

2020

Leonard Transportation Center



Inland Empire Regional Mobility Dialogue Series Proceedings

Oct 20, 2020

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Achieving Equity and Social Justice in Transportation



Introduction

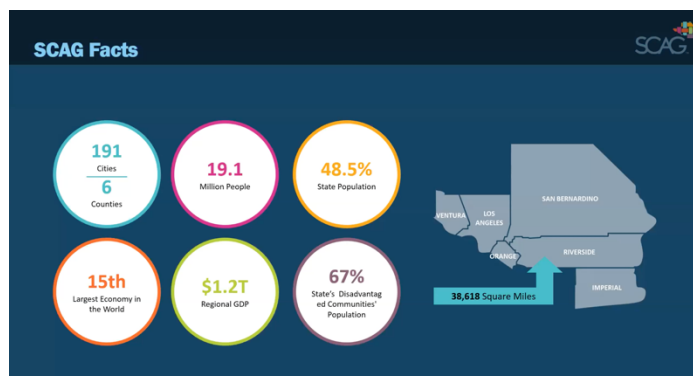
Installment 5 of the Leonard Transportation Center 2020 Regional Mobility Dialogue Series, “Achieving Equity and Social Justice in Transportation,” addressed the importance of prioritizing equity in accessible, affordable transportation systems in the Inland Empire. This Dialogue engaged two professional experts in the field, as well as a group of student researchers that are critically examining this issue in the Inland Empire academically. The discussion calls attention to the work that needs to be done with equity and the kinds of priorities the sectors must have moving forward to bridge the systemic gaps in transportation that exist today for low-income and minority communities. Major takeaways from this Dialogue include the pressing need for building equity into conversations, focus, and policy for transportation going forward.

Experts in this Dialogue included:

- Matthew Click, AICP, HNTB’s National Congestion Pricing Practice Leader
- Kome Ajise, Executive Director of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)
- Christian Lua, undergraduate student in his final year at Cal Poly Pomona in Urban and Regional Planning
- Nicole Aquino, fourth-year civil engineering student at Cal Poly Pomona
- Oscar Corona, recent graduate from UCR with a bachelor’s degree in Philosophy.
- Vanessa Gonzalez, graduate of University of California, Riverside, with a Bachelor's in Political Science and International Affairs from as well as a graduate of California State University, San Bernardino with a Master's in Social Science and Globalization
- Marven Norman, graduate of CSUSB master’s in public administration program

The Dialogue began with an introduction from Greg Hulsizer, Vice President of HNTB Corporation, a sponsor of the Dialogue series. Mr. Hulsizer emphasized the importance of having conversations around equity in transportation because so often the emphasis of research and goals for transportation is related to the topics of infrastructure and financing. Mr. Hulsizer also provided introductions for the panelists.

Dr. Lawrence Rose, Dean of Jack H. Brown College of Business and Public Administration at California State University, San Bernardino, continued introductions by thanking the sponsors of the Dialogue series for their support. He also emphasized the importance of using this Dialogue to “define equity in transportation sector discuss how policy design plays an important role in achieving that.”



Kome Ajise, Executive Director of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)

Mr. Ajise began the equity conversation by discussing his role in SCAG, which serves “six counties, 191 cities, and a population of over 19 million, which almost half the size of the state of California,” and what role it serves in the

Southern California community. SCAG serves a population that encompasses more than two thirds of the California's disadvantaged population. He explained that, "the mission of SCAG as a regional entity is to continue to offer regional solutions for the issues of our day and one of those a social equity, obviously.

Our mission is to continue to have dialogues like this to enable us to achieve that brighter future that we all envisioned for Southern California. Our mission speaks to Innovation, it speaks to collaboration, which involves in some inclusivity and of course we advocate on behalf of the region. In other words, to make sure that we have the best of all the options available for decision makers."

