Meeting of the Equity Working Group

September 23, 2021
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

The meeting was held via Zoom teleconference. A digital recording of the meeting is available for listening in SCAG's office.

ATTENDEE LIST

Presenters:
Katie Kalvoda, Advance OC
Chelsea Lucktenberg, Los Angeles Office of the Controller
Katie Balderas, City of Long Beach

SCAG Staff:
Courtney Aguirre
Mairany Anaya
Anita Au
Leslie Cayton
Prithvi Deore
Annaleigh Ekman
Alison Linder
Jennifer Martinez
Trish Sharma
Anikka Van Eyl
Rachel Wagner

Webinar:
Ana Bonilla, Public Health Alliance of Southern California
Jenny Chen, RCTC
Seth Contreras, Fehr & Peers
Susan DeSantis, Arellano Associates
Derek Eason-Towers, City of Ventura
Lori Huddleston, Metro
Jazmine Johnson, PSR – LA
Serena Liu, Caltrans
Ariana Lopez, OCPW
Paul Martin, Mark Thomas
Elsy Mejia
Alyssa Murakami, Caltrans District 12
Christal Murray, GLA FEB
Peter Nguyen, AdvanceOC
Elsy Salcedo, AdvanceOC
Eduardo Serafin, ITS Berkeley TechTransfer
James Shankel, Caltrans District 7
Gail Shiomoto-Lohr, City of Mission Viejo
Aubrey Smith, Metrolink
Candice Vander Hyde, City of Lancaster
Warren Whiteaker, OCTA
OC YIMBY

MEETING SUMMARY

1. **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**

   Anita Au, Senior Regional Planner, Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) | au@scag.ca.gov

   Anita Au welcomed all participants.

2. **ORANGE COUNTY EQUITY MAP & SOCIAL PROGRESS INDEX**

   Katie Kalvoda, President & Board Chair, AdvanceOC | katie@advanceoc.com

   Presentation Summary:

   Katie Kalvoda from AdvanceOC shared about the Orange County Equity Map and Social Progress Index, which are products of a

public-private partnership between AdvanceOC, the County of Orange, and the Health Care Agency, with technical help on the index from Social Progress Imperative (SPI).

AdvanceOC brings stakeholders together to invest in equity focused strategies. The development of the Equity Map and Social Progress Index helps to establish a baseline to understand inequities and the root causes of why disparities exist.

The Social Progress Index is used world-wide and includes 55 population indicators organized within three broad dimensions: Basic Human Needs, Foundations of Wellbeing, and Opportunity. Orange County's Average Component SPI score is 44.53/100. The scores can be viewed at various geographic levels, including countywide or by city, zip code, or census tract. Data at the neighborhood level allows local agencies to understand local issues and the disparities between their neighborhoods.

Katie shared the COVID-19 Vulnerability Map as an example use case that helped establish and test the index that helped to build trust in the tool. The interactive map involves COVID-19 Vulnerability composite indicators from the CDC's Health and Comorbidity Risk Factors and key public health factors selected from the Social Progress Index indicators to predict how vulnerable each census tract may be to contracting COVID-19. The map also includes an overlay of existing community infrastructure (e.g., churches/Islamic centers/Buddhist temples, community clinics, Latinx groceries, etc.) that could be points of contact for the County to share resources and information with those who are most vulnerable. Other use cases include food insecurity maps, housing and homelessness, and opportunity zones.

Katie provided a demonstration on how to use the Orange County Equity Map and Correlation Analysis that are available on the AdvanceOC website at: https://www.advanceoc.com/

Questions and Answers:

Question: What is the proposed funding mechanism to support all these equity action items? Who's going to pay for it? How will we fund these equity initiatives without taxing the local population even more?

> **Answer:** Currently, there are a lot of federal and state dollars dedicated to supporting this type of work (i.e., evidence-based or data-based approaches to social issues). There are also grant funding opportunities. It is important to have an early adopter to demonstrate use of data across multiple jurisdictions. COVID-19 provided an opportunity to show proof of concept for this tool and allowed for growth into new use cases, like distribution of American Rescue Plan Funds where local jurisdictions need direction in how to maximize the impact of these dollars.

Question: Broadband and internet is a very crucial part of equity plans; are there any plans to include this in the index?

> **Answer:** These are already included in the index. The digital divide became an even higher priority because of COVID-19 with remote learning and the inequitable access to learning opportunities. AdvanceOC also focused on linguistically isolated communities since they could be more vulnerable to misinformation about public health. AdvanceOC wanted to cover as many components as possible to maximize the usefulness of this tool to a broad reach of stakeholders

Question: Are you aware of any other counties in Southern California who are moving forward through a health care agency to do a similar type of index?

