



CALIFORNIA STRATEGIC GROWTH COUNCIL

To: California Strategic Growth Council Members
From: Louise Bedsworth
Re: Executive Director Report to the Council – November 17, 2020

Organizational Updates

- SGC hosted its staff retreat in early November. The retreat goals included:
 - Identifying ways to operationalize cross-programmatic action to support the priorities this year, collaborate across programs, and achieve impact.
 - Deepening relationships with one another and understanding how to use our similarities and differences to build unity and promote effective group work and team building in a virtual environment.
 - Building each other's knowledge and skills through teach ins and skill sharing.
- As a follow up to the Racial Equity Resolution adopted by the SGC Council in August, SGC Deputy Director Jessie Buendia convened the Racial Equity Working Group on October 27 with staff designees from each of the Council Agencies. The Racial Equity Working Group will meet monthly to support implementation of the Resolution. The Resolution has gained attention nationally, including through a [blog post](#) by the Government Alliance on Race and Equity.

Staffing Updates

- SGC and OPR have promoted Sandra Lupien from Chief External Affairs Officer of SGC to Deputy Director, External Affairs and Communications, for both OPR and SGC. Sandra will lead a newly organized External Affairs and Communications team across both organizations, comprising communications and web/graphics personnel. OPR/SGC are currently recruiting for a Communications Officer to round out that team.
- William Walker has joined SGC as a Transportation Planner. William joins us from OPR and will support AB 285 implementation. AB 285 directs SGC to complete an analysis of the California Transportation Plan and current Sustainable Community Strategies and assess how their implementation would affect the State's multi-modal transportation system.
- SGC welcomed Elizabeth Rozmarynowska, a Graduate Student Assistant working on communications with SGC's External Affairs team.
- SGC is in the final stages of interviews for the Transformative Climate Communities Analyst who will focus on awards implementation.
- SGC is identifying candidates for a 3rd High Speed Rail position to serve as a planning liaison with station communities in the San Joaquin Valley.
- SGC interviewed Executive Fellow candidates in November.

Program Updates

Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program (AHSC)

Staff: Ryan Silber, Judith Hinh, Shep Wilbun, and Housing and Community Development (HCD) Staff Team

- AHSC staff updated the Final Round 6 Draft Guidelines to address concerns regarding COVID-19 impacts, geographic distribution of awards, and homeownership funding access

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among a variety of other updates to clarify the guidelines while continuing to ensure that AHSC awards are prioritized to projects that advance sustainable development methods.

- Updates to the Round 6 Final Draft Guidelines were informed through a stakeholder engagement process that included three informational webinars, one-on-one discussions, and 75 letters submitted by various advocates, developers, localities, regional governments, and coalitions.
- Following the adoption of the Round 6 Guidelines, staff will release a Notice of Funding Availability for approximately \$350 million and post application materials. Staff will host application workshops and consultations with prospective applicants to inform them of the application process and help attract competitive projects.
- SGC is working with Enterprise Community Partners as technical assistance providers for the upcoming sixth and seventh AHSC funding rounds. Enterprise Community Partners bring multiple years of AHSC technical assistance experience and will support approximately 40 projects each round with direct application assistance, as well as capacity building assistance for more prospective applicants.
- Following Round 5 awards made at the June 25, 2020 SGC meeting, AHSC staff followed up with unsuccessful applicants to offer feedback and inform them of upcoming technical assistance opportunities.

Transformative Climate Communities Program (TCC)

Staff: Saharnaz Mirzazad, Sophie Young, Alex Gallo, and Department of Conservation (DOC) Staff Team

- TCC staff continue to work with Round 3 grantees to update plans and projects to comply with the TCC Guidelines and grant agreement, including rescoping the Stockton Rising application to match available funds.
- Staff anticipate that Stockton and Oakland's grant agreements will be complete by the end of 2020 and Riverside in early 2021. This timeline will meet SGC's goal to execute the grant agreements within 6-8 months after awards are made.
- Multiple projects of Round 1 are in the construction phase including West Fresno Community College and Fresno Chinatown Housing project.
- In response to SB 351 which requires any future TCC investment to be available in Disadvantage Unincorporated Areas, staff have conducted research and interviewed multiple stakeholders in preparation of a working group meeting in November.
- Seven Round 1 Planning grants have completed their work and closed their grant agreements. Staff will present the outcomes of the Planning grants to Council in 2021.