Equity Resolution 20-623-2

SCAG

- Approved in July 2020 by SCAG's Regional Council
- Affirms SCAG's intent to stand side-by-side with those working toward a fair and just society, and with those calling for systemic change and for the breaking down of barriers that reduce opportunity and undermine Southern California's shared prosperity
- Outlines SCAG's intentions to consistently incorporate equity awareness into every aspect of its work guided by a Regional Council policy statement on equity and social justice.

Mr. Ajise shared that SCAG passed a resolution on social equity in July 2020, which aims to guide the agency in working "towards a more a more fair and just society," and created "the President's Special Committee on equity and social justice to advise the Regional Council on how we might get input from outside of the agency." SCAG is acknowledging the role they may have played in transportation equity issues and is working to address them through conversations with stakeholders and paying attention to how the work done in transportation planning may perpetuate inequities in society.

He went on to emphasize the importance of defining equity and then take inventory of what equity looks like in the region. This inventory allows for SCAG leaders to develop a framework by which equity can be measured both

Equity Policy Priorities

SCAG

- **Equity & Engagement** – identifying areas with the most need, focusing resources on positive change, expanding stakeholders to include community-based organizations
- **Inclusive Recovery** – providing research to identify ongoing impacts, ensuring recovery packages address the most vulnerable communities
- **Local Capacity Building** – focus resources on building local capacity to compete for and implement local, state, and federal resources
- **Transportation** – ensuring everyone has access to high quality transit that has access to high quality jobs
 - Working to reduce the amount of emissions that disproportionately harm disadvantaged communities

qualitatively and quantitatively. He also shared that the important steps in the process of addressing equity include having honest conversations with stakeholders about their needs and

making affirmative steps to address those needs immediately, ensuring everyone has access to transportation, and also exploring the role that high-speed internet plays in equity in our modern world. SCAG has been formally working towards equity in their mission for two years and have been able to develop technical reports that explore environmental justice,

SCAG's Disadvantaged Communities Active Transportation Planning Initiative

SCAG

Project Goals

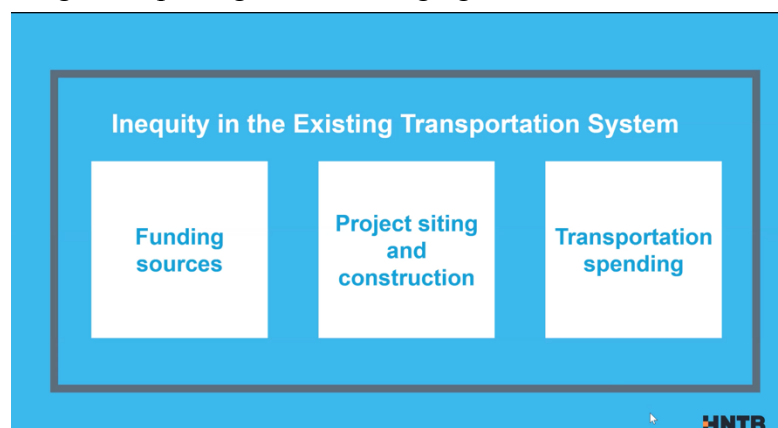
- Develop a low-cost, context-adaptable toolkit, to deliver active transportation plans in low-resourced & Disadvantaged Communities;
- Expand the use and value of SCAG's existing engagement resources, including its Go Human demonstration elements and data services;
- Align planning products with the requirements of the California Active Transportation Program to ensure plans serve as an effective vehicle for accessing infrastructure funding;
- Operationalize the template by developing 7 local active transportation plans based on robust community-led engagement activities;
- Better position each City to successfully compete for State funding to build out its active transportation network and support local programs.

PERRIS ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING - JANUARY 20, 2020

disparate effects of policies on different populations, and public health indicators that can assess the quantitative impact of policy. SCAG has also been executing projects the address equity, including the “GO Human Active Transportation” initiative.

