JOINT WORKING GROUP MEETING: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE & PUBLIC HEALTH

March 18, 2021
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

MEETING SUMMARY

1. **WELCOME, SELF INTRODUCTIONS, AND CONTEXT SETTING**

   Courtney Aguirre, Program Manager II of Planning Strategy Department at SCAG, welcomed all participants.

SCAG Staff:	*Webinar:*
Courtney Aguirre	*Kevin Aguilar, Huntington Park*
Mairany Anaya	*All American War Veterans*
Natalie Arreaga	*Francis Appiah, Caltrans*
India Brookover	*Angelica Baltazar, Lewis-San Antonio Regional Hospital*
Leslie Cayton	*Ari Briski*
Lennox Chaiveera	*Catilin Brooks, Ventura County Transportation Commission*
Deedhiti Dola	*Kurt Broz, Wildlife Biologist for the Pala Tribe*
Annaleigh Ekman	*Anabel Castaneda, Riverside University Health System*
Lorianne Esturas	*Amanda Caswell*
Steve Fox	*Siri Champion, City of Rialto*
Marisa Laderach	*Susan De Santis*
Jane Lam	*Deborah Diep, CDR/CSUF*
Jennifer Martinez	*Amanda Fagan, Ventura County Transportation Commission*
Emily Rotman	*Rebecca Ferdman, Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Office*
Vanessa Reyes Salazar	*Erik Fruth*
Anikka Van Eyl	*Emily Gable*
Frank Wen	*Claire Garcia, The Lion Electric Co.*
Amy Zhou	*Curtis Gibbs, Community Action Partnership of Orange County*
	Marisol Gonzalez, LA Metro
Presenters:	*Tom Grahn*
Courtney Aguirre, SCAG	*Valerie Guerrero, Riverside University Health System*
Lucy Andrews, UC Berkeley	*Shiella Hadayat*
Natalie Arreaga, SCAG	*Ashley Hefner Hoang*
Joe DiStefano, UrbanFootprint	*Angie Hernandez, City of South El Monte*
Deedhiti Dola, SCAG	*Jazmine Johnson, PSR-LA*
Annaleigh Ekman, SCAG	*Haig Kartounian, Southern California Edison*
Robert Flores, Riverside County	*Jo Kay Ghosh, South Coast AQMD*
Marisa Laderach, SCAG	*David Kennedy*
Jane Lam, SCAG	*Diana Kitching, City of Los Angeles Planning*
Miguel Vázquez, RUHS	*Adam Levy, CAP OC*
	Julie Lugaro

Nikitas Magel
Rebecca Marsile, Orange County Health Care Agency
Mary McCormick, MBI Media
Bryan Medina, TreePeople
Christine Nguyen
Marven Norman
Stephanie Lane Pavon, MIG
Asia Powell, CPUC
Faraz Rizvi, CCAEJ
Barry Ross
Kimberly Ruddins
Diana Ruiz, Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District
Greta Seidman
Gail Shiomoto-Lohr, City of Mission Viejo
Jeanette Short, South Coast AQMD
Linda Taira, Caltrans District 7
Nancy Thomas, UC Berkeley's Geospatial Innovation Facility
Meg Thorley, Urban Intersect Consulting
Tina Wang, Ventura County Budget and Finance
Todd Warden, South Coast AQMD
Warren Whiteaker, OCTA
Rebecca Zaragoza, Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability

2. **PLANNING FOR HEALTH EQUITY, ADVOCACY, & LEADERSHIP**
   Miguel Vázquez, Riverside University Health System

Presentation Summary:
- The Riverside University Health System (RUHS) recently developed COVID-19 guiding principles, called the Planning for Health Equity, Advocacy and Leadership (PHEAL) Guiding Principles, in collaboration with over 70 individuals. The document is extensive and requires reflection to understand what the principles mean and how they apply to your own practice.
- PHEAL guidelines were organized into three principles, each with sub-principles:
  - Community Health & Regeneration
    - Uplift health equity
    - Develop healthy and just places
    - Establish safe and prosperous communities
  - Community-based Advocacy
    - Engage in truthful interactions
    - Acknowledge that the community is in charge
    - Figure it out together
  - Healing through Leadership
    - Advance racial justice
    - Strengthen diversity and inclusion
- To view the PHEAL Guiding Principles, please visit https://www.stateofplace.co/pheal. To view the AARP Equity by Design, please visit https://tinyurl.com/ynrcmyfb. To view the Developing the National Healthy Communities Platform, please visit https://platformforhealth.rivcoph.org/. Miguel Vázquez can be contacted at mvazquez@ruhealth.org.

