



TASK 8 – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Yolo portion of I-80 is the only east-west connector that crosses the Yolo Basin separating West Sacramento and Davis, and the only east-west connector between Sacramento and the Bay Area. The Yolo 80 Managed Lanes Project (“the Project”) is expected to widen and toll a portion of Interstate 80 through Yolo County to reduce traffic congestion on I-80 within Yolo County.

This memo summarizes the equity analysis included in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) undertaken by Caltrans under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the Project. This report provides key insights about the affected environment for communities and travelers on the stretch of I-80 that goes through Yolo. It also estimates the future condition of equity and environmental justice to be expected on the thoroughfare dependent on the proposed Build Alternatives. The Project continues to develop its understanding of the equity and environmental justice concerns identified in the EIR, and plans to generate informed policy decisions and community reinvestment strategies in response.

Minimizing transportation burdens for groups that may be disproportionately impacted is one of YoloTD’s top priorities in the implementation of tolled facilities in the region. The successful application of equity to toll programs can help provide fair access to time savings, reliability, and other benefits of express lanes; build public trust and support in the effectiveness of express lanes; improve accessibility to multiple travel modes; reduce the resources needed for enforcement; and encourage widespread participation in behaviors that generate revenue and/or manage interstate congestion.

POLICY AND REGULATORY CONTEXT

The EIR describes several examples of State, Local, and Federal policies, regulations, approaches, and frameworks which shaped its consideration of equity for the Project.

STATE

Environmental Justice

Caltrans’ commitment to upholding the mandates of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is demonstrated by its Title VI Policy Statement:

The California Department of Transportation, under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, ensures “No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

Caltrans will make every effort to ensure nondiscrimination in all of its services, programs and activities, whether they are federally funded or not, and that services and benefits are fairly distributed to all people, regardless of race, color, or national origin. In addition, Caltrans will facilitate meaningful participation in the transportation planning process in a non-discriminatory manner.

Related federal statutes, remedies, and state law further those protections to include sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, and age.

Equity

The Caltrans Equity Statement acknowledges that communities of color and underserved communities have experienced fewer benefits and a greater share of negative impacts associated with the state's transportation system. Some of these disparities reflect a history of transportation decision-making, policy, processes, planning, design, and construction that "quite literally put up barriers, divided communities, and amplified racial inequalities, particularly in our Black and Brown neighborhoods" (Caltrans Equity Statement, 2020).

LOCAL

Yolo County and neighboring local governments have implemented a range of equity policies, programs, and initiatives. The following were outlined in the EIR:

- Yolo County established its Inclusion & Diversity Work Group in 2019 to create and sustain an equitable work environment and prioritize services for underserved communities.
- West Sacramento created a sidewalks and transportation equity program that reviews and prioritizes projects using an equity lens, focusing on benefits for disadvantaged communities and seniors and creating safe routes to schools and parks.
- City of Sacramento stood up its Office of Diversity and Equity in 2018 to create a "more equitable and inclusive City of Sacramento by facilitating the integration of greater representation, fairness, belonging and care into our policies, protocols, practices and workplaces."
- Sacramento County approved a Resolution on Racial Equity and Social Justice in 2021 which declared racism a public health crisis.
- Solano County has an Equity and Diversity Committee working to improve health services for underserved populations.

FEDERAL

At the time of publishing this summary, Federal initiatives that have inspired state and local work in transportation equity include the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) Equity and Access Policy Statement and several Executive orders related to equity. All considerations under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 have also been included in this project and are reflected in Caltrans'

Title VI Policy Statement.

USDOT Equity and Access Policy Statement

The Equity and Access Policy Statement, signed June 2022, emphasizes USDOT's commitment to incorporate environmental justice and equity principles into transportation planning and decision-making processes, including ensuring full and equitable access to programs, activities, and services for persons with limited English proficiency in accordance with Executive Order 13166 *Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency*.

Executive Order 13985 (Rescinded)

Executive Order (EO) on *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*, signed in January 2021. Under EO 13985, the term "equity" means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality. The term "underserved communities" refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life. As of January 2025, rescinded.