> **Answer:** Not currently. AdvanceOC compared notes on health trends with the City of Providence, RI who had their own COVID-19 detection tool. As a result of their work, AdvanceOC received a request for partnership with the American Academy of Pediatrics who manage a national registry of 67,000 pediatricians.

> Katie Balderas, City of Long Beach, also responded that the City of Long Beach Health Department has a similar tool in its Community Health Needs Assessment. It combines data & narrative: https://dashboards.mysidewalk.com/long-beach-cha. She also mentioned that the Healthy Places Index is another great tool: https://map.healthyplacesindex.org/.

Question: Could you speak to AdvanceOC's partnership with the County of Orange?

Answer: When COVID-19 hit, AdvanceOC saw that this tool could help the County manage the COVID crisis. County Supervisor Andrew Do saw this as a huge opportunity and had been looking for a tool like this because of his work in under resourced communities. The County provided seed money for the tool and AdvanceOC supplemented the budget with private fundraising. The future of this tool will also be supported through private donations and will continue to be a community tool.

Question: What was the overall budget for the development of this tool?

Answer: Taking into consideration the volunteered hours, the overall budget for this tool was around $500k, with $385k of seed money from Orange County and private fundraising for the remainder.

Question: Are the cities across Orange County familiar with the tool and how they can use the data? I also wonder if the tool can be used to help guide funding decisions.

Answer: Yes, cities were invited to the Launch Event on July 14th, but we are following up with each district to host regional workshops and invite local stakeholders for a deeper dive.

Question: Are there existing or proposed partnerships in Orange County or Southern California to leverage authority and funding from land use decisions, transportation investments, health care access, education access, etc.?

Answer: AdvanceOC relies on private philanthropy and government grants from CDC, NIH, and various other federal agencies as well as research grants.

Question: Have you stratified this data by race/ethnicity? I noticed the first census tract ranked #4 was 80% white while the community that ranked #369 was just 20% white. In addition, how has the community reacted to these rankings? Do they agree/disagree with these rankings and does their experience align?

Answer: AdvanceOC will be stratifying race data using Census 2020 data once it's fully released. We started some preliminary analysis, but we will roll out a more detailed analysis soon.

For any further questions about Orange County Equity Index and Social Progress Index, please contact Katie Kalvoda at katie@advanceoc.com or info@advanceoc.com.

3. CITY OF LOS ANGELES EQUITY INDEX

Chelsea Lucktenberg, Deputy Director of Innovation, Los Angeles Office of the Controller | chelsea.lucktenberg@lacity.org

Presentation Summary:

Chelsea Lucktenberg from L.A. Controller Ron Galperin's Office shared the LA Equity Index, an interactive, online tool released in November 2020 that measures structural disparities and barriers to opportunity. The tool was developed entirely in-house in 6 months with no formal budget and stemmed from the City's aim to increase equity within the city and to establish a holistic view of equity.

One use of the tool is to help policymakers and city council members target investment in areas that have experience historic underinvestment. The tool is also designed in a way for it to be accessible to community members to aid in contextualizing the City's equity issues. The City also hosted walkthroughs and workshops on how to use the equity index to be used as an advocacy tool.

The index is developed from data from the American Communities Survey (ACS), US Department of Agriculture, and CalEnviroScreen (CES). There are 13 indicators organized into four dimensions (socioeconomic, education, environmental, and access to resources) at the census tract level with aggregation to the council district level.

Chelsea provided a live demonstration of the LA Equity Index, showing the data available and the narrative available through the Esri StoryMap presentation.

Questions and Answers:

Question: Could you expand on the tool's implication for funding decisions?

Answer: City departments have started to use this data to make investment decisions, particularly with the CARES Act and American Rescue Plan.

Question: Is there a plan to use this type of index for transportation investments? These investments make up a large portion of funds that cities, counties, and regions receive and equity issues are at the forefront of transportation investments. Transportation inequities stem from a sustained 60-year long focus on investment in the white middle class in suburban areas nationwide.

Answer: Anita Au, SCAG, shared that SCAG is starting to develop Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) with a distinct focus on integrating equity into the plan. SCAG will be engaging stakeholders to help guide how equity is incorporated. SCAG has been discussing an equity index to inform transportation planning. SCAG would appreciate any thoughts on how they can develop this.

Courtney Aguirre, SCAG, also shared that SCAG has provided the following recent research (same research in two formats) to the County Transportation Commissions on national best practices on how to evaluate projects for equity:

- [Transportation Equity Project: Prioritization Criteria](#)

- Krapp, Agustina, Jesus M. Barajas, and Audrey Wennink. 2021. "Equity-Oriented Criteria for Project Prioritization in Regional Transportation Planning." Transportation Research Record. https://doi.org/10.1177/03611981211001072.

