Fighting Redlining & Climate Change with Transformative Climate Communities

THE GREENLINING INSTITUTE NOVEMBER 2021

GREENLINING

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened awareness of structural inequities in the U.S., and it has become undeniable that the climate crisis does particularly severe harm in under-resourced communities, including communities of color and low-income communities. In order to build a future where all communities can build wealth, live in healthy places filled with economic opportunity, and are ready to meet the challenges posed by climate change, the U.S.'s efforts to combat the climate crisis must confront this reality.

California has pioneered a unique approach to fostering community-led solutions that meet the needs of those hit first and worst by climate change through a program called Transformative Climate Communities (TCC). TCC, managed by the Strategic Growth Council, is unique in two ways:

Student participating in an afterschool biking program in East Oakland. Credit: Higher Ground Neighborhood Development Corporation

- TCC puts community leadership first, requiring all projects to develop a collaborative governance structure between stakeholders such as local government, community-based organizations and residents. The process works to ensure that projects are derived from resident-identified needs, giving community members ownership over changes taking place in their own neighborhoods.

- TCC then funds communities to develop and implement holistic, connected visions for how to transform their neighborhoods to reduce CO2 emissions and provide meaningful community benefits such as cleaner air, improved health and job opportunities. For example, this might include building affordable housing near transit, planting an urban street canopy and installing solar on homes, all at once.

TCC was created by AB 2722 (Burke, 2016), cosponsored by The Greenlining Institute and the California Environmental Justice Alliance. Since then, it has provided Planning Grants to 18 communities to develop their projects, and eight Implementation Grants enabling on-the-ground work to begin.

Five years after the program's establishment, The Greenlining Institute is examining TCC's progress thus far, and is beginning to gauge both successes and areas for improvement. Greenlining conducted an intensive qualitative evaluation of how TCC's components work together to deliver equity outcomes. This evaluation included four detailed Case Studies from Ontario, East Oakland, the Northeast San Fernando Valley and Stockton published simultaneously with the evaluation, examining specific local planning and implementation efforts in detail.

OUTCOMES

The eight Transformative Climate Communities Implementation grants are working towards reducing 197,271 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, or MTCO2e, of greenhouse gas emissions over the next five years while also leveraging over $625 million in additional funds. TCC investments pave the way for future investors to see the potential for growth and economic prosperity while also centering community priorities.

According to the Strategic Growth Council, here are the project outputs over the next five years:

Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) Project Elements	Anticipated Project Outputs (2019-2025)
Affordable Housing Units	398 new units built
Electric Buses	26 zero-emission buses in operation
EV Charging Sites	105 sites up and running
Bike Lanes	20 miles new bike lanes installed
Solar Panels	637 low-income single-family houses 3,493 KW capacity
Tree Planting	12,995 trees planted
Parks	6 new parks created
Community Gardens	6 new community gardens planted
Workforce Trainees	988 workers trained
Workforce Job Placements	861 workers placed in jobs
Displacement Avoidance Initiatives	50 policy or program initiatives
Community Engagement Workshops	400 workshops
Community Members Engaged	6,901 people

FINDINGS

Overall, we found substantial success in creating new models for community-centered governance leading to climate action plans that can deliver meaningful benefits to underserved communities while reducing carbon emissions. This model should be expanded in California and replicated nationally, by both individual states and the federal government. Nevertheless, we also identified ways the program could be improved and strengthened in order to more fully accomplish its mission.

Strengths

1. **Building equity into every step.** Greenlining defines racial equity as the practice of transforming the behaviors, institutions and systems that disproportionately harm marginalized communities. Equity means increasing access to power, redistributing and providing additional resources, and eliminating barriers to opportunity, in order to empower low-income communities of color to thrive and reach their full potential. TCC is the first climate program in California to robustly thread equity through every aspect of design — from the program's goals, values and vision all the way through to evaluation.

Northeast San Fernando Valley's partners at Strategic Growth Council's meeting announcing the Round 2 grantees in December 2018. Credit: Strategic Growth Council

2. **Integrating planning and implementation to ensure tangible benefits based on community needs.** The TCC program creates a robust pathway from planning to implementation: TCC funds community planning processes through the Planning Grant, and then provides significant and catalytic funding for capital projects through the Implementation Grant. Moreover, TCC Implementation Grants deliver a wide range of integrated and coordinated greenhouse gas-reducing projects, such as affordable housing, solar installation and public transit. Too often, government grants are siloed by narrow issue areas, but TCC bundles multiple projects together under one program, making it easier for communities to access significant funding and support without the burden of having to apply and report for each grant separately. For example, in Ontario, residents identified three top priorities: the need to breathe healthy air and be free from chronic disease, to feel safe and comfortable walking and biking, and to live in an affordable home. The resulting projects include new affordable housing, improved transit service, bike lanes, pedestrian improvements, rooftop solar power, planting 365 trees and a composting program — all integrated under the TCC program.

3. **Collaborative governance and community ownership over the solutions.** No one knows better than community members themselves what is needed in their neighborhoods, yet rarely are community voices centered in the decision-making processes that impact their daily lives. That's why TCC requires multi-stakeholder governance and deep community engagement, facilitating community ownership over the solutions. TCC asks communities to identify a collaborative structure that includes residents and community-based organizations. For example, the Northeast San Fernando Valley TCC effort has been led by a local nonprofit in conjunction with community groups and residents, with local government as a supportive partner. This structure requires that TCC communities work and make decisions together, catalyzing capital investments in ways that are governed by communities themselves and that advance significant tangible, equitable outcomes for underserved communities.

4. **Comprehensive community engagement through proposal development and implementation.** Too often, "community engagement" means holding one or two town halls or sending out a survey and nothing more — checking a box but not really deeply involving affected communities. TCC requires a much more robust and thorough approach. TCC requires Implementation Grant applicants to develop Community Engagement Plans grounded in community priorities and leadership, and applicants are evaluated based on the extent to which they incorporate meaningful community engagement into their plans. Grantees must spell out how they will provide outreach and information to the community, how they will solicit and

receive feedback on implementation from the community, and how the required Collaborative Stakeholder Structure will support implementation of the Community Engagement Plan.

5. **Integrated and holistic multi-benefit plans.** TCC amplifies its equity impact by requiring several Transformative Elements designed to ensure broad benefits to the community while minimizing potential harm. These include workforce development, displacement avoidance and climate resilience. TCC communities are asked to develop comprehensive and overarching plans to address these components, ensuring that TCC projects also create local, high-quality jobs, include strategies to protect residents and small businesses from displacement pressures, and increase community resilience to the impacts of climate change. Together, the Transformative Elements work to ensure that TCC communities comprehensively address multiple facets of community and economic development while mitigating greenhouse gas emissions.

