

December 17, 2024

**Subject:** Strategic Growth Council October 31, 2024, Meeting Minutes  
**Reporting Period:** October 2024 – December 2024  
**Staff Lead:** Lisa Duong, Administrative Associate, SGC

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## Recommended Action

Approval of the Oct. 31, 2024, Strategic Growth Council Meeting Minutes.

## Strategic Growth Council Oct. 31, 2024 - Meeting Minutes

### ***Agenda Item #1: Call to Order***

Chair Sam Assefa called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m., welcoming Secretary Kim Johnson of the California Health and Human Services (CHHS) Agency.

### ***Agenda Item #2: Roll Call***

#### **Council Members and Representatives Present:**

Sam Assefa, Director, Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI)

Frank Cárdenas, Public Member;

Karen Ross, Secretary, California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA);

Yana Garcia, Secretary, California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA);

Tomiquia Moss, Secretary, California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency (BCSH);

Cori Lucero (Designee), Public Member, on behalf of Chancellor Juan Sánchez Muñoz;

Toks Omishakin, Secretary, California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA);

Kim Johnson, Secretary, California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHS);

Nicole Capretz, Public Member (Virtual);

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

*Secretary Ross entered the meeting at 1:07pm. Quorum met; 9/10 members present.*

*Secretary Omishakin entered the meeting at 1:10pm. Quorum met; 10/10 members present.*

### ***Agenda Item #3: ACTION: Approval of Minutes***

*Approval of Oct. 31, 2024 Meeting Minutes.*

Motion was made by Moss and seconded by Cárdenas.

**Motion passes (8-0-2\*).** \*Marks abstention or absence from vote

**Council Comment**

No Council discussion.

**Public Comment**

No public comment.

***Agenda Item #4: Executive Director’s Report***

Matt Read, Acting Executive Director, SGC

**Council Comment**

**Schwartz:** I just wanted to say thank you for the excellent report. I’m really excited about the Catalyst conference. Very pleased to see the Imperial Valley event. One of the biggest things I’ve been hearing about is capacity building, so I’m really pleased that SGC is taking a focused look at that part of California and thinking about what it can do to step in and help lead.

**Public Comment**

Emily Burgueno, Kumeyaay Diegueno Land Conservancy

***Agenda Item #6: ACTION: Consent Calendar***

*Motion to move the Consent Calendar*

- a. Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation: Round 10 Guidelines*
- b. Project Award Increase: Bloom Ranch*

Matt Read, acting Executive Director, SGC

**Council Comment**

**Ross:** Can you believe that this is Round 10? This is the most remarkable land stewardship program that California has ever had. Expressed gratitude towards SALC program for reaching Round 10.

**Public Comment**

No Public comment.

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

Motion was made by Ross and seconded by Cárdenas.

***Agenda Item #7: Discussion***

*Affordable Housing & Sustainable Communities Program Update*

Matt Read, acting Executive Director, SGC

Amar Cid, Deputy Director of Investments & Planning, SGC

**Council Comment**

**Ross:** I'm always amazed at how many people didn't know about the changes and may not know it for quite some time. So, I just want to make sure that we're cautious about how much time and what are the outlets for being able to communicate changes. On the tribal component, it seems like there have been significant changes that are being proposed. Do we have any additional tools to help with building partnerships? Where are there other opportunities to leverage partnerships with any types of organizations or academia that already has deep ties? Expressed concerns about changing a minimum threshold from ten million to one million dollars and whether that would have impact on viability of the projects.

**Cid:** There's always an opportunity for solidifying partnerships. Right now, we do have technical assistance providers specific to tribal needs and supporting our tribal needs, so we do engage with the TA providers on this program. We do have two TA providers and sub-providers on this space. Where we are moving forward is finding an alignment with some of our partners at CARB and HCD to figure out how we do this. Explained about the challenges, the requirements, opportunities, and impact on the program.

**Read:** One of the stated goals of the tribal capacity building program is to develop capacity both from SGC's perspective and working with tribal communities as well as increasing the capacity of those communities to access our programs. One of the bases for the funding is to build that pipeline into these projects.

**Ross:** Lowering the threshold amount, does that have any relationship to the viability of the projects themselves?

**Cid:** Not necessarily as the project still needs to demonstrate financial feasibility and meet some of the other threshold requirements. We're hearing from our tribal TA providers that lowering that threshold creates opportunity for specific housing development at maybe a smaller scale, but still meeting the density requirements for that amount.

