

June 29, 2023

Subject: Strategic Growth Council April 26, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Reporting Period: April – June 2023

Staff Lead: Sauntharya Manikandan, Executive Fellow, SGC

Recommended Action

Approval of the April 26, 2023 Strategic Growth Council Meeting Minutes.

Strategic Growth Council April 26, 2023 - Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item #1: Call to Order

Chair Sam Assefa called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM.

Agenda Item #2: Roll Call

Council Members and Representatives Present:

Sam Assefa, Director, Governor's Office of Planning and Research

Frank Cardenas, Public Member;

Moy Moreno-Rivera (Designee), Deputy Secretary, California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA)

Lourdes Castro Ramirez, Secretary, California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency (BCSH);

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA)

Toks Omishakin, Secretary, California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA);

Nicole Capretz, Public Member;

Virginia Jameson, Deputy Secretary, California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)

Juan Sánchez Muñoz, Public Member;

Marko Mijic (Designee), Deputy Director, California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHS), on behalf of Secretary Mark Ghaly;

Agenda Item #3: ACTION: Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Lourdes and seconded by Moreno-Rivera to approve the February 28, 2023 Meeting Minutes.

Motion passes (10-0-0*). *Marks abstention or absence from vote

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Agenda Item #4: Executive Director's Report



Lynn von Koch-Liebert, Executive Director, SGC

- Staffing Updates
- Program Updates
- Connecting Communities Initiative
- SGC 2023 - 2025 Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP)
- Council Priority 1: Racial Equity Resource Hub

Council Comment:

Assefa: Excited to see all the work that has been put together for Council Priority 1 and incredible resource for agencies to center equity in their work and push for this work. It is this kind of work that is truly transformative as we have actions that move the ball forward and encourage everyone to look at the website.

Crowfoot: Since this hub has created, the Governor established the executive order that directs all agencies create a Racial Equity Action Plan and the hub can be helpful in making sure we don't reinvent the wheel.

One suggestion would be to give a guided tour of the resource hub in cabinet meeting with Governor. We need to operationalize and institutionalize this work and excited to understand what the best practices are to make into common practices. Our measure on equity is not just lifting it up but also on outcomes – actions drive outcome.

Capretz: Echo comments and question on whether local governments have accessed this resource. They really need the support and best practices.

Muñoz: Whether hub or action plan, this unrelenting deliberate effort to capture optic of equity and inclusion is very remarkable. We all have programs but what are the outcome of the programs is the question. Efforts to centralize and consistently update this hub is very important and become a tool people can refer to with confidence.

Omishakin: Tools are important, but we must continue to push so systems are changing because of the tool. Glad to have been a champion for this work but want to leave with that this is not mission accomplished yet.

Ramirez: I agree with everything said so well. It is a good steady progress we are making with the Racial Equity Hub. Our agency relies on places where best practices are being shared and this resource is augmenting our work. Agree with Toks that we should continue to do more to ensure our outcomes are good but also, so we understand who is accessing and who isn't accessing programs.

Also lifted the pro-housing designation for the City of Needles and hopes to see more of complementary state efforts. We have up to 22 pro-housing designations and many more to go!

Mijic: To go off Secretary Crowfoot's point - the cabinet is great, but the undersecretary meeting is where the work gets done! I would like to invite SGC team to speak to undersecretary meeting to speak on this racial equity. We are trying to understand how we can



truly embed equity in all that we do so that it is part of who we are as an organization. It would also be interesting to think about how we disseminate this through existing programs and mechanisms and think about linkages to hub to get further and deeper into the community.

Moreno-Rivera: Being an equity lead within EPA, one of the important pieces was knowing who to contact. For the people who are doing the work on the day to day, the opportunity to provide information about who people can go to and barriers they can overcome to push this work forward would be helpful to consider. This hub is reaffirming that the work that is being done, and they are not alone in the work they are doing.

Crowfoot: One more quick suggestion is that SGC has shown potential to convene – especially after the SGC Catalyst conference. The possibility for SGC to be convener across agency to institutionalize this further into our agencies because I often don't get to see this.

Public Comment:

No public comment

Omishakin left 1:32

Moosavi replaces Toks at 1:33

Agenda Item #5: Consent Calendar

Lynn von Koch-Liebert, Executive Director, SGC

- Community Resilience Center Round 1 Guidelines Approval
- Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Round 9 Guidelines Approval
- Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Round 5 Award Increase

Council Comment:

Public Comment:

Bob Hill, Sustainability Officer for San Luis Obispo

Olivia Sidemen, Climate Policy Leader

Motion passes (10-0-0)

Motion was made by Mijic and seconded by Munoz.

