Assessing the Impact of Equity Work in Active and Sustainable Transportation

A qualitative analysis of current and emerging equity work in sustainable and active transportation by using a combination of semi-structured interviews and ethnographic methods.

WHAT IS THE NEED?

There is an increasing level of awareness of the role transportation systems have played in racial segregation and the disempowerment of low-income communities and communities of color. As cities have once again become more attractive to developers and more privileged populations, these communities have become the target of gentrification that now displaces the residents who have long been struggling to bring life and vitality to streets long neglected.

Transportation infrastructure, particularly related to active transportation, is sometimes seen as a handmaid to gentrification and displacement. Numerous efforts have been made to address these deep issues of injustice through the inclusion of equity and community participation within projects on active and sustainable transportation. New transportation projects seek to engage longtime residents in the planning and implementation process.

Research on equity within transportation advocacy and professional spaces is emerging. Cities and planning firms have begun to hire experts in equity, diversity, and inclusion, as well as change their recruiting tactics to hire more people of color. More work must be done to assess the overall impact of this work.

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

This project will engage in a qualitative analysis of current and emerging equity work in sustainable and active transportation by using a combination of semi-structured interviews and ethnographic methods.
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WHAT IS OUR GOAL?

The goals of this project are to:

1. Identify key areas of strength and areas for improvement in equity work in active and sustainable transportation emphasizing biking, shared mobility, and automated vehicles;
2. Examine the inclusion of disadvantaged communities in the planning, policymaking, and implementation of new active and sustainable mobilities; and
3. Provide recommendations for how to enhance equity work in active and sustainable transportation.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT?

This project will help to improve the mobility of people throughout California by identifying ways to improve mobility for disadvantaged populations. Black, indigenous, and other communities of color (Latinos, Asian-Americans, migrants and refugees) have suffered systemic disadvantage historically, which has limited their mobility and access to resources including jobs, educational opportunities, public resources, and leisure opportunities.

This project will broaden the understanding of the successes and shortcomings of current equity work designed to assist disadvantaged populations, while also identifying new tactics and strategies to improve mobility and accessibility in a rapidly changing transportation landscape.

WHAT IS THE PROGRESS TO DATE?

The task order was executed on 12/5/19. Kickoff meeting is being scheduled in February 2020.

Task 1: Prepare for interviews
• Create protocols and script for interview. Draft initial list of interviewees.

Task 2: Norm interview process and identify/recruit more participants
• Finalize norm interview protocol and script.

Task 3: Conduct interviews
• Conduct and record interviews. Troubleshoot any problems with scheduling, interviewing process, questions, technology, etc.

Task 4: Transcribe interviews
• Transcribe and anonymize interviews using a transcription services.

Task 5: Code interviews
• Analyze and code interviews.

Task 6: Draft initial findings
• Analyze key findings from coding and draft report outline.

Task 7: Draft final report
• Complete draft of final report.

Task 8: Complete Final Report
• Complete final report and draft policy brief.