



CALIFORNIA STRATEGIC GROWTH COUNCIL

To: California Strategic Growth Council Members
From: Louise Bedsworth
Re: Executive Director Report to the Council – April 29, 2021

Organizational Updates

- SGC Leadership and Program Staff have continued our introductory briefings with new members of the legislature. We have also conducted legislative outreach to share highlights and accomplishments from our most recent Annual Report with staff to the Latino Caucus, members and staff of the Black Caucus, and held a few direct meetings with individual members.
- Key Staff and CARB staff are meeting to chart strategy for Rounds 7 and 8 AHSC Guidelines updates to continue to advance work on geographic distribution of awards and other program topics.
- Kirin Kumar (CACE) and Jerry Rivero (TCC) are serving as reviewers for the Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grants.

Staffing Updates

- SGC Executive Director Louise Bedsworth will be leaving SGC to pursue an opportunity at UC Berkeley. Her last day at SGC will be April 30, 2021.
- SGC Chief Deputy Director Jessica (Jessie) Buendia will serve as acting Executive Director starting in May until the Governor's Office selects a new Executive Director.
- Saharnaz Mirzazad has been promoted to Deputy Director of Community Investment and Planning and will oversee the AHSC and TCC programs.
- Sophie Young has been promoted to TCC Program Manager starting in May.
- Ryan Silber, AHSC Program Manager, will be departing from SGC. AHSC Program Analyst, Judith Hinh, departed SGC in April. SGC will be hiring for both positions.
- Bo Chung, formerly the Health and Equity Program Analyst and Racial Equity lead, was hired as the Senior Projects Analyst for High-Speed Rail. SGC will be re-hiring a Health and Equity Program Analyst.
- Elizabeth Hessom, a member of the TCC team at the Department of Conservation, has departed DOC for a job with the Healthy Soils Program at CDFA.

Program Updates

Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program (AHSC)

Staff: Ryan Silber, Shep Wilbun, and Housing and Community Development (HCD) Staff Team

- Following the Council's approval of the AHSC Round 6 Guidelines at the February meeting, staff issued the Round 6 Notice of Funding Availability for approximately \$405 million. Applications are due June 8 at 5:00 p.m. Staff at the California Air Resources Board (CARB) issued the AHSC Quantification Methodology and Benefits Calculator Tool following guidelines adoption.
- On March 11 and 16, AHSC Program staff from SGC, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), and CARB hosted application webinars, covering the program's background, eligibility requirements, scoring criteria, key topics, use of the benefits calculator tool, the application itself, and resources to help potential applicants. Over 230 individuals attended the two webinars and a recording is available on The Strategic Growth Council YouTube page.

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- In late March, staff hosted 17 consultations with prospective applicants to answer project-specific questions.
- All but four projects awarded in rounds one, two, and three of AHSC are under contract or have completed construction, including all projects from the first funding round.

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 all Round 3 implementation grants (East Oakland, South Stockton, Eastside Riverside), and started Implementation Technical Assistance grant work:
 - Stockton Rising will use TA funds to develop and implement a Displacement Avoidance Plan.
 - Oakland will use TA funds to hire a FUSE corps fellow to support community engagement.
 - Riverside will use a portion of their TCC award to fund TA for project management.
- All Round 3 TCC planning grants have been executed.
- Multiple projects of Round 1 and 2 are in the construction phase. Transform Fresno Annual Summit 2021 was held on March 25th highlighting accomplishments of the TCC project with Mayor Jerry Dyer and Louise Bedsworth providing opening remarks.
- Staff have convened a working group to support implementation of SB 351 (Chap. 368, Hurtado, Statutes of 2019) that requires SGC consider applications for projects undertaken in unincorporated areas. The working group will develop a memo for the Council later in 2021. SGC also pursued a grant application with Leadership Council for Justice and Accountability to work on research gaps identified by the working group.
- TCC's Round 3 Grantee the City of Oakland was recently awarded a \$17 million Active Transportation Grant to repave and create a system of greenways with traffic signals to help cyclists cross major thoroughfares. The street improvements are within the TCC "Better Neighborhoods, Same Neighbors" Project Area, and will enhance the TCC-funded Higher Ground x Scrapper Bike Team Bike Share and Youth Development project. The active transportation grant will also expand connectivity in the TCC Project Area. SGC is working with the City of Oakland to highlight the grant award in an upcoming SGC Newsletter.

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC)

Staff: Virginia Jameson (DOC) and her Staff Team

- SALC program staff will present Round 7 Guidelines to the Council for approval on April 29. Changes include more emphasis on projects that contribute to infill development and racial equity as well as addressing the 30x30 Executive order.

Climate Change Research Program (CCR)

Staff: Elizabeth Grassi, Leah Fisher, and Nicole Hernandez

- The CCR Program's Research Investment Plan (RIP) guides the development and implementation of the program and provides a foundation for all the Council's research investments. AB 109, the Budget Act that established the Climate Change Research program in 2017, directs SGC to develop the RIP and the current RIP states that it will be revised every three years (2021).

- CCR staff, the program steering committee, and SGC leadership will update the RIP to serve as a Research Strategy and Framework, updated in coordination and collaboration with the update to the *State's Adaptation Strategy*. SGC will continue working closely with OPR, CNRA, and other member agencies to ensure research and knowledge gaps are captured in the updated CCR Research Strategy and Framework. The partnership allows for leveraging and coordination on stakeholder engagement to support multiple State policy efforts. Staff will seek input and strategic direction from the Council, key staff, and the Program's Steering Committee throughout the year.

