention

10. Pualani Vasquez

- District 11, San Diego (San Diego)
- Professional or Civic Affiliation: Trauma Injury Prevention & Community Outreach Coordinator for Scripps Health focusing on creating an equitable understanding of transportation injuries within the medical setting.

Community and Economic Development

11. Florence Simon

- District 4, Oakland/Bay Area (San Francisco)
- Professional or Civic Affiliation: Chief of Staff for Generate Capital; Previously Special Assistant for Policy on Mayor Pete Buttigieg's Presidential Campaign helping develop community engagement plans for infrastructure projects. Led roll out of the Biden Administration and Secretary Buttigieg's Infrastructure plan to advance equity of national rail systems by working between rural communities and labor groups nationwide.

12. Randy Torres-Van Vleck

- District 11, San Diego (City Heights)
- Professional or Civic Affiliation: Associate Director of Community and Housing Development for PANA – Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans. Serves on multiple San Diego region advisory groups focused on transportation, planning, community development, and social equity.