
September 8, 2021

Subject: Strategic Growth Council April Meeting Minutes

Reporting Period: June 2021 – September 2021

Staff Lead: Sarah Newsham, Executive Fellow

Recommended Action:

Approval of the April 29, 2021 Strategic Growth Council Meeting Minutes.

**Strategic Growth Council
April 29, 2021
Meeting Minutes**

Agenda Item #1: Call to Order

Chair Gordon called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

Agenda Item #2: Roll Call

Council Members and Representatives Present:

Kate Gordon (Chair), Director, Governor's Office of Planning and Research (**OPR**);

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency (**CNRA**);

Jared Blumenfeld, Secretary, California Environmental Protection Agency (**CalEPA**);

David Kim, Secretary, California State Transportation Agency (**CalSTA**);

Lourdes Castro Ramirez, Secretary, California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency (**BCSH**);

Mark Starr, Deputy Director, California Health and Human Services Agency (**CHHS**);

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

Juan Sánchez Muñoz, Public Member;

Nicole Capretz, Public Member;

Mike Flad, Public Member

Agenda Item #3: ACTION: Approval of Minutes

Motion was made (Flad) and seconded (Blumenfeld) to approve the February 24, 2021 meeting minutes. **Motion passes.**

Agenda Item #4: Council Member Updates

Chair Gordon and Council Members recognize Louise Bedsworth, outgoing Executive Director of the Strategic Growth Council (**SGC**), for her dedicated service to the State of California. Chair Gordon stated that Assemblymember Buffy Wicks and Senator Nancy Skinner announced a resolution honoring Louise Bedsworth and her service to the State.

RESOLUTION

California Legislature

By the Honorable Nancy Skinner, 9th Senatorial District;
and the Honorable Buffy Wicks, 15th Assembly District;

Relative to commending

LOUISE BEDSWORTH

WHEREAS, Louise Bedsworth is stepping down as Executive Director of the California Strategic Growth Council after three exemplary years in that role and ten years of dedicated public service to the State of California, and it is appropriate at this time to highlight her achievements throughout her years in office and extend to her a heartfelt thank you for a job well done; and

WHEREAS, In her role as Executive Director of the California Strategic Growth Council, Louise Bedsworth drove the Council toward courageous, inclusive, and innovative policies that promote sustainability, health, and equity across the State; and

WHEREAS, As Executive Director, Louise Bedsworth held responsibility for the distribution of over \$1 billion in funding to support affordable housing, transit, and active transportation; urban greening; research; community capacity building; and technical assistance, and under her tenure, the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program developed 5,609 housing units, 4,955 of which are affordable; created new bike lanes; improved transit lines; and upgraded or created pedestrian walkways through integrated projects; and

WHEREAS, Louise Bedsworth additionally managed the Transformative Climate Communities Program, a statewide program that empowers the communities most impacted by pollution to choose their own goals, strategies, and projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and local air pollution, and she also oversaw the Climate Change Research Program, which engages both researchers and community partners in all stages of the research process to advance California's climate-change goals; and

WHEREAS, Under her leadership, Louise Bedsworth led the Strategic Growth Council to become the first state agency to unanimously adopt a Racial Equity Action Plan and commit to regular public discussions about race and equity through unanimous adoption of a Racial Equity Resolution; supervised the development of California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment and the Statewide Summary Report, focusing on building community resilience and translating information into action; and authored the 2015 Environmental Goals and Policy Report; and

WHEREAS, Louise Bedsworth also helmed the Community and Watershed Resilience Program, resulting in a \$70.3 million federal grant for community resilience work in

Tuolumne County following the devastating Rim Fire; received and ran a United States Environmental Protection Agency grant to evaluate "Implications of Extreme Events Under Climate Change on Air and Water Quality in California"; and helped design and lead the implementation of the Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program to develop a cohesive and coordinated response to the impacts of climate change across the State; and

WHEREAS, The contributions that Louise Bedsworth has made to the State of California have been invaluable, and having demonstrated a model of leadership that is kind, people centered, and visionary, she will be greatly missed by the staff of the Strategic Growth Council and her colleagues at the State of California; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY SENATOR NANCY SKINNER AND ASSEMBLY MEMBER BUFFY WICKS, That Louise Bedsworth be commended for her distinguished record of professional service with the California Strategic Growth Council and extended sincere best wishes in all her future endeavors.

