



STAFF REPORT

TITLE: California Transportation Foundation – 23rd Annual Transportation Forum

SUBMITTED BY: Janet Orth, Deputy Director & CFO

DATE: 6/6/2022

BACKGROUND:

On May 27, 2022 I attended the forum in Sacramento. As the leading transportation nonprofit organization, scholarships were given out as usual to students pursuing careers in this field. The forum is an opportunity to hear about statewide transportation goals, progress and innovations with prominent legislators, public officials, executives, professionals and colleagues. Following are a few takeaways:

- Equity and Resilience in Transportation Decisions: this talk from Stantec emphasized tools and priorities for zero emission bus deployment, investment in historically disadvantaged communities of low-income and minorities, and the Biden Administration’s Justice 40 initiative to invest 40% in under-served areas—a recurring theme in the current funding picture.
- The first expert panel addressed Making Self-Driving Technology a Reality for California, making the case that autonomous vehicles are coming sooner than we think. It was noted that roadway injuries and fatalities were up in 2021. AVs can be safer, with 360-degree view; removal of human error, fatigue and emotion; and rules of the road programmed in. Driver assistance technology is already available in many new cars. AVs can provide mobility for many who are unable to drive themselves. Four million miles have been logged in California to date. With the strain on market supply chain, “demand shock,” and shortage of 80,000 drivers, goods movement is the next focus. A study of long-haul simulations in the U.S. shows how autonomous, connected trucks could create better quality jobs at transportation hubs and grow the post-pandemic economy by \$6 billion to \$80 billion, with significant societal benefits. Development can be scaled, with neighborhood deliveries first, highways later. A national regulatory framework will be needed to accomplish these goals.
- The second panel talked about how transit agencies are adapting and recovering from the pandemic.
- The Honorable Laura Friedman, Chair of the Assembly Transportation Committee, reported a visit to the Jet Propulsion Lab, where scientists said everything they knew about climate change was correct, only it’s happening much faster. Meanwhile California has more parking spaces per person than beds; a goal of hers is to convert under-used parking lots to housing and multi-modal transportation. She mentioned her bill AB 2237 dealing with climate action, on MCOG’s agenda today.
- Steven Keck, longtime CTC staff, is the Caltrans Acting Director. U.S. traffic deaths were up 10% in 2021 to 42,913, with about 10% or 4,200 in California—a 16-year high; “We have a problem.” The Investment in Infrastructure & Jobs Act (IIJA) will green the fleet with all zero emission busses. CalITP, Integrated Travel Project, is developing intermodal innovations such as contactless payment systems. Clean California is a three-year \$1.1B program (locally reported at MCOG recently).
- Former Caltrans Director, now CA Secretary of Transportation Toks Omishakin, also highlighted safety, citing the fatality numbers. Climate action came next on his agenda. The Governor’s budget includes \$9.6B for transportation infrastructure; \$10B over five years will go to ZEVs. The federal IIJA provides \$40B over five years, plus \$100B of discretionary funds. The State’s \$97B surplus should be carefully invested in needs while also saved for rainy days. As for equity: undo the car-centric focus.

More information can be found at [California Transportation Foundation \(the-ctf.org\)](https://www.ctf.org).

ACTION REQUIRED: None at this time.

RECOMMENDATION: None, for information only.