



To: California Strategic Growth Council Members
From: Louise Bedsworth
Re: Executive Director Report to the Council – February 24, 2021

Organizational Updates

- SGC Budget Update: Governor Newsom released his proposed budget for 2021, featuring a \$4.1 billion climate and environment package that includes funding for our AHSC and SALC programs and many other key State Initiatives. The proposed budget includes funding to extend the Community Assistance for Climate Equity (CACE), which will allow the team build the framework for the Regional Climate Collaboratives Programs created by Senate Bill 1072 (Leyva, 2018).
- Racial Equity Working Group (REWG) Update: the REWG has convened and developed an inventory of racial equity action plans across the state, as well as discussed opportunities for learning and collaboration across the state agencies. Most recently, the REWG received an update and presentation by the Office of the Surgeon General and the Inclusive by Design team regarding the equity related planning efforts of the Health and Human Services Agency. The REWG is preparing to provide updates at the April SGC Council meeting.

Staffing Updates

- SGC will welcome new Communications Officer Luis Jimenez to the SGC/OPR External Affairs and Communications team this month. Luis joins us from California Volunteers.
- SGC welcomed new TCC Analyst Jerry Rivero in December. Jerry joins us from the County of San Diego.
- The Department of Conservation is working to hire an Environmental Planner for TCC.
- SGC welcomed Executive Fellow Sarah Newsham in November. She will be supporting program teams, the State/MPO Working Group, and SGC Key Staff.
- SGC and OPR welcomed our second California Council on Science and Technology (CCST) Fellow, Nicole Hernandez. Dr. Hernandez will support the Climate Change Research Program and OPR Climate Team this year.
- SGC is interviewing candidates for a third position funded by the High-Speed Rail Authority to serve as a planning liaison with station communities in the San Joaquin Valley.
- SGC is interviewing candidates for the Senior Administrator and Staff Counsel positions.
- Sarah Risher, member of the Community Assistance for Climate Equity team, returned to SGC this month after 7 months of serving as a case investigator and contact tracer for LA County.

Program Updates

Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program (AHSC)

Staff: Ryan Silber, Judith Hinh, Shep Wilbur, and Housing and Community Development (HCD) Staff Team

- At the November 2020 SGC meeting, the Council requested that staff further assess geographically targeted awards and seek additional public comment on the guidelines. Staff convened multiple meetings with SGC key staff to revise geographic targets and associated score thresholds and published and updated draft for a seven day public comment period on January 29, 2021.



- Program staff continue to work with technical assistance providers to assist communities in building capacity and creating competitive AHSC applications. TA resources are prioritized for applications from disadvantaged communities, Tribal applicants, and re-applicants to AHSC among other criteria. SGC can support up to 44 projects through direct application technical assistance and is already supporting over 30 projects.
- Following the adoption of the Round 6 Guidelines, staff will release a Notice of Funding Availability for approximately \$410 million and post application materials. Staff will host application workshops and consultations with prospective applicants to inform them of the application process and help attract competitive projects.
- Staff are preparing an interagency agreement to establish a system for collection of data on AHSC project outcomes, including jobs volume and quality and resident transportation preferences. Staff will use this data for mandatory reporting required by the California Air Resources Board and to assess what population groups AHSC projects are serving in a geographic and demographic context.

Transformative Climate Communities Program (TCC)

Staff: Saharnaz Mirzazad, Sophie Young, Alex Gallo, Jerry Rivero, and Department of Conservation (DOC) Staff Team

- TCC program staff have successfully executed two Round 3 implementation grants and work is getting underway:
 - Better Neighborhoods, Same Neighbors: An East Oakland Neighborhood Initiative
 - Stockton Rising
- TCC program staff have executed two Round 3 TCC planning grants:
 - Climate Action Plan for Porterville Schools – Creating Opportunities: Changing Lives
 - Tierra, Cultura y Salud: A Plan to Protect and Preserve Our Barrio Logan (Environmental Health Coalition, San Diego)
- City of Riverside Eastside Climate Collaborative and City of Pomona: "Pomona ACTS (Activated for Community Transformation & Sustainability)" grants are scheduled to be executed in February 2021.
- Multiple projects of Round 1 are in the construction phase. Ontario Housing Project is in final construction phase.
- In response to SB 351 which requires any future TCC investment to be available in Disadvantage Unincorporated Areas, staff have convened a working group and developed a memo that will be presented to the Council in 2021.

