

August 30, 2023

Subject: Strategic Growth Council June 29, 2023 Meeting Minutes
Reporting Period: June – August 2023
Staff Lead: Sauntharya Manikandan, Executive Fellow, SGC

Recommended Action

Approval of the June 29, 2023 Strategic Growth Council Meeting Minutes.

Strategic Growth Council June 29, 2023 - Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item #1: Call to Order

Chair Sam Assefa called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM.

Agenda Item #2: Roll Call

Council Members and Representatives Present:

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

Frank Cardenas, Public Member

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

Lourdes Castro Ramirez, Secretary, California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency

Toks Omishakin, Secretary, California State Transportation Agency

Nicole Capretz, Public Member

Karen Ross, Secretary, California Department of Food and Agriculture

Noaki Schwartz (Designee), Deputy Secretary for Equity & Environmental Justice, California Natural Resources Agency, on behalf of Secretary Wade Crowfoot

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

Luanna Putney (Designee), on behalf of Public Member Juan Sanchez Munoz

Council Comment:

Assefa: Start with acknowledging the passing of the State budget.

Agenda Item #3: ACTION: Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Ramirez and seconded by Cardenas to approve the April 26, 2023 meeting minutes.

Motion passes (10-0-0*). *Marks abstention or absence from vote

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Agenda Item #4: Executive Director's Report

Lynn von Koch-Liebert, Executive Director, SGC

CalEPA Secretary Garcia replaced Designee Moy Moreno-Rivera at 1:13

Council Comment:

Ramirez: Kudos on the progress. Excited to see the report from UCLA Luskin on the projects funded in Watts, Fresno, and Ontario and interested as a follow-up to learn more on lessons learned from these three communities that we should be thinking about in new funding opportunities. Regarding the housing piece, understanding the number of units that are being created and the importance of put some context on what the number represents. Does the Luskin report explain the benefit of affordable housing unit and the long-lasting impact in terms of footprint these projects are focused on?

Von-Koch Liebert: This report explains the impact affordable housing has on the individual, family, and community. Especially since TCC dollars are tied to investment within the 5-mile radius.

Cardenas: The UCLA Luskin report has done particularly informative research on TCC and provides insight for programs to develop through this equity lens. Encourage everybody to look at this.

Assefa: I am really excited about grant management system, so it's easier for external applicants to apply to grants. As well as the number interns we are receiving and the ability to receive pay – this was an initiative on behalf of interns. These interns will be our future employees.

Omashakin: I wanted to echo Chair Assefa's comments on the grant management system. In government we talk about ways for government to be more efficient. This is definitely going to be way; especially given the number of grants you have. This will not only help communities but also helps with efficiencies on the state agency end. Many state agencies have tried and it hasn't been always successful.

Secretary Ross: I would like to hear about your first round of applicants with the management system. Our agency is constantly looking for easier ways to have applicants access our grants.

Capretz: I am also very excited to read the UCLA Luskin report and Council Member Cardena's blog. Also want to echo the idea of lesson learned from TCC, because I have heard from folks applying in San Diego that it was an overwhelming experience, so they had to find another managing stakeholder. They shared that this required them to raise hundreds and thousands of dollars to build internal capacity to manage this even if they weren't the main stakeholder. Echo this idea of learn and refining their best practices.

Public Comment:

No public comment

DesGINEE Darwin Moosavi replaces Omishakin at 1:33.

Agenda Item #5: ACTION: Regional Climate Collaboratives Round 2 Guidelines

Approve the Regional Climate Collaboratives Round 2 Guidelines

Lynn von Koch-Liebert, Executive Director, SGC

Kirin Kumar, Deputy Director of Government Transformation, SGC

Sarah Risher, Community Assistance for Climate Equity Program Analyst, SGC

Council Comment:

Cardenas: Thank you for the presentation on the development of this program. This shows how special SGC can be if we empower staff to center their lived experiences of a community. From reconfiguration of guidelines so that tribal communities can qualify to the vision of not type-casting communities is beautiful. There can be beauty government.

Garcia: Also commend the team for pulling this together and appreciate attention to feedback from last round. We see this is a key entry point for groups as they help improve climate outcomes. I am a sucker for cool maps and really appreciate that interface. One piece I want to know more about is what the vision is on putting mapping tools up on our consolidated database so communities can understand what they are eligible for.

Kumar: In short, yes – absolutely. The tool we had created was to provide a generalized approach to helping folks define their regional boundaries of focus – but can imagine this being a replicable approach for other programs as they introduce more flexibility into their programs. We are coordinating with State Library so we can make sure it's in the State Grants Portal as well.

Ramirez: I agree that there is beauty in government – that's what we strive for in the work that we do. The importance of listening to folks in community, providing flexibility and that size matters – especially for these smaller communities, and understanding that size matters with communities, and the activity waivers. Would be helpful at the end of the pre-proposal phase, a reporting back from staff on what types of waivers are being requested – especially to see if there is one activity that seems to be more of a barrier than others.

Assefa: I will add to the kudos, especially given the importance of technical assistance (TA) given the time we are in today. We are in a time of opportunity given the significant investment in infrastructure coming from state and federal government over the next several years. One of the groups that are left behind are the ones who need investment infrastructure. This action around getting them ready is critical, given that we don't have that much time.

