



Equity Working Group Meeting

February 8th, 2024

1:00 – 2:45 p.m.

The meeting was held via Zoom teleconference. A video recording of the meeting is available upon request. The meeting presentations are available [here](#).

ATTENDEE LIST

Presenters:

James Earl Schier Nolan, UC San Francisco

Ruchita Kadakia, County of Ventura

SCAG Staff:

Anita Au

Annaleigh Ekman (Presenter)

Jasper Dwyer

Jeannie Ma (Presenter)

Leslie Cayton (Presenter)

Marisa Laderach (Presenter)

Shannon McAlpine

Webinar:

Anita Cerna, City of Pasadena

Alba Pioquinto, Imperial County Public Health Department

Aracely Carrillo-Torres, Imperial County Public Health Department

Caitlin Brooks, Ventura County Transportation Commission

Chandra Richards, University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources

Jessica Nguyen, County of Ventura

Joseph Cabral, Clean Power Alliance

Lori Huddleston, LA Metro

Nabeeha Said, Riverside University Health System / CivicSpark Fellow



MEETING SUMMARY

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Annaleigh Ekman, Senior Regional Planner, SCAG | ekman@scag.ca.gov

Annaleigh welcomed all participants and reminded the meeting participants that the EWG History document is regularly updated: <https://scag.ca.gov/post/equity-working-group-ewg>.

2. YOUTH'S EXPOSURE TO PESTICIDES AND PREVENTATIVE ACTION: COSECHA STUDY

James Earl Schier Nolan, Community Engagement Manager, UC San Francisco | james.nolan@ucsf.edu

James presented the COSECHA Study, a collaborative research project with UC Berkeley, focusing on pesticide exposure among adolescent Latina girls in the agricultural communities of Salinas Valley. The presentation highlighted the CHAMACOS Youth Council's role in developing the research framework, goals, data collection, analysis, and preventive measures. Findings revealed lower pesticide concentrations in households with doormats and consistent cleaning, contrasting with higher concentrations in households near crops, outside Salinas, with carpeted floors, open windows at night, exterminator use, and stored pesticides. Additionally, the CHAMACOS Youth Council engaged the community through educational materials, events, news interviews, distributing doormats, educational activities, and conducting radio broadcasts. The presentation ended with James providing UC San Francisco's preventative efforts and recommendations on pesticide exposure.

Questions and Answers:

- **Question:** Considering the role of academia and research, is there any follow-up research to the COSECHA Study, or do you know if other organizations are doing similar research and studies in agricultural communities of Southern California?
 - **Answer:** It is difficult to get funding for this type of research program. Once approved, there are limitations to three to five years. The COSECHA study is embedded into a larger study of 600 pregnant women and 600 children, while the women were pregnant and followed up with them while the children were born. The study is in its 25th year and continues to do this research with the same population, recruiting more participants each year. It is very rare to have funding for that period. Grants are great for new and innovative approaches, but they should encourage folks to have committed and guaranteed hard money that is dedicated to the research and allows for researchers to follow up with community participants. The policies that are needed to protect people take a long time and effort to make that happen.
- **Question:** How did you all discover that the doormats were a significant reducer (to pesticide exposure)?
 - **Answer:** The doormats were based on the presence or absence of detectable levels, and it was initially added to the questionnaire. The research also added various types of variables affecting pesticide levels, including the presence of carpets in the home, pesticide use, whether windows were open or closed, and the presence of doormats. These variables were then compared between households with and without them.
- **Question:** Were the wristbands (used as part of the study methods) accessible to other community researchers and used in other forms of community research? What are the barriers to using these wristbands in a non-academic setting? Would it be difficult?
 - **Answer:** It is somewhat impossible, but you can purchase and use the wristbands. However, the real cost lies in the analysis, because it is expensive and technical. That is why the research study contracted with Oregon State University. You can use air monitors and get guidance from the South Coast Air Quality Management



District. However, when it comes to pesticides, DOCs, and others, a lot of it involves analysis with multi-million-dollar machines that are not accessible at the moment.