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC)

Staff: Emily Tibbott and Department of Conservation (DOC) Staff Team

- SALC program staff at the Department of Conservation are working on draft guidelines for Round 7 of the program, which will come before the Council in April. Staff are analyzing changes that can be made in support of the Governor's 30 x 30 executive order. The staff will also begin conducting early stakeholder outreach for Round 8 to allow enough time to gather input on meaningful racial equity measures.
- SALC has received two requests for additional funding for previously awarded projects. The guidelines stipulate that if a property is appraised at a higher value than estimated in the application, the grantee can request up to 15% more funding. These requests will be presented to the Council members at the February Council meeting.

- Staff are working to execute grant agreements for the 22 projects awarded at the December Council meeting.

Climate Change Research Program (CCR)

Staff: Elizabeth Grassi and Leah Fisher

- The CCR program team is scoping the process to update the Program's Research Investment Plan (RIP). The RIP is the guiding document for the Program and it must be updated every three years. CCR will ground the update with input from stakeholders, including with partners on existing research grants, other community and stakeholder organizations and governments, SGC member agencies' leadership and staff, and academic institutions and researchers. SGC anticipates the process of updating this vision, strategy, and priority document for the CCR Program will be a process that benefits other interagency efforts, including updating the State's Adaptation Strategy and informing a future Fifth Climate Change Assessment. Staff are already coordinating with those efforts. Finally, staff will seek input and strategic direction from the Council, key staff, and the Program's interagency Steering Committee throughout the update process this year.
- Staff have executed the contracts for and held kicked off meetings for all six Round 3 research projects.

Community Assistance for Climate Equity (CACE)

Staff: Kirin Kumar, Ena Lupine, Coral Abbott, and Sarah Risher

- After receiving over 150 applications, CACE staff selected 22 community leaders representing areas throughout the State to participate in the Partners Advancing Climate Equity (PACE) program. The cohort kicked-off its first session on February 19th. The cohort will continue to convene over the next nine months to gain access to skills and resources around climate adaptation and resilience, accessing State funding, and initiating community-led projects.
- Staff developed a Tribal appendix to the Technical Assistance Guidelines for State Agencies that provides specific guidance on developing Tribal serving TA programs.
- Staff launched a Request for Information to California Climate Investments administering agencies to gather an inventory of the technical assistance and capacity building services that are currently available to under-resourced communities, and to gather input on how SGC's CACE team can best support agencies in expanding or creating new technical assistance and capacity building activities.

Tribal Government Challenge

Staff: Elizabeth Grassi, Leah Fisher, Blake Deering, Ena Lupine, Coral Abbott, Sophie Young, Theresa Cesena

- SGC, in partnership with the California Energy Commission (CEC), is administering the Tribal Government Challenge Program. Specifically, this program supports two collaborative efforts (described below) funded with repayments of revolving loans from an earlier CEC program (California Rural Home Mortgage Finance Authority Homebuyers Fund).
- The Tribal Government Challenge Planning Grant Program has awarded grants to ten Tribes who will be conducting climate and energy planning, and projects that advance tribal

priorities for energy independence and energy and climate resilience. The grants have been executed and kick-off meetings with the Tribes are ongoing. The press release can be found [here](#).

- The statewide California Tribal Gap Analysis that launched in late September focuses on gathering Tribal climate and energy-related priorities and needs, and making recommendations to the State around input gathered to inform future programs, funding, and technical assistance offerings. This gap analysis project is led by Prosper Sustainably and a diverse team of consultants. Staff from both CEC and SGC coordinate with the consultant team weekly and are assisting in obtaining feedback from State agencies.
- SGC and CEC continue to coordinate closely across the gap analysis, tribal planning grants, as well as other State - tribal relationships and efforts to ensure we can leverage outreach opportunities and share best practices and knowledge across work streams.

