

Workshop Notes

Equity Forum: Upending Cultural Displacement

A first-of-its-kind live technical assistance workshop for communities working on the theme discussed at the Equity Forum

1. California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

Description:

- Caltrans and their partner agencies are currently working to implement Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI) strategy 7, which directs the California State Transit Agency (CalSTA) to work with state agency partners to explore potential statutory changes that would allow transportation programs to incentivize anti-displacement strategies within their funding frameworks.
- Caltrans recently developed an anti-displacement committee and working group to conduct research and seek guidance on transportation funding and incorporating anti-displacement criteria changes. The team sent a survey to various transportation programs and partners and is currently developing a memo for the state agencies to be completed by the end of the year.

Workshop goals:

- Seeking best practices and a sense of how communities are impacted or benefit from transportation funding programs through the lens of displacement
- Questions for panelists
 - What criteria changes or tactics can be employed to continue sustainable development with displacing residents?
 - What partners should they engage in the research and process? (internal/external)
 - Opportunities to collaborate with community land trusts to help advance anti-displacement efforts through land ownership?
- [View full application](#)

Team participants:

- **Abigail Jackson**, Senior Planner/ Housing and Homelessness Solutions Lead, Caltrans
- **Natalie Fowler**, Executive Fellow, California State Transit Agency (CalSTA)
- **Alaina Bompiedi**, Specialist, Community Climate Investments, California Air Resources

- Board
- **Emma Tome**, Specialist, Community Climate Investments, California Air Resources Board
 - **Sequoia Erasmus**, Deputy Director of Equity and Engagement, California Transportation Commission
 - **Amar Cid**, Program Manager, Caltrans Office of Race and Equity

Additional application materials:

- [Anti-displacement survey](#)

Designated panelists and SGA staff members:

- **Ben Stone**, Smart Growth America
- **Jupiter Peraza**, Transgender District
- **Chris McCahill**, State Smart Transportation Initiative
- **Anushka Thakkar**, Smart Growth America

MEETING NOTES:

- The Caltrans team is interested in hearing about what the state's role should be in preventing displacement or best practices seen working with other state DOTs on anti displacement strategies
- **Abigail** would like to hear if you have observed displacement in transportation projects or any strategies to curb displacement.
- What's the scope? Thinking about context in major transportation investment projects. What form of displacement is Caltrans seeking to address?
- Context about the project: There is a Federal program – Reconnecting Communities – that will soon support a more forward looking approach for methodologies that can prevent historic trends of displacement from transportation projects.
- **Jupiter**: With housing supply shortage in California and an ongoing effort to increase housing supply, TOD is a great way to fix this.
 - SFMTA's transit service didn't serve many areas of the city disconnecting them from easy access to downtown, and as a result to services and jobs
 - Addressing sexual and street harrasment isn't just a feminist issue, it is also a working class issue, it is also an environment issue. If you want more residents to ride transit you have to fix these safety issues.
 - Anti-displacement investment is not a singular investment strategy. You have to think about a whole lot of other things that fall under that umbrella including public safety, housing, transportation and more.

- **Alaina (CARB):**
 - Resistance and tension regarding public safety issues, re: homelessness and push for policing strategies to public safety
 - Appreciate Jupiter bringing up the public safety angle

- **Ben:**
 - Transportation investments that really push up the housing prices (quite a trend in the west) - resultant increase in property taxes etc.
 - Crucial to recognize that it's slightly unfair to expect state DOTs to take on the role of providing social services, medical services etc with minimal subject expert staff
 - E.g.: [MARTA HOPE program](#) in Atlanta, WSDOT

- **Chris:**
 - need to have the right people at the table [a common theme in the on-going discussion] from reconnecting communities fed strategy to local initiative, its who is at the table making decisions
 - Siloed land use issues when working on transportation have historically caused a lot of the problems we face today
 - Example from Wisconsin - Madison wants more dense development to help with climate goals, but doesn't always think about risk of displacement.

- **Abigail and Chris:** need to create some unit to measure displacement risk.

- **Ben:**
 - Example: SGA has worked on this topic in Nashville
 - *Envision Nolensville Pike II: Recommendations for Achieving Inclusive Development:* https://issuu.com/renatasoto/docs/nolensville_pike_anti_displacement
 - Report looked into reality on the ground to determine displacement risk by tracking the following:
 - How many businesses own their buildings? How many rent?
 - What are the lease terms?
 - Who can afford increases to rent?
 - Who plans to move soon regardless of rent increases?

- **Chat: Marisela Martinez:** Here is a resource for folks: <https://www.transformfresno.com/here-to-stay/#report> - The Here to Stay report was commissioned by the City of Fresno as part of its displacement prevention efforts. The Thrivance Group, a consultant with experience in displacement prevention, authored the report after spending countless hours observing community conditions and listening to community members.

- **Jupiter:** Most often our view of looking at transportation is very traditional, but a lot has evolved over the last five years.
 - E.g. SF has become very attached to Slow Streets - how does it impact the community -- how is it in some way promoting preservation of culture and protecting communities? Good or bad?
 - So many parklets that we saw during COVID; what is their role going forward? How do they impact parking access?
 - empty lots that can house people but face resistance because they are currently used as parking.
 - 70% of traffic crashes happen in the Tenderloin area
 - Why is it that Tenderloin doesn't have as many children as generally in SF? Could be related to traffic safety.
 - When we think of an issue and why is it occurring the way it is, we need to look beyond into factors that have not received attention in the traditional formulation of transportation.
 - Redistricting and its impact on cultural districts in SF
 - City approved cultural districts in 2017
 - But how does the city honor and value the cultural district ?
 - "Neighborhoods and groups that are close together and dense are the perfect opportunity to promote cultural districts"
 - Do cultural districts have elected officials?
 - No, but there is a structure to have representatives
 - They are approved by the city and districts are managed by nonprofits.
 - Proposition E: the hotel tax fund that helps support cultural district - https://sfelections.sfgov.org/sites/default/files/Documents/candidates/Nov%202018/LT_E.pdf
- **Abigail:** Doesn't think that the state has any anti-cultural displacement fund or grants -- maybe that is the first step.
- **Alaina:** Transformative Climate Communities program has funding guidelines that incorporate anti-displacement language and maybe a starting point
 - State vs local control when stuff reaches implementation stages
 - "Displacement happens at a pace quicker than infrastructure can keep up with or is implemented"
 - Reparations program - think about them
- **Chris:**

- Value capture: if you are driving up (which you are) housing values there is an obvious opportunity for value capture - to use the anticipated value increase to invest in communities today
- Mechanisms like TIFs are something to consider.
- **Amar:** Transformative Climate Communities was a successful program and model but significantly underfunded
 - “Who the community is and where they are going” should be understood because communities turn-over over the course of transportation project implementation which takes years
- **Chat: Ben Stone:** “I think it's worth looking into some of the transit agency/affordable housing developer partnerships, like this one in Portland OR: <https://trimet.org/hollywood/>
 - Alaina Bompiedi (CARB, she/her) to Everyone (1:27 PM): Thanks, Ben! California has Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities, a housing-focused program with a strong transportation component (including active transportation)
- **Jupiter:** It is critical to take into account the structure of the system in the city and county re: San Francisco charter that allowed the creation of cultural districts
 - How do we make use of current frameworks to promote what we would like to promote?
- **Chat: Leadership Academy** to Everyone (1:24 PM) Old paper called Wipe Outs and Windfalls by Dean Misczynsky addressing this issue