



## CALIFORNIA STRATEGIC GROWTH COUNCIL

**To:** Strategic Growth Council Members

**From:** Louise Bedsworth

**Re:** Executive Director's Report for February 25 Council Meeting

### **Organizational Updates**

- SGC hosted its annual planning retreat on January 30 and 31 at the Cosumnes River Preserve. The retreat sessions focused on SGC policy and organizational priorities, operationalizing the Racial Equity Action Plan, innovative approaches to interagency coordination and stakeholder engagement, strategically aligning our activities throughout the year, increasing our presence and impact across the state, and team building.
- Key staff have met to discuss 2020 priorities and a workplan, which will be presented at the Council meeting on February 25. The SGC staff retreat also informed this proposed workplan.

### **Staffing Updates**

- SGC has welcomed several new staff:
  - Fabiha Zaman joined SGC as a Special Assistant. Fabiha is a graduate of UC Davis and a former 2019 OPR/SGC intern.
  - Cristina Echeverria joined SGC as its CCST Science Fellow. Cristina has a PhD in Civil and Environmental Engineering with a Minor in Public Health from UCLA. She is joining the Climate Change Research Program team and supporting OPR/SGC scoping efforts for California's Fifth Climate Change Assessment.
  - AHSC welcomed two new staff:
    - Judith Hinh joined as the AHSC Housing Analyst. She has 20 years of housing experience. Before arriving to SGC, she served as the Senior Program representative for the California Department of Housing & Community Development (HCD) for the Climate Change Initiative.
    - Shep Wilbun joined as the AHSC Program Associate. Prior to joining SGC, Shep worked at Limebike as an Operations Lead, in the Los Angeles Mayor's Office on an LA Promise Zone, and with community-based planning from both local government and community-based organization roles.
- Jessica Wackenhut joined the Tahoe Conservancy as the lead for the Tahoe Livable Communities program. Jessica will be spending time with SGC to partner on regional projects.
- SGC is in the final interview stage of hiring for the TCC Program Analyst and the Health and Equity Program Manager, Analyst, and Associate.



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### Program Updates

#### *Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC)*

Staff: Ryan Silber, Judith Hinh, and Shep Wilbun

- AHSC Round 5 Application period closed on February 11. Preliminary review of the applicants shows:
  - 49 complete applications, requesting over \$1 billion in funding
  - Applications were submitted from 12 MPO regions and one non-MPO region
  - AHSC received its first application for a tribal housing project
  - The applications represent over 5500 housing units, over 90% of them affordable
- AHSC staff expect to send eligibility letters to applicants in mid-April, providing an opportunity to appeal any disqualifications.
- AHSC staff is reaching out to agencies to identify reviewers.
- AHSC will present recommended awards to the Council at the June 25, 2020 SGC meeting.
- After the February 11 application deadline, AHSC will work with the on-the-ground technical assistance providers to develop a capacity building workplan for the State. AHSC will follow up with projects that did not move forward for Round 5 and work to foster applications in low-income and disadvantaged communities across the State. This may include educational workshops, partnership roundtables, and initial project scoping.

#### *Transformative Climate Communities Program (TCC)*

Staff: Saharnaz Mirzazad, Sophie Young, and Alex Gallo

- TCC Round 3 applications are due on February 28.
  - As of January 29, TCC staff is expecting applications from Stockton, Oakland, Richmond, and Riverside for implementation grants.
  - TCC staff is also expecting 32 applications for TCC planning grants which is the most inquiries we have received for the planning grants since the beginning of the program.
  - TCC staff will start reviewing applications in March and will reach out to agencies to identify reviewers.
- TCC staff will present recommended awards to the Council at the June 25, 2020 SGC meeting.
- In Quarter 1 2020, TCC staff expects to hit the following milestones:
  - Round 2 Grant Agreements Executed.
  - Round 1 Planning grant deliverables finalized with exception of Adapt West Oakland Green Infrastructure Planning grant, which has an extension to May 2020.
  - UCLA Luskin Center Year 1 evaluation report on program's impact.
- TCC staff have launched a working group to explore pathways to include disadvantaged unincorporated communities in TCC. This is in response to AB 351 (Hurtado), signed into law in 2019.



