

# RACIAL EQUITY EARLY ACTION PLAN FINAL UPDATE

NOVEMBER 2024





## ABOUT SCAG

SCAG is the nation's largest metropolitan planning organization, representing six counties, 191 cities and more than 19 million residents. SCAG undertakes a variety of planning and policy initiatives to encourage a more sustainable Southern California now and in the future.

## VISION

Southern California's Catalyst for a Brighter Future

## MISSION

To foster innovative regional solutions that improve the lives of Southern Californians through inclusive collaboration, visionary planning, regional advocacy, information sharing, and promoting best practices.



# RACIAL EQUITY EARLY ACTION PLAN FINAL UPDATE

NOVEMBER 2024

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Exhibits.....	i
Executive Summary .....	1

# List of Exhibits

---

Exhibit 1 SCAG's Racial Equity Early Action Plan Final Update November 2024..... 3

# Executive Summary

---

In July 2020, the SCAG Regional Council adopted Resolution NO. 20-623-2, affirming its commitment to advancing justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout Southern California. The resolution called for the formation of an ad hoc Special Committee on Equity and Social Justice to further develop SCAG's commitment to advancing equity and develop an early action plan. On May 6, 2021, the Regional Council adopted the Racial Equity Early Action Plan, which SCAG has used since its adoption to guide and sustain SCAG's regional and organizational leadership in service of equity and social justice.

This Racial Equity Framework adopted by SCAG's Regional Council established overarching goals and strategies to advance racial equity through SCAG's policies, practices, and activities. This ensures that SCAG's equity-related work aligns toward common goals and continues through actions pursued across the agency.

The Racial Equity Framework includes four overarching goals:

1. **Shift Organizational Culture:** Focus SCAG's internal work and practices on inclusion, diversity, equity, and awareness.
2. **Center Racial Equity in Regional Policy and Planning:** Bring equity into SCAG's regional planning functions.
3. **Encourage Racial Equity in Local Planning Practices:** Promote racial equity in efforts involving local elected officials and planning professionals.
4. **Activate and Amplify:** Communicate broadly SCAG's commitment to racial equity and join others in different fields and sectors to amplify impact.

Each of these goals is advanced through a focus on the following three strategies:

1. **Listen and Learn:** Develop a shared understanding of our history of discrimination and the structural barriers that continue to perpetuate the inequities experienced today.
2. **Engage and Co-Power:** Create an environment where everyone is included, able to share their experiences, and equipped to talk about racial equity and inequities.
3. **Integrate and Institutionalize:** Focus on systems change to improve racial equity. Center racial equity in all aspects of work. This involves internal and external systems change.

Additionally, the Racial Equity and Regional Planning Subcommittee was created in 2022, along with two other subcommittees, to dive deeper into issue areas related to the development of Connect SoCal. This subcommittee developed recommendations in a white paper built on the special committee's work to advance racial equity through Connect SoCal and presented in the March 2, 2023, Joint Meeting of the Policy Committees.

Since the Racial Equity Early Action Plan's adoption in 2021, staff have implemented many actions that set the foundation for ongoing efforts within the agency to ensure equity is part of all processes. For example, an internal Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access team was created to oversee ongoing equity efforts, facilitate equity-focused training sessions, and shift organizational culture. In centering racial equity in regional policy and planning, SCAG staff embedded equity considerations by establishing Communities of Concern representatives in policy committees, adding equity training as part of Regional Council member orientation, embedding equity goals, policies, and metrics in Connect SoCal, and forming a dedicated Equity Working Group. To further SCAG's equity goal of encouraging racial equity in local

planning, SCAG staff successfully expanded Toolbox Tuesday trainings to include equity-focused series annually, incorporated equity as a focus on various funding opportunities like the Sustainable Communities Program – Civic Engagement, Equity and Environmental Justice call for applications, and added equity considerations into the Federal Transportation Improvement Program, planning, and development process. To activate and amplify SCAG's commitments to advancing equity, staff developed the Inclusive Economic Recovery Strategy, recognized equity best practices throughout the region with an equity category in SCAG's Sustainability Awards program, and developed and strengthened relationships with other agencies toward a common goal of advancing equity in the region. These examples illustrate implementation accomplishments.

