

February 24, 2021

Subject: Strategic Growth Council December Meeting Minutes Reporting
Period: December 2020 – February 2021
Staff Lead: Sarah Newsham, Executive Fellow

Recommended Action:

Approval of the December 17, 2020 Strategic Growth Council Meeting Minutes.

Strategic Growth Council December 17, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item #1: Call to Order

Chair Gordon called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

Chair Gordon welcomes Councilmember Juan Sánchez Muñoz and shares a brief introduction.

Agenda Item #2: Roll Call

Council Members and Representatives Present:

Kate Gordon (Chair), Director, Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR);

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

Jared Blumenfeld, Secretary, California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA);

David Kim, Secretary, California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA);

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

Karen Ross, Secretary, California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) **(joined at 1:09 p.m.)**;

Juan Sánchez Muñoz, Public Member;

Nicole Capretz, Public Member

Julie Souliere, Assistant Secretary, California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHS)
- **absent**;

Mike Flad, Public Member - **absent**

Agenda Item #3: ACTION: Approval of Minutes

Motion was made (Kim) and seconded (Blumenfeld) to approve the [November 17, 2020 Meeting Minutes](#). Motion passes 7-0-1* (Muñoz abstains).

*marks abstention or absence from vote

Agenda Item #4: Council Member Updates

Gordon (OPR): Much of today's meeting will focus on SALC and the value of natural and working lands, which are important in achieving climate goals and sustainable growth strategy. We play an important role in achieving balance in our natural and working lands, which make up a large percentage of our state's land.

Crowfoot (CNRA): Advancing work on Executive Order on nature-based solutions. SALC program is a good example of how a single program can deliver on conservation, climate, economic development, and equity goals. Reached agreement with NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, will work with them to analyze satellite data to promote environmental management. Released report on "cutting the green tape" on how to more quickly and cost effectively execute environmental restoration. CA will be official observer of Convention on Biodiversity, a UN effort to develop an international agreement to preserve biodiversity. Currently recruiting for two first-time positions: Assistant Secretary for Tribal Affairs and Assistant Secretary for Equity and Environmental Justice.

Blumenfeld (CalEPA): Governor Newsom appointed Liane Randolph to chair CA Air Resources Board. Mary Nichols (outgoing chair) has an important legacy. Four other appointments made at the same time, exciting new changes to board. Looking forward to working with new federal appointees. Teams from OES and CalRecycle started cleanup operation on this season's wildfires.

Kim (CalSTA): No updates.

Castro Ramirez (BCSH): Working to coordinate housing efforts across state, embed equity and inclusion lens in work, work with Treasurer's Office to ensure greater alignment in financing guidelines. CA Debt Limit Allocation Committee (CDLAC) will meet Monday, Dec. 21 to vote on regulations to guide priorities for bond cap allocation for 2021. CDLAC will also consider awarding \$600 million in bond cap that has been returned by High Speed Rail. Bond cap will likely be prioritized for affordable housing developments and the hardest hit communities. AB 3088 provided eviction protection and included a stakeholder engagement process to figure out how to spend potential future stimulus money, excited to see that federal stimulus looks like a possibility. Homekey initiative will produce over 6,000 permanent housing units by converting existing buildings to permanent housing.

Ross (CDFA): COVID-19 led to 73% increase in demand at food banks, farmers experienced disruptions. Agricultural land conservation is about long-term sustainability, food security, and climate solutions.

Capretz (Public member): No updates.

Kim: Regarding Secretary Castro Ramirez's comments, want to clarify that HSR allocation returned to CDLAC is not from the CA High Speed Rail project, but rather from the proposed XpressWest Brightline privately funded project from Las Vegas to Victorville.

Gordon: Congratulations to CA Energy Commission and to all of the state for CA ranking #1 in 2020 state energy efficiency scorecard.

