

November 16, 2021

Subject: Strategic Growth Council September Meeting Minutes

Reporting Period: June 2021 – September 2021

Staff Lead: Sarah Newsham, Special Projects Associate, SGC

Recommended Action

Approve the September 8, 2021 Strategic Growth Council Meeting Minutes.

Strategic Growth Council

September 8, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item #1: Call to Order

Vice Chair Flad called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Agenda Item #2: Roll Call

Council Members and Representatives Present:

Mike Flad, Public Member

David Kim, Secretary, California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) *(joined at 1:22 p.m.)*

Nicole Capretz, Public Member;

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

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

Nuin-Tara Key (Designee), Deputy Director, Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR);

Karen Ross, Secretary, California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA); *(joined at 1:06 p.m.)*

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

Luanna Putney (Designee), representing Chancellor Juan Sánchez Muñoz, Public Member

Melinda Grant (Designee), Undersecretary, California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency (BCSH);

Agenda Item #3: ACTION: Approval of Minutes

Motion was made (Crowfoot) and seconded (Ross) to approve the April 29, 2021 and June 29, 2021 meeting minutes. Motion passes (9-0-0*) (Kim absent)

*marks abstention or absence from vote

Agenda Item #4: Executive Director's Report

Lynn von Koch-Liebert, Executive Director, SGC

Council Discussion:

Blumenfeld (CalEPA): SGC does amazing work and gets relatively little attention. Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) and other programs are models of what we want California to look like in the future. We want to support you in communicating about these programs.

Key (OPR): I had the opportunity to work with you on SGC Key Staff and am excited for you to bring your creativity in tackling challenging issues to SGC. Thanks to Jessie Buendia for her leadership during this time of transition.

Ross (CDFA): I appreciate that you've been part of the Housing and Transportation Working Group and understand what it takes to bring us all together and work collaboratively. I endorse the need to communicate what we are doing to make change and center equity.

Crowfoot (CNRA): Your predecessors and staff have built an incredible model of integrated, inclusive, visionary grant programs. SGC can continue to be more than just that. Let's think creatively about new ways that we can work across agencies.

Starr (CHHS): Health equity, climate change, and racial equity are core issues for CHHS. We look forward working with you and your staff on Health in All Policies (HiAP).

Grant (BCSH): You are driven, passionate, and able to bring people together. We are here for whatever you need.

Kim (CalSTA): It was an honor to be on the interview panel. I look forward to working with you to raise awareness of SGC within the transportation field. Thank you to Jessie for all your hard work leading SGC during the interim period.

Flad (Public Member): There was an impressive pool of candidates, and you have extensive experience. We are here for you 100%. You have a tremendous staff, especially Jessie Buendia. Thank you to Jessie for the work you did during

some very difficult times, including COVID, the budget process, and multiple transitions.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Agenda Item #5: Council Member Updates

Kim (CalSTA): Thank you to all stakeholders who participated in the development of the California Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI), which we recently finalized. We are participating in the Capitol Collaborative on Race and Equity (CCORE) and will develop a Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP) later this year. CalSTA staff participated in a two-day workshop on justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. The California Transportation Commission (CTC) launched an equity advisory roundtable and hired a supervising transportation planner focused on equity and engagement. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) established an Office of Race and Equity. Caltrans is developing an equity index which will be the first of its kind. CalSTA, Caltrans, and CTC are planning equity listening sessions. This spring we will be standing up a transportation equity and environmental justice advisory committee.

Blumenfeld (CalEPA): Introduction to Shereen D'Souza, Deputy Secretary for Climate and Intergovernmental Relations. This week we're signing an environmental justice (EJ) enforcement memo with US EPA. We created a program which allows employees to form voluntary affinity groups focusing on issues affecting people from traditionally underrepresented groups. Completed a train-the-trainer program for staff racial equity trainings. State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) is considering a racial equity resolution at their November board meeting and has received racist comments. The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is embedding racial equity in the prioritization of contaminated site cleanups to address the disproportionate impacts and environmental burdens on people of color. The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) will soon finalize version 4.0 of CalEnviroScreen. There has been discussion within the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and letters from employees who feel there is discrimination and systemic inequality in CARB, and so has created a diversity and racial equity task force to ensure that internal policies and culture are incorporating racial equity.

Key (OPR): We are working on resilience items in the budget, and the State Adaptation Strategy update with CNRA. OPR is participating in CCORE learning cohort this year and we are developing a REAP. We issued a survey to staff OPR,

SGC, and California Volunteers staff to understand capacity and knowledge of racial equity.