Dated this 29th day of April, 2021.

Honorable Nancy Skinner
9th Senatorial District
Honorable Buffy Wicks
15th Assembly District

Highlights of Council Member remarks:

Ross (CDFA): What I admire most about you is that you helped lead the way with designing our programs with equity at the center. Your legacy will be long-lived because of the difference you have made.

Blumenfeld (CalEPA): You've focused on problem-solving. Compromise is often defined as no one being happy, but with Louise, compromise is defined as everyone being happy. SGC is the model of racial equity work among State agencies and none of that would have happened without you and your team.

Crowfoot (CNRA): We all know Louise by her first name, but we can and should call her Dr. Bedsworth. She has brought tremendous sophistication on all the topics we cover, including climate mitigation and climate adaptation. You and your team have built programs that are serving as models to the State and to the Biden administration.

Kim (CalSTA): When I got here, several people told me that one of the most enjoyable assignments I would have is serving on the CA Strategic Growth Council, and that has been absolutely true. It's cross-cutting and multidisciplinary and that's because of your great service and the team you have built.

Castro Ramirez (BCSH): You've been a strong champion of affordable housing, and we've been able to think more holistically about how to integrate affordable housing and use it as an anchor and connector. Under your leadership, the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities flourished. It's important to be responsive to your board members and make sure they're prepared, and you have done that superbly.

Starr (CHHS): You helped facilitate a historic shift towards equity as a way of doing state government and state business, ranging from technical assistance and engagement to prioritizing monetary infrastructure resources for those communities that face historical and continuing injustice. That includes our collaborative Health in All Policies (**HiAP**) work and supporting communities to improve their living conditions.

Flad (Public Member): I don't know how you make each one of us feel like we're your only Council Member. The State of California is a better place because of you, the city of South Gate is a better place, and I'm a better person because of watching and learning from your leadership style.

Capretz (Public Member): I appreciate your calm, steady leadership. You lead from behind. I have enjoyed partnering with you on trying to elevate the Transformative Climate Communities program (**TCC**). I always look forward to our conversations.

Gordon (OPR): I had the honor of getting to work with Louise over the years before coming to OPR and was so happy that she was willing to stay on for a couple of extra years. You have such a steady hand and your academic background makes you so thorough and thoughtful.

Bedsworth (SGC): Thank you for trusting me and our staff. I am an SGC geek, I used to watch the early Council meetings on my computer. I only planned on working for the State for a year or two, and I have stayed on because of the people I've gotten to work with, the projects I've gotten to work on, and the passion and commitment everyone has. I've taken away three main lessons: 1) Collaboration is more important than ever and it's really hard work, but it's worth it—collaborating across agencies and departments, collaborating from the State down to the neighborhood level, and collaborating with other branches of government. 2) I thank you all for highlighting the work on equity—I have learned so much from our partners, our staff, and all of you about how we can advance equity. We're having conversations that ten years ago I never would have felt comfortable having, and it's so critically important that we're having these conversations and doing this work. 3) The place I've learned the most is the projects and the communities. I've always been a believer that we need a top-down and bottom-up approach to addressing our long-term sustainability challenges. More than ever, seeing projects on the ground, I know the solutions have to come from the ground up. We set the direction, but communities doing the work—rural and urban communities working at all scales. My goal is to think about how we scale and build on the kinds of work we do at SGC. I will be cheering you on from the sidelines and I won't be far away. Thank you all.

