

Feb. 26, 2025

Subject: Strategic Growth Council Dec. 17, 2024, Meeting Minutes
Reporting Period: December 2024 – February 2025
Staff Lead: Lisa Duong, Administrative Associate, SGC

Recommended Action

Approval of the Dec. 17, 2024, Strategic Growth Council Meeting Minutes.

Strategic Growth Council Dec. 17, 2024 - Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item #1: Call to Order

Vice Chair Frank Cárdenas called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m., welcoming Executive Director Erin Curtis of the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC).

Agenda Item #2: Roll Call

Council Members and Representatives Present:

Frank Cárdenas, Vice Chair, Public Member;

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

Sasha Kergan (Designee), Deputy Secretary, on behalf of Secretary Tomiquia Moss, California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency (BCSH);

Juan Sánchez Muñoz, Chancellor, Public Member;

Darwin Moosavi (Designee), Deputy Secretary, on behalf of Secretary Toks Omishakin, 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)

Council Members and Representatives Absent:

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

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

Quorum met; 8/10 members present.

Agenda Item #3: ACTION: Approval of Minutes

Approval of Dec. 17, 2024, Meeting Minutes.

Motion was made by Johnson and seconded by Garcia.

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

Secretary Ross entered the meeting at 1:14 p.m. Quorum met; 9/10 members present.

Council Comment

Cárdenas: Thanked Read for his service as acting Executive Director for SGC during the transitional period.

Read: Thanked the Council and SGC team members. It has really been an honor and a privilege to helm the organization. It's been educational, renewing and an overall very humbling experience.

Ross: Thanked Read for stepping into his acting role. You did a great job.

Cárdenas: Acknowledged and congratulated the Connecting Communities team for their convening sessions on the upcoming Catalyst Conferences. Also thanked Milken Institute for financial support in these conferences.

There is an opportunity here that we are seizing to transition to a new modality, because one of the things that we heard during these two conferences was that although it was great for people to come up to Sacramento, there were many folks who could not make it. There are a lot of voices that are best heard in their own place and space. Transitioning to regional conferences is an opportunity to meet people where they are, to listen to their lived experience and to get a better sense of how to best proceed on the climate action fronts. We're very excited about transitioning into this new phase, and I think it's going to be even more fruitful than Catalyst has been up to now.

Kergan: Welcomed Curtis in her new role. Thanked Read and the SGC team for their service during the transition. I look around the room and see so many of you here who made that Executive Director's report real.

Garcia: Thanked Read for stepping into the acting role. Really appreciated the work in Imperial Valley. We do really look forward to continuing to work with Imperial Valley. Please let us know how we can continue to support so many of the great efforts that are going on down there, thanks.

Cárdenas: Acknowledged and thanked leadership from Garcia and others for doing amazing work in Imperial Valley.

Public Comment

Rob Wilkins, Affirmed Housing

Agenda Item #5: ACTION: Consent Calendar*Motion to move the Consent Calendar*

- a. *Regional Climate Collaboratives (RCC) Annual Reports*
- b. *Affordable Housing & Sustainable Communities (AHSC): Guidelines Technical Amendment*
- c. *Sustainable Agricultural Land Conservation Program (SALC): Guidelines Technical Amendment*

Matt Read, acting Executive Director, SGC

Council Comment

Kergan: Thanked staff for bringing forward the consent calendar. I want to acknowledge the information we've been hearing from the development community about these proposals and public commenters and just wanted to share my perspective that what's being requested is not a reason to delay or modify the consent calendar items before us. These are technical amendments that have been considered for some time about promoting access and increasing the services provisions at sites. Those recommendations have already been vetted and checked, so what I'd like to suggest is that it would be helpful to have more analysis on the cost potential impact, and resolve any policy questions about how we're aligning state programs similarly to what was asked for.

If staff have capacity to do some of that investigation, and in consultation with California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) which helps you administer the program, I think that would give Council more information to evaluate and have a discussion at a future meeting. I would ask staff to come back with more details and stay in close coordination.