Collaborative Policy Initiative Updates

Health and Equity Program (HEP) & Health in All Policies (HiAP)

HEP Staff: Nanette Star, Bo Chung, Michael Jimenez; California Department of Public Health Staff, and Public Health Institute Staff

HiAP Planning and Projects

- HEP Staff conducted and analyzed data from 25 Key Informant Interviews with state agencies on health and equity priorities to help identify HiAP priority topics for a 2021-2025 inter-agency workplan.
- HEP Staff developed a Healthy Communities Framework (HCF) Survey that is open until February 28th. The link is being shared widely across the state with state departments, members and contacts of HiAP Task Force, and community-based organizations. Survey respondents were prompted to identify which aspects of the HCF they see as key priorities, which HiAP may undertake in a 2021-2025 inter-agency workplan. To ensure anonymity, the development and data management of this survey was coordinated in partnership with the UC Berkeley, Othering and Belonging Institute.
- SGC HEP Staff began developing five cross-agency Operating Guidelines, including an updated Charter for the HiAP Partnership Team (California Department of Public Health, Public Health Institute, and SGC) and the HiAP Task Force that will be used in future meetings, guidelines, and membership recruitment. All documents are in-progress.

HEP Projects

- HEP Staff began partnering with Youth-Plan Learn Act Now (YPLAN) partnership to provide health and equity insights, share experiences, and provide a learning opportunity for youth to learn about engaging state departments in the policy process. HEP's role in this partnership includes: 1) reviewing a draft Racial Equity Experience report and providing direct feedback to students; 2) attending student presentations at a Roundtable Summit on planning and environmental justice topics; and 3) connecting youth with planner subject matter experts and providing detailed feedback to students on their recommendations for planners to advance racial equity across California.
- HEP Staff provided a virtual presentation to the UC Davis Health Equity Program, titled "Communicating data to improve health and equity in strategic planning and consensus

building." A total of 16 students and numerous UC Davis Alumni attended remotely on February 9th.

SGC Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP) Activities:

- Presented SGC implementation updates on January 14, 2021 to the CCORE cohort.
- Created an online Racial Equity Forum for staff to share about racial equity topics and engage each other on racial equity issues.
- Collaborated with other SGC staff to develop a rigorous set of metrics of racial equity success for the 2021 calendar year, **in alignment with SGC's REAP**.
- Received the Racial Equity Workforce Survey provided by Race Forward and are planning distribution to OPR, SGC, and CV Leadership.

Capitol Collaborative on Race and Equity (CCORE)

The SGC partners with the Public Health Institute to host the Capitol Collaborative on Race & Equity (CCORE) – a racial equity capacity-building program for California State government institutions and employees. Highlights from this period include:

Racial Equity Capacity Building

- CCORE Advanced Implementation partners (12 state entities that participated in the cohort in 2018 & 2019) convened on December 16th 2020 to share progress updates and map out priorities across sectors for 2021. Departments are in varying stages of implementation, and all have racial equity leadership structures in place.
- The CCORE Learning Cohort (consisting of 15 teams with representatives from 23 state entities) convened on January 14th 2021 for an interactive training on development of Racial Equity Action Plans. Advanced Implementation partners from the Strategic Growth Council, Coastal Commission, Department of Public Health, and Caltrans joined as presenters, to share challenges, successes, and lessons learned from developing and implementing their plans over the last 3 years.
- CCORE Learning Cohort team coordinators convened on January 19th 2021 to apply lessons from the January 14th cohort-wide training and strategize about Racial Equity Action Plan development in their organizations.

CCORE Executive Engagement

- CCORE held an Executive Briefing on December 10, 2020, bringing together executive sponsors of the Learning Cohort to hear about the state's racial equity vision and commitments, as well as departmental racial equity team learnings. State Government Executives voiced commitments to racial equity, including remarks from Strategic Growth Council Director, Louise Bedsworth, and Government Operations Agency Secretary, Yolanda Richardson, as well as a panel on Envisioning a Racially Just California Together, which included remarks from Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary Karen Ross, Transportation Agency Secretary David Kim, and Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Undersecretary Melinda Grant.
- SGC convened its cross-agency Racial Equity Working Group, in support of its 2020 Racial Equity Resolution.