Challenges

1. **Funding has been inadequate and inconsistent.** TCC has received wildly inconsistent funding over the years. The program received $140 million in 2018, its first year of funding, but was cut to only $10 million the following year. It has bounced up and down in between those amounts since. This has left communities and local

Participant in the City of Ontario's small business incubator program. Credit: CoMotion Ontario

governments confused and frustrated while leaving many worthwhile proposals unfunded or underfunded. Investments increased through budget legislation passed as this report was being finalized in September 2021, but stable, adequate funding must be maintained.

2. **Funding restrictions hamper community efforts.** In addition to the lack of money overall, State grants in general impose restrictions on how funding is disbursed and can be used. For example, funding is typically disbursed on a reimbursement basis as opposed to paying in advance, creating serious cash-flow problems for small, community-based organizations. In addition, restrictions on funding important community engagement expenses can hamper the ability of CBOs to deeply engage residents. Shockingly, California State programs generally prohibit funding for important expenses such as the provision of food and child care during outreach or organizing activities. This creates an unnecessary obstacle to engaging with working parents and low-income families.

3. **Capacity remains a major problem.** Legacies of disinvestment, coupled with TCC's ambitious scope, all but guarantee that communities will struggle with capacity challenges through both the grant application and implementation phases. While the Strategic Growth Council does provide technical assistance in a variety of ways, which represents an important step forward, more needs to be done. The TCC application, management and reporting requirements each represent huge capacity lifts. Moreover, TCC implementation requires an unprecedented level of collaborative governance and coordination between partners. Our most under-resourced communities are the least likely to have the staffing or technical expertise to manage these requirements, and stakeholders from both the nonprofit and public sectors all reported contributing significant uncompensated time and labor in order to develop and implement robust, community-informed and collaborative projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Funding must be adequate and consistent.** TCC can only fund catalytic, transformative, community led-change if it is adequately funded. Governor Gavin Newsom's 2021-2022 budget recently proposed $420 million over three years for TCC, and this represents a good start. To sustain community transformation, the governor and legislature should explore ways to establish a consistent funding source for the program.

2. **Remove needless funding barriers.** The State of California should allow advance payment so that community organizations don't face insurmountable cash flow challenges. Restrictions that hamper community outreach, such as inability to use State funds to pay for child care or food for participants, should be removed immediately.

3. **Help communities build capacity.** To meet capacity challenges and support TCC communities from planning to implementation, the Strategic Growth Council should provide increased guidance, resources, technical assistance and peer learning, fully stepping into the role of a State partner facilitating, supporting and incubating community-led transformation. SGC should clarify and streamline overall guidance, provide publicly accessible models and best practices, offer tailored technical assistance and solutions thinking, and facilitate peer-to-peer learning.

4. **Expand TCC nationally.** As the federal government and other state governments expand their climate change efforts, they should use TCC as a model for programs to be implemented all over the U.S. To simultaneously fight climate change and build community health and prosperity, funders and policymakers must invest in community capacity and community-led transformations at all levels. We must fund the pathway from planning to implementation, and support the local ecosystems needed to support community transformation.

CONCLUSION

Transformative Climate Communities offers a model for fighting climate change, building economic prosperity and redressing the historic oppression of our most under-resourced communities. The TCC program empowers the communities most impacted by poverty and pollution to choose their own goals, strategies and projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and deliver multiple tangible benefits.

This approach represents a model for national climate change efforts that should be replicated at both the federal and state levels.

INTRODUCTION

Transformative Climate Communities   Methodology   Glossary of Terms

TRANSFORMATIVE CLIMATE COMMUNITIES

Overview

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, unprecedented levels of inequality and an escalating climate crisis, we must double down on community-led solutions that meet the needs of those hit first and worst. We must prioritize the communities who have been most impacted by

Governor Jerry Brown signs a package of climate change bills in September 2016, including AB 2722 which was authored by Assemblymember Autumn Burke (at right) and established the TCC program. Credit: The Fresno Bee

structural inequities, and ensure that community members themselves are driving neighborhood change. The Transformative Climate Communities program in California provides a tangible model for doing just this. Since 2017, TCC has made large-scale investments ranging from $10.8 million to $66.5 million in 8 of California's most disadvantaged communities.

TCC's transformative approach begins with who makes the decisions. TCC elevates community ownership by requiring that all projects develop a collaborative governance structure between stakeholders such as local government, community-based organizations and residents. Projects must also demonstrate robust community engagement in all phases of project development and implementation. This ensures that projects are derived from resident-identified needs, assets and visions, and gives community members more ownership over the changes taking place in their own neighborhoods.

The TCC program then asks the communities most impacted by poverty and pollution to develop holistic visions for how they want to transform their neighborhoods. This might look like building affordable housing near transit, planting an urban street canopy, and installing solar on homes, all at once. These investments must reduce greenhouse gas emissions and bring multiple direct and meaningful benefits to communities. In addition, TCC requires key co-benefits as part of its Transformative Elements framework: workforce development, displacement avoidance and climate resilience.

Taken together, TCC integrates comprehensive and coordinated greenhouse gas reduction strategies at the neighborhood level. TCC's place-based approach encourages community planning and directs catalytic funding, averaging at $28 million per grant to date. This large-scale funding is intended to spur neighborhood investment in our most under-resourced communities and leverage future opportunities. By advancing resident leadership, aligning local government to community priorities and investing millions of dollars in critical capital improvements, TCC offers an important approach to advancing community ownership over local solutions.

Transformative Climate Communities Program: Overview

The TCC program, administered by the Strategic Growth Council, funds the implementation of neighborhood-level plans that significantly reduce greenhouse gas emission over time and provide additional health, environmental and economic benefits. TCC focuses investment in communities most burdened by multiple environmental, socioeconomic and health inequities. Specifically, TCC funds two types of grants:

- **Planning Grants:** Planning Grants provide disadvantaged communities with time and resources to foster partnerships, identify opportunities (e.g. projects), and develop strategies that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, the Planning Grants are intended to build readiness for the Implementation Grant's Transformative Elements: ensure meaningful community engagement; consider displacement and climate change risks; create career pathways for high quality jobs; and secure outside leverage funding. Funding is meant for planning, and no funding for capital improvements is included. To date, Planning Grants have ranged from $170,000 to $200,000.

- **Implementation Grants:** Implementation Grants provide millions of dollars for neighborhood plans identified through community-led processes, designed to meet local needs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions while making frontline communities more sustainable and resilient. To date, full Implementation Grant awards have ranged from $23 million to $70 million over a five-year grant term.

