



Workshop: Center for Land Based Learning and Update on SACOG's Coordinated Rural Opportunities Plan

Workshop

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Attachments: Yes

Approved by: James Corless

Referring Committee: Not Applicable

Issue:

This workshop is an extension on the Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP) tour of Woodland and Yolo County. Each year SACOG organizes a focused tour of a local jurisdiction to fulfill the board of directors' goal to deepen understanding of how race/ethnicity, income, and geography affect the social outcomes of communities throughout the region. Presenters will highlight how the community is working to enhance the connection between its urban and rural roots to provide housing, food, and economic opportunities. Following the tour, the board will hear from Center for Land Based Learning about their programs as well as an update on SACOG's Coordinated Rural Opportunities Plan (CROP).

Recommendation:

None; this item is for information only.

Background/Analysis:

Agriculture has deep roots in our region's history and future, as we have some of the most productive farmland and expert knowhow in the world. In our region, agriculture is a more than \$2.5 billion industry (with the full food system contributing over \$12 billion a year to the regional economy), and has been called out as a key economic cluster both in the region's [Prosperity Strategy](#) as well as more recent work conducted under the statewide [California Jobs First initiative](#).

Despite the central role food and agriculture plays in the region, the food system continues to face challenges ranging from market (e.g., changing commodity prices, lack of market channels) to environmental (e.g., drought, flood, loss of agricultural land). The [Coordinated Rural Opportunities Plan](#) (or "CROP") is a regional synthesis of the challenges affecting agriculture and draws attention to the needed infrastructure investments, policy approaches, and best practice models to support this important part of the regional economy. The work draws on local planning and agricultural expertise throughout the region as well as the decade-old Rural Urban Connections Strategy program at SACOG. CROP presents an opportunity to take a regional view of the economic and infrastructure (land, transportation, water, broadband) investment challenges and solutions that will affect agriculture over the coming decades.

Discussion/Analysis:

Complementing the release of CROP, the second annual Racial Equity Action Plan tour is taking place ahead of the board meeting on the morning of March 21, 2024, with a tour through Woodland and Yolo County. Board

members and partners are invited to attend the tour to learn more about how this community is working to enhance the connection between its urban and rural roots to provide housing, economic opportunities, and food to community members who need it the most. Following the tour, SACOG has invited Mary Kimball, Executive Director of the Center for Land Based Learning to present this month's workshop on how the nonprofit's Farm Business Academy Incubator and Mobile Food Hub programs are working together to offer a new ecosystem to provide a business stream for budding farmers and provide healthy food to underserved communities in the region.

In addition, Trish Kelley from Valley Vision will be joining to share an update on CROP, which is the next phase of SACOG's Rural-Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS) to enhance rural economies and the natural assets that drive them across the six-county Sacramento region. CROP provides county and regional leaders with information on needed infrastructure investment challenges and strategies to come together on solutions that will support the region's agricultural sustainability and long-term economic health and resiliency. Attachment A includes the final CROP deliverables.

Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:

The Racial Equity Action Plan efforts are listed in SACOG's Overall Work Program. CROP was funded by the Department of Conservation's Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) program.