



Update on Engage, Empower, Implement

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.

**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:**

The SACOG board has allocated \$3 million towards Engage, Empower, Implement (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 funding framework and 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.

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.

HR&A Advising and their sub-consultant, Aim Consulting, were brought on in December 2022 to assist staff with the development of this new funding program. Since then, staff and the consultants have created an engagement plan for community based

**4. Discussion/Analysis:**

SACOG staff have kicked off work with HR&A and AIM Consulting. A 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. Local cities and counties will also be included in the development of the framework and will have the opportunity to weigh in and review.

Staff have completed a community roundtable that resulted in feedback to incorporate into the development of the framework (see attached summary document). Most recently, two focus group sessions have been completed and the additional discussions will occur through the month of June.

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. Staff intend to return in August after all engagement has been completed and the drafting of the framework begins.

#### **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.