Applicants are required to develop Collaborative Stakeholder Structures (CSS) that bring together residents, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, local government and other stakeholders to build a shared vision of transformation for their community. Organizations that are eligible to sit on the CSS, as either a lead Grantee or Partner, include but are not limited to:

- Community-based organizations
- Local governments
- Nonprofit organizations
- Philanthropic organizations and foundations
- Faith-based organizations
- Community development finance institutions
- Community development corporations
- Joint power authorities
- Tribal governments

Building off of the CSS, TCC communities must then collaboratively develop projects for coordinated investment at the neighborhood scale. Projects must achieve significant reductions in greenhouse gases, improve public health and environmental benefits, and expand economic opportunity and shared prosperity. To meet these goals, grantees can choose from a wide range of eligible strategies:

- Affordable housing development
- Transit stations and facilities
- Bicycle and car share programs
- Residential weatherization and solar projects
- Water-energy efficiency installations
- Urban greening projects
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Low-carbon transit vehicles and clean vehicle rebates

Construction of the Vista Verde Apartments affordable housing development in June 2020. Credit: Aero Cine Pros Inc.

In addition to developing projects, TCC communities must also include six Transformative Elements threaded throughout their neighborhood plans:

- Community Engagement
- Displacement Avoidance
- Workforce Development & Economic Opportunities
- Climate Adaptation & Resiliency
- Leverage Funding
- Data Collection & Indicator Tracking

Additional details can be found in the Appendix.

From Policy Development to Equity Evaluation

Greenlining has been involved with the TCC program from its original concept to its local implementation. Along with the California Environmental Justice Alliance, Greenlining co-sponsored and advocated for the passage of AB 2722 (Burke, 2016), which established the TCC program.[1] Our original vision was to streamline multiple climate-related grant processes and implement grants at the neighborhood scale. We hoped to usher in a new kind of community development grounded directly in community leadership and visions.

Since the passage of AB 2722, we have continued to support the development and implementation of the TCC program. Along with other advocates, we have contributed to the development of the TCC Program Guidelines over the intervening years. We have also supported two communities, Stockton and San Diego, with technical assistance in applying for TCC funding. In particular, we have deeply engaged with Stockton community-based and City stakeholders to successfully pursue TCC Planning and Implementation Grants over a period of four years.[2] For us, this work with local communities is critical to ensuring that people and neighborhoods can access and benefit from the structural policy change we seek. It also gives us a unique perspective on how the program functions on the ground, and what gaps or challenges might exist.

Case Studies

To focus our equity analysis, we selected five Case Studies of TCC Planning and Implementation communities (four are also published separately from this analysis). We chose these TCC communities to represent the breadth of how the TCC program can be leveraged to advance diverse community visions.

Our Case Study communities represent a cross-section of California, from rural unincorporated communities to urban neighborhoods. Our selected communities also comprise a mix of Planning and Implementation grantees from between Rounds 1 and 3 of TCC, and help to illuminate the path from community engagement and planning to shovel-ready capital projects. Lastly, our Case Studies come from diverse local ecosystems, with different levels of community organizing, partnerships and histories of collaboration.

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1   *Transformative Climate Communities Program, Cal. Public Resources Code § 75240 (2016).* https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB2722

2   *Wang, E. (2019, November 15). Stockton Rising to Achieve Community-Based Transformation. The Greenlining Institute.* https://greenlining.org/blog-category/2020/stockton-community-based-transformation/

Transformative Climate Communities: Implementation Grants

Sacramento

Stockton

East Oakland

Fresno

Northeast San Fernando Valley

Ontario

Watts (LA)

Riverside

TCC Implementation Grant Communities. *Map of the TCC implementation grant communities included within this analysis.*

Ontario Together's community engagement team. Credit: City of Ontario

Ontario 🔗

- *Round 1 Implementation Grant (2019 - 2026): $33.25 million*
  - **Grantee:** City of Ontario
  - **Partners:** National CORE, City of Ontario Housing Authority, Huerta del Valle, Partners for Better Health, GRID Alternatives, Omnitrans, San Bernardino County Workforce Development, San Bernardino County Public Health Department, Inland Empire Small Business Development Center, Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice, Safe Routes to School National Partnership, Ontario-Montclair Schools Foundation, Inland Empire Fair Housing and Mediation Board, Mercy House, Neighborhood Partnership Housing Services, San Bernardino County Transportation Authority

Ontario Together's TCC project builds on over a decade of collaborative work, relationships and trust developed under the Healthy Ontario Initiative (HOI).[3] A local government-led collaborative, the TCC project leverages the strong relationships developed between the City of Ontario and community stakeholders. Through the HOI collective impact effort, project partners identified the need to make transformative investments in community health and infrastructure. Ontario Together thus seeks to address three primary resident-identified priorities: the need to breathe healthy air and be free from chronic disease, to feel safe and comfortable walking and biking, and to live in a home that is affordable.[4]

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3   *Healthy Ontario. Retrieved from https://www.behealthyontario.com*

4   *Ontario Together. Retrieved from https://www.ontariotogether.com*

Pacoima Beautiful's resident Community Inspectors. Credit: Pacoima Beautiful

Northeast San Fernando Valley 🔗

- *Applied for but did not receive a Round 1 Implementation Grant*
- *Round 2 Implementation Grant (2020 - 2026): $23 million*
  - **Grantee:** Community Partners
  - **Partners:** Pacoima Beautiful, Trust for Public Land, GRID Alternatives Greater Los Angeles, Los Angeles Business Council, Los Angeles Conservation Corps, Los Angeles Department of Transportation, City of Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, University of California Los Angeles

Pacoima Beautiful, a community-based organization, pursued and anchors the Green Together TCC collaborative. Building off of shared community priorities identified over two decades of organizing, Pacoima Beautiful prioritized a vision for TCC centered around pedestrian safety, street improvements, greening and climate resilience.[5] The organization then brought together additional partners for TCC that could bring that vision to life. Significantly, Pacoima Beautiful actualized their commitment to community-led transformation by partnering with another nonprofit entity with significant financial reserves to serve as the lead grantee. The Green Together Collaborative is the only TCC community thus far to be led by a nonprofit organization, rather than local or regional government.