Community Assistance for Climate Equity (CACE)

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

- The Partners Advancing Climate Equity (PACE) 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 have met with a number of State agencies to discuss how to include their programs, policies, and tools into the PACE curriculum, including the California Climate Investments, the Department of Public Health, and the State Water Boards, to name a few. Staff have also met with external stakeholders interested in learning about the PACE model in order to inform similar programs they are developing.
- Staff developed a Tribal appendix to the Technical Assistance Guidelines for State Agencies that provides specific guidance on developing Tribal serving TA programs. Staff is working with the Governor's Office to coordinate their review of the document and ensure consistency in language around supporting Tribes.
- 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. Staff is currently following up with State Agencies that filled out the RFI to discuss potential opportunities to partner and support their TA efforts.
- SGC released a Request for Proposal for the Capacity Building For Local Governments project. This project builds upon the success of the BOOST pilot program in partnership with the Institute for Local Government. The Project will provide hands-on capacity building technical assistance to 5-7 small/medium sized jurisdictions on topics related to climate and equity. An informational webinar is being held on 4/5 and the application window closes in early May.
- Staff continue to manage and support a variety of technical assistance contracts and activities including assistance for applicants to AHSC, SALC, CARB's Sustainable Transportation Equity Project (STEP), and CDFA's Climate Smart Agriculture Programs, in addition to the ongoing implementation of the California Climate Investments Technical Assistance Program Evaluation.

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

Staff: Nanette Star, Michael Jimenez, in partnership with California Department of Public Health and Public Health Institute Staff

HiAP Planning and Projects

- HEP Staff, in collaboration with the HiAP Partnership and UC Berkeley Othering and Belonging Institute (OBI), developed the CA Health in All Policies 5-Year Priorities Survey that was open from January 14 to March 4, 2021. A total of 128 respondents completed the survey representing state, local, and community-based organizations. The survey was administered and analyzed by OBI as an external partner. OBI provided summary data to HEP Staff for further report writing and presenting.
- HEP Staff drafted a 5-Year HIAP Task Force workplan as a tracking, decision-making, and implementation tool around high-priority health and equity topics. HiAP partners are currently reviewing the workplan.
- HEP Staff coordinated and hosted a special meeting with CA HiAP Partners on roles and future participation leading the HiAP Task Force on March 30, 2021. The outcomes of this meeting will guide the future work of HiAP Task Force workplan.
- HEP Staff developed and finalized two cross-agency Operating Guidelines, including an updated Charter and Meeting Guidelines 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, and membership recruitment.
- SGC HEP Staff coordinated a Communications Audit meeting with the Public Health Institute on March 23rd to discuss future HiAP outreach, exchange of roles and responsibilities, and strategized outreach for future HiAP Members.
- SGC Staff attended a collaborative meeting with the Southern Australia - Centre for HiAP Research Translation and shared best practices and activities.

Health and Equity Program Activities

- SGC launched the [Health and Equity Program website](#).
- HEP Manager presented to the Cal Trans Grant Managers Information Exchange on April 14, 2021 with over 80 participants. Presentation included health and equity work of HEP and resources for California HiAP membership and connections.
- HEP Staff conducted an information session and health and equity focused conversation with Riverside University Health Systems on April 16, 2021 to assist with alignment and future community outreach opportunities.
- HEP Manager attended the Sustainable Agriculture and Lands Conservation (SALC) listening sessions on April 20 and 28 to assist SALC and provide input on health and equity applicability.

SGC Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP) Activities:

- HEP staff developed draft Racial Equity onboarding materials for new staff.
- HEP Analyst and Associate began process for drafting racial equity competencies and learning curriculum in collaboration with California Volunteers.
- HEP staff started developing a process of creating racial equity tools for reports in collaboration with OPR, which will be incorporated in future reports as an equity impact assessment if needed.

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:

Sessions/Learning Year Updates

- CCORE Learning Cohort participants convened on March 10, 2021 for two training sessions. The morning session included training on community engagement that furthers racial equity and in addition to the Public Health institute trainers, included co-trainers from the California Department of Public Health, Bay Area Air Quality Management District, and SGC. The afternoon training focused on strategies for increasing workforce and contracting equity within the Proposition 209 context and featured Stephen Menendian, Assistant Director and Director of Research at the Othering & Belonging Institute. CCORE Learning Cohort team coordinators convened on March 16 for additional training on land acknowledgements and to deepen their understanding of public health frameworks around racial equity.
- The CCORE Learning cohort convened April 13, 21, and 28 to expand their communication tools centered around racial equity and for an introduction to the Racial Equity Tool. Public Health Institute and Race Forward served as co-trainers for these sessions.

Land Use Planning and Economic Development

Staff: Emily Tibbott, Egon Terplan, and Bo Chung

Partnership with High-Speed Rail Authority:

- SGC staff are partnering with HSR staff to support project delivery, specifically reviewing site and station community planning activities in the Central Valley.
- Staff is coordinating with HSRA on exploring immediate projects to work with Fresno partners on station area site beautification, site activation, and community engagement.
- Staff is exploring the potential to work with a more rural station community – possibly Hanford – regarding agricultural lands protection scenarios.

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. As part of an inter-agency policy team, staff is playing an active role in the drafting of the CNRA-led Climate Smart Lands Strategy, which will be released for public comment this summer.
- 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 in May. Staff have received comments on the draft report from leadership at CNRA, DOC, CDFA, CARB, OPR, SGC, American Farmland Trust and The Nature Conservancy. Staff anticipate a report briefing in May or early June, in advance of its formal release.
- 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.