Agenda Item #5: Executive Director's Report

Louise Bedsworth, Executive Director, SGC

Council Discussion:

Crowfoot: Used to serve at OPR when SGC had a director and one and a half staff members. Exciting to see what SGC has become.

Ross: Second what Crowfoot said.

Public Comment:

Hasan Ikhata, SANDAG

Gordon: Items 7 and 8 will switch order. Item 7 will be SALC awards, Item 8 will be update on replan tool.

Agenda Item #6: Consent Calendar: Climate Catalyst Fund 2021 Investment Categories

Gordon: AB 78 created a vehicle for the Catalyst Fund but it was never capitalized because of budget impacts of COVID-19. AB 78 calls on SGC and the Labor and Workforce Development Agency to recommend areas for investment. In the event that the fund is capitalized in the upcoming budget, we will engage in further discussion to refine the categories and make more specific recommendations.

Dan Adler, Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GoBiz)

Louise Bedsworth, SGC

Recommended Action: *Accept Interim Investment Category Recommendations from the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (IBank) for the Climate Catalyst Fund.*

Council Discussion:

Gordon: Point about the federal component is well-taken, there is a parallel discussion happening at the federal level. Funds could only go to states that have vehicle to accept the funds.

Capretz: How did you identify projects?

Adler: First step: Interagency process created a database of projects they had heard about on the ground. Second step: engaging the market and asking for project types that could use funding.

Capretz: You said there would be technical assistance, how do you see that working on the ground?

Adler: GoBiz's Zero-Emission Vehicles initiative is a good model. Give communities money and guidance for how to deploy it to achieve their objectives.

Capretz: We need huge electric vehicle infrastructure investment in San Diego, will be hard to meet Executive Order.

Blumenfeld: If you were going to scan projects that you have identified, how would you think about orienting them with equity and environmental justice lens?

Adler: Priorities should be technologies and inclusivity. Heavy-duty goods movement is good option, EJ communities affected. We need to drive technology and spread benefits as widely as possible.

Blumenfeld: Would love to talk with CA Air Resources Board and CalEPA in the new year about goods movement.

Crowfoot: We know we need more resources to meet scale and speed of change that is necessary to combat climate crisis. Excited to see this get off the ground and scale up over time.

Public comment:

Eddie Price, San Diego Urban Sustainability Coalition

Daniel Taillant, Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development

Capretz: shoutout to Eddie Price, recipient of a CA Energy Commission award.

Assistant Secretary Darwin Moosavi replaced Secretary Kim at 2:11 p.m.

Motion was made (Ramirez) and seconded (Ross) to accept [Interim Investment Category Recommendations](#) from the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (IBank) for the Climate Catalyst Fund. Motion passed (8-0-0).

Agenda Item #8: ACTION ITEM: FY 19-20 Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program

Virginia Jameson, Department of Conservation

Recommended Action: Approve awards totaling \$52,046,171 in Fiscal Year 2019-20 funds through Round 6 of the Sustainable Agricultural Land Conservations Program to support the 20 agricultural conservation easements, two fee-title acquisitions, and 10 planning grants recommended by Staff in this report.

Council Discussion:

Gordon: Presentation touched on the value of these lands as buffers to wildfire. Also great geographic diversity, demonstrates that this can happen all over the state.

Ross: Thanks to staff at Department of Conservation and SGC for work on technical assistance, planning grants, and emphasis on all parts of the state.

Crowfoot: Share Sec. Ross's enthusiasm for program. Is it appropriate to integrate other priorities that emerged through the Executive Order this fall—biodiversity, climate resilience?

Jameson: Yes, we do that with the RePlan tool, will be discussed later.

Crowfoot: Would be nice to have a way to institutionalize and evaluate that. It would be ideal if SALC could be recorded as part of these conservation goals.

Jameson: In projects where conservation value is part of the reason for funding, those conservation elements are included in the conservation agreement.

Gordon: These GHG analyses account for only avoided emissions, right?