New Racial Equity Actions and Commitments

- On January 27, 2021, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) unanimously approved a Racial Equity Statement including 6 specific commitments to center racial equity in the organization.

Planning and Economic Development

Staff: Emily Tibbott, Egon Terplan, and William Walker

Partnership with High-Speed Rail:

- SGC HSR staff are working on several initiatives to support HSR project delivery and station area development. SGC HSR staff are participating with HSRA staff to review site and station area planning activities in the Merced to Bakersfield area.
- Staff met with incoming HSRA Director of Environmental Services, Serge Stanich, to help him understand the nature and history of the SGC-HSRA relationship, and to discuss partnership opportunities going forward.

Regional Planning:

- SGC and CalCOG reconvened the State-MPO Workgroup late in 2020, bringing together MPO Planning Directors from all MPOs and representatives from SGC, OPR, CARB, CalSTA, Caltrans, CTC, and HCD. The group has held three meetings and has begun to identify several areas for collaborative work around data and SCS consistency. The group has also had discussions around CARB's mobile source strategy and plans to discuss the EO N-19-19 implementation in February. The group plans to meet monthly throughout 2021.
- Staff continue to work with partners at UC Berkeley and a group of graduate students to develop a process map of the various levers state agencies have in shaping the outcomes of the regional planning process. This effort builds on the interviews the team conducted with 17 of the 18 MPOs across California that were organized into a white paper on perspectives from the MPOs.
- Staff continue to engage with the future of the freight and logistics sector. The focus is increasingly on the future of warehouses and the opportunity for coordination around inland ports in the Central Valley and other areas where mode shift from truck to rail is possible.
- Staff have been engaged on an interagency process to determine a more consistent set of regional definitions across state agencies. This effort has included discussions with EDD's LMID (labor market analysis) on producing data that tracks the performance of regional economies through identifying regional planning units that align with labor sheds more so than existing workforce development board boundaries. A related effort is the creation of a new online tool in partnership with the CA Research Library to identify and compare the various definitions of regions across California. The goal of this effort is a proposal for a more consistent set of regions across California that can be used for planning and data purposes.

Transportation Planning:

- SGC is moving forward on the work of implementing AB 285, which requires SGC to produce a report evaluating the CA Transportation Plan, regional Sustainable Communities Strategies, how these strategies together lead to an integrated intermodal statewide transportation system, as well as to identify ways for better coordination across state funding programs to achieve state climate goals. There is a Transportation Planner in this position to support the effort (William Walker). The team is identifying potential consulting teams through an Interagency Agreement with a UC or CSU researcher. The team has begun to do briefings and interviews with key staff across related agencies that touch on transportation and climate.

- Staff is supporting the EO N-19-19 action plan stakeholder outreach process and development of an action plan. This includes meeting with key leaders in transportation and planning across California.

Land Conservation Initiatives:

- Since the passage of EO N-82-20, staff has supported stakeholder outreach regarding the specific elements of the Executive Order and their timing. In coordination with the Department of Conservation and OPR, staff is playing an active role in the drafting of the Climate Smart Lands Strategy, which includes the immediate actions regarding Land Conservation that staff compiled and drafted last fall.
- Staff is managing efforts of a UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs graduate student engaged in researching and writing a report on financial incentives for land conservation, to be finalized this spring. Interviews both with government and private sector experts have been completed, as well as a literature review and outline for the report. A briefing was held in January with leadership from CNRA, DOC, CDFA, CARB, OPR, SGC, American Farmland Trust and The Nature Conservancy to present progress on the report, as well as gain input on organization of financial incentives.
- Staff is involved in inter-agency leadership efforts regarding the implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, including how to minimize local economic impacts, and how to support regional land use planning. In addition, staff is exploring how to incorporate SGMA needs in the SALC Program.