Ross (CDFA): We are doing integrated planning and activities with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee and Disability Awareness Committee. We have a racial equity speaker series, book club, and will be launch a 21 days of racial equity habit-building challenge. We did a virtual pride parade in June. This month we are bringing additional awareness to Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) mental health. We are analyzing demographic data to inform future grant programs. We put together a farmer advisory group of historically underserved BIPOC farmers. We created a new program, the California Small Producer Grant Program, and funded seven new bilingual technical assistance positions.

Starr (CHHS): We have a new goal of reaching 75% coverage with at least one dose for all Californians currently eligible for the vaccine and all racial and ethnic groups by January. CDPH is creating a new Advancing Community Equity branch to provide equity technical assistance to local health departments and work with community-based organizations (CBOs) regarding vaccine allocation. We are implementing a \$32 million health disparities grant. Budget includes many investments for equity-focused initiatives, including a significant investment in language services. The Department of Social Services is focusing on workforce racial equity through training and surveys. The Department of Public Health will have nine health equity liaisons placed across the department to imbed racial equity.

Crowfoot (CNRA): Want to thank community groups and leaders who have demanded that State government do better on equity and inclusiveness. At CNRA we listen and learn, commit, and act. We acknowledge that our agency and many of our entities have perpetuated systemic inequity and racism. We need to reshape our institutions to redress the inequity that we have perpetuated. We've heard from direct conversations with Californians that our mission does not feel inclusive to them. Our workforce needs to reflect the diversity of California. We have hired an Assistant Secretary for Tribal Affairs who is helping us institutionalize the Governor's tribal ancestral lands return policy and resources co-management. We hired an Assistant Secretary for Equity and Environmental Justice. Have overhauled an entity that names features in California to redress discriminatory names.

Grant (BCSH): We will be establishing a position on the executive leadership team that is completely dedicated to equity. Department of Financial Protection and Innovation established a Black resource group. Homekey 2.0 has been targeting communities of color. Emergency rent relief program has distributed over \$491 million to almost 50,000 households. We have a data

dashboard showing racial distribution of funding. Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council (HCFC) will be focusing on their racial equity working group.

Capretz (Public Member): You have all modeled what is possible with government agencies, and there's a lot of best practices and lessons learned. At the local level we've seen cities and counties that have embraced this idea of promoting equity, but I haven't seen the intentional investment in their staff and making it a government-wide effort. I think some of the newly hired officers of race and equity would love to hear the ideas and solutions you have implemented that can be replicated at the local level. It's fantastic that you're sharing here, but there's not many folks listening. It would be fantastic to have some of the best practices trickle down to local and regional governments. The accountability you have for yourselves, your teams, your staff is remarkable and I would love any way to share that out with local governments and the rest of California.

Putney (Public Member): In 2019 UC Merced hired our first Chief Diversity Officer. We are elevating that position to a Vice Chancellor position and providing additional budget and staff. We're developing our first strategic plan, and a primary theme is equity, diversity, and inclusion. Chancellor Muñoz committed \$2.3 million over five years to the Valuing Black Lives initiative and we are hiring a Black student success coordinator. We were awarded the Hire Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award.

Flad (Public Member): Echo comments about sharing this with local government. It could be as simple as sharing this portion of our meeting. I agree with Secretary Crowfoot that we have a long way to go, we are on a long journey that will not end, we need to be vigilant and keep this at the forefront of what we're doing. At the local level, it feels like we're losing momentum. Local government tends to be more responsive and reactive. There was a lot of momentum with the defund the police movement. That momentum stayed for months, but now we need to convert that motivation and spirit and convert it into longer-term action.

Public comment:

Elena Santamaria, NextGen California

Agenda Item #6: ACTION: Consent Calendar

- a. *Authorize Executive Director to approve requests for extension to deadlines under Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities guidelines for Rounds 1 & 2.*
- b. *Approve the staff recommendation to direct \$400,000 of 19/20 cap-and-trade auctions for implementation technical assistance to meet workforce development requirements.*
- c. *Approve the staff recommendation to award an additional \$68,175 in Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) funds to the California Rangeland Trust to support the purchase of an agricultural conservation easement on the Yates Ranch.*

Motion was made (Blumenfeld) and seconded (Crowfoot) to approve the Consent Calendar.

Public comment:

Scott Littlehale, Northern California Carpenters Regional Council

Council response:

Flad (Public Member): Is this recommendation something that can be incorporated into existing language, or is this something that would require an amendment?

Saharnaz Mirzazad: We are happy to include this conversation in our ongoing research. The main goal is to provide technical assistance to grantees to report to CARB the co-benefits of investments. We will see if we can expand the scope of this study to be in collaboration with local apprenticeship programs.