Agenda Item #6: Action: California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Confirmation

Lynn von Koch-Liebert, Executive Director, SGC

Sean Kennedy, Special Projects Analyst, SGC

Recommended action: Council approve nominees recommended by SGC staff to serve on the California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force.

Council Discussion



Jameson: I just want to acknowledge nominees and their commitment to the taskforce over the next three years and how meaningful it is. Also acknowledge that this is an issue facing not just California but nationwide. Lots of interest of getting into farming but it is not easy in California especially given how high pricing of land is. In 2020, CDFA released a Farm Equity report lead by Thea Rittenhouse that found that unstable land tenure and a lack of long-term land leases was a principal barrier on long term conservation practices or becoming certified organic and additionally contributed to long term risks to sustainability. Sometimes we see leases as short as three years and that is our minimum length requirement for our healthy soils program – it should be the start of something not the end.

I hope task force will look at land ownership but also the length of leases on public land and urban areas. Grateful for the taskforce and work you are going to help do to elucidate the factors affecting access in California. Also extend thanks to Sean Kennedy.

Moreno-Rivera: Thank you CDFA folks for your expertise and Sean for your patience and work and exited for next three years.

Ramirez: Question for compensation issue brought up during public comment, can staff explain that with further detail.

Read: The authorization was put forward in budget bill language, authority needs to be independent and specific in statute for the ability to go over the threshold. Will circle back with the council to establish what information needs to be developed or shared among the taskforce to take full advantage of current law.

Ramirez: Would greatly appreciate staff follow up. I understand we are in a difficult fiscal environment as a stage. However, it is important for us to address barriers and especially any economic barriers from being at the table. When we speak about equity, we also need to think about how we are continuing to remove economic barriers.

Assefa: I see the challenges around land use around agriculture and a lot of the work we do, and equity issues are all inter-related to sustainable use of our land. I am excited about this and see the importance of this taskforce. Extend gratitude for taskforce and staff who helped put this together.

Cardenas: Clarifying questions on the stipends for the Land Equity Task Force. 1) When will the taskforce begin to convene and 2) When can council understand what options are available?

Read: We can provide the state of options as they exist today immediately. Any additional statutory authority wouldn't need to come to this council necessarily and would require legislation that has not been yet introduced. The taskforce itself is meeting in June (tentatively set for 6/23/23) and that's when they can discuss current options.

Capretz: Particularly noteworthy that there was a lack of youth engagement in the taskforce and what I heard today is that young people need to see farming as a viable option. This shows me a stipend is worthwhile. I want to encourage folks who made public comment that you can



still push for legislation in this session with placeholder bills. Thank you to the public comments for informing us of these issues.

Crowfoot: Stipend is a larger issue at the state and dozens of agencies that are limited by this, and comments made today are entirely valid. Recognize that this is a part of a bigger issues and repeat that there are opportunities through a law change to amend this limitation.

Assefa: This is for SGC staff - Is there a way to support getting youth organizations and youth groups engaged in the taskforce.

Kennedy: There could be options to engage with youth focused organizations to bear on this process. This taskforce is meeting quarterly and possibility for research and other supplementary activities to focus on youth.

Public Comment:

Jamie Fanous, Policy Director of Community Alliance with Family Farmers

Beth Smoker, Policy Director of California Food and Farming Network

Megan Thomas, CEO of Catalyst of Sand Diego and Imperial

Shyanne Stone, Big Pine Reservation

Janet, Los Angeles Food Policy Council

Motion passes (10-0-0)

Motion was made by Muñoz and seconded by Crowfoot

Moosavi leaves 2:02 PM

Omishakin replaces Moosavi at 2:03 PM

Agenda Item #7: DISCUSSION: Council Priority 3: Housing, Climate, and Equity Draft Work Plan

Lynn von Koch-Liebert, Executive Director, SGC

Sean Kennedy, Special Projects Analyst, SGC

Discussion Questions

- Which strategies and actions do you believe will have the most significant impact in meeting the objectives of Council Priority 3?
- In which strategy areas is your agency best positioned to take a leadership role?
- In which areas would you like to see greater emphasis?

Council Comment:

Assefa: Thank you Sean and Lynn. Opening up to council discussion.

Ramirez: I appreciate being a co-champion on priority 3 and appreciate the process of the creation of these workplans to make sure there was alignment especially with work that is already taking place. Appreciate Lynn highlighting that much of this work is happening at state

and local levels and the intention of this plan is to be more strategic and to pitch the work, we are currently doing to funders and partners at state level on equitable communities. There are a lot of objectives and clarity around timeline and leadership and there will be opportunity to assess how things are coming along and course correct that! Approving this does not mean we aren't making changes along the way.

