

October 26, 2023

Subject: Strategic Growth Council August 30, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Reporting Period: August 2023 – October 2023

Staff Lead: Lois Kim, Projects Analyst, SGC

Recommended Action

Approval of the August 30, 2023 Strategic Growth Council Meeting Minutes.

Strategic Growth Council August 30, 2023 - Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item #1: Call to Order

Chair Sam Assefa called the meeting to order at 1:04 PM

Agenda Item #2: Roll Call

Council Members and Representatives Present:

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

Nicole Capretz, Public Member

Frank Cardenas, Public Member

Moy Moreno-Rivera (Designee), Deputy Secretary, California Environmental Protection Agency, on behalf of Secretary Yana Garcia

Toks Omishakin, Secretary, California State Transportation Agency

Karen Ross, Secretary, California Department of Food and Agriculture (*virtual*)

Noaki Schwartz (Designee), Deputy Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency, on behalf of Secretary Wade Crowfoot (*virtual*)

Rohan Radhakrishna (Designee), Deputy Director, California Department of Public Health Office of Health Equity, on behalf of Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly of the California Health & Human Services Agency

Sasha Kergan (Designee), Deputy Secretary, California Business Consumer Services & Housing Agency, on behalf of Secretary Lourdes Castro Ramirez

Agenda Item #3: ACTION: Approval of Minutes

Approve the June 29, 2023 Meeting Minutes.

Motion was made by Munoz and seconded by Kergan.

Motion passes (9-0-1*). *Marks abstention or absence from vote

*Toks Omishakin was absent for the vote.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Agenda Item #4: Executive Director's Report

Lynn von Koch-Liebert, Executive Director, SGC

Council Comment:

Assefa: SGC will conduct Council Elections during the October Meeting.

Capretz: Excited about the Connecting Communities work. My organization is working with CivicWell and local governments. I want to reinforce how pivotal technical assistance is for underserved communities and how it should be replicated across the country.

Ross: Curious about the funding available for technical assistance. \$2 million is a lot but California is a large state. I want to make sure we equip every community possible.

von Koch-Liebert: The first year of the contract is focused on the near-term opportunities, but we are looking into creating a “train the trainer” type of program. We are also in coordination with the US EPA Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers to support the state and Region 9.

Moreno-Rivera: CalEPA and US EPA recently held an event together and is committed for continued collaboration, and this includes the Council.

Munoz: We are very supportive of the technical assistance programs being developed across the State so we can increase access to the opportunities.

Kergan: For the Connecting Communities program, we look forward for opportunities to connect, particularly with other State programs that are oversubscribed.

Assefa: As we plan for the next meeting, being out with the community is a critical part of the work. It's important for us to meet the community members and see the projects we fund. It's a 2-way process – we learn a lot more from being on the ground.

Cardenas: I invite you all to host a meeting in Los Angeles next year. When we do, we will hear communities speaking about community resilience centers, there is already a lot of traction there in LA.

Public Comment:

Emily Burgueno

Agenda Item #5: CONSENT: Transformative Climate Communities Guidelines: Round 4 Technical Amendment

Motion to move the Consent Calendar

Lynn von Koch-Liebert, Executive Director, SGC

Council Comment:

No Council Comment.

Public Comment:

No Public Comment.

Motion was made by Capretz and seconded by Omishakin

1:40 pm: Secretary Yana Garcia replaced Designee Moises Moreno-Rivera.

Motion passes (10-0-0)

Agenda Item #6: ACTION: AHSC Round 7 Awards

Approve the Affordable Housing & Sustainable Communities (AHSC) Round 7 Awards

Lynn von Koch-Liebert, Executive Director, SGC

Jessica Lopez, Senior Project Analyst for the Affordable Housing & Sustainable Communities Program

1:45 pm: Secretary Lourdes Castro Ramirez replaced Designee Sasha Kergan.

Council Discussion

Munoz: Really excited about projects in the San Joaquin Valley, want to call attention to the Dakota project, Lemoore project, and the Modesto project. These projects will be transformative to these communities.