Motion passes (10-0-0).

Agenda Item #7: ACTION: Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Notice of Funding Availability

Saharnaz Mirzazad, Deputy Director of Community Investment and Planning, SGC

Recommended Action: Approve the staff recommendation to direct the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to amend the February 26, 2021 Notice of Funding Availability for the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program to reflect an additional \$380,000,000 of 20/21 cap-and-trade auctions to reflect a total amount of \$785,000,000.

Public Comment:

Sally Greenspan, Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.

Nicole Norori, California Housing Partnership

Beckie Flores, Regional Housing Authority

Kate Rose, California Coalition For Rural Housing

Alexander Russell, Many Mansions

Motion was made (Capretz) and seconded (Starr) to approve the staff recommendation to direct the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to amend the February 26, 2021 Notice of Funding Availability for the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program to reflect an additional \$380,000,000 of 20/21 cap-and-trade auctions to reflect a total amount of \$785,000,000. Due to the change in the NOFA amount, the amended NOFA should reflect the new award timeline and maximum developer amount. Motion passes (10-0-0).

Council Discussion:

Blumenfeld (CalEPA): This is a huge amount of money going out the door for exactly what California wants, so this is an example of an opportunity to explain and publicize what we do.

Agenda Item #8: ACTION: Racial Equity Action Plan

Jessica Buendia, Chief Deputy Director, SGC

Recommended Action: Approve the 2019-2022 SGC Racial Equity Action Plan, including actions for September 2021 to August 2022.

Panel introductions:

Kirin Kumar, Community Assistance for Climate Equity Program Manager

Alex Gallo, Transformative Climate Communities Program Analyst

Michael Jimenez, Healthy and Equity Program Associate

Panel Discussion:

Jessie Buendia: How has your work advanced items within the REAP, and how was your process informed by the REAP?

Kirin Kumar: REAP called for making government more accessible to under-resourced communities and building capacity to access resources and implement community-led change. The Partners Advancing Climate Equity

(PACE) Program advances this strategy through its curriculum and relationship building. REAP discusses structural issues communities face in partnering with the State to implement contracts, including by providing technical assistance **(TA)**. We're hoping PACE will equip trusted, community-based organizations to pursue contracting opportunities with the State. SGC's TA guidelines were informed by REAP and highlight this form of community-based TA.

Alex Gallo: We were intentional about bringing together community-based organizations, technical infrastructure, and policy experts who had experience working in and with communities of color. We used a bottom-up approach and worked collaboratively with our working group. The REAP process helped us articulate our goal of bringing investment to unincorporated communities of color, which helped keep us accountable.

Michael Jimenez: To conduct strategic planning for the Health in All Policies (HiAP) task force, SGC partnered with the UC Berkeley Othering and Belonging Institute (OBI), an organization that shares similar racial equity values as SGC and understands the importance of engaging with diverse audiences around health and racial equity. OBI anonymized data from an online survey and listening sessions and conducted a thematic analysis, leading to key recommendations and interventions around health and equity and the HiAP Task Force with a strong connection to the REAP.

Jessie Buendia: Why is the work around capacity building explicitly a racial equity strategy?

Kirin Kumar: Investing in upstream capacity-building is a step towards addressing historic inequities faced by under-resourced communities, including communities of color, in accessing funding to implement community priorities. Capacity-building is topically agnostic—it is an investment in a community's capacity to affect meaningful policy, systems, and environmental change with communities at the forefront of decision-making. It represents a departure from traditional top-down power structures and is a significant step to build power in communities of color.

Jessie Buendia: What advice do you have for other programs or departments working through similar policy efforts?

Alex Gallo: Think about your racial equity approach from the beginning. We started by conducting a root cause analysis to identify the structural causes of continued disinvestment. Once you can name a specific problem, you can begin to address it. It is also important to recognize that lived experiences can bring trauma and distress, and that sometimes healthy conflict is a necessary component of a process. Focusing on process is the most important step to developing a racially equitable framework. Racial equity competencies

including root cause analyses, collaboration with communities of color, and ground-truthing data can all be replicated.

Jessie Buendia: What does your work mean for the State around advancing racial equity and how does this plug into existing and future efforts?

Michael Jimenez: We are thinking about two main factors: people and policy. Through HiAP, we are building out a network of staff who aim to achieve health and equity goals in their departments. The HiAP Task Force led to the establishment of CCORE, and CCORE is informing the next iteration of the HiAP Task Force with a specific racial equity focus. The future of HiAP policy work will be grounded in the recommendations and input we've received from our stakeholders in the past year. HiAP work will focus on racial equity as a key determinant of broader health and equity outcomes.