Public comment:

Julia Caplan, Public Health Institute

Agenda Item #5: ACTION: Consent Calendar

- a. Award TCC Planning Grant award to the City of Bakersfield with \$35,926.61 from unspent Proposition 84 funds to support community outreach, engagement, and project development in the completion of the City's TCC Plan.
- b. Rescind \$175,346 Wildfire Resiliency and Recovery Planning Grant, funded with Proposition 84 funds, from the City of Moorpark. Award returned funds to the County of Los Angeles to support recovery from catastrophic wildfires from 2017, 2018, and 2019.

Public comment:

No public comment.

Motion was made (Flad) and seconded (Starr) to approve the Consent Calendar.

Motion passes (10-0-0*).

*marks abstention or absence from vote

Agenda Item #6: Executive Director's Report

Louise Bedsworth, Executive Director, SGC

Council Discussion:

Mark Starr (CHHS): Want to comment on the Health in All Policies work and highlight the value of the Othring and Belonging Institute's work to get input across the state on health equity priorities. It showed that people want State government to address these important issues. Our HiAP staff is very much engaged with this.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Agenda Item #7: Discussion Item: Racial Equity Resolution Implementation

Jessica Buendia, Deputy Director, SGC

Racial Equity Working Group members

Council Discussion:

Gordon (OPR): OPR and SGC are in the Racial Equity Action Plan (**REAP**) development and implementation process. Most proud of our staff's commitment to this work and to the Capitol Collaborative on Race and Equity (**CCORE**) training and principles. Every

team at OPR and SGC has been dedicated to this work. Excited to guide OPR's piece of the Racial Equity Action Plan and to make it actionable and create mechanisms for tracking.

Kim (CalSTA): Our long-term goal is that everything we do will be done with an equity lens. All eight of our Boards, Departments, and Offices (**BDOs**) are fully on board with the equity agenda. Shortly after the murder of George Floyd we put out a statement condemning racism and calling attention to the fact that transportation decisions of the past had the effect of dividing and displacing communities, especially Black and brown neighborhoods. We have to own up to that, take responsibility, and do something about it. The Department of Transportation (**Caltrans**) has formed an Office of Race and Equity. The California Transportation Commission (**CTC**) has an equity statement and is launching a series of equity listening roundtables. The Motor Vehicle Board has established an equity advisory committee. Caltrans is in the process of developing an "equity index" analytical tool, which we think can be a model for the country.

Starr (CHHS): Disproportionate rates of deaths and illness among historically oppressed groups during COVID reflects the inequities that existed before the pandemic and that we hope to address moving forward. A few weeks ago, the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a statement identifying racism as a public health threat. We recently conducted a rigorous review of our agency and departments, which included recommendations to promote racial and health equity agency-wide. Pleased to see that the Governor's proposed Jan budget requests \$9.7 to implement equity initiatives. California Department of Public Health (**CDPH**) was an early participant in the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (**GARE**), the predecessor to CCORE.

Ross (CDFA): We have our first CCORE cohort this year. It's exciting to see the excitement and new leadership that's developing as a result, and what they're bringing back to all of us. CCORE cohort did a training for leadership and is now sponsoring a speaker series. Have a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (**DEI**) committee for people who couldn't participate in the into the CCORE series. Created two new ad-hoc advisory committees to inform us of how we can broaden the representation of all California farmers to improve our boards and commissions. We are doing mandatory training.

Chair Gordon acknowledged at 2:08 p.m. that Secretary Blumenfeld (CalEPA) has been replaced by Deputy Secretary Yana Garcia.

Garcia (CalEPA): Want to acknowledge how critical the foundation-setting work through GARE was. We've seen our boards and departments adopt resolutions, pursue working groups and task forces. There is a lot of existing interest that we are tapping into. Speaks to capacity-building that we're focusing on across the agency. Comes with difficulties of culture change. Important to acknowledge the history of systemic impacts. We've done a lot of data collection and gathering and we're looking to double down on our data metrics and indicators. Race is not included in CalEnviroScreen but there is an accompanying race analysis. Redlining story map tells

history of redlining and what it means for existing environmental disparities today. Culture change is challenging, excited to tackle difficult conversations. We've heard loud and clear that consistent leadership and reminders are important, and demonstrate to everyone that this work is important and requires everyone's engagement.

