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Subject: Strategic Plan Annual Update

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Summary

The Strategic Growth Council is providing an annual update to the Fiscal Year 2024 – 2027 Strategic Plan, which was approved in June 2023. The update includes a summary of the areas of accomplishment and progress, as well as areas to prioritize for the upcoming year.

Background

In June 2023, the Strategic Growth Council adopted SGC’s [Fiscal Year 2024 – 2027 Strategic Plan](#). SGC’s Strategic Plan communicates how SGC will continue to ideate, incubate, and scale solutions that advance climate and racial equity, implement infrastructure projects, and build capacity and resilience in California’s historically under-resourced and marginalized communities. The Strategic Plan guides SGC’s programs, policies, relationships, and operational strategies to realize SGC’s vision of healthy, thriving, and resilient communities for all.

Following the first year of the Strategic Plan’s implementation, SGC is providing an update of the progress made across the five goals. The Strategic Plan has five goals across community development, climate equity, and systems change that build upon existing work throughout the Council while creating strategies to address new priorities and existing gaps. Each update is organized by program awards and guidelines; strategic collaborations and engagement; evaluation; strategic initiatives; and SGC operations. Updates do not include an exhaustive account for what was achieved, and instead highlight major milestones and core components of the strategy. Staff are also sharing areas of prioritization for the next year of implementation, FY 2025 – 2026.

This document is a summary of progress in the past year. Supplemental documents with additional details include SGC’s:

- [August 2023: Council Priority 2: Capacity Building & Technical Assistance Updates](#)
- [December 2023: Racial Equity Action Plan Updates](#)
- [December 2023: SGC’s Racial Equity Action Plan 2023 - 2025](#)
- [June 2024: Council Priority 3: Housing, Climate, & Equity Progress Report](#)
- [June 2024: Connecting Communities Initiative Overview & Framework](#)
- [June 2024: Connecting Communities Resource Mobilization Plan](#)



FY 2024 – 2025: Progress and Areas of Focus

Goal 1: Accelerate Sustainable Development Through Community Investments, Conservation, & Planning

Program Awards and Guidelines

- SGC awarded the following grant rounds to invest in community development, conservation, and planning that promote sustainable development:
 - [Affordable Housing & Sustainable Communities Round 7](#) awarded \$757 million to create more affordable housing and clean transportation. This investment creates more than 2,500 affordable homes, 150 new ZEV buses, over 50 miles of new bikeways, and improves miles of sidewalks across the state.
 - [Transformative Climate Communities Round 5](#) awarded \$98 million to eleven projects. These projects will reduce GHG emissions by a combined 36,647 metric tons, equivalent to taking 8,155 gas-powered passenger vehicles off the road for a year. To date, \$424 million has been invested in 37 California communities through the Transformative Climate Communities Program.
 - [Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Round 9](#) awarded \$116 million to permanently protect approximately 50,500 acres of croplands and rangelands, as well as lands utilized by California Native American tribes for the cultivation of traditional resources.
 - [Community Resilience Centers Round 1](#) awarded nearly \$98 million to 24 projects across three grant types to help build climate resiliency centers in neighborhoods most impacted by extreme heat and other climate related issues.
- SGC introduced a grant type, Project Development, to the TCC and CRC program to support grantees as they prepare for larger implementation projects.
- The Factory-Built Housing (FBH) Pre-Development Pilot Program released its program guidelines and Notice of Funding Availability to support factory-built housing manufacturers apply to federal funding to build new factories in California that prioritize the production of multi-family affordable housing, workforce development, energy efficiency, and community benefits.

Strategic Collaborations and Engagement

- The AHSC Program and FBH Pre-Development Pilot Program each facilitated inter-agency advisory committees as they developed their respective program guidelines, to ensure intersectional State priorities were reflected.
- Through Council Priority 3: Housing, Climate, and Equity, SGC leads a coordinated interagency effort to support strategic and inclusive growth across California. Actions under Priority 3 have included education, outreach, and engagement with State and non-state partners, which has informed priority areas of focus for Year 2 of the Priority 3 Work Plan.
- The grantees of the Transformative Climate Communities program were featured in multiple site tours showcasing community-driven projects that exemplify the Justice40



initiative with federal officials representing the White House Council of Environmental Quality, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Department of Transportation.

- SGC grant programs continued to host program informational sessions, guidelines and application workshops, and application debrief sessions with stakeholders across California to ensure programs are accessible and reflective of community priorities.