Matthew Click, AICP, HNTB’s National Congestion Pricing Practice Leader

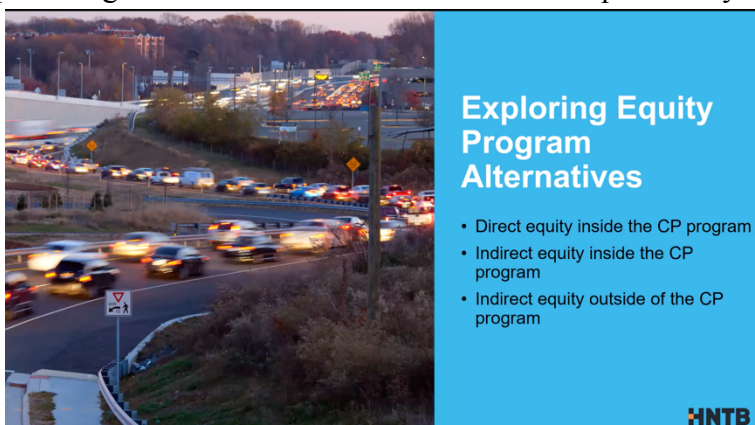
Mr. Click introduced the concept of congestion pricing and its relation to equity. He defined congestion pricing as, “the charging of automobiles for traveling, either in a certain corridor or



an urban area right during periods of heavy demand,” with the goal of redirecting discretionary trips to lower volume times and improve travel for those commuting during peak times. Determining equity pricing involved examining factors such as the location of the congestion, the commuter willingness and ability to pay fares, the public response to congestion fares, the transportation

modal diversion options, and the impacts these factors have on the regional economy. A major equity concern is developing congestion pricing models that work to achieve their overall goals while not placing a disproportionate burden on some communities due to the cost of the fares. Mr. Click works with communities to develop their congestion plans with their specific goals in mind.

Equity in congestion pricing can be addressed with direct equity inside the congestion pricing system, indirect equity in the system, and indirect equity outside of the program entirely. An example of direct equity built into a congestion pricing system is means based tolling. This model works to address equity by providing low income individuals a reduced or potentially free congestion fare. Indirect equity within a program often provides an additional desirable service within the system, such as Express Lanes, which motivates people to seek access. Indirect equity outside of the program is done by “investing congestion pricing generated revenues into transportation or other services,” such as bike lanes and sidewalk construction.



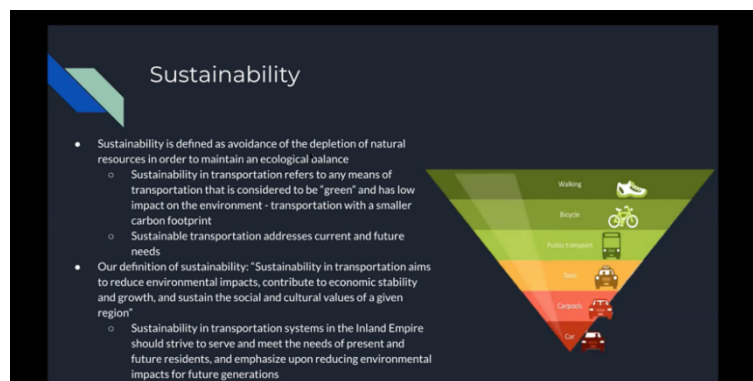
While the balance can be difficult to find, Mr. Click “firmly believes that we can implement congestion pricing and walk away with a transportation system that in fact is more equitable than the one that existed before.” This can be done by making informed decisions about pricing

policy, working with the community to define populations who will need discounts or exemptions, and determining the best ways to use the revenues that are generated.

Following Mr. Click's presentation, Dr. Collins introduced the team of student researchers, part of the LTC's 2020-21 Student Research Challenge. This student research team represents CSUSB, CalPoly Pomona, and UCR. They shared their work to date with the attendees.