After three years of staff efforts in implementing the Racial Equity Early Action Plan, early actions have been implemented and incorporated into everyday work for staff. SCAG is closing out the Racial Equity Early Action Plan because the goal of providing a strong foundation to institutionalize and further racial equity within SCAG's work has been achieved. As work continues, many early actions will be incorporated into the updated SCAG Strategic Plan, Connect SoCal implementation, and various other programs.

This final report concludes the Racial Equity Early Action Plan, transitioning SCAG's commitment to advancing equity in the region into its ongoing work on numerous programs working toward the overarching equity goals laid out in the Regional Council-adopted framework.

Exhibit 1 SCAG’s Racial Equity Early Action Plan Final Update November 2024

Goal	Action	Accomplishments and Final Update
<b>Shift Organizational Culture</b>	Develop an inclusion, diversity, equity, and access (IDEA) education and training program.	SCAG will continue to provide training and education opportunities to staff, including “The Many Faces of Black Identity: A Guide to Understanding Our Diversity.” Additional training sessions will be developed and facilitated for staff on topics such as civility in the workplace, mitigating bias, and psychological safety.
<b>Shift Organizational Culture</b>	Conduct an externally led racial equity audit to further inform equity actions.	External expertise was leveraged for assessment and sharing of best practices through the Racial Equity and Regional Planning Subcommittee, and resulting policy guidance was incorporated in Connect SoCal. Resources were not available for a full racial equity audit.
<b>Shift Organizational Culture</b>	Establish an IDEA team to oversee and update the Racial Equity Early Action Plan.	Following the adoption of the SCAG Strategic Plan in June 2024, SCAG is establishing a new governance structure of IDEA in support of our new strategic plan objectives and key results to ensure we are consistently embedding diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) principles and measuring progress against global DEIB benchmarks.
<b>Shift Organizational Culture</b>	Assess and align procurement policies with diversity goals.	This work is ongoing. A final draft of the Procurement Policy and Procedures is anticipated in fiscal year 2025. Following adoption, training will be provided to SCAG staff.
<b>Shift Organizational Culture</b>	Create an Equity Planning Resource Group to share best practices.	SCAG established an internal Equity Work Group, which developed an equity resource guide to support local jurisdictions as they advance equity, and is currently developing a racial equity toolkit to help institutionalize equity in the Planning Division. Additionally, with support from an equity expert, SCAG developed resources for staff to incorporate racial equity in Connect SoCal. These resources will live in Connect SoCal moving forward, and the internal Equity Work Group will continue to develop resources as needed.
<b>Shift Organizational Culture</b>	Develop a Diversity Style Guide on standards for communication.	The Media and Public Affairs department completed an agency style guide that includes a section on “Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging.” The document is a resource for all employees.

Goal	Action	Accomplishments and Final Update
<b>Shift Organizational Culture</b>	Update SCAG’s Strategic Plan to incorporate an equity vision and goals to guide agency work plans.	The Strategic Plan was completed in June 2024, including a new value, “cultivate belonging.” Key results will be developed in fiscal year 2025.
<b>Shift Organizational Culture</b>	Prepare an Inclusive and Equitable Talent Management Strategy.	SCAG will continue to regularly assess and implement enhancements to its talent management strategy. Forthcoming initiatives include developing a series of bias mitigation resources for hiring process participants throughout the recruitment lifecycle and evaluating our current recruitment process and tools.
<b>Center Racial Equity in Regional Policy and Planning</b>	Offer equity training for Regional Council members, including as part of Regional Council orientation.	SCAG’s equity efforts are incorporated into new member orientation presentations and onboarding materials. Resources from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) and other publications are shared with members on the SCAG website.
<b>Center Racial Equity in Regional Policy and Planning</b>	Include “Equity Assessment” section in staff reports.	All staff reports brought forward to the policy committees and Regional Council must reference the strategic priority or priorities advanced by the work. The priorities were established to advance a new goal in the Strategic Plan focused on “cultivating belonging.” A separate “equity assessment” has not been established.
<b>Center Racial Equity in Regional Policy and Planning</b>	Prepare racial equity indicators report.	In November 2022, SCAG staff released an update to the “Racial Equity Baseline Conditions Report,” which provides an assessment of existing disparities and inequities focused on goals from Connect SoCal. The baseline conditions report is anticipated to be updated every four years, with the next release planned for the fall of 2026 to support the development of Connect SoCal 2028.
<b>Center Racial Equity in Regional Policy and Planning</b>	Increase opportunity for participation in policy committees; formalize committee equity roles.	SCAG’s Bylaws were amended in May 2021 to expand policy committee membership to include Communities of Concern representatives to create a more inclusive governance structure.