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- SGC is hosting a convening on March 17 to bring together TCC planning and implementation grantees to share stories about the impact TCC is having in their communities. The SGC Executive Director and staff have conducted approximately thirty legislative briefings to educate legislators on the program in preparation for this convening. **Councilmembers and key staff are invited to attend the convening in Sacramento.**

### Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC)

Staff: Emily Tibbott, DOC Staff Team

- SALC Round 6
  - DOC staff posted the draft Round 6 program guidelines for public comment on December 20 and held workshops on January 22 and 23 in Sacramento and San Bernardino. The Sacramento workshop included a webinar component for remote attendees.
  - Public comment closed January 27.
  - DOC staff received 125 comments in writing and at the workshops. SALC DOC staff conferred with SGC on the comments to finalize the draft guidelines.
  - SALC DOC staff will present draft guidelines to the Council for approval on February 25, 2020.
- SALC DOC staff are working to execute Round 5 grant agreements this quarter. In December, the Council awarded 20 easement grants and 6 planning grants.
- SALC's technical assistant, Cultivate LLC., has selected three regions to work with on future planning grant applications: Ventura, San Diego, and San Bernardino/Inland Empire. They will be working with interested parties in each region to formulate objectives and put together applications for the program's August application deadline.

### Climate Change Research Program (CCR)

Staff: Elizabeth Grassi and Leah Fisher

- Round 3 proposals were due on February 12.
  - SGC received 37 applications, requesting over \$27 million in funding.
  - Staff anticipate recommending 5-7 awards at the completion of the review process.
- Staff have begun a two-phase review process, and plan to request Council approval of recommended awards at the June 2020 Council meeting.
- SGC will release a Summary Report from the inaugural SGC Climate Change Research Symposium, which was held on November 5, 2019. The Summary Report highlights what was discussed and learned from participants to improve community engagement in climate change research.
- SGC launched a collaboration with the Thriving Earth Exchange to support community-driven research in California. Through this partnership, participating communities will be paired with a Community Science Fellow to assist in



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development of a research project and identification of a volunteer scientist to work with the community on their research need.

- This is the first time the Thriving Earth Exchange has focused on developing a cohort of communities and Fellows specific to one State.
- SGC will advise Thriving Earth Exchange (TEX) on selection of communities, so that preference will be given to historically marginalized and/or underserved communities, including California Native American Tribes, as well as communities classified as disadvantaged by CalEnviroScreen 3.0, low income, and climate vulnerable communities.
- TEX hopes to select 10 California communities for the cohort, from diverse regions of the state.
- SGC will begin the process to update the program's Research Investment Plan, pending FY20-21 budget decisions. Staff will ask for input from the Council this fall, to provide strategic direction for the Plan's update.

### Community Assistance for Climate Equity (CACE)

Staff: Kirin Kumar, Ena Lupine, Coral Abbott, and Sarah Risher

- CACE staff have launched a stakeholder listening tour to better understand capacity building needs and barriers to accessing state investment in under-resourced communities.
- CACE staff will be releasing two RFPs to support SGC's technical assistance and capacity building efforts:
  - Develop and implement a pilot climate and equity learning collaborative with the objective of expanding community-based leadership around CCI grant readiness.
  - Evaluate the impact of the CCI TA program to date and establish new metrics around technical assistance and capacity building.
- CACE staff is convening a work group to develop the Technical Assistance Guidelines for State Agencies that the SGC was directed to create per SB 1072. **Staff will need participation from agencies to develop the TA guidelines.**
- CACE staff is working with partner agencies to launch a new round of TA for Caltrans' Low Carbon Transit Operations Program, CalSTA's Transit and Intercity Rail Capitol Program, CARB's Sustainable Transportation Equity Project (CARB) and CDFA's Climate Smart Agriculture Programs.
- CACE staff is continuing to manage the following TA activities:
  - BOOST Pilot Program
  - AHSC TA
  - TCC TA
  - SALC Planning Grants TA

### Health in All Policies

Staff: Julia Caplan, Lianne Dillon, Colin Gutierrez, and Holly Nickel





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- In partnership with DOC, staff is advancing research on transfer of development rights as a mechanism to use in high-speed rail station cities and elsewhere. Funding has been identified to advance a research RFP, and research questions are under development.
  - Working with HSR Environmental Services Department, staff is monitoring progress on Regional Conservation Investment Strategies and Mitigation Credit Agreements for potential use by the train, particularly in the Santa Clara Valley.
  - Working with Planning and Sustainability Department leadership, staff will identify one or more San Joaquin Valley station area communities in which to undertake comprehensive planning, focused both on denser development patterns and adjacent agricultural lands protection.
  - Staff is collaborating with HSR Planning and Sustainability leadership to help educate State environmental interests regarding HSRA sustainability activities, in an effort to strengthen relationships with the environmental community.
  - Participating with HSRA staff on review of site and station area planning activities in the Merced to Bakersfield alignment for HSR.
- Staff is engaging with an inter-agency leadership team to elevate natural and working lands as a priority within the Administration, including the identification of priority land protection and restoration activities, in anticipation of the inclusion of this sector for the first time in the next State Scoping Plan update.