Evaluation

- The UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation released its [annual evaluation](#) of the TCC program, which showcases the outcomes of community-led investments in five recipient communities of the TCC Implementation Grant and evaluates the program's progress.
- The California Housing Partnership and Enterprise Community Partners released the [AHSC Impact Report, Rounds 1 to 7](#), which evaluates the outcomes of AHSC's policies and funded AHSC projects.
- The CRC program released a Request for Information (RFI) to develop an evaluation framework for their Round 1 evaluation.

Strategic Initiatives

- Through the Connecting Communities Initiative, SGC has established a pathway for SGC grant program applications to receive technical assistance for federal funding.
- SGC is one of four California State entities to receive the Solar for All Grant through the US EPA Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, which will provide technical assistance and grant capital to develop the social infrastructure and capacity necessary to plan for, access, and benefit from both distributed residential and community-scale solar and storage.
- In April 2024, SGC entered a zero-dollar memorandum of understanding with King Energy to leverage federal funding through the U.S. Department of Energy Loan Programs Office to implement Distributed Energy Resources (DERs) as Virtual Power Plants (VPPs) at sites and facilities supported by SGC-member programs. Through this effort, SGC seeks to enhance site- and grid-level energy resilience while extending benefits such as reduced energy costs and rental income to participating entities and their communities.

SGC Operations

- SGC established a dedicated Energy Investments portfolio. This portfolio aims to support communities historically excluded from the benefits of California's energy transition through dedicated outreach, engagement, and technical assistance, while working across the broader portfolio of grantees and applicants to create pathways to alternative funding opportunities, such as those available under the Inflation Reduction Act and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund.
- SGC contracted Submittable, a social impact platform, to develop a grants management system across the department. Four grant programs have accepted and evaluated grant applications utilizing Submittable and all programs are updating the platform with



historical data from previous grant rounds to streamline data analysis and administrative procedures.

- TCC, AHSC, SALC, and CRC are updating processes and procedures to streamline program and project management. The programs updated processes and technical assistance providers to enhance project implementation and successful completion.

Priority Areas of Focus

- The Energy Investments Portfolio will use Solar for All project development grants to build a pipeline of projects to be supported by California Solar for All grants and other federal funding opportunities.
- SGC will also identify opportunities to implement SGC's energy investments to meet broader SGC goals relating to housing, transportation, health, conservation, economic and workforce development, and equity.
- Within SGC's grant programs, SGC will prioritize opportunities to maximize the efficacy of grant programs that reduces complexity and focus on strengthening partnership, create new programs/funding targets to ensure increased access for priority populations and Tribes, and streamline project analysis, reporting, and evaluation for effective and efficient program management.

Goal 2: Build Capacity for Climate Action

Program Awards and Guidelines

- SGC awarded the following grant rounds to build capacity for climate action: Regional Climate Collaboratives Round 1, TCC Round 5 Planning Grants, CRC Round 1 Planning Grants, SALC Round 8 Capacity Building Grants, and the Tribal Capacity Building Pilot Program.
- The RCC Round 2 guidelines and application process were significantly simplified to reduce complexity and increase access for under-resourced applicants. While RCC did not award Round 2 grants due to budget cuts, staff evaluated applications and provided feedback to applicants to support the continuation of their work. Staff are also in the process of developing RCC Round 2 applicant profiles that will be posted on the SGC website and plan to explore federal and philanthropic funding opportunities and partnerships to help applicants access other sources of funding.
- SGC continues to provide application and implementation technical assistance across all grant programs.

Strategic Collaborations and Engagement

- In collaboration with the Governor's Office and the California Energy Commission, CACE has secured \$500,000 from an anonymous donor to support a capacity building initiative modeled from SGC's BOOST program for the Imperial Valley. BOOST Imperial Valley will focus on supporting the seven cities within Imperial County to help them access public resources, build community partnerships, and build critical staff capacity to ensure that the implementation of Lithium Valley brings significant community benefits to this region. This initial \$500k will cover one third of the budget needed to support the



overall BOOST Imperial Valley effort and will allow SGC to launch this initiative in the coming months, in partnership with the Institute for Local Government.

- CACE organized a RCC Funders Convening to support Round 1 grantees through relationship building with philanthropic funders and to support the work undertaken through the RCC grants.

