

Date: August 31, 2022

Subject: Sustainable Communities Panel
Reporting Period: June 2022 – August 2022
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Summary

The objective of the Sustainable Communities Panel is to highlight opportunities and challenges of building sustainable communities at a local, regional, and state level. The Panelists will discuss how to plan and build sustainable communities while balancing multiple priorities such as environmental justice, public health, and agricultural land conservation.

Background

The California Strategic Growth Council's vision is to create healthy, thriving, and resilient communities for all through sustainability, equity, and economic prosperity. SGC realizes this through various programs that prioritize the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in place-based strategies that revitalize communities. Similar goals exist across the State, such as SB 375 (Chapter 728, Stats. 2008) which established the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act to incentivize regional and local planning and building that brings people and destinations closer together, with low-carbon, alternative, and convenient methods of transit.

Despite the numerous State and regional goals, California and its regions are not on track to meet their climate targets. Additionally, historically disadvantaged communities, including low-income communities and communities of color, face significant health, economic, housing, and additional equity burdens.

Most recently, SGC was directed by the Legislature to assess transportation planning and funding in California pursuant to AB 285 (Friedman, Chapter 605, Statutes of 2019). SGC presented the report's stakeholder engagement summary during the June 2022 Council Meeting, and highlighted gaps between the State and regional commitments and the funding and plans in motion. This led Council Member Frank Cardenas to recommend a discussion on sustainable communities.

The Sustainable Communities Panel is composed of housing and transit planning practitioners at the State and regional level. They will discuss holistic approaches to sustainable community development, such as the importance of agricultural land conservation to high infill communities and how to prioritize environmental justice and community health in the implementation of sustainable communities' strategies. The objective of the discussion is to highlight opportunities and challenges of building sustainable communities at a local, regional, and state level.



Panelists

Moderator: Shereen D’Souza, Deputy Secretary for Climate Policy & Intergovernmental Relations, California Environmental Protection Agency

- Margaret Cederoth, Director of Planning & Sustainability, California High Speed Rail Authority
- Stephanie Dietz, City Manager, City of Merced
- Kacey Lizon, Deputy Executive Director of Planning & Programs, Sacramento Area County of Governments
- Preston Prince, Executive Director, Santa Clara County Housing Authority