**Garcia:** I really appreciate the ability to think about the more nuanced scoring with respect to DACs. Thinking about how we can shift from the straight threshold amount, I'm just curious if you could talk a little bit more about that because I'm unclear whether that's the proposal that you're maybe considering assigning a numeric score depending on the location and how we're going to think through that.

**Cid:** Explained about the five-point addition to scores for projects that meet the scoring criteria.

**Garcia:** There's a difference between the location of the transit component versus the housing component. Would you then score that separately?

**Cid:** Not necessarily. Explained about the criteria being the location of the housing component.

**Assefa:** Just reminding us of what the program is and the criteria, it's always helpful because we don't look at that in detail and looking at it again always amazes me how this program is really so unique in that it's not just building buildings; it's really building communities and not just housing. It's the nature of transportation. It addresses public health and the totality of it is just really unique. Expressed understanding of applicants that had to go through the process and



the importance of improving the guidelines. Is the short-term directly correlated to the most important feedback we've heard from applicants, or is it based on it being an easy fix?

**Cid:** Explained about the short-term and long-term approaches. Short-term approach will affect Round 9 and what could be accomplished now. Long-term approach will need to bake in the process for research analysis and then larger structural changes to the program for an award in 2026 or 2027. Not necessarily based off of needs or import from feedback.

**Assefa:** So in a nutshell, target short-term for 2025 award, and long-term changes maybe in 2026. That delay in a year is an issue. That is kind of my feeling, but I think it would be good to get feedback from Council.

**Moss:** I appreciate the work that the staff has done. It was really helpful to see such a comprehensive update for us since the August meeting, and I agree with the chair about the urgency of need. As we look at the short-term and long-term, it's important to me as the housing secretary, as our mandate is very clear about the homes that we need to permit and build over the next several years. Further expressed appreciation to the communities for providing feedback, and staff for preparing to incorporate it into the guidelines.

I also agree with Secretary Ross that we need to be as robust with our outreach efforts to make sure that we are inclusive of people opining on their top priorities and making sure that our guidelines are as clear and inclusive as possible in this next round. Emphasized the desire to move the improvements forward and that the draft guidelines can be released for public comment as soon as possible. Staff can report back to Council on how that process is going so that we can provide additional guidance and support.

**Capretz:** I also just want to echo my thanks and express gratitude for staff. They clearly did a deep dive and are thinking about every permutation, every community that's impacted and how we can improve the program. I really appreciate that and learned a lot even on my 101 call, so for me I'm fine to move forward with next year's award process. I think that the need is obviously clear. Some information that I still want to see where awards have been granted, because geographically I still feel like there's a huge disparity between Northern California and Southern California. I just want to make sure that we're distributing these dollars as equitably and inclusively as possible. Explained that Southern California is at a competitive disadvantage when it comes to transit and GHG reduction. I want to keep doing my due diligence on that and keep pressing on that.

**Schwartz:** Thanked Public Member Capretz for her comments and thanked staff for their hard work. How did you decide on an additional five-point score for the disadvantaged communities? I mean in terms of the point spread, how did you determine that?

**Cid:** Explained about the scoring criteria, moving points around and reducing other scored criteria. We felt that five points was a good number to use as a buffer, not wanting to push it over the edge or under.

**Omishakin:** Thanked staff for their work around this program and making improvements. How can we make sure applicants can apply and get their grants and assistances in a timely fashion?



Are we giving our best efforts in increasing the number applicants as it relates to disadvantaged communities? How does eliminating TOD criteria help with our efforts overall?

**Cid:** We're not eliminating TOD, we are condensing spaces where we had STI or TRAs components in different places of the application. Explained about the different criteria causing confusion in last round, and so sections are condensed to provide alignment and familiarity across the board.

We have technical assistance to support applicants on applications. Explained about engagement workshops rolled out in the last couple of months to go over all the components of the program.

**Johnson:** I also want to pile on the appreciation for the work in this area and for the partnership especially as it relates to the integration of climate and healthy equity goals. Further expressed gratitude in the intentionality of the multi-benefits strategy. I'm also suggesting that this is a phenomenal opportunity for each of us in the roles that we play to be intentional in making these connections and that we do so to the extend of this process. Having that learning and understanding of how to do that, I think the more that we can incorporate that in the work that we're doing in our respective areas, the better it will be and the more we continue to simplify and make these processes, funding opportunities, and investments more accessible to the communities that we're trying to reach.