Question: How often do you anticipate refreshing these indices?

Answer: Katie Kalvoda, AdvanceOC, shared that there are constant refinements within their tools and they are waiting for the full dataset from the ACS expected to be released at the end of the year. There is also a desire to focus on small businesses and recovery efforts considering the scale of small- and micro- business closures in communities of color during COVID-19 and new urban planning models, like 15-minute cities.

Chelsea Lucktenberg, Los Angeles Office of the Controller, is also looking forward to updates to the ACS and CES datasets and will be updating the StoryMap as the sources are updated themselves. Like AdvanceOC, the City is also looking to identify new collaborators, specifically with the City's newly formed Civil and Human Rights and Equity Department where the tool will likely be institutionalized and hopefully updated every year.

For any further questions about LA Equity Index, please contact Chelsea Lucktenberg at chelsea.lucktenberg@lacity.org.

4. EQUITY IN ACTION: CITY OF LONG BEACH

Katie Balderas, Equity Officer, City of Long Beach | katie.balderas@longbeach.gov

Presentation Summary:

Katie Balderas from the City of Long Beach shared about the City's recent efforts related to racial equity.

After the murder of George Floyd, Long Beach City Council issued the [Framework for Reconciliation](#), which included a clear mission, vision, and values to center the elimination of systematic racism starting with dismantling anti-Black practices and institutions and replacing them with those that ensure racial equity for all. The City had established an equity team in the emergency operations center for COVID-19, which made it easy to mobilize staff to adapt to this new need and establish the vision and values for the Framework.

The four key components of this framework included:

- **Acknowledging** the existence and impacts of longstanding racism in Long Beach and in the Country

- **Listening** to accounts and experiences of racial injustice, inequity, or harm to community members

- **Convening** stakeholders to analyze feedback from the listening sessions, including all the racial disparity data to recommend initiatives that would shape the City's policies, budget, charter, and programmatic reforms

- **Catalyzing** action that included short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations for City Council.

Katie shared that the City started the Acknowledgement process with (1) sharing public health statistics on health disparities, (2) work completed by the Office of Equity (established in 2017 within the Department of Health and Human Services), (3) participation in the Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE) to establish an understanding on the role of government in dismantling systemic racism, (4) the creation of Equity Toolkit for City Leaders and Staff, (5) an Economic & Digital Inclusion framework, (6) Diversity in Recruitment & Hiring, and more. Katie shared the following resources and tools that the City developed and used as a foundation for their work.

- [Long Beach Equity Toolkit for City Leaders and Staff](#)
- [City of Long Beach Equity Infographic](#)
- [USC Dornsife Equity Research Institute - An Equitable Growth Profile of the City of Long Beach](#)
- [City of Long Beach Health & Human Services Community Health Assessment](#)

In respect to public outreach (Listening & Convening), the City held 4 townhall sessions, 17 listening sessions, issued surveys, solicited email inputs, and held stakeholder meetings to comprehend community members' accounts and experiences of inequity and harm caused by racial injustice. From the listening and analysis, the City developed the [Racial Equity and Reconciliation Initiative, Initial Report](#). Katie then highlighted accomplishments and ongoing activities from each of the four goals established in the report:

- Goal 1: End systemic racism in Long Beach, in all local government and partner agencies, through internal transformation
- Goal 2: Design and invest in community safety and violence prevention.
- Goal 3: Redesign police approach to community safety.
- Goal 4: Improve health and wellness in the city by eliminating social and economic disparities in the communities most impacted by racism.

Katie shared about the implementation structure of all this work through an organizational chart. The presentation wrapped up with a few next steps that the City is taking, including a "One Year" report to be finalized by the end of September, in the process of establishing Community Advisory Committees and Department Leadership Advisory Groups.

Questions and Answers:

Question: What initiatives are now in place to address systemic discrimination espoused by financial institutions that impact the opportunities afforded to Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) communities?

> **Answer:** Katie Balderas, City of Long Beach, acknowledged that there are areas of Long Beach that still do not have a full-service bank. Katie suggested that the City could try to provide incentives to bring full-service banks to areas of the city that they don't currently serve or encourage banks to use their Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) fund to invest back into the communities.

Question: The presentation described a lot of work; for those who aren't as advanced in their work, where do they start? Any tips for cities to start? SCAG often refers cities to GARE, but they have not developed a guide for advancing equity at a city level.

Answer: Katie agreed that GARE is a great resource but they are shifting their approach. One of the first efforts that the City did as a part of the GARE cohort was talk to elders in the community and the historians, especially those who do not share the white narrative. The other piece is to begin reckoning with the harm that the City itself has caused. For context, Katie shared about a time when the term "redlining" was removed from a document because the City was not ready to confront that part of the City's history. For example, using redlining maps and current demographics (low-income communities, communities of color, children under 10 years old etc.) to understand how the history of the City is already shaping the outcomes of children.