Executive Order 12898 (Rescinded)

Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, signed in February 1994. This EO directs federal agencies to take the appropriate and necessary steps to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse effects of federal projects on the health or environment of minority and low-income populations to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law. Low income is defined based on the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines. For 2023, the amount was \$30,000 for a family of four (ASPE 2023). As of January 2025, rescinded.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The Project EIR details effects on the basis of Environmental Justice (EJ) and equity, two related but separate concepts. An equitable transportation plan considers the circumstances impacting a community's mobility and connectivity needs, and this information is used to determine the measures needed to develop an equitable transportation network (U.S. Department of Transportation 2022a, 2022b).

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Environmental Justice communities are defined as areas with concentrated populations with low

incomes and/or minority communities, using thresholds and descriptors from the Census Bureau. This is consistent with the Federal Highway Administration's EJ strategy and uses Census Bureau poverty thresholds and minority population descriptions. Approximately 39% of residents in the community study area live in defined EJ communities.

Support for travel in these communities is significant to their ability to access jobs, schools, and services, as well as to overall health effects and quality of life.

For this EIR, Caltrans uses the following definitions for EJ communities:

- Low Income: Census tracts and/or block groups where 40% or more of the population is at 200% or less of the Federal Poverty Level.
- Minority: Census tracts and/or block groups where 70% or more of the population are Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Asian Pacific Islander, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, or other non-white ethnic groups.

EQUITY

The CalEnviroScreen mapping tool, developed by the California Office of Environmental Health Hazards Assessment, was also used to identify communities that are disproportionately burdened by pollution regardless of EJ status. Communities that are in or above the 75th percentile of CalEnviroScreen scoring are defined by the California Environmental Protection Agency as disadvantaged communities. Disadvantaged communities are facing socio-economic or health disadvantages.

CalEnviroScreen uses four categories to generate scores for defining disadvantaged communities:

- Pollution exposure
- Environmental effects
- Sensitive populations
- Socioeconomic factors

STUDY AREA

21.5% percent of residents in the community study area live below the poverty line, which is higher than percentages in the state and region (roughly 13%). Traveler data by income and race/ethnicity is limited to those who reside within the regional study area. Roughly 23% of daily travelers had annual incomes below \$40,000, and between 46.7 and 50.2% were part of minority communities.

EJ communities are concentrated in portions of downtown and south Davis, along the I-80 and US-50 freeways, and near the US-50/I-5 interchange in Sacramento. On average, households in these communities use alternatives to SOV travel at a higher rate than those in non-EJ communities (twice as many regionally). This may be due partly to vehicle availability, though most EJ community residents still use personal vehicles for transportation. Disadvantaged communities are also concentrated near the US-50/I-5 interchange, as well as in West Sacramento. CalEnviroScreen

scores also indicate that communities within segment 3 of the project (I-80/US-50 to Jefferson Boulevard and Jefferson Boulevard to I-5) have high pollution burdens and/or high sensitivity, with scores in the 66th to 96th percentile.

Rate of transit use is twice as high in low-income communities within the study area, and 65% higher for walking and biking region-wide. Additionally, more workers in the Davis neighborhood use alternative modes of travel than workers in other census tracts, which may signal that these residents have more options to do so than others.

EQUITY EFFECTS

This memo discusses consequences and mitigations described for Alternatives 4a and 4b. The chosen Build Alternative, Alternative 4b, will:

- Add a high-occupancy toll lane in each direction for free use by vehicles with three or more riders (HOV 3+). Vehicles with less than three riders would pay to use the lane.
- Replace existing inside shoulders, construct a new median, construct pedestrian/bicycle improvements, install ITS elements, an I-80 connector structure, and other improvements.
- Signage and signage locations: 79 overhead signs would be replaced or proposed within the project area. Several other existing signs would be removed and not replaced. Additionally, there would be 11 replacements and 373 proposed signs for the median or the shoulder.

CONSEQUENCES AND MITIGATION

Compared to the No-Build Alternative, Alternative 4b would introduce no changes to existing land uses, acquisition of property, nor displacement of any minority residence, business, or employees. As such, there is no expectation for long-term disruptions or adverse effects on land use or community members in the surrounding areas. Added lanes would not divide, further divide, nor remedy historical divides in disadvantaged communities.

Benefits of Alternative 4b may not be felt by EJ community members who do not own a vehicle. However, the introduction of Intelligent Transportation Systems and auxiliary lane improvements would facilitate circulation in the surrounding areas, which would be a benefit to those EJ community members using bus and transit services to enter or exit the highway.