Comments and Questions:

- Question: Do you anticipate any opportunities for more discussion about these principles because each contains a lot. Will there be a discussion or forum to unpack it together?
- Answer: In the long-term future, we are working on developing our strategy to be able to continue to share these principles in different spaces. We will probably use the model of what AARP International did with their Equity by Design workshops. They have about five or six throughout the year and that seems to be a very good model. We are happy to speak in any venue that would be available to us. The steering committee members are open to participate in sharing. Every time I have an opportunity, I put it in front of our key audience, which I refer to as the stewards of the built environment, which includes professionals working in the spaces of creating, envisioning and maintaining communities. There will be more opportunities to dive deeper into the guidelines. There is a lot of learning to do with these principles. You probably notice that these principles deal with our own humanity. I think that's part of what has been missing in our professions. We have the tendency to focus on the hardware of what makes our communities. If I follow that analogy, the software, which are the people, are the second thought. This is a time to really focus in bringing front-and-center everybody, but especially the people who have been impacted mostly by community-development decisions that have been detrimental to some communities.

3. **SCAG'S ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC HEALTH TOOLBOXES**
Deedhiti Dola & Jane Lam, SCAG

Presentation Summary:
- SCAG developed two toolboxes: the Healthy Cities Toolbox and the Environmental Justice (EJ) Toolbox, which stem from the Connect SoCal Public Health Technical Report and Connect SoCal EJ Technical Reports, respectively. Both provide a collection of recommended best practices and approaches that may be effective in addressing public health or EJ-related impacts.
- Both toolboxes will be supplemented with informational handouts and updated on SCAG's website by the end of April 2021.
- For more information, please visit www.scag.ca.gov/public-health or www.scag.ca.gov/environmental-justice. For questions about the Healthy Cities Toolbox, please contact Courtney Aguirre at: aguirre@scag.ca.gov. For questions about the Environmental Justice Toolbox, please contact: environmentaljustice@scag.ca.gov.

Comments and Questions:
- Question: Is there an interactive tool that lets you "zoom in" to more details of the EJ Area Maps?
  Answer: SCAG has an interactive Environmental Justice Tool that allows users to toggle layers on and off, draw on the map, and change the underlying base map. Additionally, SCAG's Housing Element Parcel (HELPR) Tool shows EJ Areas and Disadvantaged Communities, but not Communities of Concern.
- Question: What is the methodology for determining EJ Areas in the map presented?
- Answer: Methodology can be better shared by the SCAG staff that developed the EJ Technical Report (Tom Vo and Kimberly Clark). EJ Areas are defines as Transportation Analysis Zones, which are similar to census block groups that have a higher concentration of minority population or low-income households than is seen in the region as a whole. SB 535 Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) are census tracts that have been identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency and CalEnviroScreen 3.0 as DAC based on the requirements set forth in SB 535, which seek to identify areas disproportionately burdened by and vulnerable to multiple sources of pollution. Communities of Concern are Census Designated Places and the City of Los Angeles Community Planning Areas that fall in the upper one-third of all

communities in the SCAG region for having the highest concentration of minority population and low-income households.
- Question: I don't see the toolbox on the EJ website. Can you please direct me to it?
  Answer: We will be posting the EJ and public health toolboxes and story maps to the website in the next month. We will email the group once they are posted.
- Comment: Warren Whiteaker from OCTA commented that sharing the map in KML format would also be helpful for use with Google Earth.

4. **CAL ADAPT'S LOCAL CLIMATE CHANGE SNAPSHOT TOOL**
   Lucy Andrews, Geospatial Innovation Facility, UC Berkeley

   Presentation Summary:
   - Cal-Adapt is California's repository and portal for many different types of climate change projections, including extreme heat. Their work is funded by the Strategic Growth Council in the Energy Commission and they are working to make their tools, data, and support widely available to people who are thinking about climate change in their work, particularly through an adaptation lens.
   - Their goals have three dimensions:
     - visualizing climate data to see trends,
     - allowing people to download climate change projections to work with the data themselves, and
     - offering Cal-Adapt and its tools as a resource for learning about climate change science, understanding how projections are developed, and recommendations for best practices for using those projections.
   - The Cal-Adapt Local Climate Change Snapshot Tool is designed to be straightforward, introductory, and accessible. It is intended to support municipal adaptation planning, education, and advocacy and simplifies settings for parameters like General Circulation Models (GCMs) and time intervals to quickly provide information.
   - The Cal-Adapt home page can be accessed here: https://cal-adapt.org. The Cal-Adapt Local Climate Change Snapshot Tool can be accessed here: https://cal-adapt.org/tools/local-climate-change-snapshot/. Lucy Andrews can be contacted at: lucyandrews@berkeley.edu.