Radhakrishna: On behalf of the Health and Human Services agency we want to commend SGC and RCC program staff for the innovation and continual improvement around procedural and distributional equity and to make all these improvements in Round 2 is tremendous. I agree with Council Member Capretz's call for lessons learned and making sure we have this interim

check points like Secretary Ramirez recommended. I want to commend staff in their continued prioritization and consideration of tribes. You are really removing barriers for communities to access state resources and funding.

Garcia: In the last round, you had 45 applicants and awarded 6. It's clear there is still a need for these communities. We have grants through our EJ grant programs to help supplement and meet the needs - opportunities to supplement some of the grants and advertise opportunities.

Kumar: Thank you for that comment. We took that to heart, especially after what was an exciting but tough awards Council Meeting. We are anticipating again a high interest in Round 2. We developed profiles of folks we couldn't fund in round 1 to share the opportunity with other programs and philanthropy as well as made to commitment to provide connections to other grants available like the environmental justice grants in the funding space.

Public Comment:

Peter Bratt

Laura O'Connor

Motion passes (10-0-0)

Motion was made by Garcia and seconded by Putney

Agenda Item #6: Action: SGC Fiscal Years 2024 – 2027 Strategic Plan

Approve SGC's Fiscal Years 2024 – 2027 Strategic Plan

Lynn von Koch-Liebert, Executive Director, SGC

Amar Cid, Deputy Director of Community Investment & Planning, SGC

Kirin Kumar, Deputy Director of Equity & Government Transformation, SGC

Council Discussion

Assefa: So exciting to have this completed! Thank Council Members and Administrative Committee for their input on the content for the strategic plan as well as SGC staff. I am extremely appreciative of how simple and clear the strategic plan is and how it clearly captures current activities and initiatives but also lays out future opportunities for equity and access to opportunity. In responding to the questions – the actions that made it into plan are incredibly important. My personal recommendation is prioritizing which actions that prepare communities to have access to resources – so they can access these resources sooner and fill in gaps that exist. Few to highlight – Goal 1 “develop more holistic reporting to expand definition of success in priority communities”, Goal 2 “to maximize funding within all SGC grants to increase to improve TA and support provide to priority communities”, Goal 3 “coordinate with state agency and partners for landscape analysis of readiness gaps”, Goal 4 “identify support to remove barriers to accessing state resources.” These goals stand to meet as immediate ways to prepare communities to be ready and competitive for upcoming funding opportunities.

Regarding the second and third questions – since SGC and other complementary programs are housed at OPR – thinking about how we can leverage and cross coordinate to support implementation of SGC’s actions. For example, at OPR the Integrated Climate Resiliency Program and Community Economic Resiliency Fund can partner with SGC to ensure we are using the same approach to address the inter-related needs. The newer office at OPR, Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications (OCPSC) have an incredible network of trusted messengers that can help all communities. Further, I would like to focus on the most important priorities of this administration which is equity on all fronts. We are excited to be establishing the racial equity commission and youth empowerment commission to address long-standing inequities as per Goal 5 in the plan.

Ramirez: Thank Chairman on your leadership on this council and driving the committee to support the staff. Congrats SGC on putting together a comprehensive strategic plan that includes work of the committees. Very much appreciate the way you started the presentation that the strategic plan centers equity in everything we are doing, this administration has made it clear that all our work is critically important to ensuring communities that have been adversely affected by inequities can have stability and reach for opportunity and have dignity.

Our agency (BCSH) just completed our strategic planning process, so it was important to make sure we have a clear vision of how everything is connected – so staff can move in a unified manner which I see in your plan. Very much appreciate the focus on annual performance metrics to understand the effect of strategies we have established. Especially in striving for place-based strategies and working with communities on the ground.

I think it’s important to focus on Goal 1 and Goal 5. Goal 1 is a space of infrastructure, housing, and catalytic place-based efforts – we are all working this space. Goal 5 to double down on equity to achieve healthy, thriving, and resilient communities. Goals 2,3,4 will follow because that’s part of the process. The last point I would say, is the call out on increasing the production of housing. We have a housing crisis not only in state but across the country – this is a situation affecting not only disadvantaged communities but also people at the other end like college student. We need to increase production of housing that is affordable and is in the right spaces.

Cardenas: Thank you Secretary Ramirez on your vision for housing policy. I echo your comments that this strategic plan is clear and integrated. It was just a year ago that the director announced the Catalyst Conference and Strategic plan, and here we are 12 months later. I mention all of this – I see in this strategic plan everything I have seen and heard. This is an integrated document with principles and the law that will guide this organization.

What I think is particularly important is Goal 4 and specifically objective 4.3, to coordinate across sectors to accelerate strategic growth. That to me underscores Council Priority 3. Everything now is aligned and integrated with this strategic plan. Having said this, proof is in the pudding. The measurable objectives which all already within the document.

