Advancing Equity in Regional Transportation Planning

Puget Sound Regional Council – Toolbox Peer Networking Series
April 30, 2021
The SCAG Region

- Nation's Largest MPO
- 191 Cities
- 6 Counties
- 18.9 Million People
- 16th Largest Economy in the World
Connect SoCal (RTP/SCS)
Connect SoCal (RTP/SCS) – Outreach

• Partnered with 18 Community Based Organizations
• Helped us reach underrepresented communities
• Funded meetings, outreach activities, intercept surveys
Public Health Focus Areas:

- Access to Essential Destinations
- Affordable Housing
- Air Quality
- Climate Adaptation
- Economic Opportunity
- Physical Activity
- Transportation Safety
Environmental Justice Areas – Transportation Analysis Zones that have a higher concentration of minority OR low-income households

SB 535 Disadvantaged Areas – Census tracts Cal/EPA has identified as Disadvantaged Communities based on the requirements set forth in SB 535 - areas disproportionately burdened by and vulnerable to multiple sources of pollution

Communities of Concern – Census Designated Places and City of Los Angeles Community Planning Areas that fall in the upper 1/3rd of all communities in the SCAG region for having the highest concentration of minority population AND low-income households
How will this impact quality of life?
• Jobs-Housing Imbalance
• Neighborhood Change and Displacement
• Accessibility to Employment and Services
• Accessibility to Parks and Educational Facilities

How will this impact health and safety?
• Active Transportation Hazards
• Climate Vulnerability
• Public Health Analysis
• Aviation Noise Impacts
• Roadway Noise Impacts
• Emissions Impacts Analysis (PM2.5 & CO)
• Emissions Impacts Along Freeways

How will this impact transportation costs?
• Share of Transportation System Usage
• Connect SoCal Revenue Sources in Terms of Tax Burdens
• Connect SoCal Investments vs. Benefits
• Geographic Distribution of Transportation Investments
• Impacts from Funding Through Mileage-Based User Fees

How will this impact the commute?
• Travel Time and Travel Distance Savings
• Rail-Related Impacts
Connect SoCal (RTP/SCS) – Environmental Justice Analysis

Connect SoCal EJ Technical Report Performance Indicators

- CI = Circulation
- CO = Conservation
- H = Housing
- LU = Land Use
- N = Noise
- OS = Open Space
- S = Safety

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Environmental Justice Toolbox
Recommended Practices & Approaches
March 2021
Equity & Engagement
Identify need, focus resources, and expand stakeholders.

Inclusive Recovery
Research ongoing impacts and focus recovery on the most vulnerable.

Public Health & Safety
Safe access for essential workers, safe streets, and COVID-19 counter measures.

Resilience
Plan a region resilient to environmental, social, and economic shocks.

Local Capacity Building
Building local capacity to compete for and implement local, state, and federal resources.
Program Goal: Build street-level community resilience & increase the safety of people most harmed by traffic injuries and fatalities

Priorities:
1. Organizations focused on or led by members of disadvantaged or historically underinvested communities in the region.
2. Projects that leverage Go Human safety resources, including co-branded safety materials or the Kit of Parts.
3. Creative leadership and capacity building strategies.

Connect SoCal (RTP/SCS) – Implementation, Mini-Grants

Echo Park Film Center

Community Intelligence
Partnership with California Community Foundation to support deeper community engagement in planning activities and programs that accelerate housing production.

Funding available on competitive-basis for:
- Partnership Programs to support implementation of existing plans, initiatives or partnerships
- Spark Grants to seed new models of collaboration and engagement

Empowering community-based organizations to bring voices to the table that are often left behind, but are also the most impacted by the policies in question.
**Connect SoCal (RTP/SCS) – Sustainable Communities Program**

- **$15M in technical assistance to local jurisdictions to implement Connect SoCal**

- **Calls for Applications in multiple categories:**
  - Past: Active Transportation, Housing
  - Feb 2021: Smart Cities & Mobility Innovations
  - June 2021: Under Development

**INTEGRATE & INSTITUTIONALIZE**

**ENGAGE & CO-POWER**

- Targeted outreach, coaching, listening sessions, evaluation criteria for underserved communities

- Community Based Organizations on Evaluation Panel

- Support local plans that address inequities in the region
Moving Forward: SCAG’s Commitment to Equity & Social Justice

- July 2020 – SCAG Board adopted resolution
- Established Special Committee on Equity & Social Justice
- Focus on:
  - Developing SCAG’s response to advancing equity throughout the agency’s activities
  - Advising SCAG’s Regional Council on policies and practices to advance its resolved intentions
Leading with racial equity to address the pervasive and deep inequities faced by people of color across the region.