Jameson: Also account for loss of soil carbon due to construction.

Gordon: Important to make sure SALC is contributing to the efforts Crowfoot is leading.

Bedsworth: Trying to broaden participation in interagency group to make sure we are addressing all goals. Would welcome additional perspectives as we move onto next round of guidelines.

Public comment:

E.J. Remson, The Nature Conservancy
Clay Downing, County of Ventura, Resource Management Agency
Renee DeVere-Oki, SACOG
Susie Kirschner, Inland Empire Resource Conservation District
Sara Press, Sonoma Land Trust
Marc Landgraf, Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority
Kathryn Lyddan, Marin Agricultural Land Trust
Nancy Schaefer, California Rangeland Trust
Ashley Paulsworth, County of Monterey
Emily Renzel, San Benito Agricultural Land Trust
Stanley O Van Vleck, Van Vleck Ranching and Resources, Inc
Cain Silvey, The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County
Sheryl Landrum, Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County
Katie Patterson, American Farmland Trust
Jeanne Merrill, CalCAN
Devin Rothman, The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County
Sibella Kraus, Sustainable Agriculture Education

3:16 p.m. Chair Gordon acknowledges that Deputy Secretary Amanda Hansen has replaced Secretary Crowfoot (CNRA), Deputy Secretary Lauren Sanchez has replaced Secretary Blumentfeld (CalEPA), and Assistant Secretary Julie Souliere (CHHS) has joined.

Motion was made (Ross) and seconded (Sanchez) to approve awards totaling \$52,046,171 in Fiscal Year 2019-20 funds through [Round 6 of the Sustainable Agricultural Land Conservations Program](#) to support the 20 agricultural conservation easements, two fee-title acquisitions, and 10 planning grants recommended by Staff in this report. Motion passed (9-0-0).

Agenda Item #7: Discussion Item: Update on RePlan, a Regional Conservation Planning Tool: Development and Applications

Denny Grossman, SGC

Panel:

DWR: Ted Frink, Branch Manager, Special Restoration Initiatives

DOC: Shanna Atherton, Associate Environmental Planner, Division of Land Resource Protection

CDFA: Amrith Gunasekara, Science Advisor to the Secretary

Council Discussion:

Ross: Do you see other programs you want to pursue to make sure this tool is being used as widely as possible?

Bedsworth: There is a challenge in trying to sustain a tool. Great structure that has been set up, shared master agreement with Department of Technology. Has allowed other departments to use tool. Many other opportunities to use a tool like this. Shana mentioned conversion risk and development patterns—that has been challenging to capture in the tool.

Grossman: Partnerships with DWR. Also considering what other datasets will be useful. Look at general plans, look at zoning—decisions already made about how land will be used. Need updated dataset on zoning decisions.

Muñoz: Who has access to the plan? Just regional planners? Would researchers have access to this data?

Denny: A key piece of what we're trying to do is make this information broadly available. Replan.org is the website, full functionality of the tool is available to everyone. Can also download datasets.

Muñoz: We should make this link available to researchers at UCANR (University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources).

Hansen: How are future climate change impacts built into this tool?

Grossman: Tool has some remaining steps to have all the datasets we would ultimately like to have. We have atmospheric change included in climate sensitivity and exposure. Also have soil resilience to climate change. We have identified that this is an area where we need to connect more with other datasets.

Bedsworth: We have the ability to bring in other datasets, e.g. CalAdapt. You can also bring in CES and start to overlay those datasets.

Gordon: How hard/easy is it to add more datasets? Can anyone add datasets?

Grossman: It's easy to add data, but individuals cannot currently add data to the tool itself.

Gordon: Want to underscore the critical need to do aggressive compact development and infill development, the flip side of this conservation. We have really critical housing needs in this state, in every part of this state, need to support the development we want to see.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Agenda Item #9: Public Comment

No public comment.

Agenda Item #10: Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:08 pm.