Evaluation

- SGC's internal Technical Assistance (TA) and Contract Equity Work Group developed two surveys for technical assistance applicants, including a demographic survey and evaluation survey to evaluate SGC TA and identify needs from the experiences of TA recipients.
- SGC and the Institute for Local Government (ILG) released a report highlighting the transformative impact of State investments in capacity building and technical assistance. The [report](#) details the outcomes of the second round of the BOOST program, which helped a cohort of seven cities leverage \$500,000 in capacity building resources to secure an additional \$25 million in State and federal grants.

Strategic Initiatives

- CACE launched the Tribal Capacity Building Pilot Program, which support tribes throughout California to establish readiness, pursue available funding, and implement tribally led projects.
- SGC partnered with the Milken Institute's 10,000 Communities Platform to connect grantees and applicants across various programs access a network of technical assistance providers and funders, resources specific to sectors and project development, and a virtual community through its [Community Infrastructure Center](#)
- SGC launched the Connecting Communities Initiative which will support SGC grantees and unawarded applicants in accessing federal funding and demonstrate proven strategies to advance community climate leadership. Since December 2024, the Initiative has provided outreach to 47 communities across 18 projects. Four projects have been submitted to open federal grants.

SGC Operations

- SGC onboarded two positions to establish the Connecting Communities team: a Special Advisor for Innovation & Partnership and an Analyst. The team has begun coordinating with SGC programs and external partners (state, federal, philanthropic, nonprofit) with the intention of connecting disadvantaged communities statewide to more and more diverse funding for climate projects.
- SGC fully staffed the CACE team, which now has a team of five staff and an Executive Fellow. The CACE team serves as a coordinating entity within SGC and across State government to support, promote, and implement TA and capacity building initiatives.

Priority Areas of Focus



- The Connecting Communities team introduced its framework and Mobilization Plan in June 2024, which has three goals: to 1) support SGC partners access federal funding through technical assistance, 2) advance strategic collaboration with external partners, and 3) accelerate community-led climate projects statewide. Throughout the year, the Initiative will continue to refine the Connecting Communities Mobilization Plan and framework as it provides technical assistance to additional programs in search of federal funding, prepares for the 2025 Catalyst Conference, and collaborates with external partners and agencies.
- SGC will continue to strategize and coordinate future funding opportunities for RCC, TCC, and CRC.
- SGC will continue to facilitate greater coordination amongst SGC and other State programs to align policy and funding objectives with community needs and goals.
- SGC will evaluate all SGC technical assistance initiatives and coordinate with providers to maximize benefits to community during application, post award, and implementation.

Goal 3: Ideate, Incubate, and Scale Transformative Approaches to Climate Equity

Program Awards and Guidelines

- The CCR program is leveraging existing funding to support capacity building around the Participatory Research to Policy model (PRP) that facilitates deep community involvement across all phases of research. CCR has established three capacity building initiatives in partnership with researchers across the state: The UC Davis Center for Regional Change, CSU Water Advocacy Toward Education and Research, and University of California Office of the President Research and Innovations.

Strategic Collaborations and Engagement

- The HEP Program supports capacity building through interagency coordination with over 30 state agencies to advance health and racial equity, advance data equity initiatives, and increase access to funding programs via the Health in All Policies Task Force (HiAP). The HiAP Task Force has prioritized objectives focused on increasing the provision of technical assistance (TA) and capacity building to support priority communities.
- CACE updated the [Technical Assistance Toolkit](#) to scale best practices for state entities and funders to provide technical assistance to grantees. The 2023 Technical Assistance Guidelines update includes new sections on securing funding for TA, selecting TA providers and recipients, making the case for TA, reducing barriers within grant programs, and more.
- SGC partnered with local community-based organizations to host multiple listening sessions across the State: Connecting Communities hosted two regional round tables in Oakland and Coachella Valley and the 5th Assessment Team hosted nine workshops across the state to raise awareness of State opportunities and gather community feedback.
- SGC expanded collaborative efforts with partners and programs across California through attendance at events like the Governor's Office Philanthropy Summit, the San

Joaquin Valley Housing Conference, UCLA Lake Arrowhead Transportation Forum, EnviroVoters Central Valley Accelerator, and others.

Evaluation

- SGC is working with internal and external teams to evaluate programs and awards. This includes reviewing leading community identified markers of success for programmatic updates and inclusions.
- TCC is analyzing survey results of past applicants to further understand metrics including, but not limited to, demographic information and persistent gaps or barriers in applying to TCC, particularly for priority communities.

