

Attachment 4

Sonoma County Comprehensive Action Plan Workshop - Racial Equity Analysis

December 2023

Utilizing the Racial Equity Toolkit, published by the Government Alliance on Race and Equity, staff has expanded consideration of racial equity in decisions, including policies, practices, programs, and budgets. Staff recognizes the racial equity tool can help to develop strategies and actions that reduce racial inequities and improve success for underserved members of our community. Below are responses to several questions adapted from the Toolkit provided by the County.

How does your Program align with or leverage other Countywide initiatives to advance racial equity?

- The County of Sonoma's Climate Resiliency Strategic goals identify a need to work toward County and community resilience to climate impacts and a goal for the County of Sonoma to be zero-waste, carbon neutral and resilient by 2030. The Climate Resilience Comprehensive Action Plan (CR-CAP) centers climate justice in collaboration with other Countywide initiatives, leading to the advancement of racial equity and climate resilience. Several programs focus on providing technical and funding assistance for building modifications to ensure that communities are resilient to wildfire disasters and drought impacts, reduce home energy use, decarbonize homes, and have emergency resources in the case of climate disasters. For example, the Permit Sonoma and the Sonoma County Energy Independence Program provide incentives for home hardening upgrades and free DIY Toolkits for energy efficiency improvements. Many recommendations in the CR-CAP are outlined in the Sonoma County Home Resilience Guide, an accessible English/Spanish booklet that provides resources for implementing climate resilience initiatives. These improvements to housing have direct impacts on the surrounding community related to economic development, the physical environment, health outcomes, planning and development, and youth.
- The CR-CAP aligns with other initiatives such as the Agricultural Preservation and Opens Space Vital Lands Initiative and the County of Sonoma's Climate Resilient Lands Strategy, which embed equity as a core principle in their recommendations and prioritization. The County of Sonoma's Greenhouse Gas Audit, Zero Waste Audit and Characterization Study and Comprehensive Energy Plan which inform the CR-CAP are focused on making County municipal operations zero-waste, carbon neutral and resilient by 2030. These actions will make for a more resilient County, which leads to more reliable and robust services in the face of climate impacts. The CR-CAP is also informed by the Carbon Stock Inventory & Potential Sequestration Study which presents opportunities for conservation activities across Sonoma County. This data will be further analyzed to ensure that county conservation practice plans result in equitable distribution of practices and their multiple benefits to surrounding communities.

What specific racial and/or economic inequities in Sonoma County does this Program intend to address/reduce?

- The CR-CAP leads reparative efforts to address historic environmental injustices that occurred due to racism in the built environment. Coupled with historic divestment, there is significantly

less greenspace in Black, Latinx, and Indigenous communities throughout Sonoma County. Black and Latinx individuals reside in neighborhoods with impervious surface areas, that make up 40% and 37% of their neighborhoods, on average. Whereas white individuals reside in neighborhoods with 27% impervious surfaces, on average. The CR-CAP has action items related to lowering air pollution rates and GHG emissions, both of which decrease the Urban Heat Island Effect in BIPOC, low-income, and age vulnerable communities. Specifically, some actions will directly address greenspace disparities, such as efforts to support climate-smart practice planning and implementation and directing grant procurement to build “Green Corridors” in some of these neighborhoods.

- From a public health stance, asthma is prevalent in communities closer to large transportation networks like highways and large intersections, and CR-CAP plays a critical role in addressing this health concern. Approximately 39.9% of Indigenous people have been diagnosed with asthma, along with 19.6% of Latinx people in Sonoma County. Transportation is currently the biggest GHG emission sector for the County of Sonoma. Electrification of single-occupancy vehicles (SOVs) and public transportation will provide diverse multi-modal options for community members. The CR-CAP includes specific initiatives to build out County electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure for public and community use and expand policies and incentives that reduce employee commutes to County offices will drive down GHG emissions from transportation.

**Will the Program have impacts in specific geographic areas (neighborhoods, areas, or regions)?
What are the racial demographics of those living in the area?**

- CR-CAP focuses on updating policies, procedures, infrastructure and equipment at County-owned and operated facilities. These actions will have profound benefits for the communities surrounding county facilities in Santa Rosa. Santa Rosa and its environs constitute a disproportionate share of neighborhoods with the lowest levels of well-being in the county. In addition, the CR-CAP discusses opportunities to engage with partners and community members to realize the GHG impacts throughout Sonoma County. Those actions will include an equity analysis to ensure CR-CAP outcomes and benefits positively impact neighborhoods and regions considered Disadvantaged Communities (DAC). Some of those communities include Downtown Santa Rosa, Roseland, and Bellevue along the 101 Freeway. There are different parts of Sonoma and Cloverdale that have disadvantaged communities who will benefit from the projects and actions outlined in the CR-CAP. For the neighborhoods mentioned within Santa Rosa, over 50% of community members identify as Latinx. For the neighborhoods in Sonoma and Cloverdale, 63% and 48% of the neighborhoods identifies as Latinx. These target neighborhoods will benefit from greenspace investment, decarbonization efforts, and resilience funding opportunities outlined in the CR-CAP.