   Comments and Questions:
   - Question: Does the tool include wind patterns?
     Answer: We do host projected wind speed data on Cal-Adapt, but it is not included within the Local Climate Change Snapshot Tool. The wind data is currently available as raster data that you can download for your own research. When you are on Cal-Adapt, click on the "Data" portion at the top of the webpage and you will be directed to a page that instructs you to check out the download tool. This allows you to access many more variables, not just those presented in the Local Climate Change Snapshot Tool for an area of interest, wind speed being one of them. You are walked through a process where you can identify the dataset, time range, the emissions scenario of interest, and if you want, you can upload polygons to get data for a custom geography that's relevant to your work.
   - Question: Can we look at historical data? If so, how far back?
     Answer: Yes, historical data is available going back to 1961.
   - Comment: Bryan Medina commented that it would be nice to see PM 2.5 data linked to increased wildfires.
     Additional comment: Lucy added that they host a small portion of CalEnviroScreen 3.0 on Cal-Adapt and they are planning to add more. In the longer-term, the Strategic Growth Council is interested in building a tool that looks particularly at social and equity dimensions of climate change exposure. In the 5th

climate change assessment, which is the next one to happen in the state, many researchers are looking to produce a dataset that speaks to the change in wildfire smoke. That's currently data that doesn't exist for California. There are currently no projections for smoke in particular. There are wildfire occurrence projections, which is the probability that any given area will burn over a period of time. But there is no smoke data and that's a cutting-edge scientific question that GIF is hoping to have more resolution around within the next two to three years.

- Comment: Diana Ruiz commented that heat varies broadly throughout Riverside County; a smaller area of analysis would help.

5. **EXTREME HEAT & PUBLIC HEALTH: BEST PRACTICES**
   Natalie Arreaga, SCAG

Presentation Summary:
- SCAG presented their findings on best practices to combat extreme heat. It is critical for counties and cities to begin taking action now to reduce the burden of extreme heat and ensure the health and well-being of residents within the SCAG region.
- The SCAG region is projected to have an average increase of 35 extreme heat days from 2040-2060. Many serious illnesses are caused by extreme heat exposure and over the last 30 years, extreme heat was the leading weather-related cause of death in the US.
- The Extreme Heat Best Practices resource provides examples of recommendations, ordinances, heat response plans, and adaptation and resilience strategies to combat extreme heat. The resource will be published to SCAG's Sustainability website page by June 2021.
- Natalie Arreaga can be contacted at: arreaga@scag.ca.gov.

Comments and Questions:
- Question: A best management: Are you including the need for Urban Forest Management Plans, for long term planning and management of climate-appropriate trees?
  Answer: No, but this is ongoing research so that is something I want to look into because it is part of best practices. It would be great if you had any plans you could share because I haven't come across any. I would love to add any other best practices to my ongoing report and once I'm done, I would be happy to share it with you.
  Courtney Aguirre added: It's quite challenging at times to find some best practices and good examples, especially in the region, so if you are aware of best practices or if your jurisdiction is doing something to address extreme heat or you have any recommendations for documents that we should view, please email Natalie to share this information with her because it could certainly be added since this document is evolving as we learn more.
- Question: Is there anything for indoor heat mitigation?
  Answer: That is really important but the documents I came across didn't highlight indoor heat mitigation specifically, besides air conditioning.
  Courtney Aguirre added: That comes with some challenges too because of affordability and contributing to climate change by using air conditioning. Different types of housing quality can help preserve indoor temperatures or prevent excessive heat.
  Miguel Vazquez added: In terms of best practices, from the US Green Building Council, they have programs for low-income communities to help people afford the improvements to be able to keep their places cool.
  Courtney Aguirre added: Maybe that's an additional search term we can use going forward relating to housing quality and indoor heat mitigation.

<u>Diana Ruiz added:</u> Please see the [Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) Toolkit](#) at the California Urban Forests Council.

<u>Anikka Van Eyl added:</u> Perhaps internationally, there would be more resources in that space. The US favors air conditioning but it's used much less frequently across the globe, so I would think there might be relevant resources.

6. **URBAN FOOTPRINT'S ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES ANALYSIS**

Joe DiStefano, CEO, UrbanFootprint

<u>Presentation Summary:</u>
- UrbanFootprint presented their recent work with data and toolsets to support equity through their urban intelligence platform, which provides comprehensive urban, climate, and community resilience data to help assess risk, understand markets, and make better decisions.
- UrbanFootprint has been helping frontline relief providers, safety agencies, and federal agencies understand the scale and distribution of this COVID-19 pandemic crisis in order to more equitably and effectively distribute resources.
- Joe DiStefano can be contacted at: joe@urbanfootprint.com. For additional questions about UrbanFootprint, please contact: marketing@urbanfootprint.com.