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC)

Staff: Emily Tibbott and Department of Conservation (DOC) Staff Team

- SALC Round 6 grant applications were due August 28. Extensions were granted to a few applicants who were affected by fire. Ultimately, the Department of Conservation received 52 acquisition applications and 10 planning grant applications (compared to 36 and six last year, respectively).
- Department of Conservation staff are reviewing and scoring each application, as well as continuing to conduct virtual site visits.
- The SALC Interagency Committee will conduct a review of the projects on November 18. Funding recommendations will be presented to the Council on December 17.



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Climate Change Research Program (CCR)

Staff: Elizabeth Grassi and Leah Fisher

- The Greenlining Institute released a new report, "Making Racial Equity Real in Research", that references SGC's 2019 Climate Change Research Symposium Summary Report. SGC recommends this document as a resource to anyone working in and/or funding applied research.
- CCR staff has recently completed a series of interviews with Round 1 grant partners to strengthen the connection between our research efforts and the objectives of California communities, and to understand how we can better integrate non-traditional research partners and stakeholders into the research funded by the Program.
- Staff continue to support CCR grantees addressing COVID-related challenges by providing the fourteen grantees with one-year extensions for completing their research projects and encouraging grantees to learn from each other about engagement adaptations and other best practices. Staff are holding a roundtable for their grantees on October 30.
- Staff have completed the process of executing the six Round 3 award contracts, with projects launching this month.
- Staff will begin updating the program's Research Investment Plan, pending FY20-21 budget decisions. Staff will seek input from the Council this winter, to provide strategic direction for the update.

Community Assistance for Climate Equity (CACE)

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

- CACE staff launched the Partners Advancing Climate Equity (PACE) leadership development and technical assistance program in early November. The program will convene a cohort of 20-25 community leaders from under-resourced communities throughout the state to develop skills and networks to support local, community-driven climate action. Cohort participants will develop needs assessments of their communities and focus on initiating cross-sector collaboration to advance local priorities.
- SGC received a State Environmental Justice Cooperative Agreement grant (SEJCA) from US EPA. The \$200,000 award will go toward providing participant stipends for PACE and updating the curriculum to reflect the impacts of COVID-19 on under-resourced communities.
- Staff developed a Tribal appendix to the Technical Assistance Guidelines for State Agencies that provides specific guidance on developing Tribal serving TA programs.
- Staff continue to manage the TA activities for the BOOST Pilot Program, CARB's Sustainable Transportation Equity Program (STEP) AHSC TA, TCC TA, SALC Planning Grants TA, and the community-informed research partnership with Thriving Earth Exchange.
- Following the Council's August approval of a \$2 million expenditure of AHSC continuously appropriated funds to support technical assistance, staff are working to develop a strategic plan for advancing the overall goals of the TA program and initiating new TA programs in partnership with other State agencies.

Tribal Government Challenge

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



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- SGC, in partnership with the California Energy Commission, is administering the [Tribal Government Challenge Planning Grant Program](#). The program has awarded grants to eight tribes to conduct climate and energy planning, planning projects that advance tribal priorities for energy independence and energy and climate resilience.
- This program is also supporting a statewide gap analysis that launched in late September, focusing on gathering Tribal climate and energy-related priorities and needs, and making recommendations to the State around input gathered to inform future programs and funding. This gap analysis project is led by Prosper Sustainably and a diverse team of consultants.
- SGC and CEC are coordinating between the gap analysis, tribal planning grants, as well as other State tribal relationships and efforts to ensure we can leverage outreach opportunities and share best practices and knowledge across work streams.