Crowfoot (CNRA): Our agency is on a journey: listen and learn, commit, act. Reaching higher percentages of resources going to disadvantaged communities. Historically, our agency and the State have provided funding to communities that can make the case and have the capacity to secure those dollars. Providing technical assistance to those communities that want to access resources but can't. Making the case for shifting funding to achieve more equitable access to the outdoors, including State Parks. Some of our decisions cause environmental injustice, but environmental injustice also manifests in unequal access to the resources of our state. Parks for All is an upcoming effort. Focus on deepening partnerships with tribal governments and tribal communities. Tribal communities have stewarded our environment since time immemorial, and for most of the time over the last 170 years, state government has disconnected and disrespected that traditional ecological knowledge and stewardship. Advancing Governor's Tribal Ancestral Lands policy. Brining aboard Assistant Secretary for Tribal Affairs and Assistant Secretary for Equity and Environmental Justice to institutionalize this work. Building a workforce that reflects the diversity of California. Launched an effort called Thrive@Resources to recruit a vibrant workforce.

Castro Ramirez (BCSH): Furthering fair housing by making sure we are doing everything possible to ensure local jurisdictions are doing their part to create access and reverse patterns of residential segregation. Department of Housing and Community Development (**HCD**) released new guidance on Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (**AFFH**). Released a tool to allow local jurisdictions to see how they're doing and connect them to tools to further their efforts. In implementation of the Homekey initiative, HCD included a racial equity metric and geographic equity metric. Department of Financial Protection and Innovation (**DFPI**) obtained new powers at the start of the year and has been using those powers to hold predatory lenders and debt collectors accountable. There is a tendency for those financial institutions to target people of color. DFPI held an economic equity conference in banking. Importance of data—you can't improve what you can't measure. Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council (**HCFC**) released homelessness data integration system. Disproportionate representation of BIPOC individuals within the homelessness system.

Flad (Public Member): There's a level of government that is just now starting to become active in this space, and it's a credit to organizations like SGC. We see these inequities every day at the local level in access to healthcare, employment, housing, and now vaccines and testing. Starts a dialogue that is rooted in outrage, and rightly so. The key is to change that outreach into action. GARE and the actions of SGC provide leadership and an actionable plan. Need to connect horizontally and vertically.

Public Comment:

Juliet Sims, Prevention Institute

Monica Hernandez on behalf of James Corless, Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG)

Julie Nelson, Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE)

Shireen Malekafzali, County of San Mateo

Juliet Sims, Prevention Institute

Leyne Milstein, City of Sacramento

Elena Santamaria, NextGen California

Alejandra Ramirez-Zarate, Advancement Project California

Chelsea Spier, CA Department of Water Resources

Michael Harris, California Black Agriculture Working Group

Council Member responses:

Crowfoot (CNRA): Thrive@Resources is focused on employee wellness across our agency. We also have an employer of choice committee with leaders and HR representatives across the agency focused on how to improve the hiring process to attract a broader universe of applicants, and then conduct our selection process in ways that minimize unconscious bias and recognize the value of diversity. To learn more, go to resources.ca.gov where there is a link to Thrive@Resources.

Kim (CalSTA): A few speakers mentioned SB 17 to establish an Office of Racial Equity. I would encourage everyone to check out the bill analysis written by the Senate Judiciary Committee staff for a great history.

Capretz (Public Member): Centering equity in regional planning process. Ensuring our investments go first into communities of concern. Our city and county are starting offices of racial equity. Our regional transportation plan is going to be game-changing for our region. I agree with the focus on outcomes—Environmental Justice (**EJ**) communities do not think that cap-and-trade has benefitted outcomes in their communities. Metrics will be important so that communities on the frontline feel they have been heard.

