

## Race, Equity & Inclusion Working Group

Friday, May 27, 2022 | 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Meeting recording available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QMWWNNyCxE>

### **Working Group Outcomes for the year:**

- Prioritize racial equity in the Blueprint, SACOG's long-range transportation and land use plan
- Build support among key stakeholders and Board members and provide direction for a racial equity action plan

### **Pre-reading:**

- Learnings from 1-on-1 listening sessions with REI working group members
- Blueprint engagement strategy overview
- Adopted Racial Equity Statement of Change and Commitment
- 2022 Working Group Schedule and Outcomes

### **Goals for the meeting:**

- Discussion and then guidance from this working group on how SACOG should interpret the learnings from the listening sessions to create a draft racial equity action plan.
- Identify where there are tensions/conflicts in the learnings.
- Guidance from this working group on how to prioritize racial equity in public engagement for SACOG's Blueprint plan.

### **Call to Order, Welcome, Public Communications and Approval of Remote Working Group meeting**

Chair Jennings opened the meeting and welcomed meeting attendees. The committee then approved the remote working group meeting.

### **Where have we been, where are we today, where are we going**

James Corless, SACOG Executive Director, re-capped the working group's work this year. The working group finalized a racial equity statement of change and commitment that was adopted by the SACOG Board. Following this, at its February meeting the working group gave feedback on a new SACOG funding program, Engage, Empower, Implement. This funding program is intended to act on the commitments in the racial equity statement—the program will fund local jurisdictions to co-create projects with their communities. SACOG also kicked off the development of a racial equity action plan starting with a listen and learn phase: working group

members were invited to provide input via one-on-one interviews with SACOG staff, and for external stakeholders SACOG hired an equity consultant to conduct group listening sessions to gain input.

Mr. Corless shared other activities also underway to follow through on SACOG's racial equity commitment: the agency issued a request for proposals to community based organizations to work with us to design the program guidelines for the Engage, Empower, Implement program; SACOG held a board retreat focused on the actualizing Triple Bottom Line (equity, economy, environment) goals in its work; the agency convened community based organizations for input on the Green Means Go grant program guidelines; the board approved the creation of a Community Voices committee of CBOs that can be a staff-level advisory committee.

The rest of the year, over its remaining 4 meetings, the REI working group will be focused on developing a racial equity action plan for SACOG and helping to prioritize equity in SACOG's long range transportation and land use plan (a.k.a., Blueprint).

## **2. Learnings from listening sessions held to date**

Preliminary findings from listening sessions: SACOG hired equity consultant firm, Venture with Purpose, to conduct small group stakeholder listening sessions and guide SACOG in the development of its racial equity action plan. Kacey Lizon of SACOG staff introduced Patrick Brown and Shaniece Alexander, from Venture with Purpose. Mr. Brown and Ms. Alexander presented their firm's approach to equity work and an overview of their scope of work with SACOG. Ms. Alexander explained that the listening sessions are being conducted as small groups of the following stakeholders: city and county governments, transit agencies, community-based organizations, and SACOG staff. Ms. Alexander then presented the preliminary findings from the listening sessions conducted to date (see Handout 2 for findings). Additional listening sessions will be conducted with these groups before the end of June. Venture and SACOG staff are also working to meet with tribal governments and REI Working group members offered to facilitate introductions for those meetings.

Preliminary findings from working group 1-on-1s: Since the working group's February meeting, REI working group members have been to have 1-on-1 interviews with SACOG staff to provide input on how SACOG can follow through on the commitments in its racial equity statement. About half of the working group members have participated so far and Ms. Lizon invited any who have not yet participated to schedule their 1-on-1 with SACOG staff for a date in June. Ms. Lizon highlighted the themes from the 1-on-1 interviews of working group members thus far:

- There is a need for equitable community engagement, and many ideas for what that looks like.
- SACOG should support cities, counties, and transit agencies in re-learning how to engage with their local communities.
- SACOG can create opportunities for local elected officials to understand the different communities in the region.

The working group members gave feedback on the preliminary findings:

- There is appreciation that the racial equity statement will be integrated into all levels of what SACOG does internally and externally, and that learnings have been organized into programs/operations/board practices.
- Learnings so far identify that there are currently gaps in outreach to constituencies. But the learnings also presented a lot of ideas about how to conduct inclusive community engagement. A part of the action plan could articulate adoption of some core principles around what is authentic community engagement in SACOG's programs, which could also serve as a basis for training.
- The learnings have a theme of training—internal (for staff) and external (for local governments) and for the board. The working group is interested in seeing the action plan yield sample policies and technical support to local jurisdictions. The ideas of an internal study mission within the region, and learning the history of places, resonated. Working group members also raised up a question and need of how to talk about racial equity and inclusion in rural areas, and build up the capacity in rural areas to do equity work.
- Make sure to include accountability in all three areas of the action plan, such as regular reports at board meetings and internal staff meetings, to keep the organization focused on progress toward the goals of the plan.

The working group is very interested to see learnings from the rest of the listening sessions and 1-on-1s integrated into the findings in July. Staff reported that the comprehensive findings from the listening sessions will be presented along side a draft racial equity action plan in July.

**Case Study: How can SACOG's Blueprint engagement strategy follow through on racial equity commitments?**

This item was continued to the July 29<sup>th</sup> meeting due to lack of time.

**Next meeting dates:**

**July 29, 2022**

**September 30, 2022**

**November 18, 2022**