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5   *Green Together Collaborative. Retrieved from* https://www.greentogethercollaborative.org
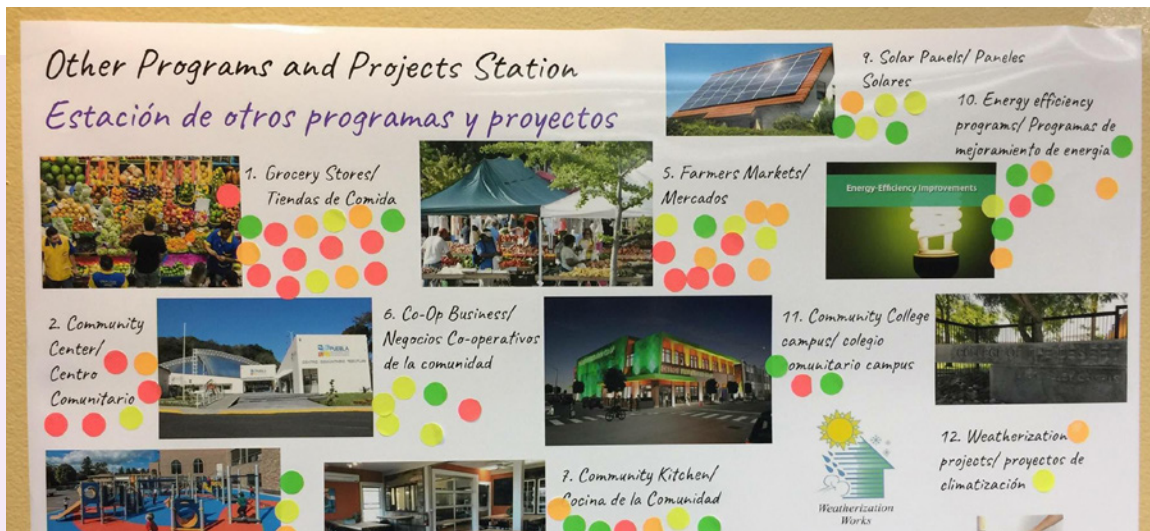
Residents participate in community planning activities for Eastern Coachella Valley. Credit: Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability

Eastern Coachella Valley

- *Round 1 Planning Grant (2018): $170,000*
  - **Grantee:** Coachella Valley Association of Governments
  - **Partners:** Office of Riverside County Supervisor, City of Coachella, Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability, Dudek

Local government agencies, in partnership with a community-based organization, pursued a TCC Planning Grant to meet the needs of rural Eastern Coachella Valley and particularly its unincorporated communities. The planning process focused on the City of Coachella and four unincorporated areas (Thermal, Mecca, Oasis and North Shore), regions that are interconnected by similar challenges and opportunities but that fall under the jurisdiction of multiple land use and transportation agencies. Government stakeholders leveraged the Planning Grant to combine existing planning documents along with priorities identified through the TCC Planning Grant.[6] While the effort was successful in delivering a strong regional planning document, the planning process in our evaluation could have done more to prioritize community-based leadership and community engagement. Moreover, up to this point, Eastern Coachella Valley has not been eligible to apply for a TCC Implementation Grant, and more work remains to advance the priorities identified through the Planning Grant.

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6   *Coachella Valley Association of Governments, City of Coachella. (2019). Eastern Coachella Valley's Action Plan for Climate Resilience Draft.* http://www.conservecoachella.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/CVAG-Action-Plan-June-17.pdf

Community bike rides with the Original Scraper Bike Team. Credit: Oakland Department of Transportation (OakDOT)

East Oakland 🔗

- *Round 1 Planning Grant (2018): $170,000*
  - **Grantee:** City of Oakland Bureau of Planning
  - **Partners:** Oakland Climate Action Coalition, Communities for A Better Environment, HOPE Collaborative, East Oakland Collective, East Oakland Building Healthy Communities, Acta Non Verba: Youth Urban Farm Project, East Oakland Boxing Association, Local Clean Energy Alliance, Original Scraper Bike Team, Merritt College Institute for Sustainable Policy Studies, Sobrante Park Resident Action Council, Urban ReLeaf
- *Applied for but did not receive a Round 1 Implementation Grant*
- *Round 3 Implementation Grant (2021 - 2025): $28.2 million*
  - **Grantee:** City of Oakland
  - **Partners:** Related CA/ACTS Community Development Corporation, East Bay Permanent Real Estate Collaborative, East Bay Regional Parks District, Black Cultural Zone Community Development Corporation, Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation, Planting Justice, Higher Ground Neighborhood Development Corporation

The East Oakland Neighborhoods Initiative (EONI) is a collaboration of 12 community-based organizations with deep roots in East Oakland.[7] In 2017, EONI invited the City of Oakland to join the initiative as the Lead Applicant for TCC's Planning Grant. Through a community-led planning process, the Planning Grant supported residents in coalescing around a shared vision of neighborhood investment without displacement and a commitment to plan by and with the community. Five community priorities emerged from this process and formed the basis of East Oakland's Implementation Grant proposal: green space and healthy surroundings, housing as a human right, safe and accessible transportation, growing community wealth, and arts and culture. East Oakland's Implementation Grant term began in 2021 and will result in five infrastructure projects.

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7   *City of Oakland. East Oakland Neighborhoods Initiative. Retrieved from* https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/east-oakland-neighborhoods-initiative

Mayor Michael Tubbs and Rise Stockton leaders. Credit: Rise Stockton

Stockton 🔗

- *Round 1 Planning Grant (2018): $170,000*
  - **Grantee:** City of Stockton
  - **Partners:** Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Stockton, Fathers & Families of San Joaquin, PUENTES, Third City Coalition, Public Health Advocates, Rising Sun Center for Opportunity, STAND
- *Round 3 Implementation Grant (2021 - 2023): $10.8 million*
  - **Grantee:** City of Stockton
  - **Partners:** Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Stockton, PUENTES, Public Health Advocates, Rising Sun Center for Opportunity, GRID Alternatives, San Joaquin Regional Transportation District, Insight Garden Program, Edible SchoolYard Project, Little Manila Rising

Stockton's TCC Planning Grant initiative, called Stockton Rising, was helmed by a group of nonprofit organizations that partnered with the City of Stockton to bring green investments to the South Stockton area. For Stockton, the TCC Planning Grant resulted in a community plan built on a vision of community-led climate justice, incorporating projects from five strategies: transit access and mobility, energy efficiency and solar installation, water efficiency, urban greening and green infrastructure, and health and well-being. These community-identified strategies form the cornerstone of Stockton's Implementation Grant, the grant term for which started in 2021 and will result in a total of five projects. Notably, Stockton's Planning Grant process catalyzed the birth of a new environmental justice coalition, Rise Stockton, which aims to continue and expand their collective environmental justice efforts.[8]

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8   *Rise Stockton. Retrieved from* https://risestockton.org/

We are simultaneously publishing four detailed Case Studies. These Case Studies spotlight each community, and allow for deeper exploration into community vision, collaborative governance structure, projects and Transformative Elements.

METHODOLOGY

This report offers a rigorous qualitative evaluation of how TCC's components work together to deliver equity outcomes. A qualitative evaluation allows us to understand the complex interactions between formal policy structures and how policy becomes real through people and communities. Numbers alone cannot tell the story of a community's lived experience, and our equity evaluation seeks to better understand the processes of collaborative formation and change.