Council Discussion:

Kim (CalSTA): What is the application process for PACE and how do you get the word out to potentially interested applicants?

Kirin Kumar: We aim to reduce barriers to accessing resources, and we wanted to keep the application process simple while balancing and funding stewardship. The application was a Google form with simple responses. Rather than excessive documentation, we wanted people to tell a story about their work in the community, the connection to State priorities and goals, and racial equity imperatives. We provided clear templates and a rubric. We did robust outreach by funding trusted CBOs organizations to do outreach on our behalf. We recognize that newsletters aren't always the most effective way to reach frontline community leaders, so we had to get creative. We also relied on the public health community.

Crowfoot (CNRA): How would you suggest working together across agencies to ensure consistency and identify best practices? How can we promote consistency in terminology, contracts, procurement, recruitment, hiring, policy approaches?

Jessie Buendia: The Racial Equity Working Group (REWG) is a forum for this. Over the past year, agencies have built up their teams to coordinate this work. There are many agencies not represented on the Council, and the HiAP Task Force will help us reach those agencies. We also rely on Council leadership to keep lifting up models that work so we can replicate them and create efficiencies.

Blumenfeld (CalEPA): The Transformative Climate Communities program, with its focus on equity, should be replicated nationally and internationally. Let's think about how the most important components of this program can be articulated and replicated.

Jessie Buendia: We have dedicated staff time this year to working as technical assistance providers to the federal government. We have philanthropic partners who come to us asking how they can help. We can bring other private sector funders to the table to help support the work so our impact and investment is scalable.

Alex Gallo: Want to emphasize the community-driven approach and collaborative stakeholder structure with accountability measures. The program was established in 2016 and has had three rounds of awards, and every day we're hearing new stories about what's happening on the ground. We're thinking about ways to uplift those stories. We will continue to rely on the Council members to uplift those stories as well.

Jessie Buendia: We want to thank the Council members and stakeholders for their support for the TCC budget item. We are here to educate anyone who would like to learn more about the program.

Flad (Public Member): Is there capacity at the local level for working through healthy conflict, which is very necessary?

Alex Gallo: Our planning grants are structured to bring local governments and community partners together to have those conversations so there is joint agreement on how the plans will be implemented. CCOPE is another place to talk more about these issues—we're developing competencies on how to have these difficult conversations in productive ways.

Jessie Buendia: We are dealing with a trust deficit with communities of color who have historically been left out by design. Clarity is kindness. It's good governance to be clear and manage expectations. The TCC team has navigated difficult and controversial issues with local government by being clear, transparent, and consistent. These are important competencies to deal with conflict in a healthy and productive way, and we need to continue to build them at all levels.

Starr (CHHS): Is there anything out of our experiences with COVID-19 that we can leverage to help move forward with addressing inequities, particularly related to climate? The same populations are hit first and worst by climate change and COVID.

Kirin Kumar: We need to leverage and invest in the collaboratives of CBOs, direct service providers, and local government that have come together to address COVID. That's where trust has been built in a lot of places, especially communities of color. While those collaboratives may not see their mission as directly climate-related, they do see it as supporting communities and community visions.

Alex Gallo: TCC's collaborative stakeholder structure allowed for communities to have a centralized place for resources. There are opportunities to build on those community partnerships. We also learned that flexibility in grant programs and funding structures is incredibly important. We extended deliverables in March 2020 which gave time for collaboratives to restructure their work. Communities were able to pivot their work to meet additional goals, including responding to COVID.

Lynn von Koch-Liebert: We recognize the importance of continuing to partner with CBOs and networks that have formed in the COVID response. We rely on them to make sure that what we're working on and the way we're presenting information and delivering programs is meeting the needs of the recipients and target audiences. We also need to continue to reduce obstacles to access and participation. Because of the short timeline and novelty of COVID, we reduced what we were asking partners to do. We should continue to be reflective and introspective regarding what we're asking from our partners. During COVID we learned that there are many more partners who are interested and eligible to participate in State programs and activities.

Public Comment:

Vince Leus, Prevention Institute

Elena Santamaria, NextGen California

Julia Caplan, Public Health Institute

J Jordan, Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability

Motion was made (Crowfoot) and seconded (Blumenfeld) to approve the 2019-2022 SGC Racial Equity Action Plan, including actions for September 2021 to August 2022. Motion passes (10-0-0).

Agenda Item #9: Public Comment

No public comment.

Agenda Item #10: Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 3:54 p.m.