<u>Comments and Questions:</u>
- <u>Question</u>: What databases are these collected from? What is the source of the data?
  <u>Answer</u>: I will respond directly to the individual who asked the question through chat. I didn't cover this here, but we have very specific data around Senate Bill (SB) 1000 compliance and datasets within our platform that support a city being able to immediately filter for SB 1000.
- <u>Question</u>: Can you give us pricing information, whether it's for a government agency or non-profit, is there an umbrella price?
  <u>Answer</u>: It depends. I will be happy to follow-up with you.

7. **COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ELEMENT**

Robert Flores, County of Riverside

<u>Presentation Summary:</u>
- The County of Riverside shared the County's effort thus far related to environmental justice (EJ) and California State Senate Bill (SB) 1000.
- They held four community council meetings in strategic locations prior to the pandemic as their initial effort to outreach to the community. After the pandemic, two virtual policy charettes and virtual office hours were offered in effort to outreach for draft policies. Additionally, public hearings and comment periods were offered to further community engagement.
- Their implementation plan includes land use development projects in EJ areas, evaluation for compliance with applicable EJ policies, and venue for evaluation with affected Municipal Advisory Councils and Community Councils. Public hearings for the EJ General Plan Amendment and Implementation Plan will undergo an approval process and expected to be adopted in late winter or early spring 2021-22.
- For more information regarding Environmental Justice, please refer to the Riverside County Environmental Justice webpage: https://planning.rctlma.org/EJ. Robert Flores can be contacted at: rflores@rivco.org.

Comments and Questions:

- Question: In the pandemic, how challenging has it been to do this work? Is there a significant challenge you want to highlight?
  Answer: Community outreach is a challenge during these times, specifically some areas in the county, such as economically-challenged areas that don't have the resources to participate virtually or online. One of the main challenges that comes to my mind is reaching out to these communities that, at this time, where they may not have the resources to participate but at the same time, we cannot do any traditional-type of community outreach to reach them. Before the pandemic started, we did do community outreach and we were there in person, so we are hoping they already know about the effort and reach out to us if they need any additional help or have additional input.

8. **SCAG'S RACIAL EQUITY EARLY ACTION PLAN**
   Courtney Aguirre, SCAG

   Presentation Summary:

   - SCAG shared updates on their efforts to develop a Racial Equity Framework and Early Action Plan.
   - Last summer, SCAG's Regional Council adopted a resolution affirming its commitment to advance justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. The resolution called for the formation of an ad hoc Special Committee on Equity and Social Justice to further develop their response to advancing social justice. They are also committed to working on the following deliverables: a working definition of equity, an equity inventory report to catalogue the existing equity-related activities and areas with potential for more equity focus/work, and an equity framework containing indicators of existing inequities and disparities.
   - SCAG has created a survey where you can share specific feedback. A draft Racial Equity Early Action Plan (EAP) will be shared with their Special Committee meeting on March 30, and then with the Regional Council in May 2021.
   - The Early Action Plan survey can be accessed using this link: www.surveymonkey.com/r/earlyactionplan. The deadline to respond is Tuesday, March 30 at 11:59PM. Courtney Aguirre can be contacted at: aguirre@scag.ca.gov.

9. **FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENTS**
   Marisa Laderach & Annaleigh Ekman, SCAG

   Presentation Summary:

   - SCAG's Smart Cities & Mobility Innovations Call for Applications is now open. Applicants can apply for any of the following project types: Smart Cities & Job Centers; Go Zones; and Shared Mobility/Mobility as a Service. Local agencies, cities, counties, and tribal governments are eligible to apply to this program. The SCMI Call for Applications closes April 23, 2021 at 5:00 pm. Questions? Contact Marisa at Laderach@scag.ca.gov or attend the next application webinar on Monday, April 5, 10:00am-12:00pm.

   - 2021 EJ Small Grants Announcement. The Request for Applications for US EPA's 2021 EJ Small Grants Program is open! EPA is specifically looking to fund (1) projects focusing on COVID-19 impacts, particularly addressing climate and disaster resiliency and (2) projects that address diesel pollution in underserved communities living near ports and rail yards, in part with EPA's Ports Initiative. Also, half of the total available funding will be reserved for small non-profit organizations with 10 or fewer full-time employees. Applications are due May 7, 2021.