**Moss:** If I recall, in Round 8 we had tribal engagement, but folks didn't make it to the end. I really want to make sure that as we had no applications for Round 8, that we really sort of track our engagement process along the way to have a better understanding where people are actually having trouble within the application process. If we're providing TA, the TA providers can look into where folks may be falling out. I want to make sure that we, in fact, are getting our tribes engaged in this process.

**Garcia:** One of the things that come into mind is making sure we're engaging folks in some of these refinements that we're making and ensuring that we're hearing from them along the way. Also clarifying from a process standpoint that we're making recommendations to the Council what the touch points are for various applicants to be able to talk to you all about feedback, about where they're scoring from a technical assistance standpoint but also from the perspective of making sure that people are not caught off guard. Just know that you have all our support in making sure that we can handle the communication as best as possible with the applicants, given how important these dollars are and how unique they are for the state.

**Cárdenas:** In regards to AHSC and our ongoing efforts to perfect this, we need to continue to move and to underscore Secretary Moss's vision on this. The people of the state need and deserve more quality affordable housing, and we need to do this in, for, and with communities that can be increasingly sustainable. I just wanted to underscore a couple of things; first is the opportunity to clarify and strengthen our language when it comes to local workforce development. Second is to clarify our language with respect to our anti-displacement provision. Mentioned that one of the ways to identify an organization's priorities is trying to understand



what they look for when hiring people, what skills are they seeking to procure. We need to move and continue to build these homes.

*Secretary Moss left the meeting at 2:45 p.m.*

*Sasha Kergan (Designee), Deputy Secretary of Housing & Consumer Relations (BCSH), on behalf of Secretary Tomiquia Moss, present the whole duration of the meeting, assumed their role as designee at 2:45 p.m.*

*Secretary Omishakin left at 2:54 p.m. Quorum met; 9/10 members present.*

*Secretary Garcia left the meeting at 2:54 p.m.*

*Lucy Levin (Designee), Climate Policy and Intergovernmental Relations Supervisor, California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), on behalf of Secretary Yana Garcia, present the whole duration of the meeting, assumed their role as designee at 2:54 PM.*

*Secretary Omishakin returned to the meeting at 3:04 p.m. Quorum met; 10/10 members present.*

**Public Comment**

John Mooyman, BRIDGE Housing

Brian Baker, L37 Development (1051 Mission)

Eric Tao, L37 Development (1051 Mission)

Andrew Dawson, California Housing Partnership

Walker Toma, City of Alameda

Ellen Morris, Eden Housing

Christine Anderson, Mercy Housing California

Sally Greenspan, Enterprise Community Partners

J.T. Harechmak, Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern CA

Nell Selander, City of South San Francisco

Alex Rogala, MidPen Housing

Veronica Beaty, California Coalition for Rural Housing

Shannon Dodge, BART

Courtney Pal, Resources for Community Development

Emily Burgueno, Kumeyaay Diegueno Land Conservancy

Luis Hernandez, Homes & Hope

**Agenda Item #8: Discussion***Fifth Climate Change Assessment Update*

Matt Read, Acting Executive Director, SGC

Hoi-Fei Mok, Deputy Director of Equity & Government Transformation, SGC

Elea Becker Lowe, Climate Change Assessment Program Manager, LCI

Emely Anico, Resilient Community Senior Researcher, SGC

Natalie Obaldia, Resilient Community Research Associate, SGC

*Secretary Omishakin left the meeting at 3:19 p.m.*

*Darwin Moosavi (Designee), Deputy Secretary, California State Transportation Agency, on behalf of Secretary Toks Omishakin, present the whole duration of the meeting, assumed their role as designee at 3:19 p.m.*

*Public Member Capretz left the meeting at 3:19 p.m. Quorum met; 9/10 members present.*

**Council Comment**

**Ross:** Wanting to take full advantage of this great work and look at ways at how we can help leverage it from the Department of Food and Agriculture. Everybody works very closely with our Deputy Secretary, Virginia Jameson on climate and working lands. We are in the very ambitious project that we don't believe has been done in California before with is a standalone California agricultural climate resiliency plan. It's really looking over at the next decade; there's going to be tremendous changes in the agricultural sector. I see how a lot of your research projects are going to be informative for that, but it's also through our process of outreach and public comment that there could be opportunities to highlight some of the work. The ways that you're looking forward to uplift the climate assessment and the projects that you're funding, I'd really love it if we could look at that. Further mentioned that CDFA is concurrently working with UC ANR and CSU Agricultural Research Institute on a master plan for Agricultural Science technology and research over the next couple of decades. There is a lot of ways to tie in this work across agencies, and I'm really excited about what you're doing.