Goal	Action	Accomplishments and Final Update
<b>Center Racial Equity in Regional Policy and Planning</b>	Update Public Participation Plan.	SCAG updated the Public Participation Plan to include several goals and strategies to ensure SCAG’s communications are looked at through an equity framework whenever possible. The Regional Council approved and adopted the 2022 Public Participation Plan on April 7, 2022.
<b>Center Racial Equity in Regional Policy and Planning</b>	Form Regional Policy Working Group dedicated to Equity.	As part of the Regional Planning Working Groups, the first Equity Working Group (EWG) was held on June 4, 2021. The EWG convenes quarterly to engage stakeholders on SCAG’s equity-focused regional and local planning activities as well as to support efforts across the region to advance equity in land-use and transportation planning. SCAG staff will continue to convene stakeholders to discuss and share equity issues and solutions.
<b>Center Racial Equity in Regional Policy &amp; Planning</b>	Develop equity goals, policies, and metrics as part of Connect SoCal update.	SCAG formed a Racial Equity and Regional Planning Subcommittee to guide opportunities to advance racial equity in Connect SoCal. The subcommittee’s recommendations informed policies and strategies in the adopted plan. The adopted plan includes an enhanced approach for conducting an equity analysis, including defining and analyzing plan impacts in Priority Equity Communities and a series of regional planning policies and strategies.
<b>Center Racial Equity in Regional Policy and Planning</b>	Explore developing research program with university partners.	The Tribal Data Needs Assessment for Tribal Resilience project kicked off in Spring 2024. The project will conclude in December 2024 with a co-published report by SCAG and the Brookings Institution. Updates on the status and findings of the effort will be made available on SCAG’s <a href="#">Inclusive Economic Recovery Strategy website</a> .
<b>Center Racial Equity in Regional Policy and Planning</b>	Form a Restorative Justice Subcommittee to inform work on Connect SoCal.	The Racial Equity and Regional Planning Subcommittee was established to identify opportunities to advance racial equity through the policies and strategies in Connect SoCal and guide how planning and investments over the next 30 years can address and rectify the effects of racially discriminatory policies in SCAG’s communities. The subcommittee held four meetings and produced a white paper with recommendations for infusing racial equity in Connect SoCal. The white paper was considered by the Joint Policy Committee in March 2023 and informed policies and strategies in Connect SoCal.

Goal	Action	Accomplishments and Final Update
<b>Center Racial Equity in Regional Policy and Planning</b>	Form an economic empowerment program.	An Economic Empowerment program was established in the Planning Division with current work focused on the administration of the Sustainable Communities Program – Civic Engagement, Equity, and Environmental Justice call for applications and the Call for Fellowship Providers (CivicWell and Partners for Public Health).
<b>Encourage Racial Equity in Local Planning</b>	Support data requests and create tools for information sharing.	SCAG staff have been conducting outreach to local jurisdictions in the region, including under-resourced jurisdictions located in disadvantaged communities, to introduce the available tools and resources in the Regional Data Platform (RDP). Through the 2021 Regional Early Action Plan Grant Program (REAP 2.0), SCAG has made the Streetlight platform available as part of the RDP to all local jurisdictions and key partners in the region, especially for the small and under-resourced jurisdictions that may not have the capacity to use big data to advance racial equity in local transportation planning. In addition, the SCAG Local Information Services Team (LIST) has been conducting Toolbox Tuesday webinars and providing technical assistance on subjects such as spatial analysis and map creation to under-resourced jurisdictions. SCAG staff will continue to look for innovative approaches and other opportunities to provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions in the SCAG region.
<b>Encourage Racial Equity in Local Planning</b>	Expand Toolbox Tuesday trainings to include sessions on racial equity.	The first equity-focused Toolbox Tuesday was hosted on June 22, 2021; SCAG staff has coordinated more than nine equity-focused Toolbox Tuesday trainings. SCAG staff will continue to respond to interests expressed by practitioners, including incorporating equity-focused trainings.
<b>Encourage Racial Equity in Local Planning</b>	Provide elected officials with fact sheets and tools to promote racial equity.	New member orientation presentations and onboarding materials include equity resources. Other resources from GARE and publications are posted on SCAG's website.