OmniTrans buses serving residents of the Inland Valley. Credit: City of Ontario

This evaluation is particularly interested in exploring both procedural equity (inclusive and accessible engagement and representation, including the ability to participate in all stages of decision-making) and distributive equity (the fair distribution of benefits and burdens, prioritizing benefits to those communities with highest need).[9] Our research was thus guided by the following key research questions:

- **Procedural Equity:** How does TCC change how community-based and local government stakeholders engage with each other, make decisions and share power?
- **Distributive Equity:** How does TCC deliver multiple, intersecting benefits — especially climate, public health, environmental, workforce and economic benefits — to under-resourced communities?

To conduct this evaluation, we conducted a literature review of grant materials from each of the TCC communities, including the TCC Program Guidelines, grant applications, grant agreements, workbooks, grant reports and local planning documents. We then interviewed nearly 50 stakeholders from our five TCC Case Study communities, each of whom have been deeply involved in TCC application, implementation or grant management processes. TCC requires multi-stakeholder collaboration, and our interviewees included residents, community-based organizations, nonprofit partners, local government and other stakeholders. These interviews form the backbone of this equity evaluation of best practices, challenges and recommendations related to the TCC program.

Lastly, additional expert reviewers from partner organizations, public agencies and academia offered invaluable feedback and upgrades to this evaluation.

Our evaluation covers both the application and grant management periods for our TCC communities, ranging from Planning Grants to Implementation Grants. For the Implementation Grants specifically, our TCC communities are still relatively early in implementation of their projects, with the first grant term beginning in March 2019, and most grant terms lasting for five years.

We therefore offer this initial equity evaluation to better understand what has been happening on the ground to date, and particularly to examine processes of community collaboration, formation and change. We look

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9   *Bell, D., & Carrick, J. (2017). Procedural environmental justice. In R. Holifield, J. Chakraborty & G. Walker (Eds.), The Routledge Handbook of Environmental Justice, Abingdon: Routledge.*

forward to future evaluation efforts, including the evaluation of the TCC sites being conducted, thus far, by the UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation, the Sacramento State Institute for Social Research, the Institute for Social Research and the University of San Francisco School of Management.[10] These evaluations offer valuable year-to-year analysis of each TCC site's progress and outcomes.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Throughout the report, we use several different terms to describe our communities of focus.

Partners after Stockton City Council approved the TCC application in 2020. Credit: Rise Stockton

- **Transformative change,** for the purposes of this report, refers to the innovative and foundational changes needed to center equity, shift power and transform the systems that created injustices to meet the needs and leadership of our most under-resourced communities.[11]

- **Disadvantaged communities** are defined by the California Environmental Protection Agency as California's top 25% of census tracts that suffer the most from pollution, poverty, health and other socioeconomic burdens.[12]

- **Low-income communities** are defined as communities whose median household income is 80% of state median household income or less, as defined by AB 1550 (Gomez, 2016).[13]

- **Under-resourced communities,** for the purposes of this report, are defined as communities who have borne the brunt of historical and present-day disinvestment, and who therefore are least likely to have sufficient capacity or resources to take local climate action.

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10   *University of California Los Angeles Luskin Center for Innovation. Tracking Groundbreaking Climate Action. https://innovation.luskin. ucla.edu/tracking-groundbreaking-climate-action/; Sacramento State Institute for Social Research. Research Projects. https://www. csus.edu/center/institute-social-research/projects.html*

11   *Creger, H., Aquayo, L., Partida-Lopez, Román, & Sanchez, Alvaro. (2021). Clean Mobility Equity: A Playbook. The Greenlining Institute. https://greenlining.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Clean-Mobility-Equity-A-Playbook-Greenlining-Report-2021.pdf, 14.*

12   *California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. CalEnviroScreen. https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen*

13   *Greenhouse gases: investment plan: disadvantaged communities, Cal. Health and Safety Code § 39713 (2016). https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB1550*

BEST PRACTICES FOR REPLICATION & SCALING

Equity in Program Design   Equity on the Ground

The Transformative Climate Communities program offers a promising model for advancing holistic, equitable and community-led strategies to combat climate change, build economic prosperity and redress the historic oppression of low-income communities of color. TCC is the first climate program in California to robustly thread equity throughout every aspect of design — from the program's goals and vision all the way through to evaluation. We thus uplift TCC as a national model for how to do climate policy right, putting communities first and connecting the dots between energy, transportation, housing and jobs.

On the ground and backed with TCC funding, TCC communities are then pioneering innovative forms of collaborative governance to make *community-led* transformation real.

In this section, we dive deeper into best practices at two different scales:

1. *Equity in Program Design*
2. *Equity on the Ground*

EQUITY IN PROGRAM DESIGN

Using Greenlining's *Making Equity Real Framework*, we identify best practices in TCC program design. To create the strongest equity outcomes, equity must be centered throughout a policy, program or grant.

Four Steps to Making Equity Real[14]

1. **Goals, Vision, Values** — How is equity described in the context of the overall goal of the policy? Is equity a core component?
2. **Process** — How does the policy propose to deliver outcomes with equity as a focus? How are decisions made or influenced by communities that have less political power or voice?
3. **Implementation** — How will implementation lead to equity outcomes? What are the explicit equity outcomes described in the policy?
4. **Measurement & Analysis** — How is equity progress measured? How do we know that equity goals were achieved?

Oftentimes, programs and policies cite equity as a goal without clear strategies to embed equity through the program's development, implementation and evaluation. When a program does intentionally incorporate equity throughout its lifecycle, it often exclusively focuses on distributive equity outcomes such as environmental benefits, without centering procedural equity or community ownership over the process.

By contrast, TCC incorporates equity — both procedural and distributive — throughout each phase of program design, thus offering a model for programs that wish to make equity real.

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14   *Mohnot, S., Bishop, J., & Sanchez, A. (2019). Making Equity Real in Climate Adaptation and Community Resilience Policies and Programs: A Guidebook. The Greenlining Institute.* https://greenlining.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Making-Equity-Real-in-Climate-Adaption-and-Community-Resilience-Policies-and-Programs-A-Guidebook-1.pdf

Equity in Goals, Vision, Values

The Transformative Climate Communities program focuses investments in the State's most disadvantaged communities and requires that projects produce meaningful, direct and multiple benefits. These explicit goals form a strong equity foundation for the program. TCC also takes a place-based approach, which concentrates funding at the neighborhood scale and allows for deeper community participation and increased collective impact.

In this section, we highlight the following best practices for developing equitable goals, visions and values:

1. ***Targets Funding to Disadvantaged Communities***
2. ***Encourages Community-Led Planning through a Place-Based Framework***
3. ***Provides Direct & Meaningful Benefits***

1. Targets Funding to Disadvantaged Communities

TCC explicitly identifies the communities it serves within its program guidelines. In the Round 3 Guidelines, Implementation Grant funds must go to disadvantaged communities identified as "communities in which more than half of the area overlaps with census tracts in the top 10 percent (10%) of the [CalEnviroScreen] rankings, and the remaining 49 percent (49%) of the project area overlaps with census tracts in the top 25 percent (25%) of CES rankings" and Planning Grant funds must go to "communities in which all census tracts fall within the top 25 percent (25%) of the CES rankings."[15] These communities are those that are most burdened by multiple sources of environmental, socioeconomic and health inequities.