Links:

- COSECHA Study: <https://cerch.berkeley.edu/research-programs/cosecha-study>
- UCSF Prescriptions for Prevention: wsphehsu.ucsf.edu/prescriptions-for-prevention/

3. VENTURA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL WORKER HOUSING ORDINANCE

Ruchita Kadakia, Planning Manager, County of Ventura | ruchita.kadakia@ventura.org

Ruchita Kadakia from the County of Ventura presented on the Agricultural Worker Housing Ordinance in Unincorporated Ventura County, adopted on March 1, 2022. The ordinance aims to enhance agricultural worker housing production to offer diverse housing options that meet the different needs of seasonal and agricultural workers. The design of the ordinance began with public engagement through multiple workshops and stakeholder meetings. Results showed that farmworkers of all types required various housing options, updated regulations to reflect the times, housing complexes near social services, new development standards, and updated standardized plans. In response, Ventura County evaluated its existing housing types and inventories and updated developmental standards along with permit applications and related documents, including Pre-Approved Standardized Plans for Accessory Dwelling Units. The developmental standards updates included general requirements for farmworker housing complexes, animal caretaker units, farmworker group quarters, and temporary trailers. The presentation concluded with a brief description of the *Countywide Farmworker Housing Study and Action Plan*, in partnership with House Farm Workers. The County is currently in the final two phases of the project, aiming to develop the farmworker housing study and action plan and conduct community engagement to implement the plan.

Questions and Answers:

- **Question:** Do you feel as if you are able to maintain the relationships that you built with the farmers for the farmworker housing study?
 - **Answer:** Yes, we just started working with the farmworker housing project to partner with the county study and action plan. During the agricultural ordinance, farmworkers connected with the county and requested that the county conduct a study to determine the number of farmworkers and their housing status. Farmworkers also collaborated with the county to distribute the survey as part of the study due to their strong connections with the community. There are over 40 advisory council members who represent every single area of the agriculture industry, from finance to transportation, local agencies, and nonprofits, and they inform countywide actions on farmworker issues. These engagements have continued to be instrumental in the project.

Links:

- County of Ventura Farmworker Housing: <https://vcrma.org/en/farmworker-housing>
- County of Ventura Farmworker Housing ADUs: <https://vcrma.org/en/accessory-dwellings-farmworker-dwellings>
- County of Ventura Farmworker Housing Study: <https://vcrma.org/en/vc-farmworker-housing-study>

4. STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CLEAN CITIES

Marisa Laderach, Principal Regional Planner, SCAG | laderach@scag.ca.gov

Marisa provided an overview of the Southern California Clean Cities Coalition Strategic Plan which aims to displace gasoline gallon equivalent (GGE) and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The Southern California Clean Cities Coalition Strategic



Plan will cover various topics such as Clean Transportation Transition, Alternative Fuels, Emission Reductions, a Roadmap, and more. The presentation outlined the Clean Cities Coalition's work, SCAG's Clean Technology Program/Policy, and status updates on the Strategic Plan. The project will be brought to the Regional Council in April 2024 for approval; however, it is a living document that can be continuously updated as new information and ideas are shared.

For more information, see these **Clean Cities Coalition Resources**:

- <https://scag.ca.gov/clean-cities>
- <https://cleancities.energy.gov/coalitions/southern-california>

5. **CONNECT SOCAL 2024 UPDATE**

Leslie Cayton, Associate Regional Planner, SCAG | cayton@scag.ca.gov

Leslie provided several updates on the Connect SoCal 2024 Draft and associated PEIR for public comment. Through the public comment period, SCAG staff hosted elected official briefings, public hearings, and consultations with federal land management agencies and federally recognized tribal governments. SCAG staff are currently updating the Plan with feedback from public comments. Updates and revisions to Connect SoCal 2024 will be presented at the SCAG Joint Policy Committee meeting held on March 7th. Staff anticipates PEIR certification and adoption of the Final Plan by the Regional Council in April 2024.