Capretz: I just wanted to comment about the issue related to AHSC and the developer fees. I'm very interested in that conversation when it's appropriate. I know it's not exactly on the agenda, but it brought to mind the reality that there are all of these different guidelines for these different affordable housing programs, so it leads to not only confusion but disparate outcomes. Explained the work in her organization as an example. I'd love to hear more about how we can align incentives and the requirements for all affordable housing programs.

Garcia: I do want to note on the Regional Climate Collaboratives: Seven of our recipients are also recipients of environmental justice (EJ) action grants or EJ small grants. We often talk about the importance of leveraging funds in this space and just want to showcase that these multiple funding streams are really important for us to continue. We have our guidelines out for public and tribal comment until Jan. 10. Please do feel free to comment on these in our application period for our EJ grant programs. Program is anticipated to be in late January to late February.

Public Comment

Marina Espinosa, California Housing Consortium



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

Motion passes (9-0-1*). *Marks abstention or absence from vote.

Motion was made by Capretz and seconded by Garcia.

Agenda Item #6: Discussion

Racial Equity Action Plan Update

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

Secretary Garcia left the meeting at 2:14 p.m.

Yvonne Chi (Designee), Deputy Secretary, California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), on behalf of Secretary Yana Garcia, present the whole duration of the meeting, assumed their role as designee at 2:14 PM.

Council Comment

Cárdenas: Acknowledged this as an important opportunity for staff and new leadership to hear from members of the Council.

Moosavi: I know we hear about all of the various pieces of work throughout the year but putting it all together makes you realize how big of a lift all this work has been over the last few years. I really want to give kudos to the team for everything that you all have done to implement the Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP). I wonder if you could talk a little bit about some of the interagency work you all have been doing to share out best practices and to make sure we know all our lessons learned as we all try to figure out how to implement this in government. I know you all have a racial equity group that meets regularly.

We've been thinking about our own REAP work at CalSTA. We are committing to a lot of work in the tribal government space, in particular our new climate action plan for transportation infrastructure. This includes an action to improve technical assistance to tribal governments on transportation programs. You all have been leaders in terms of really trying to figure out a lot of those issues, so how do we make sure that we are leveraging that work, and are there existing communication streams that we could continue to build on? That'd be great as a focus in the coming year.

Mok: Explained about various SGC involvement in the work and interagency spaces including the Racial Equity Group, Health in All Policies (HiAP) task force and Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) network. Mentioned advance pay convening as an important outcome - staff is hoping to share what SGC has done and hear what other agencies are doing.

Read: Mentioned the Racial Equity Resource Hub that was created from Council Priority 1. I just want to recognize how instrumental that's been as an outcome of this Council's action.

Ross: The investment in capacity building and technical assistance is so crucial. We're in the State of California. Funding goes up and down, and this is an investment in our intellectual network especially with climate change. With the rapid changes, we will continue to have this network of technical assistance providers. Capacity building organizations have been able to



position themselves at their local community to be able to help us with climate change and to focus on resiliency and equity. I just want to say that this is a priority to continue to build on and I especially appreciate the strengthening of the TA guidance. Appreciated the comments on following up with those who are not awarded, to have that discussion about how to improve. That's a huge opportunity for all those entities.

Johnson: I applaud this Council for their leadership in this space in racial equity. I watched this Council launch this plan in 2019, so I just want to underscore both for the Racial Equity Resource Hub and its utilization: I think that it's helpful in being concrete on the process. I also want to thank the partnership with Health in All Policies. I would also underscore the need to continue to look at disparities and disproportionality and be very intentional about engaging community and co-design policy as we go forward.

I have the privilege of co-chairing the California Interagency Council on homelessness with Secretary Moss. We are also being very specific on addressing the housing needs for people facing behavioral health and substance use disorders. We are seeing alignment and opportunities across government. We want to be able to lift those up as we move forward.

Garcia: As we're seeing a change in federal administration, I'd be really interested in you all thinking through as you're implementing how to embed the type of leadership that we've seen from this Council, from you all, and from our state agencies in a way that withstands change in political administration. I think at the federal level it would be really important and helpful to all of us. We're happy to be partners with you all and happy to have offline conversations about how we can approach that.