Vanessa Gonzalez from CSUSB began with an explanation of the team's work "to define what equity and sustainability means in the context of transportation within the Inland Empire." They have conducted an extensive review of the current literature and developed a research project that, "seeks to define the established approaches to equity and sustainability in a way that would encourage community engagement. On both of those issues in order to achieve representation, our work also seeks to recommend solutions that would cater to the future environmental needs off the Inland Empire." The team has been working towards three different subprojects to "look at these issues from multiple perspectives."

First step was to define sustainability. The importance of the "definition is that sustainability in the transportation sector aims to reduce environmental impacts, contribute to economic stability and growth, and sustain the social and cultural values of a given region." It also focuses on reducing environmental the effects of transportation.



Next, Marven Norman from CSUSB shared how equity was more of a challenge to define. Based on their research, an equitable transportation system aims to not impose any further barriers on those who are underprivileged and also seeks to remedy such inequities with active participation from the community. Transportation inequities include disparate health impacts and access, which impact the overall quality of life in communities.




Panel Analysis

Textual Analysis of Panelists from different Industries:

- Distribution Management Association
- Public Transit
- Transportation and Planning Agencies
- Inland Empire Politicians
- Industry Leaders

Transcribing these panels to conduct a qualitative analysis of the perspectives of professionals on sustainable and equitable transportation systems in the Inland Empire



Nicole Aquino from Cal Poly Pomona presented the first of the three subprojects, a qualitative analysis of the leaders' opinions of transportation sustainability and equity. Based on their work thus far, they have learned that, "there's an overall consensus that our transportation systems do need to be more sustainable and equitable." They have used this insight to drive their ongoing research and plan to expand

contact additional leaders in the region to learn about their perspectives.

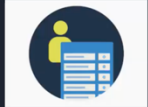
Christian Lua from Cal Poly Pomona presented the next subproject, a quantitative analysis of different data points. The team has developed a scorecard to evaluate transportation sustainability and equity in different Inland Empire jurisdictions. The scorecard will include a point system that highlights efforts on equity, sustainability, and transportation throughout the IE.

Regional Score Card

Analyze the jurisdictions within the Inland Empire to better understand how they are looking into equitable and sustainable goals. Including what they are doing within transportation policies.

Criteria:

- Equity - Measure if the jurisdictions are focusing on equitable practices or factors that show may show inequitable affects.
- Sustainability - Are there plans that would reduce environmental harm or do they have "green" ideas for the future.
- Transportation - What are some ways or the methods they are using for circulation.



Finally, Oscar Corona from UCR presented the last subproject, a GIS map that displays accessibility in the region. This project "is meant to allow us to have a better understanding of what areas have more access to jobs, services and goods. This assessment works by first using data to map desirable destinations for people in the region. We decided that these destinations will be job opportunities, health centers, educational locations both lower and higher ed, recreational spaces, and grocery shopping." Ultimately, this project "will help us understand what areas are the most underserved when it comes to accessibility to these key destinations, which should be a good starting point for both research and implementation of solutions."

Accessibility Assessment


Spatial analysis of census tracts on what destinations are accessible to them.

GIS and GPS data used to see how many destinations are available within a specific time frame:

These destinations are: Job opportunities, Health centers, Education (higher and lower ed), Recreational spaces, Grocery shopping locations

Car: 30 mins for jobs and higher ed, 15 mins for health, recreation, shopping and lower ed.

Bus: 1 hour for jobs and higher ed, 30 mins for health, recreation, shopping and lower ed.



The other speakers then provided some thoughts and feedback for the student researchers. Kome Ajise agreed with the emphasis the team placed on creating a quality definition of equity and said, "if we're going to solve this huge societal problem, we have to all have a common sense of

what we're trying to solve.” He also offered the insight that, “This is a forever conversation. So, I think being open to the fluid nature of the conversation as you bring stakeholders to the table,” is an important aspect of success in this work. He stated that he liked the element of analyzing access to opportunities for groups and impacts of programs. Finally, he concluded that “when you start to take the totality of your work, you can begin to see that the notion of equity is very complex and we need to be very deliberate, intentional in how we approach it.”