Castro Ramirez (BCSH): We recognize that equity is also about access. We are doing this holistically—not just about getting something in writing and sharing it, it is also about doing the heavy work of looking at how something is implemented. 80% of completed applications coming in for rent relief program are from renters making less than 30% of AMI, so we are effectively getting to those households who have been hard hit and are economically struggling. Also looking at racial and ethnic representation to see where we're not hitting our targets.

Break at 3:04 p.m.

Reconvened at 3:10 p.m.

Secretary Kim (CalSTA) has been replaced by Deputy Secretary Darwin Moosavi.

Agenda Item #8: ACTION: Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program

Virginia Jameson, Department of Conservation

Recommended Action: Adopt the Final Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Round 7 Guidelines

Council Discussion:

Crowfoot (CNRA): Glad these guidelines incorporate equity, climate adaptation and resilience, biodiversity. Also removal of barriers to tribal applicants.

Ross (CDFA): Thrilled that these guidelines address land tenure issues. Glad to see planning grants.

Flad (Public Member): Supportive of planning grant and technical assistance investments. Glad to see that the applicant pool will be broadened.

Secretary Castro Ramirez (BCSH) has been replaced by Deputy Secretary Lynn von Koch-Liebert at 3:28 p.m.

Secretary Crowfoot (CNRA) has been replaced by Deputy Secretary Elizabeth Williamson at 3:30 p.m.

Public Comment:

Katie Patterson, American Farmland Trust

Shayne Green, Resident/Conservation Consultant

Michael Delbar, California Rangeland Trust

Council Member response:

Ross (CDFA): Clarification on last two speakers' comments regarding restricting eligibility for ranchland? (Jameson responds, clarifying that the intent of the program is to promote infill development. Staff is ready to provide technical assistance to any applicants who want support on how they are meeting that legislative intent.)

Motion was made (Sánchez Muñoz) and seconded (Flad) to adopt the Final Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Round 7 Guidelines. **Motion passes (10-0-0).**

Agenda Item #9: Discussion Item: Overview of Outcomes from BOOST Technical Assistance Pilot

Erica Manuel, Executive Director, Institute for Local Government

Council Discussion:

Gordon (OPR): Question for Louise Bedsworth about capacity-building approaches at SGC.

Bedsworth (SGC): Technical Assistance (TA) has been largely program-specific. BOOST was a shift to a place-based approach with flexible to goals. Regional Climate Collaboratives (RCC) will be place-based, helping build social infrastructure. Providing tools for communities to meaningfully engage in processes that are affecting their communities.

Capretz (Public Member): BOOST was really helpful to San Diego. Helped with community outreach. Currently there is a group of community-based organizations (**CBOs**) that is doing deep dive on a Climate Action Plan (**CAP**) update to make sure voices of all communities are heard. All of the CBOs are working together, sharing notes, best practices.

Flad (Public Member): This capacity-building is so critical, really appreciated the local effort. Enables local government to participate in climate action. We need to continue to replicate this model of meeting communities where they are.

Public Comment:

Delo Freitas, City of Arcata

Ruben Abrica, City of East Palo Alto

Sandra Moberly, Town of Mammoth Lakes

Sánchez Muñoz leaves.

Agenda Item #10: Discussion Item: Sustainable Communities and the Master Plan for Aging

Kim McCoy-Wade, Director, Department of Aging

Chair Gordon acknowledges and remembers Marty Wachs.

Council Discussion:

Starr (CHHS): So many things have come to light recently—disasters, the pandemic, extreme heat, smoke, power safety shutoffs—that put folks that are a little older at greater risk. CDPH looks forward to supporting implementation of this plan.

Elizabeth Williamson (CNRA): We're thinking about our equitable access agenda. We've seen the health benefits of access to nature. There are some good synergies here.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Agenda Item #11: Public Comment

No public comment.

Agenda Item #12: Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.