

June 26, 2024

**Subject:** Council Priority 3 on Housing, Climate, and Equity: 2024 Progress Report

**Reporting Period:** April 2023 - June 2024

**Staff Leads:** Sean Kennedy, Deputy Director of Energy Investments, SGC  
Alex C. Walker, Executive Fellow, SGC

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## Summary

In December 2022, the Strategic Growth Council passed a [resolution](#) calling for a coordinated approach to housing, climate, and equity efforts that support strategic and inclusive growth across California (“Council Priority 3” or “Priority 3”). Council Priority 3 aims to improve access to affordable housing in healthy and amenity-rich communities, provide a variety of mobility options that reduce the need to drive, and preserve and ensure access to natural and working lands. The 2024 Priority 3 Progress Report summarizes key achievements, milestones covered, and challenges encountered in implementing the [Priority 3 Work Plan](#) submitted to the Council in April 2023. This report also provides recommendations for new or revised actions that should be undertaken as necessary in response to the state's changing conditions and evolving needs.

## Background

### Council Priority 3: Housing, Climate, And Equity

California is experiencing acute and entwined housing and climate crises, the impacts of which are driving and amplifying widening racial and economic equity gaps across the state. Addressing these challenges requires changing how California builds and connects communities through strategic growth: an inclusive, coordinated, interagency approach to development and conservation that helps protect our health and natural environment and make our communities more resilient, vibrant, and socially diverse. To support Council Priority 3 implementation, SGC Staff developed a two-year work plan designed to operationalize the goals of Priority 3. The work plan draws on a review of existing recommendations and input gathered through a Request for Information released in March 2023. The work plan is comprised of short and medium-term actions and objectives and is organized by three goals:

1. Ensure existing opportunities to simultaneously advance the State's housing, climate, and equity objectives are utilized to their full potential.
2. Identify additional tools and strategies to meet the State's housing, climate, and equity goals in a coordinated way and at the scale and pace necessary to close existing gaps and meet the urgency of current and projected needs.
3. Improve coordination and information sharing between State, local, federal, and Tribal partners at the nexus of housing, climate, and equity.

Progress on Work Plan implementation is monitored by the Housing, Transportation, Climate, and Conservation (HTC+C) sub-committee of the interagency Housing and Transportation Work



Group. HTC+C has produced a progress report documenting key accomplishments made to implement the actions listed in the plan. This progress report also provides recommendations for new or revised actions that should be undertaken as necessary in response to the state's changing conditions and evolving needs.

### **Council Priority 3: Implementation Action Status**

One year into Council Priority 3 implementation, lead and partner agencies have made significant progress toward with Council Priority 3 goals. The Work Plan includes twenty (27) actions. Actions have been classified as:

- Complete — the action has been fulfilled as written;
- In progress —the action has made significant progress toward completion or is an ongoing activity; and
- Not started — discussions regarding how to initiate or implement the action are yet to begin.

Of the twenty-seven (27) Priority 3 actions, four (4) were reported as complete as of May 2024, seventeen (17) are reported as in progress, and six (6) have not yet started. Actions that are either complete or in-progress include:

- A1: Inventory of State policies, programs, and funding opportunities at the nexus of housing, climate, and equity.
- A7: Implementation workshops with local and regional planners focused on barriers and opportunities to leverage existing policies and practices
- A 9: Identify opportunities to decrease burdens on individuals and organizations applying for State funds related to housing, climate, and equity.
- A14: Housing, Climate, and Equity education series for State government.
- A23: Technical assistance resources catered to the specific needs of California Native American Tribes.
- A26: Evaluate the overlap of health, housing, and climate change, and explore options to leverage Medi-Cal funding/services/providers to address needs of homeless, transitional housing, and those with needs for housing with supportive services.

The implementation progress and status of all actions are included in Appendix A of the 2024 Priority 3 Progress Report.

### **Council Priority 3: Next Steps**

The 2024 Priority 3 Progress Report demonstrates encouraging trends toward a coordinated approach to housing, climate, and equity efforts that support strategic and inclusive growth across California. Throughout 2024-25, HTC+C will continue to monitor those actions that are in progress or have not yet started and provide guidance and support to the lead agencies to accomplish them within this timeframe. Strategies for beginning actions not yet started are included in Appendix A of the 2024 Priority 3 Progress Report.

Council Priority 3's emphasis on interagency and State-local engagement has led to the identification of several opportunities for future action. Looking to 2024, themes and areas of interest to further commit to action within Council Priority 3 could include:

- **Pathways to Federal Funding**
  - HTC+C and SGC could support the development of a project inventory of unfunded plans or projects that support housing, climate, and equity goals, and identify opportunities to streamline pathways and match projects to additional resources, including the National Clean Investment Fund (also known as the “National Green Bank”), Build America Bureau financing, and SGC’s Connecting Communities initiative.
- **Administrative and Implementation Actions**
  - HTC+C can leverage SLECC, the Housing, Climate, and Education series, and continued engagement with SGC-member agencies to explore and report as appropriate on administrative and implementation actions that can be adjusted to lower the cost per unit of housing in infill areas.
- **Excess Sites/Surplus Lands**
  - HTC+C could support HCD’s work on state excess sites/local surplus lands by sharing data and knowledge with partners across agencies and supporting the expansion of interagency technical assistance for State Excess Sites, Surplus Land Act (SLA) Programs and housing that reduces vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Where housing is not deemed suitable on these sites, HTC+C could support pathways to meet Council Priority 3 goals related to conservation and agriculture (e.g., green space, urban agriculture, or co-location of land use types).
- **Continue Coordination on Regional Plan Alignment**
  - HTC+C could leverage external partnerships like the [State-Local Energy and Climate Coordination](#) meetings and the Housing, Climate, and Equity education series to share opportunities for stakeholder input and comment and provide thought partnership and collaboration on policy and programmatic feedback. The [California’s Housing Future 2040 Report](#) could be leveraged to evaluate how new housing development and transportation projects advance state equity and sustainability goals.
- **Agriculture, Conservation, and Farmworker Housing**
  - HTC+C could work with the SGC’s Sustainable Agricultural Land Conservation program to assess funded planning projects, identify examples that integrate development and conservation in ways that advance the objectives of Council Priority 3, and work with SGC to explore guideline modifications if required. HTC+C, in partnership with SGC, CDFA, BCHS, and the California Department of Conservation (DOC), could commit to exploring opportunities for farm and agricultural worker housing in voluntary development easements of SALC grants.

- **Additional Tools and Strategies**
  - HTC+C can develop a summary of potential high-impact tools and strategies not yet part of the State’s interagency efforts that could accelerate progress toward State housing, climate, and equity goals. This summary should include an analysis of resources – e.g. capacity, funding, data, etc. – that would be needed to pursue these additional measures.

## Discussion Questions

1. What are your agency’s most significant Priority 3 accomplishments over the past twelve months?
2. Which of the proposed areas of focus within the Progress Report should SGC and SGC-member agencies prioritize in the upcoming year?
3. What information, actions, or other forms of support are required to ensure the effective implementation of those priority areas?

## Attachments

Attachment A: Council Priority 3: Housing, Climate, & Equity Progress Report – June 2024