Matt Click then shared his reactions. He posed a series of questions to the group for them to start thinking about, which is something he would likely do for a client he is consulting with. He encouraged the team to think about:

How the team plans to analyze all the subprojects together?

How to get major players in alignment on implementing that framework?

How measurement of these criteria will really look like in terms of balancing quantitative and qualitative data?

He acknowledged these questions were “stream of consciousness” and reactions to the presentation. He offered to share his organized notes, questions, and feedback with the team following the Dialogue.

Questions:

1. Have there been any discussions about a reduction in fare from some of the revenue of the congestion pricing for transit service?

Matt Click said both yes and no. Some states are implementing low rate general fares and relying primarily on congestion pricing for revenues, but many have not moved to no fare at all. Often, they aim to be providing more transit services in the corridor.

2. Could you see the time when either as a for Southern California as a regional advocates SCAG or on a statewide basis, there'll be an advocate to maybe amend AB 194 and other legislation that would require any new Express Lanes or ones that want to expand to include some type of social equity environmental justice low income program?

Kome Ajise answered that Express Lanes are being built out across SCAG and that offsetting fares, as Josh Landis inquired about, is possible. Some jurisdictions are already looking at going fare-less altogether. Mr. Ajise emphasized that the ability for a jurisdiction to reduce or get rid of fares lies in the amount of revenue it is gaining for those fares. If a jurisdiction is making little on fares to begin with, reducing or ending them may not make a significant impact on revenues. The ability to move in that direction will depend on the jurisdiction. He stated that, “understanding that there is financing involved with manage lanes. There is money borrowed that money needs to be paid back. AB 194 puts in there that once you have paid your debtors whatever's left that excess revenue has to be spent in the corridor. And one of the primary objectives of that expenditure is going to be transit, it is going to be active transportation, and I think there is more to social equity from that, from those proceeds where there is access revenue as we go forward.”

3. How does user psychology effects congestion pricing in terms of the complexity of financing?

Mr. Click shared that, “the psychology is tough, but I think how you engage in and talk about your congestion pricing program to the public around what its vision is, what the goals are, and then specifically how the revenues are going to be utilized, will go a long way.” He also shared that people respond to the idea of paying for premium services and giving them an understanding of how the money they are paying in taxes is bettering the system for their use.

Mr. Ajise also answered this question by stating that, “what you're trying to do is to give people that sense of, you know what, I don't need to make my trip at 7am and pay five bucks. Because if I wait till 10, I don't have to pay anything, and I can still make what I need. I can still get done what I need to get done.” He also said that people need to be reminded that there are a lot of utilities that you pay for regularly, and transportation should be one of them because of the benefits it serves the community.

4. How does the fact that transit ridership is down fit into the discussion of equity and pricing?

Kome Ajise said that transit ridership is certainly connected to equity because there are some people who cannot drive and rely on transit to meet all their needs. One of the reasons ridership is down is because lower income individuals are able to secure loans for personal vehicles, thinking they are more reliable ways to get to jobs and other opportunities. One of the issues is that often that public transit is built out around high needs times, but does not always provide the kind of services outside of those times that people who rely on public transit need. People often find it easier to get where they are going in a personal vehicle, which needs to be addressed, so that the equity and sustainability issues can be equalized.

Matt Click shared that, in terms of congestion pricing, some jurisdictions are using a multi-faceted approach to determine congestion pricing and fares based on equity criteria, including geographical area, income and frequency of use. Ultimately, he thinks that, “we are going to see sort of blended in hybrid solutions around equity as we move forward, by various modes.”

5. Is there a plan going forward on the broadband issue Kome mentioned in his presentation? If so, is there a plan to use revenues to enhance broadband access that may allow more work from home options and less commuting?

Kome stated that, “broadband has become an essential piece of infrastructure” and that the State of California is working on a strategic plan to bring broadband at a certain speed to more residents. One part of that is streamlining the process for ISPs to build out their networks across jurisdictions and using revenues, such as from the CARES Act, to make that access to broadband happen. Ultimately, “broadband is an important element of social equity going forward without question, so there will continue to be exploration of how we can bring broadband to more households so they can have access to opportunities like working from home, education, etc.”

