

Memo

To: The California Department of Transportation
From: Senator Carol Liu
Date: 05/16/2016
Re: Comments on Draft CTP 2040

I appreciate the opportunity to offer comments on CalTrans' Draft California Transportation Plan (CTP) 2040 prepared in accordance with Assembly Bill (AB) 32 (Nunez), and Senate Bills (SB) 375 (Steinberg) and 391 (Liu). As the author of SB 391, I am pleased to see this measure come to fruition during my tenure in the Senate.

As you know, SB 391 (Liu), enacted in 2008, required CalTrans to update the CTP consistent with AB 32 (Pavley), the Global Warming Solutions Act, and SB 375, which requires Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to include Sustainable Community Strategy's (SCS) in their Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs). In developing the CTP update, Caltrans was directed to consider all of the following subject areas for the movement of people and freight:

- (a) Mobility and accessibility.
- (b) Integration and connectivity.
- (c) Efficient system management and operation.
- (d) Existing system preservation.
- (e) Safety and security.
- (f) Economic development, including productivity and efficiency.
- (g) Environmental protection and quality of life.

Plan Overall

Overall, the Draft CTP 2040 is a laudable effort that provides an overview of the current state transportation system and catalogues in one document information about a wide range of programs and activities related to transportation, air quality, and sustainability. This in and of itself is an accomplishment. The discussions are appropriate and reflect the issues identified in SB 391. In some cases, I believe the recommendations (with which I agree) could be more detailed, though I understand the limitations imposed by regional complexities across the state. There are no one-size-fits-all solutions. However, as a Legislator, the questions that remain in my mind are: How much will this all cost? How can we make the CTP more actionable?

Specific Comments

I have a few specific recommendations:

Page 16. I suggest that the first goal be to “improve multimodal interconnectivity and accessibility for all people.”

Page 21. The reference to P3 is confusing for those of us who are used to P3 referring to public/private partnerships. I agree with the sentiment and am not sure about the fix; maybe call it 3P instead.

Page 38. Discussion of Transportation maintenance should present the total estimated cost of addressing deferred maintenance and the shortfall in resources. In spite of new monies dedicated for this purpose, they pale in comparison to the total need.

Page 42. The discussion of the two HSR projects is a bit confusing. After both have been introduced it is unclear whether the narrative following applies to both projects or just the CAHSR vs. ExpressWest. Any discussion of major rail projects should also include the importance and benefits of promoting economic and housing development along these corridors.

Page 56. The CTP has done a good job of describing current and future state demographics. Clearly the cultural and economic character of our population will influence travel behavior and transportation needs. With respect to the aging population, the data show that almost 20% of the California population will be 65 years old or older in 2030. Mobility needs of the current aged population are not met, so much thought and attention to needs to be given to where this growing population will live and how they will get around. Curb-to-curb solutions will not work for people who require assistance descending stairs from their home, nor will service that doesn't run on schedule enable them to keep their doctor appointments on time. State, regional and local collaboration will be critical for finding solutions.

Emerging Technologies (Page 59 ff.)

I appreciate the development of scenarios to address the effectiveness of various strategy and implementation mixes in reducing GHG emissions. However, I recommend that Caltrans develop a fourth scenario exploring a more futuristic vision for the state integrated transportation system. Emerging technologies currently in various stages ranging from conceptualization to actualization include Hyperloop, Maglev, autonomous vehicles, hovercraft, wireless technologies for traffic management, and many more (<http://faculty.washington.edu/jbs/itrans/tehtable.htm>). New practices in freight movement (<http://its.dot.gov/efm/index.htm>) (http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/freight_news/first/first.htm) should also be addressed.

As a companion to this scenario, the CTP should discuss how new technologies to be integrated into the existing transportation and community mobility infrastructure. This should also include a discussion of the impact the introduction of new technologies will have on currently planned transportation projects and how potential early obsolescence can be accounted for in economic feasibility analyses. Given the length of time it takes from transportation project conceptualization to construction and operation, and the fast pace of technology development, it is possible some projects on the drawing boards are already obsolete.

Lifestyle Changes

Caltrans should discuss the impact changing work and life behaviors such as home business, telecommuting, using Uber, and video conferencing may have on the transportation system.

Caltrans as a Model

I appreciate the discussion of Caltrans efforts to improve construction methods and incorporate recycling and use of advanced materials. However, I recommend that the CTP forthrightly state its intention to become a model of transportation planning, construction and operations in the 21st Century that integrates meeting transportation demand with sustainability and GHG emissions reduction practices. Areas of activity would include (some of which I believe are already in motion):

- Transition fleet and equipment to alternative fuels
- Incorporate advanced materials and technology for transportation design and construction (<http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/millennium/00031.pdf>)
- Use non-toxic and drought tolerant right-of-way maintenance practices; and
- Scheduling of maintenance and construction to minimize increased congestion
- Enhanced public engagement (especially with disadvantaged communities)
- Enhanced local, regional, and state collaboration and coordination.

I am sure Caltrans is aware of many more opportunities and model practices.