Strategic Initiatives

- SGC hosted the 2024 Catalyst Conference: Progress in Place: From Power Building to Project Development, which convened over 300 attendees across the country over two days to advance best practices and provide direct resources to advance climate equity. Following the conference, SGC released the [2024 Summary Report](#).
- SGC launched three [Climate Equity Catalyst Models](#) in 2024: Iterative and Inclusive Program Design, Collaborative Governance, and Multi-Benefit Projects.
- SGC continues to partner with State partners like Go-Biz, California Energy Commission, and California's Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank to strategize methods to increase access to federal funding to serve under-served communities in California.
- SGC's Participatory Research to Policy Model is being utilized by the California 5th Climate Assessment Regional Synthesis Report Author teams to prioritize community engagement in climate research.

SGC Operations

- SGC onboarded a new role, SGC Communications Officer, who will develop a Communications Strategic Plan to increase and streamline strategic and culturally competent communications across the organization.
- SGC updated its website to reflect new programs and initiatives and increase accessibility to SGC's diverse audiences, from policy makers to grant applicants.
- SGC launched a new racial equity webpage that hosts the SGC REAP, links to initiatives and resources related to racial equity and government transformation and provides a narrative timeline of SGC's racial equity-driven initiatives. The website also hosts links to reports, publications, and resources related to racial equity, including the SGC Racial Equity Resource Hub.

Priority Areas of Focus

- SGC will organize the 3rd annual Catalyst Conference in 2025 to elevate best practices and advance community-driven solutions for climate equity across the State. In coordination with the Catalyst Conference, SGC will share new Catalyst Models to share tested policy models for equitable outcomes in under-resourced communities.



- SGC will seek to build capacity within the State to embed the Participatory Research to Policy Model across State-funded research, starting with promoting the outcomes and findings of Rounds 2 and 3 to policy decisionmakers.
- SGC will coordinate with the California 5th Climate Change Assessment team to ensure community participation and partnership across the regional and topical reports.

Goal 4: Improve Government Systems and Structures to Achieve a California for All

Program Awards and Guidelines

- SGC developed the Tribal Capacity Building Pilot Program with extensive engagement with tribal entities and partners across the State. The Pilot Program is rooted in consistent feedback from California Native American tribes that they require a dedicated capacity building program tailored to their unique status and needs.
- CCR hosted and recorded six exit presentations with the Principal Investigator to summarize the outcomes of each research grant and share how the Participatory Research to Policy Model was utilized to change how research is facilitated to prioritize community priorities.

Strategic Collaborations and Engagement

- CACE has numerous requests from State and Federal agencies for guidance related to providing TA and the 2020 Technical Assistance Guidelines Overview webinar has received nearly 50,000 views and is SGC's most watched video. CACE has also offered presentations and trainings to State agencies on structuring and implementing TA and requests for guidance on developing TA programs continue to increase.
- SGC built and strengthened relationships with federal contacts at the White House, Department of Housing & Community Development, Department of Agriculture, Department of Transportation, Department of Environmental Protection, and more through trips to Washington DC and by hosting meetings in Sacramento. During these engagements, SGC shared the Catalyst Models and other best practices lifted from SGC's programs and policy initiatives.
- SGC hosted the October Council Meeting in Barrio Logan, San Diego at the Chicano Park Museum & Cultural Center. SGC facilitated two events complimentary to the Council Meeting focused on Council Priority 3: Housing, Climate, and Equity. These events convened Council agencies and departments, local and regional government, and local community-based organizations to learn about Barrio Logan's rich history and their community-led plans to advance equity through integrated housing and climate resilience planning.
- SGC, in partnership with CivicWell's California Climate & Energy Collaborative, serves as co-chair of the State/Local Energy & Climate Coordination (SLECC) meeting series. SLECC meetings serve as a statewide communication and ideation hub to help State and local entities identify priority needs and co-create operational solutions to advance place-based energy and climate action focused on buildings, transportation, and land use.

Evaluation



- Through Priority 3 on Housing, Climate, and Equity, SGC supported the development of the Prosper Sustainably *Better Funding* report, which explores how State and federal agencies can “better” fund local and tribal climate needs and proposes new approaches to funding deployment to incrementally fund climate projects on a rolling basis and provide regional-based project scoping support.
- During the project applicant review phase of Round 1, the CRC program effectively integrated tribal-led data solutions to meet tribes-specific Tribal Data Sovereignty Requirements.