Goal	Action	Accomplishments and Final Update
<p><b>Encourage Racial Equity in Local Planning</b></p>	<p>Provide resources for community-based organization engagement in local planning, e.g., the <i>Go Human</i> Community Streets Grant Program and the Sustainable Communities Program</p>	<p>Sustainable Communities Program (SCP) – Civic Engagement, Equity and Environmental Justice call for applications projects are currently progressing through the contracting process, including memoranda of understanding execution, procurement, and preparation for kick-offs in fall 2024.</p>
<p><b>Encourage Racial Equity in Local Planning</b></p>	<p>Build planning capacity in under-resourced jurisdictions by providing staff support, e.g., Civic Sparks and Public Health Fellows.</p>	<p>Six graduate student fellows supported various REAP 2.0 efforts. Two fellows supported the development of the Programs to Accelerate Transformative Housing program and developed a research report that examined housing, public health, and community well-being to affirmatively further fair housing policy. Two fellows worked to support the procurement process and development of scopes of work for housing and land use projects under the SCP – Civic Engagement, Equity and Environmental Justice. One fellow supported the development of the County Transportation Commission Partnership Program and researched metrics to advance equity in transportation projects. The final fellow updated the transportation equity zones and developed a case study to analyze and improve transportation equity and accessibility in a transportation equity zones. Other deliverables produced by the fellows included a white paper that examined restorative justice in planning, a story map highlighting a REAP 2.0-funded project for the SCP – Civic Engagement, Equity and Environmental Justice program and its intersection with public health, and a storymap that featured the County Transportation Committee Partnership Program.</p>

Goal	Action	Accomplishments and Final Update
<b>Encourage Racial Equity in Local Planning</b>	Refine equity goals and evaluation criteria used in the Sustainable Communities Program (SCP).	The SCP prioritizes equity in its evaluation, and the program goals point to prioritizing priority populations and disadvantaged communities in alignment with SCAG's resolution on race and equity. SCP – Civic Engagement, Equity and Environmental Justice piloted a co-applicant structure, which allows for community-based organizations to apply as co-applicants to support community-identified and community-led project identification and implementation opportunities alongside a primary jurisdiction or agency applicant. This co-applicant structure facilitates equity-centered proposal development and decision-making. Finally, the SCP has continued to facilitate opportunities to compensate community-based organization partners committed to equity, serving as evaluators to ensure projects are assessed with intentional attention to equity.
<b>Encourage Racial Equity in Local Planning</b>	Provide resources through the Sustainable Communities Program (SCP) to promote environmental justice.	SCAG developed the SCP – Civic Engagement, Equity and Environmental Justice call for applications to support the goals and implementation of the Racial Equity Early Action Plan. This program prioritizes resources in historically disinvested areas and catalyzes planning activities to reduce vehicle miles traveled, advance equity, and promote environmental justice. Six housing and land use strategies projects, funded through REAP 2.0, and five multimodal communities projects, funded through Senate Bill 1, were selected and are expected to begin in fiscal year 2025. All projects in both project categories are scheduled to be completed by November 2025.
<b>Encourage Racial Equity in Local Planning</b>	Identify opportunities to incorporate equity analysis in development of the 2023 Federal Transportation Improvement Program.	Based on the adopted Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) Guidelines, county transportation commissions were encouraged to consider equity in developing their respective county transportation improvement programs. In future FTIPs, more advanced database analytics, combined with spatial analysis, may be utilized to evaluate investments across the region and consider whether they address under-resourced or under-served areas. In the near term, SCAG has initiated an FTIP mapping tool through the updated FTIP database to capture the location and extent of all projects, including non-modeled (exempt) projects. For the 2025 FTIP, SCAG staff also included relevant equity questions, along with the mapping tool, to encourage equity through local planning. Any changes to the FTIP process involving equity will be done in collaboration with the county transportation commissions.