Mijic: Wanted to applaud you all for pulling this together. Follow up with Lynn on how to add more health and human services aspect to this. Whether that's the expansion of Medicaid work and leveraging Medicaid to pay for social drivers of health. Ultimately making sure people are able and capable to stay housed. One of the things I find frustrating is that people we serve don't live in silos, but the way we deliver programs is in these complicated silos.

Capretz: Thank Ramirez and Garcia for inviting me to participate in this process. As local and regional advocate, what we see on the ground is all these competing issues because we struggle to communicate that mix-used, dense housing is the solution. The good news is that the process and packing everything holistically for the community is important and thrilled that the state is doing this. One of the priorities/goals is state education but I am going to push the need for local government to have community and planning education, tools, and resources to make the pitch for these housing needs.

I don't to underestimate the State's ability to capture and model this vision is so important. You have a platform that is powerful, and we must keep doing it. Moreno-Rivera: Your comments are well taken Capretz. Huge champion about language access and plain language first! Cal EPA took a deep dive on the action items, and we can send over in writing and talk through this after the meeting.

First thanks, SGC staff and council member for elevating this issue – our ability to reduce GHG emission goals is critically linked to housing, climate, and equity. I echo that breaking down silos is extremely important. The greater emphasis we would like to see is - the collaboration is important and public process to get comments, advancing new tools. Reiterating when Secretary Garcia stressed the need to close climate, housing, and equity gaps. Importance of taking data analysis approach as we strive towards our very ambitious goals

Crowfoot: The genesis of SGC is this issue. State leaders passed SB 375 to figure out how to steer necessary land use and housing development. If we are being honest, one area we haven't succeeded is housing and reducing vehicle miles traveled in fact VMT has increased. One area we need to improve is land use and housing development.

We are making progress. Thanks to Ramirez, Governor, and legislature the State in driving housing projects across the state. Hoping that the work at SGC can help complement that. I lead an agency that wouldn't normally think about when working with housing. Looking to you to help us engage on secretary level across agencies.

Assefa: Exciting due to experience as a land use planner. What is important is that last 4 years around housing is unmatched by any throughout the country. Connecting the dots on housing development, type, climate, equity and this is where everything comes together.



OPR will be able to help with connections across local jurisdictions. Many are burdened by actions that have come out of the legislature and carrot and stick types of funding. We must be able to help them navigate this at a local level. Overall, we only have two years and at the end what can we show for progress.

Jameson: Acknowledged establishment of SB 375 and the connection between sustainable communities and SALC program. Have housing that is connected to transit and then protecting land on the urban edge. We conceptually started there, and we brought in experts on conservation and housing (SALC and AHSC) there is so much education, history, and policy on these areas and moved apart. This helped us come full circle to be able to make that connection between housing, conversation, and transportation.

Cardenas: Secretary Jameson is correct; this has always been here for SGC to deal with wicked problems. Just look to work that SGC and the other Secretaries have done, commitment to drive within their massive organizations to take actions. When might we see policy recommendations prioritized and brought back to this council?

Von Koch-Liebert: I really appreciate the council champions willingness and readiness to break down silos. We have proposed quick timeframe with the two years because there is not another option, and we will miss this opportunity window.

Cardenas: My second question is around action item 12 – Who is reporting on these outcomes?

Von Koch-Liebert: The way we are imagining this is, it would be looking across the collective rather than the council member updates. Is there something else you would like to see? SGC is open to facilitating this process and leave it to council members if they are comfortable with conversation.

Crowfoot: I like this! Distilling how each agency can support the mission we have is a great idea and reporting on that ensures we are accountable.

Ramirez: Having the opportunity to do that helps us bring other members in our agencies that are doing this work and going back to point of communication – it creates a forum to be able to share and provide more public feedback. Really appreciate these ideas Council Member Cardenas.

Assefa: I really like this. As we take individual responsibilities, we make sure to connect the dots.

Capretz: Brilliant idea. If we are going to have discussion on public forum, we can bring together more stakeholders as there are a lot of thought leaders. This is an adjacent forum to talk to the implementers for all the legislation that is getting passed and challenges being faced.

Public Comment:

Motion was made by XXX and seconded by XXX.

Munoz leaves at 2:26 PM

Moosavi replaces Omashakin at 3:10

Agenda Item #8: Public Comment

Anthony Caroll

Agenda Item #9: Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 3:35 PM