Omishakin: Want to celebrate the moment. I want to emphasize and appreciate how holistic the analysis and program is regarding housing, transportation, land-use, energy, and more. These projects are transformative to the people living in the areas. I want to thank all the agencies involved because AHSC is reflective of a whole of government approach.

Sam: Agree, these are truly transformative projects. It's incredible to see all the projects and the diversity in project types, and how they are catalysts for additional leveraged funds.

Lourdes: I completely agree that we need to celebrate more. We need to do more to celebrate and lift up the work of the SGC and the work communities are doing to link housing, climate, energy, and more to improve the quality of life for veterans, seniors, children, and more. We should do more track and evaluate with a focus on the people.

Karen: I want to emphasize how important these projects are to save our prime farmland and how important it is to create affordable housing in rural communities. This is a vision of the original legislation that passed.

Radhakrishna: I agree that this is more than housing, it's a holistic approach that will also help prevent disease and improve quality of life to create sustainable communities.

Capretz: I agree, I want to celebrate this moment. I want to raise that in San Diego, there is a risk that apartment construction will not be financed due to interest rates and other increased costs. This is leading to a decrease in apartment construction, and I am curious if the State can explore options to support the construction of apartments. I am also excited that all the units are all electric, this is setting a standard for the industry. In San Diego, we are also exploring how to incentivize all electric buildings and learned that the different funding sources and the

stipulations required for them, can hinder this process. I am curious about a conversation on creating more consistency across the various funding pots for building and construction, and use AHSC as a model to move this forward. I also want to flag that San Diego had very few applications, particularly compared to other regions. As we explore guidelines, I would like to evaluate why that is.

Cardenas: AHSC is a testament to the genius of the legislation for SGC and the California Climate Investments. I want to highlight the work of the Downtown Women's Center in Downtown Los Angeles. They have been doing great work and our investments are creating hope, health, and homes for the projects in the area.

Garcia: Kudos to the staff for their work, particularly for the building electrification. I think we still have work to increase capacity building and applications from our rural communities and tribal communities.

Public Comment

Kristine Williams

Emily Burgueno

Motion made by Garcia and seconded by Capretz.

Motion passes (10-0-0)

Designee Sasha Kergan replaces Secretary Castro-Ramirez at 2:20- pm.

Agenda Item #7: DISCUSSION: Council Priority 2 Update

Lynn von Koch-Liebert, Executive Director, SGC

Kirin Kumar, Deputy Director, SGC

Ena Lupine, CACE Program Manager, SGC

Council Discussion

Sam: At OPR, the Integrated Climate Adaptation & Resiliency Program has grant programs that utilizes third-party technical assistance provider to underserved communities, particularly from rural and tribal communities. One of the most critical things we can do now, is to connect the dots between all of the state programs so there is larger impact on the communities.

Garcia: At CalEPA, the Environmental Justice Small Grants program has grown to a more significant action grants program. This was born out of a desire and need for small community-based organizations to have capacity support to engage in decision making processes. We were able to use discretionary dollars to fund this, and it's essential. I also want to give a nod to technical assistance providers outside of government who are doing great work statewide. It's also essential that as government, we streamline our own processes to make it easier for the communities we are reaching out to.

Ross: I agree on how we can work on agencies and make life easier to the groups we are reaching out to. Part of the TA also needs to be from agencies that have been doing local community engagement, especially with the environmental justice communities, to other agencies now working with these folks. The first time CDFA was interested in providing TA, SGC first supported CDFA and funded 10 TA providers for the Climate Smart Lands Program. CDFA has since increased this and continue to see this as a long-term investment. Technical assistance is the name of the game.

2:40 pm: Designee Moises Moreno-Rivera replaced Secretary Yana Garcia.