Who are the most affected community members who are concerned with or have experience related to this issue/program? How will you involve these community members in the development and implementation of this program?

- The CR-CAP will go as far as to analyze the costs and benefits of specific County programs and actions to meet the goal of having a zero-waste, carbon neutral and resilient County by 2030. This will ensure that the County of Sonoma will be able to provide services to the community

in the face of climate hazards while contributing to lower greenhouse gas emissions and supporting state climate goals. CR-CAP also addresses the need for community-facing climate resiliency programs to support climate resilience throughout the entire county. As part of the development process, the County will collaborate with community-based organizations, County partners, and community members to uplift their community visions for an equitable, climate resilient future. CR-CAP has a Community Outreach Manager focused on developing these partnerships and finding funding to support initiatives and programs. To make those connections and foster an understanding of the County's climate actions, outreach and education materials will be translated into English and Spanish for greater accessibility. As part of implementation, CR-CAP will work alongside community members and community-based organizations to ensure that gaps, possibilities for changes, and rerouting opportunities are identified and addresses throughout the process to ensure that racial equity is centered in the process.

Does the estimated Program budget and timeline include sufficient resources and time to ensure accessibility, i.e. translation, interpretation, outreach, etc.?

- Yes. CR-CAP will guide the County in achieving the climate action and resiliency strategic goals of being zero-waste, carbon neutral and resilient by 2030. Municipal action must get underway to meet this goal. The County has surveyed input from County staff and the community, held a community poll, and two public workshops to learn more about the climate-related priorities of community members. CR-CAP was brought before community members on August 28th, at a Climate Workshop for your board, and at a County-hosted community Town Hall on November 1st. The plan will be further discussed in a public forum on the December 11th Board of Supervisors meeting. Additional focus groups with County departments, community members and Community Based organizations are needed before the plan comes before your board in May. The Climate Action and Resiliency Division has initiated these meetings and will continue collaborating in coming months. Outlining a path for community-facing programs to achieve climate resiliency throughout Sonoma County will require additional community engagement. There is not time to ensure that community-facing programs are fully developed with sufficient input from partners before the CR-CAP is brought to the board in May 2024. These community-facing programs will be better formulated after the initial approval of the CR-CAP. While some programs that will facilitate this level of engagement are funded, there is a need for funding to sustain this work. The County recently hired a Grants Manager to coordinate outreach to community partners and support partners in grant applications to fund this work.

How will the Program document and evaluate the Program's impact on communities of color and low-income communities?

- To measure progress being made on climate resilience, is it critical for the CR-CAP to include a clear set of climate-related indicators that will allow the County to understand changes that are occurring regionally. The climate-related indicators will help the County track how projects implemented through CR-CAP are influencing the conditions of residents, workers, and visitors in the County. CR-CAP will include demographic data for all regions of Sonoma County, along with types of benefits being achieved by projects advanced from the CR-CAP action goals of

zero-waste, carbon neutral and climate resilient by 2030. CR-CAP will build off existing monitoring frameworks initiated in the Climate Resilient Lands Strategies as well as the Sonoma-Marin Ag + County Climate Coalition, which leverages a public project tracking database created by regional Resource Conservation Districts. An additional County-specific dashboard will be created to track GHG impact and progress toward strategic goals. The CR-CAP intends to outline measurements for determining the effectiveness of climate actions within the report, with a specific focus on DACs. The County will maintain a digital database requiring periodic updates and data inputs on climate metrics such as: heat index, air pollution, green space, floodplains, drought conditions, wildfire extremities, etc. These data sources will be sourced by outside consultants, County staff, and federal platforms like Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool and Climate and Economic Justice Map.

What additional disaggregated demographic data will your Program need to collect, track, and evaluate to inform future decisions, and/or develop mitigation practices to respond to unintended impacts of the project in communities of color?

- Transportation / Mobility Behavior Patterns
- Demographics of SCIEP Participants
- Vulnerability Study for Climate Indicators
- Spatial Demographic Data (Race, Gender, Income, Age, etc.)
- Public Transportation Demographic Data
- Home Ownership Demographic Data
- Access to Greenspace Data
- Air Quality Data
- Health Indicator Data (Asthma, Cancer, etc.)
- As Needed Databases
- CR-CAP requires a robust action to ensure that the County reaches zero-waste, carbon neutrality, and climate resilience by 2030. These additional sources of data are crucial to ensure that the impacts of projects are creating positive impacts for those most vulnerable to human-induced climate change disasters. Currently, the County has imperfect data and needs additional demographic data to better tailor mitigation and resilience efforts in communities throughout the region. The County has a rapidly changing climate due to climate change, and patterns of climate-related indicators would provide direction for CR-CAP community-facing programs developed through 2030. Transportation and mobility behavior highlight the greatest source of GHG emissions for the County. To have effective solutions for addressing climate change, robust transportation must supplement the data outlined in reports produced by and in collaboration with RCPA.