Additionally, a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) mitigation plan for the Project was required by the California Environmental Quality Act and completed in April 2024. As part of this proposed plan, the Project's VMT-reduction efforts include investments in:

- A voluntary trip reduction program in Yolo County
- Capitol Corridor rail service frequency expansion
- Microtransit in Yolo County
- Yolobus Route 42 expansions
- Causeway Connection Route 138 expansions

- Unitrans service expansion
- Putah Creek Trail expansion

SHORT-TERM EFFECTS

In the short term, construction activities would delay roadway users and potentially affect access to surrounding businesses and facilities. Alternative 4b would result in a larger construction timeline to accommodate building the I-80 connector structure. These impacts are not expected to be disproportionately felt. Short-term impacts include:

- Visual effects
- Increased noise levels
- Increased air pollutants due to excavation, grading, hauling, and other construction-related activities.

Short-Term Mitigation

Short-term changes in access, circulation, light/glare noise, and air quality are expected due to construction activities. All roadway users would be inconvenienced by intermittent and temporary ramp and lane closures. Residents and businesses adjacent to the construction site may experience temporary increases in noise, dust, and light/glare. These increases would be minimized with standard construction protocols and measures, like Standard Measure AR-4 and AMM AES-1, which limit construction lighting and minimize glare.

Standard Measures AR-2, AR-4, GHG-1 through GHG-6, TT-1 through TT-3, and AMMs NOI-1 through NOI-6 would additionally help minimize and reduce short-term impacts from construction. With these measures, impacts will not be disproportionately high and adverse for underserved and disadvantaged communities during the construction period.

LONG-TERM EFFECTS

A modest increase in noise levels and modest effects of visual changes on community character are expected. While a degradation in visual condition may be expected, these are not found to create disproportionately high and adverse effects for EJ and disadvantaged communities, and no mitigation is needed. Alternative 4b is not expected to increase the pollution burden in nearby EJ and disadvantaged neighborhoods in the long term, requiring no necessary mitigation.

Improved traffic flow is expected to benefit a wide range of communities, including EJ communities. The volume of vehicles and people moving through would increase during peak commute hours with the added lane capacity, though congested conditions are still expected in both directions at peak hours. These conditions would not be felt disproportionately, so mitigation is not needed.

Long-Term Mitigation

Use of toll lanes could cause a higher financial burden that is predominately borne by travelers

from EJ communities and therefore may be considered a disproportionate impact. The EIR identifies Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures (AMMs) to reduce potential adverse effects on low-income drivers. CARTA would be required to implement a tolling program in alignment with the statewide managed lanes policy and guidance established under Caltrans Deputy Directive 43. CARTA's role will be to realize travel benefits to all travelers on I-80/US 50, including EJ communities who may not realize the cost-benefit of time savings associated with tolling.

The following AMMs are outlined by Caltrans in the EIR as suggested mitigation approaches:

- EJ-1: Project would establish variable pricing for express lanes or provide discounted per-mile tolls, credits, rebates, and/or exemptions based on income levels and cost of living.
- EJ-2: Project would offset the financial burden of enrolling in an electronic tolling program. CARTA would improve methods for EJ communities and other users to obtain toll transponders. This could include—but isn't limited to—waivers for monthly minimum balances for those with low-incomes, options for unbanked users, and translation services for those with limited English proficiency.
- EJ-3: Project would use no less than 50% of excess toll revenue to improve multi-modal transit, expand transportation choice, and other transportation improvements that would distribute benefits to EJ communities.

At the time of this writing, CARTA is still evaluating policy regarding toll discounts, customer accounts, and revenue expenditures. CARTA is considering the AMMs outlined above as the project develops with input from YoloTD, SACOG, and Caltrans.

The EIR notes that tolling signage and the process for obtaining toll transponders could pose challenges for households with limited English proficiency. With Measure EQ-1, CARTA would be required to implement a tolling program that aligns with the Caltrans Language Access Plan (2020) and Deputy Directive 91-R2. The Language Access Plan includes steps to provide linguistically isolated individual meaningful access to all Caltrans activities, including translation and interpretation services. Instructions would also be provided in multiple languages. With these measures, Build Alternatives 4a and 4b would not disproportionately impact underserved and disadvantaged communities.