SGC's partnership with HSRA has enabled the launching of the Regions Rise Together initiative (which is a partnership between OPR and GOBiz). Recent activities include:

- Worked with GOBiz to draft elements of the Jobs/Economy section of the Governor's proposed budget. This portion of the budget included a section on Regions Rise Together that highlighted \$50 million in investments to support the DRIVE initiative in Fresno and a medical school in the Inland Empire.
- Convened a group of leaders from Kern County and Bakersfield in a meeting with the Governor about a regional economic development strategy for Metro Bakersfield. This meeting was inspired by the Governor's inclusion of funding for Fresno's DRIVE initiative in the budget.
- Preparing for future outreach strategy sessions in additional regions, including the Northern San Joaquin Valley, Salinas Valley, and Imperial.
- Drafted and released an op-ed about Regions Rise Together in Cal Matters in early February that will be signed by Kate Gordon and Lenny Mendonca.
- Beginning to prepare a second "story map" about CA as a state of regions for possible inclusion in the CalCOG conference in April.
- Participating in a multi-agency review team for the TIRCP funding program. All applications will be reviewed and scored by February 18th.



## Special Projects Updates

### Tribal Government Challenge

Staff: Elizabeth Grassi (Program Manager), Leah Fisher, Doug Bojack, Kevin Peth, Blake Deering, Ena Lupine, Coral Abbott, Sophie Young, Theresa Cesena

- SGC staff, in partnership with the California Energy Commission, released a draft solicitation for the [Tribal Government Challenge Planning Grant Program](#) for tribal comment on February 3rd.
- The program will award up to \$2 million in grants (max award \$250,000) to support tribal planning that identifies solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improves clean energy access, and advances climate adaptation and resiliency on Tribal lands and in Tribal communities.
- A program information and Tribal comment webinar about the Program was held on February 19. The Tribal comment period continues until March 3rd, and the Notice of Funding Availability containing the final solicitation document will be released on March 13th. Grants are anticipated to be awarded in June 2020.
- This funding will also support a statewide gap analysis of climate and energy-related work on Tribal lands. SGC and CEC Staff are drafting a Request for Proposal (RFP) to hire a consultant to begin this work in spring/early summer 2020.

### Integrated Regional Planning: Applications and tools

Staff: Denny Grossman

- SGC staff coordinate an interagency team to advance the practice of regional conservation assessments, the integration of standardized datasets to address state planning priorities, and the development of practical tools to support regional planning applications. Specific activities include:
  - Supporting two DWR conservation and resource management implementation programs: The Urban Streams Restoration Program and the San Joaquin Fish Population Enhancement program.
  - Advancing proposal submission and evaluation processes for the CDFA Healthy Soils Innovation Grants Program. The Regional Conservation Development and Planning Tool (RePlan) has been extended to integrate agriculture and soils datasets as a platform for improved user-friendliness, efficiency and comprehensiveness of this CDFA proposal submission and evaluation process.
  - Implementation of a Regional Conservation Assessment for the Great Valley ecoregion that is creating the spatial representation of terrestrial and aquatic values that are critical to informing conservation and development planning and granting activities across this region.
  - Working with the Sierra Cascade Land Trust Council to integrate conservation information from its 19-member land trusts as a foundational component of the development of a Regional Conservation Strategy.



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### Wildfire Resiliency and Recovery Planning Grants

Staff: Elizabeth Grassi, in partnership with OPR

- OPR released the Wildfire Resiliency and Recovery Planning Grant Program guidelines on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020.
- Staff developed these guidelines, in collaboration with the Department of Conservation and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research's Integrated Climate Adaption and Resiliency Program (ICARP), to conduct a competitive process for awarding approximately \$750,000 in re-appropriated unused or returned local assistance funds, originally awarded as part of the SGC's Sustainable Communities Planning Grant and Incentives Program.
- The deadline for submitting applications is March 11, and OPR staff will present the Council with a list of recommended planning grant awards for approval at the April 30<sup>th</sup> meeting.