Ross: I want to contribute from an agricultural and rural community perspective because I appreciate your comment Secretary Ramirez your comment on not just building housing but building housing in the right places! My passion for the nutritious food we grow in the State and

the importance that every Californian has access to that food. If you prioritize goal 1 and 5, everything else will support this. We are doing TA and capacity building long after these one-time funding opportunities go away – we will build the human infrastructure that carries on this work. Citing fairground example for CDFA with Antelope County vision for 20-million-dollar investment.

Anything we can do to contain urban sprawl and make sure housing isn't creating more problems is easier said than done – but showing examples of success is important. What an inspiring and pragmatic document.

Omashakin: I also want to echo the comments made by my colleagues about the actionable nature of this plan and that it has come at such an historic time. Where we finally have all the policy and funding we have been asking for years and now we have a plan to guide us through. Recognize my staff at CALSTA – Jayden and Darwin that I know have supported your work to get this plan done. I am going to dig into three specific strategy areas to touch on your questions.

- 1) Strategy 3.14: We should convene and maintain cross sector agency workgroups to elevate best practices. We have such a group already, the Housing and Transportation Work Group. Given how divergent our housing and transportation decisions are sometimes and we don't have a lot of control in how that happens. Local governments face pressures of land use and zoning. We need to continue to foster that group to combat this pressure.
- 2) Strategy 12.3: Pilot strategy to expand project eligibility. There is a lot in that. We just went through an extensive budget cycle, and a big part of the debate and discussion and this year was the transit fiscal and the fact that transit agencies across the state are facing fiscal condition that would put them in dire straits in the coming years. Post-COVID, lots of agencies don't have operational capacity. Glad this is a strategy you have added so transit agencies can access these funds. The Governor and state legislature were successful in getting a better budget for transit, but this also makes a difference.
- 3) Strategy 13.1: Emphasizes collaboration with communities to have an intersectional and transformative impact. In particular, transit-oriented development and the opportunity to TOD. On a trip to Europe seeing TOD at hand and we have long way to go. Transit stations are not just to on board and off board but are destinations! I look forward to championing this work.

Capretz: I will be tracking your comments Chair Assefa about Goal 2 because I believe it is critical, we take advantage of this historical moment in time. My organization has a grant right now with Civic Well to help some of the small cities take advantage and provide TA so they can apply to state and federal fundings, through this experience, the capacity needs are massive, and they would not be applying if we were not writing the grants for them. It is reflective of State to support these smaller communities – and SGC is top tier experience.

My final comment is on urban sprawl. In San Diego we have a special election, and the building industry association is attempting to change our county of supervisors so that we do build sprawl. It is a very depressing, dark time and those of us who are trying to build TOD and affordable housing are very concerned about the outcome. The sprawl developers are not



backing down similar to fossil fuel industry. I don't know what the State can do, but it's important the State knows what's going on.

Putney: This plan was really great, comprehensive, and readable which will increase access. On the goal emphasis question, also agree that Goal 1 extremely important. Other comment is on Goal 3 and the research to policy pipeline – especially in connecting researchers and community. On goal 5 on the racial equity action plan, I see that as something that should touch all of them.

Garcia: Echoing all comments and especially the comments of Secretary Ramirez which covered a lot. Goals 1 and 5 being the key priority and particularly Goal – given the place we are in with funding coming down the line and need to make a difference with investment dollars with sustainable strategies. Given CARB's ownership of several strategies, bring forth new development with water conservation work that the board will be taking on a conservation as a way of life strategy. We may have some data that might be helpful for you all with the partnership moving forward.

Echo kudos on accessibility of this document, and we are in excellent place with aligning our plan with respective council agencies.

Radhakrishnan: Thank you to all that have worked on this and congrats to our key staff. Share our agencies appreciation that healthy is at the start, which really gets to the human centered nature of this. I wanted to share what Lynn prefaced that the strategies that aim to address disparities caused by climate change at the human level – it really elevates the spirit of the Council.

Build off consensus of Goal 1 and 5 and to thread across racial equity, technical assistance, and equity for resource allocation – those are areas we are excited to be prioritizing. In overlaps between HHS and SGC just wanted to mention a few: refining standards and collection of data, supporting multi-benefit taskforces like Hi-AP task force. Secretary Ghaly has a specific focus on how income inequality places a large role – so we see that reflected in that plan. Our agency is finalizing a contract on a health equity plan, so definitely will look to you agency's plan as we develop ours.

Specifically highlight alignment with Goal 2.3, 2.4 , 4.2, 5.1 , 5.2, and 5,3 to show how and can government can do its work. The CBO's we have engaged with have asked for more assistance with help to continue their work. Another lesson is working with OES to create a priority populations taskforce to support disaster relief.

Schwartz: I do want to align with prioritizing Goal 1 and 5. Also want to say how much I appreciate staff prioritize equity and accessibility in contents and readability so that we can communicate to the public.

Public Comment:

Julia Caplan

Motion passes (10-0-0)

Motion was made by Cardenas and seconded by Secretary Ramirez

Moosavi leaves 2:02 PM

Omishakin replaces Moosavi at 2:03 PM

Agenda Item #7: Public Comment

Peter Bratt

Lauren O'Connor

Agenda Item #8: Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 2:30 PM