Radhakrishna: CHHS funds a lot of noncompetitive applications that goes directly to communities, so we appreciate how user friendly this TA update is and the opportunity to contribute to it. Some ideas to further impact of the toolkit: 1) Train the trainer to ensure the Toolkit is used especially to support rural and unincorporated areas. Cold spotting – where have funds not been dispersed across the state and how can we provide TA so they can level the playing field? 2) Recently learned that tribes in other jurisdictions have a long list of requirements, like a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, to receive FEMA reimbursements. It would be interesting to do reverse engineering to help identify who needs technical assistance. 3) Support small organizations who struggle with long term funding and support.

Sasha: The lack of access for states to utilize discretionary funding can be a barrier to providing TA and other useful resources. I am interested to see how we can continue to find opportunities for state teams to fund technical assistance. As we navigate federal funding and compliance, how do we navigate federal compliance and meet with federal partners and community partners where they are at? Reaching out to our federal regional counterparts to share resources like this would be valuable to advance administrative priorities.

Omishakin: At Caltrans, we are establishing Caltrans Engagement Coordinators (CECs) and this toolkit could be useful for them as they begin their engagement. As we roll out the Reconnecting Communities Program, and the unprecedented federal funding programs, this resource is extremely timely.

Assefa: The State of New York has implemented a single funding application across the state. Regarding implementation and innovation, I am curious how California can explore this – it's fascinating.

Public Comment:

Erica Manuel

Christina Fernandez

Rainie Torrance

2:57 pm: Designee Darwin Moosavi replaces Secretary Toks Omishakin.

Agenda Item #6: DISCUSSION: Interagency Racial Equity Updates

Lynn von Koch-Liebert, Executive Director, SGC

Kirin Kumar, Deputy Director, SGC

Jazmine Garcia-Delgadillo, Health & Equity Program Manager, SGC

Council Discussion

Assefa: Racial equity is not easy work. I'm really proud of how the State is resourcing this to institutionalize equitable practices. I'm also proud to have recently sworn in the first California Racial Equity Commission. It's also important to remember that movements like this benefit everyone.

Cardenas: I am particularly interested in how organizations communicate and advance equity internally and externally. What kind of technology and idea sharing is there to discuss racial equity with folks within and outside your organization?

Sasha: BCSH released their first strategic plan, where equity is embedded and a priority in implementation. I am curious how to measure equity and social sustainability, since they may seem more quantitative. We can all work on how to measure and validate qualitative information.

Radhakrishna: At CHHS, we're proud to have an agency Equity Officer on board and equity officers across their 17 boards and offices. Also, our Department of Health Care Services has put out a health equity roadmap with explicit goals to decrease disparities in deaths from Black and indigenous moms and infants by 50% 2025. We are also expanding Medicaid services to youths and adults in jails and correctional services, and advancing health equity and justice.

3:59 pm: Designee Darwin Moosavi leaves.

Moreno: The Environmental Justice Action Grants interpreted the EO to give them authority to embed environmental justice into their grants, and we encourage other agencies to think about embedding equity into grant programs as well. Some of our boards and departments are beginning to create strategic plans that do embed equity. It's extremely important that these conversations on equity are normalized and people are validated, across our organizations and management.

Ross: At CDFR, we started with CCORE which really energized folks across the organization to advance racial equity. Next week, we will share our Racial Equity Action Plan and take 6 months to share with our communities to acknowledge the history of racism in agriculture. This will feed into our Strategic Plan. We also have a Farm Equity Advisor who is working across the agency to embed equity throughout the programs and policies, in addition to numerous other initiatives and boards to do this.

Schwartz: I recognize that government has played a huge role in institutionalizing racism, and we have a responsibility to do what we can to unwind that. The fact that this Administration has realized this and focused on this in so many ways is very uplifting.

Assefa: I'm very proud that we are having this conversation at one of the highest levels of government in the State.

4:15 pm: Frank Cardenas & Juan Sanchez-Munoz leave.

Public Comment:

Holly Nickel

Vince Leus

Maria Barakat

Paige Kruza

Emily Burgueno

Agenda Item #9: Public Comment

No public comment.

Agenda Item #10: Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:29 PM.