**Johnson:** Thank you for the efforts that you are doing. It's great to see Council's focus on that participatory research to policy model. Just really want to highlight the government-to-government consultation with tribes, which is a critical component of the work and want to lift that up and call it out. I also just want to appreciate that at California Health and Human Services Agency and the Department of Public Health, we're privileged to lead the development of the Fifth Assessment's Public Health report. Further detailed the collaboration with other agencies on that report since April. Looking forward to synthesizing existing literature and resources on the current and projected health outcomes associated with climate change and providing metrics that can be tracked and compared over time to measure progress towards resilience to the health equity impacts. Really appreciate this partnership.

**Moosavi:** Thank you all for the presentation. In the transportation space, we have heavily relied on the resources and the work of LCI and interagency team on the climate change assessment. Caltrans has been doing a lot of work on climate assessment themselves through vulnerability assessments and adaptation reports. The work plays a key role in resources that are used. Further mentioned the Climate Action Plan for CalSTA known as CAPTI, and new action proposed for Caltrans to create a comprehensive climate adaptation planning and delivery framework for transportation projects. The work that you are all doing, the engagement and collaboration with you all will be critically important.

**Kergan:** Thanked the team for their enthusiasm with the work. I think there's an opportunity to embed some of that approach within the research that you're leading. There is a need for ongoing research to deepen the ways that we're thinking about housing as part of our climate strategy. We would be happy to lend any of our staff or expertise or partnership if that feels helpful, but just wanted offer that there's housing implications in many of those connections between housing and public health, the need for thinking about emergency response and management which Secretary Johnson knows very well. Development land use intensification can be ways that we build more resiliently in infill areas. In terms of engagement opportunities, we would welcome additional conversation. Our contacts would be your contacts. We will be updating the statewide housing plan, a plan on homelessness, and a state action plan.

**Cárdenas:** Thank you for the wisdom that is inherent in the participatory research model and in centering that in your methodological approach. Have you noted any kind of evolution in the sense of awareness, urgency, and energy, around what's happening, what's going to happen, and what we need to do to prepare for this?

**Lowe:** Thank you for the question. The evolution and awareness is a deeper recognition that the climate has changed, so part of our work is to acknowledge that and to uplift these stories, those examples, and the lived experiences but use that to further our understanding of how we can take action for the future. We're matching that with this ability to project through modeling and through research, what we anticipate those changes and further impacts to be between now and the end of the century. Kind of create this more holistic narrative of what the experience is today and what it's been evolving over time.

**Levin:** Thank you so much for this presentation. Really excited to see the inaugural tribal research program and the focus throughout the whole Fifth Assessment on equity-centered engagement. I just want to uplift what the Air Resources Board is doing on that topic and in collaboration with all of our state agency partners, so really excited to think about how we can include that in the Fifth Assessment. Also want to note on engagement opportunities, CARB and CalEPA are going to be leading some outreach for the comprehensive climate action plan which is being developed as part of USPA Climate Pollution Reduction grant program deliverables. We're planning on some in-person and virtual meetings in the first half of 2025, which could be a great opportunity to highlight some of the ways to engage in the Fifth Assessment process. Expressed interest in the re-imagined Catalyst program for 2025 and opportunities it may present.



**Schwartz:** Thank you, and just wanted to let you know how excited we are at CNRA. We're ready to provide any support you may need. This really touches on so much of the work that we do at CNRA, from access to the coast to wildfires. It just really is all over our portfolios. Please let us know what you need.

**Assefa:** Expressed appreciation within LCI and the collaboration between SGC and the State Planning Policy. Using SGC's engagement with all other agencies, I think that's the right approach and I'm very appreciative of that. Continue the work, it looks like it'll take a long time but it is such critical work in the next five to ten years.

**Public Comment**

Emily Burgueno, Kumeyaay Diegueno Land Conservancy

Angie Hacker, Prosper Sustainably

***Agenda Item #9: Public Comment***

Wendell Wesley Jr.

***Agenda Item #10: Meeting Adjournment***

Meeting adjourned at 3:56 p.m.