

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HOLLY J. MITCHELL AND JANICE HAHN

ADDRESSING INFRASTRUCTURE INEQUITY

On August 6, 2019, the Los Angeles County (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) unanimously adopted the “[Our County Sustainability Plan](#)” that centered equity and the need to acknowledge and address the disproportionate health and safety impacts on communities of color related to public infrastructure and private facilities throughout the County. On July 21, 2020, the Board unanimously approved a [motion](#) to establish an Anti-Racist County policy agenda. The July 21, 2020 motion called for the development of a strategic plan and policy platform to articulate the goals, actions, and deliverables of an Anti-Racist initiative, and directed County departments to evaluate policies, practices, and operations through a lens of racial equity. Today’s motion, one year later, seeks to accelerate the County’s Anti-Racist agenda, specifically as it relates to infrastructure investments overseen by the Department of Public Works.

Racism in the County has taken many forms, from racially restrictive covenants, to bombings and shootings that targeted people of color, to the intentional and systematic erasure of communities in order to build nearly 2,000 miles of freeways in California. This legacy is shamefully tethered to the present. In fact, as a direct result of freeway construction, communities surrounding the freeways experience worse environmental outcomes, and those communities are disproportionately Black and Brown. The

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households that now stand next to freeways have suffered generational smog and pollution, which kills more than 1,300 people each year. One in four Black children suffers from asthma, a rate that is three times higher than for White children, due to the disproportionate exposure to diesel particulate and other air pollutants. Additionally, Black people constitute 16 percent of people killed by cars in a traffic collision but comprise only nine percent of the population. Black households are less likely to have access to a car than White households, and households without cars in the County can get to just eight percent of the jobs that those with cars can access. Meanwhile, nearly nine in 10 public transit riders report being people of color. Fewer people traveling in Los Angeles feel the burden of traffic and the needs of the public right of way more acutely than a transit rider waiting for a bus in the hot summer or a bus stuck in traffic.

Too often, leaders in the region are asked what they are doing to advance equity considering these disparities, and what follows is a litany of initiatives and efforts that speak to one marginalized population or another. This is not enough. Placing equity at the center of our work means evaluating everything that we do through a lens of equity, prioritizing what we do based on data, community-articulated needs, and a more formulaic approach to investments. Placing equity at the center of our work means thinking broadly about the sphere of control and influence that our County departments possess, and then setting audacious goals to correct for these disparities. As the new federal administration looks to invest billions of dollars into our nation's infrastructure and advance its Justice40 Initiative (a goal to invest 40 percent of the benefits of infrastructure investments in disadvantaged communities), the County and its lead agency for infrastructure investments must set a national example of an Anti-Racist Infrastructure agenda.

WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Instruct the Director of the Department of Public Works (DPW), in partnership with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Director of the Department of

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Regional Planning, the Director of the Department of Public Health, and executive officers of all other relevant Los Angeles County (County) departments and agencies, to report back to the Board of Supervisors (Board) in writing within 45 days on the required resources (including staff time, classifications, budget, and consultant resources) and other considerations to produce the following deliverables by no later than August 31, 2022:

- a. A compendium of equity-based best practices from infrastructure agencies.
- b. Established goals, metrics, and related actions to achieve Board-adopted equity-based policies. Goals, metrics, and actions should be informed by a community process that includes impacted communities (including People of Color-empowerment organizations, faith-based communities, local tribal governments, immigrant communities, advocacy organizations, neighborhood leaders of unincorporated areas, and other communities that are left out of public planning processes).
- c. Established list of benefits reaped from DPW investments. This should expand on the Justice40 Initiative's Implementation Memorandum, which establishes an understanding of the benefits of infrastructure investments.
- d. A definition of equity, definition of disadvantaged/impacted communities, and definition of community engagement (as opposed to community outreach) that all DPW sectors apply.
- e. Needs-based prioritization methodologies for all possible funding sources, staffing plans, project lists, and grant application processes. These methodologies should mirror other Board-adopted equity frameworks, including the July 13, 2021 motion, "[Ensuring Equitable Implementation of the American Rescue Plan.](#)"

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- f. A responsive digital map of all County projects constructed or managed in the last three years and planned over the next two years in the County in key infrastructure categories (Transportation/Rights of Way including sidewalks, street lighting, urban canopy, Water Resources, Solid Waste, Public Buildings, and Broadband Services). The map should include an overlay with demographic and other equity-based data layers and indices. The map should also be accompanied by a report that includes a comparative analysis of the average five-year investment in communities and include the differences in investments by race, socio-economic status, and incidents of COVID-19 deaths.
 - g. An assessment of the current process of how DPW conducts community engagement. The assessment should be informed by a community process and include recommendations to improve community engagement protocols department-wide.
 - h. An analysis of the current process for fulfilling constituent service requests related to infrastructure. This should include an assessment of who has access to current constituent request processes and how DPW will expand interdepartmental and public access.
2. Instruct the Director of DPW, in partnership with the CEO, County Counsel, the Los Angeles County Assessor, all other relevant County departments and agencies to assess the feasibility of establishing an additional source of County directed funds to address infrastructure inequity, including a potential new funding source to be utilized for undergrounding of utilities to replace the California Public Utilities Commission Rule 20A program, which will sunset after December 31, 2021.

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(LO/LM)