Collaborative Policy Initiative Updates

Health and Equity Program (HEP) & Health in All Policies (HiAP)

Staff: Nanette Star, Bo Chung, Michael Jimenez and California Department of Public Health and Public Health Institute Health in All Policies (HiAP) Staff

HiAP Future Planning

- HEP Staff conducted and analyzed data from 25 Key Informant Interviews with state agencies on health and equity priorities to help identify HiAP priority topics for a 2021-2025 inter-agency workplan.
- Staff developed a Healthy Communities Framework (HCF) Survey that is currently being vetted by HiAP Stakeholders and dispersed to state and local partners in December 2020. Survey respondents were prompted to identify which aspects of the HCF they see as key priorities, which HiAP may undertake in a 2021-2025 inter-agency workplan.
- Staff are developing Operating Guidelines for HiAP Partnership Team and the HiAP Task Force that will be used in future meetings, guidelines, and membership recruitment.

HiAP Projects

- In October, PHI and HEP Staff contributed guidance on HiAP strategies to CDPH's COVID-19 Health Equity Playbook for Local Jurisdictions.
- The HiAP Task Force partnered with the Office of the Surgeon General and the Department of Health Care Services to administer the California State Departmental Scan on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Trauma-Informed Approaches.
- On October 26, PHI HiAP racial equity strategist Holly Nickel hosted a panel session on CCORE at the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association. The session was titled "Building California State Government Capacity to Advance Racial Equity" and discussant-presenters included Lazaro Cardenas from CDPH, Rhiannah Gordon from Caltrans, and Deldi Reyes from Cal-EPA.

Capitol Collaborative on Race and Equity (CCORE):

- State entities increase their learning and capacity on racial equity. In August, September, and October, the CCORE Learning Cohort (consisting of 15 teams with representatives from 23 state entities) convened for 5 all-cohort trainings and 3 team coordinator trainings on Antiracist Results-Based Accountability, skill building in Racial Equity Tool application and



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timing, and core concepts on communicating to advance racial equity including application of the Affirm, Counter, Transform method.

Collaborative Policy and Planning Initiatives

Staff: Emily Tibbott and Egon Terplan

Partnership with High-Speed Rail:

- SGC HSR staff are working on several initiatives to support HSR project delivery and station area development. SGC HSR staff are participating with HSRA staff to review site and station area planning activities in the Merced to Bakersfield area.

Regional Planning:

- Staff have been leading an interagency working group focused on ways to improve regional planning in California, especially the Sustainable Communities Strategies and Regional Transportation Plans. The interagency working group is a subcommittee of the Housing + Transportation workgroup and includes staff from HCD, CARB, OPR, SGC, Caltrans, CTC, and CalSTA. The team is working with partners at UC Berkeley and a group of graduate students to conduct interviews with all 18 MPOs across California. Findings will be presented in late summer/fall 2020.
- SGC and CalCOG reconvened the State-MPO Workgroup, bringing together MPO Planning Directors from all MPOs and representatives from SGC, OPR, CARB, CalSTA, Caltrans, CTC, and HCD.
- Staff continue to engage with the future of the freight and logistics sector. The focus is increasingly on the future of warehouses and the opportunity for coordination around inland ports in the Central Valley and other areas where mode shift from truck to rail is possible.

Transportation Planning:

- Staff is supporting the EO N-19-19 action plan stakeholder outreach process and development of an action plan. This includes meeting with key leaders in transportation and planning across California.
- SGC is launching activities to implement AB 285.

Land Conservation Initiatives:

- Staff supported the passage of EO N-82-20 and will be actively involved in its implementation, including stakeholder outreach. SGC helped lead in development of immediate actions regarding Land Conservation.
- Staff is managing efforts of a UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs graduate student engaged in researching and writing a paper on financial incentives for land conservation, to be finalized next spring.
- Staff is involved in inter-agency leadership efforts regarding the implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, including how to minimize local economic impacts, and how to support regional land use planning.