In part due to Proposition 209 and California's ban on affirmative action, race is not included as an indicator in CalEnviroScreen.[16] This is a huge barrier, as research has long demonstrated what communities know intimately to be true — that race is the single biggest factor in determining which communities suffer the greatest environmental pollution.[17] CalEPA has, however, consistently analyzed the connections between race and the CalEnviroscreen results, which show "clear disparities with respect to the racial makeup of the communities with the highest pollution burdens and vulnerabilities. People of color, especially Latino and Black people disproportionately reside in highly impacted communities in California."[18]

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15   Strategic Growth Council. (2019). *Transformative Climate Communities Program: Round 3 Final Program Guidelines.* https://sgc.ca.gov/programs/tcc/docs/20191104-TCC_Guidelines_Round_3_Final.pdf; https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen

16   *Proposition 209 amended the California Constitution to prohibit state governmental institutions from considering demographics including race in the arenas of public employment, public education and public contracting. Legislative Analyst's Office. (1996). Proposition 209: Prohibition Against Discrimination or Preferential Treatment by State and Other Public Entities*. https://lao.ca.gov/ballot/1996/prop209_11_1996.html

17   United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice. (1987). *Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States: A National Report on the Racial and Socio-Economic Characteristics of Communities with Hazardous Waste Sites.*. https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML1310/ML13109A339.pdf

18   *California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. (2021). Preliminary Analysis of Race/Ethnicity and Draft CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Scores* https://oehha.ca.gov/media/downloads/calenviroscreen/document/calenviroscreen40preliminaryraceanalysisd12021.pdf

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

By explicitly defining the target community in the program guidelines, the funding is guaranteed to reach and benefit disadvantaged communities (DACs). An unambiguous definition prevents different interpretations of eligible communities and circumvents the possibility that vital funds are siphoned off to wealthier communities with more resources to apply for and secure large-scale grants.

It is important to note that the TCC program goes beyond the mandate of AB 1550, which directs funding to the top 25% most disadvantaged CalEnviroScreen communities, to target Implementation Grants to the top 10% of DACs.[19]

Free biking afterschool program with the Original Scraper Bike Team and Higher Ground Development Corporation in East Oakland. Credit: Higher Ground Neighborhood Development Corporation

Although it is a best practice to direct program benefits to disadvantaged communities, restricting program benefits to the top 10% excludes many disadvantaged communities in need of programs like TCC. We recommend that TCC's eligibility requirements be expanded to be inclusive of the top 25% of DACs.

2. Encourages Community-Led Planning through a Place-Based Framework

TCC provides concentrated funding at the neighborhood scale and ensures funding for multiple, integrated local initiatives. Round 3 Guidelines (2019) specify that grant projects provide co-benefits, including anti-displacement, workforce and climate adaptation benefits. They also specify that the project area must be a contiguous project area no larger than approximately five square miles. This place-based approach enables communities to develop and advance solutions more effectively through collective impact. Moreover, the place-based focus supports community members to plan holistically for the improvements they want to see in their neighborhoods.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

Collective Impact: Communities face challenges that are both deeply entrenched and intersectional. These challenges cannot be solved incrementally nor in isolation, yet funding is often provided piecemeal and limited to a project-by-project basis. TCC's place-based framework offers a more effective approach; it directs a variety of targeted, integrated investments at a neighborhood scale, which facilitates concentrated efforts to meet multiple community needs. It allows communities to consolidate what may have been disparate, distributed efforts into mutually reinforcing activities in a single place. One interviewee explained:

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19   *Greenhouse gases: investment plan: disadvantaged communities, Cal. Health and Safety Code § 39713 (2016).* https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB1550

> *There are many organizations who are in [the TCC Initiative] that have been saying this message for decades. I just think that [with] TCC defining a specific area, I'm hopeful that we'll be able to use all those resources and channel them all in the same direction... So a positive of TCC is that it has us rallying around a particular area in a way that's not been done before, and we're able to go deeper."*

— Anonymous

Community Engagement: The place-based framework also empowers community members to partici-pate in community change, think big and plan holistically for their communities. We heard from multiple community members that the place-based framework was a shift away from business-as-usual for community engagement. People live intersectional lives, yet city plans and community engagement are so often siloed by issue areas, such as housing, transportation or climate. These silos create barriers to broader community participation, excluding residents who have dreams and goals for their neighborhood, but may not believe themselves experts in a particular issue area, such as climate. Because TCC focuses on multiple benefits at the neighborhood-scale, the engagement process is more approachable, accessible and efficient. Communities can plan for their neighborhood holistically, and the process invites people who may be experts on their neighborhood but not an expert on specific issue areas to participate.

> *There's something powerful about being able to imagine what could be there that is directly impactful to the community itself and individuals, versus the economy. People just mention economy and businesses. And nobody talks about the people behind it and the people living there. So I think that was a big strength of being able to allow people to imagine a better community for themselves, their children, their families."*

— Anonymous

3. Provides Direct & Meaningful Benefits

TCC requires that applicants deliver both direct and meaningful benefits to disadvantaged communities, including improving public health, achieving environmental benefits and expanding economic opportunity.[20]

Direct Benefits: TCC delivers direct benefits in that it funds development and infrastructure projects that are located in and benefit target communities. These benefits directly reach the community, as opposed to trickle-down benefits that may reach communities long after the policy has been implemented.

Early construction of Vista Verde Apartments, a 101-unit affordable housing project in Ontario. Credit: Aero Cine Pros Inc.

Meaningful Benefits: The program delivers meaningful benefits because it requires robust community engagement during all phases of the project, ensuring that benefits are informed by community-identified needs. TCC uses "a place-based approach that entails a holistic understanding of a community's needs and assets, and direct involvement of community members. Program applicants are required to actively engage community residents and stakeholders in TCC Proposal development and implementation to foster long-term interest and investment in the community's revitalization."[21]

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

By requiring both meaningful and direct benefits in its guidelines, TCC ensures that communities most in need will receive targeted investments that make sense within the context of each community's unique history, assets and needs.

