



Land Use & Natural Resources Committee

Meeting Date: April 6, 2023

Agenda Item No. 6

Engage, Empower, Implement Update

Prepared by: Rosie Ramos

Attachments: Yes

Approved by: Clint Holtzen

Referring Committee: Not Applicable

1. Issue:

Staff is providing an update on the Engage, Empower, Implement (EEI) funding program.

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 EEI, a new funding program focused on the region's most disinvested communities. The SACOG board allocated \$3 million towards EEI to begin addressing disparities that result in limited-healthy environments for the region's residents. EEI will strategically invest these funds in low-income communities with an emphasis on communities that have faced the largest inequities which include Black, Indigenous, Asian, Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino and other communities of color. 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.

EEI is founded on concepts and priorities similar to some of our peers' recent work, including Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Community Based Transportation Plans, San Joaquin Council of Governments' grassroots efforts that led to a \$7.48 million STEP grant, and Southern California Association of Governments' Civic Engagement, Equity, and Environmental Justice program. As state and federal grant programs continue to place an emphasis on meaningful community engagement, EEI will strengthen our region's ability to secure future funding by laying the groundwork and establishing best practices that ensure all projects begin with the communities they will serve.

4. Discussion/Analysis:

SACOG staff have kicked off work with the selected consultant team including HR&A and AIM Consulting. A draft funding program framework will be developed in collaboration with community-based organizations (CBOs), jurisdictions throughout the six-county region and other key partners. The framework development process will include engagement with CBOs through a roundtable, survey, and focus group discussion to

discuss: strengths and weaknesses of SACOG and other public agencies' approaches to CBO engagement; potential barriers to EEI participation; the most pressing community needs in the region's disinvested and rural communities, and the types of projects that address these needs; and the extent of government partnerships needed for successful project collaboration.

Feedback from CBOs will help inform SACOG staff and the consultant team in drafting the funding program approach. Staff will engage member jurisdictions following each CBO engagement effort to share key findings and solicit feedback from the public agencies' perspectives to further inform the framework.

Key areas for decision-making during this process include:

- Project Funding Guidelines: define which types of groups and projects are eligible to apply for funding through SACOG or their partner organizations and determine how investments are prioritized.
- Project Application Process: define the process, materials, and resources needed to apply for funding.
- Project Funding and Execution: define how awardees access funds and in what ways they are supported through the project execution phase.
- EEI Program Evaluation: define the process and metrics used for evaluating the overall impacts of the EEI program and projects.

Attached are the project research questions and approach as well as a list of community organizations and partners to invite to our EEI conversations.

The workshop at the April 20, board meeting, will showcase the Health Education Council and the City of Roseville partnership that demonstrates the type of collaboration that EEI hopes to sponsor across the region.

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.