Strategic Initiatives

- The signing of AB 211 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, 2022), a public resources trailer bill, authorized SGC to provide advance payment to qualifying awards to ensure effective implementation of the program. Advance payments can be up to 25% of the total grant award, spread across a series of installments between the start date identified in the grant agreement until June 30, 2025.
- SGC administers the California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force, which was established in 2022 to develop recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor to equitably increase access to agricultural land for food production and traditional tribal agricultural uses. SGC has convened three Task Force meetings and continues to provide research, capacity building, and administrative support toward the development of the final recommendations.

SGC Operations

- SGC hired a new Deputy Director for Government Equity & Transformation, Hoi-Fei Mok, to lead the CACE, CCR, and HEP programs, as well as Council Priority 2.
- SGC fully staffed the California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force team, including the Program Lead and Program Associate. The Land Equity Task Force began hosting quarterly Task Force Meetings to develop recommendations for Land Equity TF Team and begin hosting public Task Force Meetings to develop recommendations to equitably increase access to agricultural land and traditional tribal agricultural uses.

Priority Areas of Focus

- SGC will continue to support the California Agricultural Land Equity Task in its development of recommendations to equitably increase access to agricultural land for food production and traditional tribal agricultural uses.
- SGC will seek new diverse funding opportunities to continue supporting the CACE programs, including expanding the Tribal Capacity Building Pilot Program and supporting further adoption of technical assistance and capacity building programs across the state.
- SGC will broaden its tribal support across all the organizational program areas, including updating program guidelines to increase access to tribes and tribal organizations.

Goal 5: Center Equity in Achieving Healthy, Thriving, and Resilient Communities for All

Program Awards and Guidelines



- SGC’s programs expanded program eligibility, increased outreach, and increased technical assistance to improve accessibility for tribal communities and priority populations. This is detailed much further in the [2023 REAP Annual Update](#).
- SALC extended its Round 9 guidelines process to research and develop recommendations on tribal notification and consultation processes, analyze how various tribal entities are defined for purposes of funding eligibility and prioritization, and increase engagement with tribal entities. For the first time, SALC funding will support California tribes with land acquisitions, advancing the state’s work to support tribal access, co-management, and acquisition of ancestral lands. SALC investments from this round of funding also provide pathways to land ownership and access to agricultural lands for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.
- Through CCR’s three partnerships across the state to execute the Participatory Research to Policy Model, key resources will be developed to guide state and academic entities approaching community-based participatory research and integrating the expertise of Native American and communities of color.

Strategic Collaborations and Engagement

- The Capitol Collaborative on Race and Equity (CCORE) launched the CCORE Learning Cohort on June 5, 2024. This foundational racial equity capacity building program for California State entities is facilitated by State of Equity (a program of the Public Health Institute) and the Strategic Growth Council is the state co-host.

Evaluation

- In December 2023, SGC shared an [annual update on its progress of the REAP](#) which includes a detailed overview of how SGC’s programs, policy initiatives, leadership, and operations embedded racial equity.

Strategic Initiatives

- Early planning is underway for a 2025 CCORE Transformative Leadership Cohort (TLC). TLC enhances the existing work of CCORE and takes it to a new level of impact by supporting California’s growing cadre of state-level racial equity leaders. This cohort is designed with the intention of centering the experiences of workers and learners of color.

SGC Operations

- Council adopted SGC’s [2023 – 2025 SGC Racial Equity Action Plan \(REAP\)](#), which involves all facets of SGC’s organization to undo systemic and institutional injustices that prevent opportunity for all, and to provide resources that support healthy, thriving, and resilient communities for all and the most at-need Californians.
- SGC has operationalized Council Priority 1: The Racial Equity Resource Hub. The resource continues to be maintained and updated by HEP.

Priority Areas of Focus



- SGC will hire a new Program Manager and Analyst for the Health and Equity Program to fully staff up the team.
- SGC will track the REAP goals and metrics across the organization's programmatic areas and utilize interagency groups such as SGC Council, Health in All Policies Task Force, and Capitol Collaborative on Racial Equity to coordinate state efforts around racial equity.
- SGC will continue to coordinate internal resources and learning opportunities to enhance staff's understanding of racial equity and environmental justice principles.

Next Steps

SGC will continue to implement SGC's Strategic Plan and provide updates to the Council. As SGC reflects on the progress in the past year and prioritizes actions, SGC will continue coordinating with Council agencies and external partners to share best practices, align resources, and accelerate momentum to advance healthy, thriving, and resilient communities for all.

Discussion Questions

- Which areas within the Year 2 Look Ahead should SGC prioritize in the upcoming year?
- Are there any gaps or opportunities for further alignment with your entity's strategic goals?

