



Engage, Empower, Implement Update

Receive and file

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Attachments: Yes

Approved by: James Corless

Referring Committee: Transportation

1. Issue:

Staff is providing an update on the Engage, Empower, Implement (EEI) funding program with next steps and an updated timeline.

2. Recommendation:

This item is for information and discussion only. Staff is open to board recommendations and questions regarding the upcoming EEI work.

3. Background/Analysis:

In 2020, during the SACOG board's adoption of the Funding Round, the agency created a new program, EEI, to focus on the region's most disinvested communities. The SACOG board allocated \$3 million dollars to fund EEI to begin addressing disparities that have limited healthy environments for all of the region's residents. EEI will strategically invest these funds in low-income communities with an emphasis on the communities that have faced the largest inequities which include Black, Indigenous, Asian, Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino and other communities of color.

The program will be seed funding for the region's cities and counties, in partnership with community-based organizations, to develop projects that address community needs and provide solutions to challenges. Through this funding program, SACOG aims to establish a planning process to create a pipeline of equitable, safe, and sustainable projects throughout the Sacramento region that are community-led and co-designed, starting from the identification of issues and needs, solution ideation, and project design. The EEI planning process will create projects ready for implementation through local, state, and/or federal funding.

In March, the board received a workshop looking at peer agencies and related approaches: the Bay Area's Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) shared their Community Based Transportation Planning program and San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG) also shared their experience with grassroots engagement and discussed their community engagement and relationship building work they conducted and how these efforts helped SJCOG secure a \$7.48 million Sustainable Transportation Equity Project (STEP) grant to serve disadvantaged communities in Stockton. Staff continues to follow best practices from peer agencies and looking to similar efforts.

4. Discussion/Analysis:

As is described in the attachment, in the last several months, SACOG staff have been developing the next steps of EEI in various forms. Since February, SACOG has been working on developing a racial equity action plan that started with listening sessions. These listening sessions have been helpful in shaping the current draft framework and providing preliminary understanding of how some CBOs want to be engaged and where there are gaps.

At the same time, SACOG has also convened working groups for other projects, including the Project Evaluation Process and Green Means Go, that have also provided insight on CBOs' perspectives and the regional need for more collaboration for decision making and project and program design, that begins with meaningful engagement at every step of the way.

Additionally, the funding round team has gone out to meet with cities and counties to share the upcoming funding program and this has been a great way to introduce the region's staff to EEI and upcoming efforts and gaining preliminary insight on how this program can be used by our diverse region.

Another critical component to the next steps of EEI includes the procurement of a partner to do this work. Staff initially wanted to have a CBO be the lead in engaging with other CBOs and member jurisdictions and released a Request for Proposals (RFP) in May 2022. Unfortunately, the RFP was unsuccessful in soliciting a CBO partner and provided valuable lessons learned regarding capacity of CBOs and the limitations of CBOs being excluded from the implementation end of EEI if they worked closely on the program development. Staff had to pivot and released a new RFP in August for a consultant.

Staff will have a signed and executed contract with a consultant and begin work in early November. The consultant will work closely with SACOG to develop outreach strategies and specific timelines for all the program elements. The consultant will support SACOG as the agency collects information from CBOs and member jurisdictions to develop the EEI program, including the development of guidelines, application materials, and other resources. They will report back key findings and provide recommendations based on their needs and priorities identified by CBOs and jurisdictions and help finalize the EEI program.

The consultant will be delivering the following items:

- Lead the engagement effort with member jurisdictions and CBOs through interviews, focus groups, and meetings alongside SACOG
- Provide key recommendations based on partner outreach and listening
- Help develop a draft EEI program, application, materials, and resources
- Be available for additional consultation as SACOG implements the first round of EEI

Next steps for EEI will include working with the consultant to assess current outreach efforts/strategies and creating an outreach plan with CBOs and member city and counties to begin discussing needs, challenges, and opportunities. Outreach and detailed conversations with CBOs and member jurisdictions will begin in December and continue throughout the development of the program with an ongoing feedback loop and their review at every key step. SACOG staff and the consultant will begin using the information gathered to develop guidelines, applications, and resources and continue checking in with CBOs and jurisdictions until the final program adoption, estimated for Spring 2023, with a call for applications following shortly after.

5. Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:

The implementation funds (\$3 million) for this program are allocated from the 2020 Funding Round. The framework development, along with the consultants, will be funded through a combination of REAP 2.0, SMUD grant, and SACOG's operating budget.

6. This staff report aligns with the following SACOG Work Plan Objectives:

Goal 2 : Connected Communities

Objective 1: Develop more sustainable sources of future transportation funding while winning new competitive state and federal transportation grants.

Objective 2: Support innovative mobility options that develop equitable, accessible transportation options for all residents.