Katie shared a video based on the Color of Law by Richard Rothstein which is an excellent resource for bringing staff together to get the conversation started: https://www.segregatedbydesign.com/

Question: Are there any initiatives to address inequity in the quality of education for K-12?

Answer: Katie Balderas, City of Long Beach, shared that the City's role in the lives of children through community safety, library programs, and parks and recreation. Katie shared that she feels the roles are very siloed and has come to value the Office of Equity's relationship with a Deputy Superintendent who is leading equity work within the school districts. The City has also signed on to My Brother's Keeper, an initiative focused on young men and boys of color where healing, attention, and love is needed.

The National Equity Atlas has developed research around the "racial generation gap" which shows that as wealthier, white communities age, they stop investing as much when the population is made up of children of color. https://nationalequityatlas.org/indicators/Racial_generation_gap#/

Katie Kalvoda, AdvanceOC, added that policy discussions often end up suggesting solutions that are blanket statements, but through their data development, it is clear how inequity and solutions look different depending on the neighborhood.

For any further questions about the City of Long Beach's equity work, please contact Katie Balderas at katie.balderas@longbeach.gov, Alanah Grant at alanah.grant@longbeach.gov, or Teresa Chandler at Teresa.Chandler@longbeach.gov.

5. **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM CALL FOR APPLICATIONS**
Anita Au, Senior Regional Planner, SCAG | au@scag.ca.gov

Presentation Summary:

Anita Au from SCAG shared about an upcoming call for projects through SCAG's Sustainable Communities Program (SCP) and the opportunities to provide input on the guidelines. SCAG is aiming to release the fourth and final Call for Applications for programs and projects centered on civic engagement, equity, and environmental justice in Spring of 2022. Anita shared about the SCP, the goals and objectives of this Call for Applications, examples of project areas that could be funded, eligible applicants and co-applicants, and a tentative timeline.

The second set of listening sessions are anticipated to take place in January 2022. SCAG will share the session details with this group when it becomes available. Learn more about SCAG's Sustainable Communities Program here: https://scag.ca.gov/sustainable-communities-program

Discussion:

Katie Balderas, City of Long Beach, noted that the SCP should allow for equity capacity building efforts (City and community-based organization staff racial equity training) and the development of equity tools/plans to shape planning & projects. Katie also noted GARE's shifting role leaves a need for a space for Southern California "equity people" to come together.

Courtney Aguirre, SCAG, shared that SCAG's intent for these Equity Working Group meetings is to provide a space for local leaders on equity to gather and share about the work being done in their jurisdictions, so that we can continue to learn from

each other. If you have suggestions for SCAG on how we can serve and connect staff and leaders across the region who are working on advancing equity, please contact Anita Au at au@scag.ca.gov or Courtney Aguirre at aguirre@scag.ca.gov.

Eduardo Serafin, UC Berkeley ITS and Aubrey Smith, Southern California Regional Rail Authority provided supportive comments.

Ana Bonilla from the Public Health Alliance of Southern California shared that they are convening public health departments from Southern California with County Health Executives Association of California (CHEAC), providing a place for health department equity officers and staff to help grow their work.

For any further questions about Sustainable Communities Program Call for Applications, please contact Anita Au at au@scag.ca.gov.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Anita Au, SCAG shared about the following announcements:

- SCAG is in the process of updating our Public Participation Plan, which was last updated in 2018, and is seeking feedback on SCAG's outreach efforts and public participation processes. The survey has already closed, but if you would like to share your thoughts on the Public Participation Plan, please contact Anita at: au@scag.ca.gov.

- SCAG offers free interpretation services for the Equity Working Group (and other SCAG events). When registering, indicate your interest in interpretation services and your preferred language. Please provide us with at least 72-hour advance notice for interpretation services.

SCAG provided the following resources for review and consideration:

- The Governor's Office of Planning and Research has released the CEQA review of Sustainable Transportation Projects, a draft technical advisory on the CEQA streamlining options available for sustainable transportation projects.

- PolicyLink released For Love of Country: A Path for the Federal Government to Advance Racial Equity and the accompanying user guide which provides resources, tools, and a plan for federal agency leaders to implement President Biden's historic executive order on advancing racial equity.

- Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and Claremont Lincoln University are hosting a three-part webinar series on "Confronting Structural Racism: From History to Action" with free online events on September 29, October 13, and October 27th.

Save the date for two upcoming SCAG events you might be interested in:

- October 19, 2021 at 1PM: Upcoming Toolbox Tuesday on equitable engagement

- December 9, 2021, time TBA: Equity Working Group