Goal	Action	Accomplishments and Final Update
<b>Activate and Amplify</b>	Collaborate on a fair housing public information campaign.	This project was postponed due to uncertainty regarding REAP 2.0 funding. Given the related funding and timing constraints, the program will likely not move forward. The housing team will work with United Way Greater Los Angeles to identify ways to support and uplift pro-housing efforts.
<b>Activate and Amplify</b>	Strengthen relationships with other metropolitan planning organizations.	Every two months, a group of staff from several metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), including SCAG, convenes an MPO Equity Working Group to discuss current equity efforts, challenges, and best practices. Meetings have focused on various equity topics, including, but not limited to, performance measures, partnerships with community-based organizations, environmental justice analysis, and equity tools. Information about the meetings is shared through the GARE network. SCAG also participates in monthly meetings with the California Association of Councils of Governments, the “Big 4” MPOs, and Caltrans meetings to discuss experiences advancing equity and share resources.
<b>Activate and Amplify</b>	Explore opportunities to partner to establish a “planning university” for community-based organizations and stakeholders.	Connect SoCal 2024 includes a new Implementation Strategy to “Develop an agency-wide Community Based Organization (CBO) Partnering Strategy that outlines tools and resources for partnering with CBOs to increase inclusive and equitable engagement opportunities.” This effort is anticipated to kick-off in fiscal year 2025.
<b>Activate and Amplify</b>	Develop an “Excellence in Equity” annual award program.	SCAG’s Sustainability Awards program now includes an equity category to highlight projects that advance equity and facilitate the growth of healthy, livable, sustainable, and economically resilient communities. SCAG renamed the Equity Award to honor the late Ventura County Supervisor Carmen Ramirez, who was tragically killed in 2022 after a lifetime of championing sustainability.
<b>Activate and Amplify</b>	Develop an Inclusive Economic Recovery Strategy.	The Inclusive Economic Recovery Strategy was developed through a rigorous public outreach and engagement process, including 20 convenings with stakeholders from the private, public, and government sectors. The resulting Inclusive Economic Recovery Strategy and recommendations were adopted by the Regional Council on July 1, 2021.

Goal	Action	Accomplishments and Final Update
<p><b>Activate and Amplify</b></p>	<p>Inclusive Economic Growth Implementation Program.</p>	<p>Following adoption of the Inclusive Economic Recovery Strategy (IERS) in July 2021, SCAG was awarded \$3.5 million in state funding to implement IERS core recommendations. Of these recommendations, SCAG is working to complete a regionwide report addressing barriers to economic opportunities, with a particular focus on lower-income communities and communities of color; a data needs assessment for supporting Tribal economic development and resilience; a best practices report on expanding apprenticeship pathways to good jobs; and action-oriented plans to expand access to family-supporting jobs. On Nov. 15, 2023, SCAG released the Inclusive Contracting Toolkit, which will serve as a resource for public and private institutions to advance equitable procurement and support the region's diverse small businesses. In the briefing book for the 2023 SCAG Economic Summit, SCAG shared the results of county-level analyses of the economic costs of inequality. In spring 2023, SCAG also completed the Job Quality Index Framework, which could serve as a foundation for future tools to investigate the various dimensions of job quality in the SCAG region. SCAG will complete the remaining IERS grant-funded deliverables by Dec. 31, 2024. SCAG could pursue additional funding to further advance the strategies and recommendations produced by IERS work.</p>

Source: SCAG



#### MAIN OFFICE

900 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 1700,  
Los Angeles, CA 90017  
Tel: (213) 236-1800

#### REGIONAL OFFICES

##### IMPERIAL COUNTY

1503 North Imperial Ave., Ste. 104  
El Centro, CA 92243  
Tel: (213) 236-1967

##### ORANGE COUNTY

OCTA Building  
600 S. Main St., Ste. 1108  
Orange, CA 92868  
Tel: (213) 630-1599

##### RIVERSIDE COUNTY

3403 10th St., Ste. 805  
Riverside, CA 92501  
Tel: (951) 784-1513

##### SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

1170 West 3rd St., Ste. 140  
San Bernardino, CA 92418  
Tel: (213) 630-1499

##### VENTURA COUNTY

4001 Mission Oaks Blvd., Ste. L  
Ventura, CA 93012  
Tel: (213) 236-1960

**LEARN MORE**

[SCAG.CA.GOV](http://SCAG.CA.GOV)