Equity in Process

TCC offers a model to operationalize equitable processes in a few important ways. First, TCC requires robust community engagement in its program design. TCC then requires communities to identify a collaborative governance structure that includes residents and community-based organizations. Paired together, the community engagement and collaborative governance requirements ensure that TCC projects deeply engage community

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20   *California Air Resources Board. (2018). Funding Guidelines for Agencies that Administer California Climate Investments.* https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/classic//cc/capandtrade/auctionproceeds/2018-funding-guidelines.pdf?_ga=2.211339477.1327335814.1626219399-386466989.1600464601

21   *Strategic Growth Council. (2019). Transformative Climate Communities Round 3 Final Program Guidelines.* https://sgc.ca.gov/programs/tcc/docs/20191104-TCC_Guidelines_Round_3_Final.pdf

members so as to learn about their priorities, needs and challenges, and incorporate these findings into project selection and outcomes. Lastly, in recognition of the complexity of the TCC grant, the program provides critical technical assistance to support communities to reach their full potential.

In this section, we highlight the following best practices for developing equitable processes:

1. ***Requires Detailed Community Engagement Plans***
2. ***Pioneers Equitable Model of Governance through Collaborative Stakeholder Structures***
3. ***Provides Critical Technical Assistance for Communities***

1. Requires Detailed Community Engagement Plans

TCC requires Implementation Grant applicants to develop Community Engagement Plans that are grounded in community priorities. Community engagement must be threaded throughout two key programmatic phases: proposal development and grant implementation. The TCC Round 3 Program Guidelines (2019) explicitly state that applicants will be evaluated based on the extent to which they incorporate meaningful community engagement in their Community Engagement Plans. More details on the Community Engagement Plan can be found in the Appendix.

Proposal Development: The program prioritizes applicants that include community engagement in each phase of proposal development, from visioning to project selection. It also prioritizes those that can demonstrate a previous history of resident engagement.

Grant Implementation: The program prioritizes applicants that prioritize meaningful community engagement throughout the grant implementation process. SGC's Round 3 Guidelines (2019) require the grantee to provide details on three distinct community engagement components:

- How the grantee will provide outreach and information to the community;
- How the grantee will solicit and receive feedback on implementation from the community; and
- How the Collaborative Stakeholder Structure will support implementation of the Community Engagement Plan

In implementation, grantees may allocate up to 8% of their budget to the Community Engagement Plan.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

For many planning projects, especially government-led projects, meaningful community engagement is not the standard. Often, community engagement begins and ends with community outreach and input. Agencies inform communities of a proposed project and solicit input, but stop short of intentionally and systematically involving communities in decision-making. This can happen due to many factors, including limited funding and capacity, lack of historical precedent, or disinterest in and distrust of community input.

TCC provides a model for program design because it intentionally evaluates applicants based on the extent to which they demonstrate a commitment to community engagement in each phase of the project. Not only does TCC require community engagement in its program guidelines and prioritize it in applicant

scoring, it also provides specific guidance on components for meaningful community engagement. TCC's guidelines encourage grantees to commit to a spectrum of best practices, such as prioritizing organizations with a history of community engagement, incorporating both community outreach and feedback mechanisms, and integrating community engagement with decision-making frameworks, such as the Collaborative Stakeholder Structure.

Even with these guidelines, we heard from community members that some struggled to implement meaningful community engagement practices due to funding challenges, which we highlight in the following Challenges section. Nonetheless, TCC's detailed community engagement requirements go far beyond the industry standard. Therefore, we uplift TCC's community engagement requirements as a best practice that future programs should seek to surpass and build upon.

2. Pioneers Equitable Model of Governance through Collaborative Stakeholder Structures

TCC requires applicants to collaboratively work and make decisions towards collective impact. Grant requirements can drive grantee and partner selection, and most resource-intensive grants highly favor local government grantees and do not require multi-stakeholder collaboration. By contrast, TCC's grant requirements incentivizes collaborative governance in both the Planning and Implementation Grants.

Planning Grants: TCC Guidelines require a minimum of one Co-Applicant in addition to the Lead Applicant. More than one Co-Applicant is strongly encouraged, and priority in application scoring is given to those that are able to demonstrate strong and diverse partnerships, including with community-based organizations and other stakeholder groups.

Implementation Grants: TCC requires applicants to develop Collaborative Stakeholder Structures (CSS) to govern implementation of the TCC grant. TCC encourages applicants to create CSS that consist of a diverse range of organizations, and are required to include residents and community-based organizations within their formation. The CSS must identify the roles, governance, decision-making processes, legal and financial considerations, and processes for involving community representatives in decision-making. Organizations that are eligible to sit on the CSS, as either a lead Grantee or Partner, include but are not limited to:

- Community-based organizations
- Local governments
- Nonprofit organizations
- Philanthropic organizations and foundations
- Faith-based organizations
- Community development finance institutions
- Community development corporations
- Joint power authorities
- Tribal governments

See the Appendix for additional details on the Collaborative Stakeholder Structure.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

TCC's collaborative governance requirements are critical for combatting entrenched government-community dynamics and ensuring increased community decision-making.

Supports Increased Community Decision-Making: No one knows better than community members themselves what is needed in their neighborhoods, yet rarely are community voices centered in the decision-making processes that impact their daily lives. The CSS creates a platform where community organizations and residents not only have a seat at the table, they also have meaningful decision-making power. This formalized decision-making structure gives TCC applicants the flexibility to draw on their own historical foundations and unique strengths, which will be different for each community.

> " *We all had the opportunity to come and share and to develop this project. Someone didn't just come out and tell us, 'This project is going to be done this way, from A to Z, and so on and so forth.' Instead, a door opened for people, for the community."*
>
> — *Maria Alonso*
> *Huerta del Valle*

Requires Collaboration in Local Government Planning: Local governments have not historically practiced collaborative decision-making with communities. TCC provides the framework for a pioneering new model of governance — rather than making disconnected decisions on behalf of communities, local governments must work collaboratively with communities. TCC offers a best practice by institutionalizing a collaborative governance model within its program guidelines.

Furthermore, when pursuing grants, cities often source partners through an RFP process. In doing so, cities can select the partners most amenable to a city's historic practices, rather than partners most connected with the community. Local governments maintain and consolidate their decision-making power through partner selection.

Stockton provides an example of how TCC flips the script to allow communities to determine who the collaborative governance partners should be. Stockton's community partners wanted to pursue TCC, and knew that they needed the partnership and fiscal and administrative capacity of local City government to make it happen. Community stakeholders approached the City with the TCC opportunity, and because the grant guidelines so heavily prioritized and incentivized collaborative governance, the City agreed to participate in a non-traditional and collaborative grant application process for TCC.