Moving the Dialogue Forward: Ideas from the Participants

After the presentations, the Dialogue attendees discussed the ideas presented and worked together in groups to discuss solutions to move it forward. The top three ideas from each table have been categorized and summarized below.

Funding. Several participants discussed the importance of generating and using funding in equitable ways.

- Prioritize financial efficiency, but also focus on improving communities.
- Get the most out of infrastructure through innovation and shared mobility.
- Continue to examine equity in terms of access taxes or congestion pricing as well as how those funds are being used once collected.

Community engagement. Two of the groups identified that building engagement within the community, and assessing equity needs from stakeholders are crucial.

- Explore ways to connect different organizations and jurisdictions in the equity conversation.
- Look for ways to engage with the public on these conversations and reduce the car-centric nature of the region.
- Take a comprehensive review of how the transportation system affects everyone and try to equalize the impacts being felt in communities.
- Become more immersed in the community will better identify needs.

The effect of COVID. The groups also discussed the impacts that COVID has had on equity in transportation.

- COVID has emphasized many existing equity disparities in the community, including the digital divide.
- Increase access to broadband and make it possible for more people to have the option to work from home or otherwise reduce their time commuting.

About the Regional Mobility Dialogue Series

The Leonard Transportation Center (LTC) at California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB), presented a bi-monthly Dialogue Series on topics relevant to the future of transportation in the Inland Empire. The series, which was open to the public, was sponsored by HNTB Corporation and was held every other month starting in February 2018.

Dialogue topics ranged from understanding the current mobility dilemma and its causes to potential solutions like congestion pricing, transit; emerging technologies such as autonomous and connected vehicles and new ways of funding transportation infrastructure. Attendees had the opportunity to hear from transportation experts and engage in vigorous discussion about the transportation challenges facing the Inland Empire.

About the Leonard Transportation Center

The Leonard Transportation Center (LTC) at California State University, San Bernardino opened in 2006 with a focus on regional transportation needs. The vision of Bill and Barbara Leonard was to create a center that focuses on the unique transportation opportunities and challenges the Inland Empire faces. Today, the LTC is working to expand its research and student engagement programs. Focal points include transportation management and governance issues, development of new technologies, and transnational studies. Their vision is to work collaboratively to seek solutions to assist residents, businesses, government and nonprofit agencies, and international partners to work together on improving sustainability and quality of life in the Inland Empire. For more information, visit.

About HNTB

HNTB Corporation is an employee-owned infrastructure solutions firm serving public and private owners and contractors. HNTB's work in California dates back to its founding in 1914. Today, HNTB continues to grow in size and service offerings to clients in California from seven office locations, currently employing more than 350 full-time professionals. With more than a century of service, HNTB understands the life cycle of infrastructure and addresses clients' most complex technical, financial and operational challenges. Professionals nationwide deliver a full range of infrastructure-related services, including award-winning planning, design, program management and construction management. For more information, visit www.hntb.com

About San Bernardino International Airport

Conveniently located in the heart of the Inland Empire, close to major freeways and just 60 miles from Los Angeles, San Bernardino (SBD) International Airport is strategically positioned to meet growing aviation activity, including cargo, business aviation, general aviation, and commercial airlines by providing competitive rates for aviation companies and local businesses looking to stretch their wings and expand their horizons. With extensive stretches of pristine runway and acres of prime land available for aviation development, SBD International Airport is ready to help our community and region reach new destinations.

About San Bernardino Valley College

San Bernardino Valley College will become the college of choice for students in the Inland Empire and will be regarded as the alma mater of successful, lifelong learners. We will build our reputation on the quality of our programs and services and on the safety, comfort, and beauty of our campus. We will hold both our students and ourselves to high standards of achievement and will expect all members of the college community to function as informed, responsible, and active members of society.