“As central to SCAG’s work, racial equity describes the actions, policies, and practices that eliminate bias and barriers that have historically and systemically marginalized communities of color, to ensure all people can be healthy, prosperous, and participate fully in civic life.”
Moving Forward: Understanding Our Baseline Conditions

- Analysis of existing disparities and inequities
- Indicators across four main categories:
  - Economic Vitality
  - Healthy and Complete Communities
  - Mobility
  - Environment
- Informs Racial Equity Early Action Plan & future planning work
Moving Forward: Understanding Our Baseline Conditions

**Economic Vitality**
- $15 / Hour
- Median Hourly Wage
- Poverty
- Working Poor
- Unemployment

**Connectedness**
- High Poverty Neighborhoods

**Healthy + Complete Communities**

**Affordability**
- Home Ownership
- Housing Burden

**Housing Quality**
- Kitchen Facilities
- Overcrowding

**Essential Services**
- Plumbing Facilities
- Broadband Access

**Public Health**
- Health Insurance
- SNAP
- Life Expectancy

**Household**
- Median Household Income

**Mobility**

**Accessibility**
- Access to Employment
- Access to Open Space & Parks
- Commute Time
- Households without a vehicle
- Transportation System Share

**Safety**
- Bike + Pedestrian Collisions

**Environment**

**Climate Vulnerability**
- Flood Hazard areas
- Wildfire risk

**Environmental Health**
- CalEnviroScreen3.0*

**Public Health**
- Air pollution index

*Omitted in first draft
Moving Forward: Racial Equity Early Action Plan

SCAG’s Racial Equity Early Action Plan

In July 2020, SCAG’s Regional Council made a commitment to advancing justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout Southern California and established an ad hoc Special Committee on Equity & Social Justice to advise the Regional Council on policies and practices to advance racial equity. The Committee met on a quarterly basis starting in September 2020 and concluded in March 2021. Based on discussions and feedback from the Committee, SCAG staff prepared the Racial Equity Early Action Plan to provide a framework for sharing the Committee’s recommendations with the Regional Council. The Racial Equity Early Action Plan establishes a definition of equity, benchmarking goals, and strategies to advance racial equity through SCAG’s policies, practices, and activities. It includes activities that can be initiated with existing resources through process improvements, leveraging current work activities, and forming new partnerships, as well as new efforts and programs that would need to be considered through the budget development process. The Early Action Plan is a living document with opportunities to identify new actions over time.

GOALS

Shift Organizational Culture

From SCAG’s internal work and practices on inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility

Center Racial Equity in Regional Planning & Policy

Bring equity into SCAG’s regional planning framework

Encourage Racial Equity in Local Planning Practices

Incorporate racial equity in efforts involving local elected officials and planning professionals.

Activate & Amplify

Communicate broadly SCAG’s commitment to racial equity and join with others in other fields and sectors to amplifying impact.
Moving Forward: Connect SoCal-related Actions

• Develop equity goals, policies, and metrics as part of Connect SoCal update
• Consider adjustments to EJ analysis
• Identify opportunities to incorporate equity analysis in development of 2023 FTIP
• Update Public Participation Plan
• Form Regional Policy Working Group dedicated to Equity
• Refine equity goals and evaluation criteria used in Sustainable Communities Program
The Definition

• How does / should the definition relate to SCAG’s racial equity definition?

• Does the definition convey environmental equity is abolishing harms (+ minimizing, mitigating, offsetting) as opposed to redistributing them?

• Is there something critical missing from the definition?

• Is there something in the definition that shouldn't be included?

• Does the definition sufficiently reflect climate equity, or should climate equity have a standalone definition?

The Process

• How do you see the definition potentially being implemented in your work?

• Do you have any suggestions for how we could improve the process for developing the definition?

• Who else should we seek feedback from?

• What documentation might be helpful to other teams as they start this process?
MPO EJ/Communities of Concern Indicators - Compared

- Disability
- Low Income
- Limited English Proficiency
- Minority
- Older Adults (65+)
- Youth
- Ethnic Minority
- Racial Minority
- Poverty
- Female
- Foreign Born
- Zero Vehicle
- Seniors (75+)
- Severe Overcrowd
- Educational Attainment
- Severely Rent Burdened
- Single Parent

SCAG current CoC & EJ Areas
Questions? Comments?

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