For more information, see these **Connect SoCal 2024 Resources**:

- Connect SoCal 2024 Page: <https://scag.ca.gov/connect-socal>
- Email: ConnectSoCal@scag.ca.gov

6. **EQUITY ANALYSIS UPDATE**

Annaleigh Ekman, Senior Regional Planner, SCAG | ekman@scag.ca.gov

Annaleigh provided an overview of the equity-related public comments received, most of which encompassed copy editing, the context of equity, and clarification around Priority Equity Communities. Additional changes to the report included a revised map template, expanded discussions for clarity, and additional historical context. Some expected changes due to updated data inputs may affect Priority Equity Communities, transit accessibility, and demographic analysis. Changes to the Equity Analysis Technical Report will be discussed in more detail at the SCAG Joint Policy Committee meeting on March 7th.

7. **SCAG REGION SB 1000 UPDATE**

Jeannie Ma, Assistant Regional Planner, SCAG | ma@scag.ca.gov

Jeannie presented SCAG's SB 1000 tracking results, providing an overview of jurisdictions' status on Environmental Justice (EJ) Elements in the SCAG region. The presentation provided context on SB 1000 and statistics on the number of published EJ elements and jurisdictions that have integrated EJ-related goals and policies into their General Plans. The findings revealed that more than half of the jurisdictions within the region lack EJ elements or incorporated EJ-related goals and policies. Additionally, over half of SCAG jurisdictions with Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) include EJ in their General Plans, and those addressing SB 1000 often undertook additional initiatives, such as the City of Long Beach creating an Equity Data Hub.

Questions and Answers:

- **Question:** Could you share information and study on which cities have EJ-related policies and elements? What are some best examples/practices of EJ-related Elements and policies? How have other jurisdictions crafted policies regarding their approach on EJ; did they integrate EJ into existing elements, or opted to create a new element?



- **Answer:** The Equity Analysis Technical Report for Connect SoCal 2024 includes the Equity Resources for Action (ERA) Toolbox that provides recommendations for policies and projects that can be incorporated into an EJ Element and General Plans. SCAG staff followed up via e-mail with more resources.

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS & OFFERS, REQUESTS, AND CONNECTIONS

Annaleigh Ekman, Senior Regional Planner, SCAG | ekman@scag.ca.gov

- **UCLA Center for Health Policy Research Data Equity Center:** <https://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/our-work/data-equity-center>
The UCLA Center for Health Policy Research Data Equity Center promotes data equity in data sets impacting health determinants and offering resources that will support data systems to become more representative, inclusive, and collaborative with the communities they serve. The Equity Center offers up to eight free technical assistance hours to advance creators' data equity goals centered on healthy equity. Overall, the Data Equity Center focuses on all aspects of design, collection, production, and dissemination of population health data.
- **EPA Regional Roadshow in San Bernardino:** <https://www.epa.gov/community-equity-resiliency/regional-roadshows>
The Regional Roadshow is an initiative made by President Biden's *Investing in America* agenda on the EPA's Inflation Reduction Act. The EPA's Office of Air and Radiation and Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil rights will facilitate in-person community-driven partnerships and provide a space for potential grant applicants and community leaders to learn, connect and cultivate ideas on how to access historic resources in low-income and disadvantaged communities. Register for Region 9: San Bernardino Roadshow to be held on **February 16th**, <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/cer-regional-roadshow-region-9-tickets-765671713707>.
- **SCAG Regional Data Platform and Services Experience Survey:** <https://scag.ca.gov/RDP>
SCAG is conducting a user experience survey to evaluate how local jurisdictions utilize the Regional Data Platform to assess the sharing of land use data through the Local Data Exchange portal and gauge the level of GIS skills and capacity within the region. Take the Regional Data and Services Experience Survey by **March 11th**, <https://form.jotform.com/SCAGweb/regional-data-and-services>

If you have questions about this meeting, please feel free to reach out to Anita Au (au@scag.ca.gov) or Annaleigh Ekman (ekman@scag.ca.gov). SCAG also encourages participants to reach out if you have a topic, project, program, tool, or resource that you think should be highlighted in a future meeting.