In terms of issues emerging for the development of the next REAP, two things come to mind. Tribal issues in particular have been mentioned by several of my colleagues already. I do think that thinking about an approach to California-specific racial equity as it pertains to tribes is really important. Language justice and language access is an issue that has continued to come up for us within CalEPA quite frequently. We have a language access policy that's part of our Racial Equity Action Plan that we will be updating. Depending on the local jurisdiction can also be quite contentious with respect to how we're thinking through these issues at a macro level across the state.

Kergan: Thank you so much for leading this body of work and for being able to tell the story about the incredible scope that SGC is holding. The ways that you're staying engaged in this work and keeping it active not only for the Council but for the staff is quite impressive. I applaud the thoughtful and integrated approach to continuous improvement. To the two questions, yes to continue strengthening not only tribal service initiatives and broadly improving the government-to-government relationship. That is a place where we can as a Council and within organizations remove barriers so that we are not having every department and certainly not every tribe navigate the nuances that seem different, when really, we're trying to solve for some of the same communication and coordination challenges. We've heard about capacity-building, and I think that's important at the local level for all the reasons that colleagues stated.

Preparing for the development of the next REAP, I want to echo what Secretary Garcia was mentioning about how we continue to assert our commitment to racial equity even amidst external changes and changing dialogue; so as to continuing to describe our “why” to a variety of audiences. Maybe something that is helpful to us is considering that we still will have federal coordination. It’s required in our work and our commitment remains strong to our work.

I wanted to reflect on the focus on Imperial Valley. For some of us who visited the Imperial Valley as a group, they were leading conversation about how Build Organize Optimize Transform (BOOST) could show up to build capacity in the local area. We’ve done a lot of reflection on what that means for BCSH in our programs and our racial equity goals, how we can take these lessons from Imperial, build it into programs, build it into technical assistance and other capacity-building. Mentioned about her experience in the visit to Imperial Valley in October.

Schwartz: We just need to continue to move forward. The work is not done, we need to dig in and kind of make sure that we’re including as many people as we can, pulling in more allies into this work and continuing to work with each other. Mentioned about her experience in the environmental justice space and how it was not really talked about the way it is in the present. This administration with the executive order has helped to focus that work. I would say just keep moving forward, there’s so much to do so let’s just keep doing what we can and as quickly as we can.

Explained about equity bridge and her work involvement. I’ve seen that language popping up in spaces including Prop 4 and so we’re really thinking about how you measure benefits. We bucketed this into five areas which include partnerships, community benefits, community engagement, jobs and contracts. CalEPA created a framework for how we measure this, so it’s iterative and moving forward.

Muñoz: When I look at these kinds of prompts, you covered a great deal of information, provided very thoughtful insights and provided some additional context for thinking about next year. What did you miss? Generally, we report favorable outcomes, but what were the things that we shouldn’t have done that we did. You mentioned some observations for example, about things learned when dealing with native tribes. We talked about reimbursement payment, capacity, etc. What are the things that we should avoid next year? What are the things that we might direct you to think differently about, not just how to provide advice but things we actually tried and didn’t yield the results? How do we avoid wasting people’s time, effort and money in programs that just didn’t work?

When I see that kind of prompt, “What should be the priorities?”, I want to say, “What did you learn?” Like what everybody else is saying, this is wonderful work and that’s an interesting observation. Nine years ago, we weren’t talking about climate the way we are today. Let’s take a little bit of hope that that in three to four years from now, we’ll be talking about this in even better, more informed, effective ways based on the feedback you continue to provide us in our deliberations.



Johnson: Community engagement in 2025 may look a little different than it's been in the last few years, so I would just ask the team to be very clear and thoughtful about changes in approaches. Whether it's engaging via community partners or if we're seeing places around the state where we had done previous engagement that people are not coming to, especially as it relates to our immigrant neighbors and families and households. That would be a specific point I'd ask to focus on.

Public Comment

Lianne Dillon, State of Equity

Agenda Item #7: Public Comment

Cheryce Cryer, Department of Housing and Community Development

Ann Silverberg, Related California

Agenda Item #8: Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