> " *Most of the time the City has to go for a grant, win the grant and then procure their partners through an RFP process. We did this completely differently. The partners put the grant together ourselves."*
>
> — *Jasmine Leek*
> *Third City Coalition*

3. Provides Critical Technical Assistance for Communities

TCC funds technical assistance (TA) providers to provide support for Implementation Grant applicants and grantees. This technical assistance occurs in several phases:[22]

- **Third-Party Application TA:** SGC provides TA through third party providers for all Implementation Grant applicants, to help applicants meet program thresholds. Application TA activities may include but are not limited to: direct application assistance, financial analysis and budget development, assessment of project readiness, and quantification of greenhouse gas emissions reductions.
- **Local Application TA:** Beginning in Round 3, SGC offered up to $3,500 to applicants to hire local technical assistance to support and help coordinate the Implementation Grant application. Using this funding, applicants were able to identify their own local and culturally relevant TA providers.
- **Implementation TA:** Once awarded an Implementation Grant, awardees have been allocated additional resources for technical assistance. Grantees have been able to use these TA dollars to meet local gaps. For example, the Northeast San Fernando Valley collaborative developed a project management tool, while Stockton stakeholders are hiring a consultant to strengthen their Displacement Avoidance Plan.

Technical assistance provides targeted support to meet identified gaps, and can include both direct assistance as well as overall capacity building to support communities in developing projects and strengthening multi-sector partnerships. Technical assistance can thus fill many different roles dependent on community need: coordination, grant administration, technical expertise, translation of technical documents to community, community engagement, building community capacity and more.[23]

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

Technical assistance is a critical equity component in the TCC program. Long-term, systemic and historic disinvestment means that frontline communities often do not have the resources or infrastructure required for technical, complex and time-consuming government grants. Underserved communities need support and resources to succeed in pursuing and implementing these types of large grants. Technical assistance helps bridge this resource gap, ranging from technical analysis, such as quantifying greenhouse gas emissions, to building up grant administration know-how, such as complicated government budgeting and invoicing processes.

Within our TCC analysis, we found that technical assistance is most successful when a TA provider is either from the community themselves or has a long history of working with the community. This type of community-rooted TA provider holds the trust of the community and is better able to tailor technical assistance to the needs of the community.

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22   *Strategic Growth Council. (2019). Transformative Climate Communities Program: Round 3 Final Program Guidelines.* https://sgc.ca.gov/programs/tcc/docs/20191104-TCC_Guidelines_Round_3_Final.pdf**.**

23   *Strategic Growth Council. (2020). Technical Assistance Guidelines for State Agencies.* https://sgc.ca.gov/programs/cace/docs/20200826-TA_Guidelines.pdf

" *The Strategic Growth Council allowed us to hire a community representative to help with the application. We were able to bring on a trusted community representative, someone that all of our partners had worked with before. And it became her job to catch up on all the materials and read the grant agreements, so that she helped to distill that information and spread the knowledge and bring in a voice that we might not have heard if we hadn't had someone who was paid to read all of that and catch up on it.*"

— *Alexandria McBride*
City of Oakland

Technical Assistance Examples

Each community takes advantage of a variety of TA both through the TCC grant and, occasionally, through unfunded or non-TCC opportunities. The examples below are a selection of strong TA examples that highlight the spectrum of possible local technical assistance provision activities:

Centering Community Voices through Community-Rooted TA

Ontario

Ontario Together contracted with a trusted, local consulting firm, Social Impact Artists, for community engagement activities. Social Impact Artists has been supporting local community engagement and strategic planning efforts for over five years. For TCC, they leveraged Ontario's existing collective impact model, health hubs and resident-led Community Health Improvement Association (CHIA) to develop an overall community engagement strategy.

East Oakland

East Oakland hired Marquita Price as a technical assistance provider during the Implementation Grant application. Marquita is a third generation East Oakland native and works directly with residents in her role at the East Oakland Collective. In her TA capacity, Marquita played a key role in ensuring an inclusive and community-centered application process. Bridging the gap between the grant application process and community stakeholders, she provided dedicated capacity to interpret complex grant requirements, educate and coordinate with community stakeholders, and develop application materials that centered community voices as much as possible.

Strengthening Community Capacity through Project Management TA

Stockton

Stockton Rising leveraged two sources of technical assistance for its proposal and grant implementation efforts, particularly in the Planning Grant process: Third City Coalition, a local civic engagement organization based in Stockton, CA, and The Greenlining Institute, a state-wide policy advocacy organization based in Oakland, CA. Together, Third City Coalition and Greenlining supported in partnership development, grant coordination, facilitation, strategy development and grant writing during the Planning Grant's application and implementation process. Each brought project management capacity and expertise on the TCC grant program that were critical to shepherding the grant proposal and implementation processes

Strengthening Community Capacity through Grant Management TA

San Fernando Valley

Green Together leveraged Community Partners, a nonprofit organization that provides fiscal sponsorship services, to serve as the Grantee. While the lead Grantee may not traditionally be thought of as providing technical assistance, Community Partners brings significant capacity and technical expertise to serve as the administrative backbone for TCC, fulfilling the administrative, reporting and budgeting requirements of the grant. Staffing for this position was critical, and the lead project manager for Community Partners is herself from Pacoima and is deeply committed to seeing through equitable and community-led implementation of TCC.

Equity in Implementation

Equitable implementation means that implementation centers community vision from beginning to end and that those visions are properly resourced. We often see planning activities without associated dollars for implementation, or implementation opportunities without sufficient, community-centered planning before-hand. TCC models a best practice by providing funding for planning processes while also providing significant, catalytic grants for implementation. These parallel opportunities are critical to building community capacity to advance equitable development projects in the most under-resourced communities. Communities need both resourced time to conduct critical planning and community engagement activities, and dollars to implement tangible projects to meet community needs in their neighborhoods.

Importantly, TCC Implementation Grants deliver a wide range of integrated and coordinated greenhouse gas-reducing projects, such as affordable housing, solar installation and public transit. TCC further amplifies the equity impact of its investments by requiring three key co-benefits as part of its Transformative Elements framework: workforce development, displacement avoidance and climate resilience. Together, the capital projects and Transformative Elements work to ensure that TCC communities can comprehensively address multiple facets of community and economic development while mitigating greenhouse gases.

In this section, we highlight the following best practices for equitable implementation:

1. ***Strengthens Community Capacity Through Planning Grants***
2. ***Provides Catalytic Funding & Multiple, Integrated Projects through Implementation Grants***
3. ***Creates Pathways to Economic Opportunity through Local, High-Quality Jobs***
4. ***Includes Measures to Mitigate Displacement***
5. ***Catalyzes Climate Resilience & Adaptation Planning to Mitigate Climate Risks***

1. Strengthens Community Capacity through Planning Grants

Planning Grants provide under-resourced communities with time and resources to foster partnerships, identify opportunities (e.g. projects) and develop strategies that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions; ensure meaningful community engagement; consider displacement and climate change risks; create career pathways for high quality jobs; and secure additional outside funds. Funding is meant for *planning*, and no funding for capital improvements is included.

> **"** *These are massive applications with so many details. And you need four to five months to really prepare and get these applications in place... Those Planning Grants are really important for getting people on board."*

> — ***Marsha Murrington***
> *City of Oakland*

To date, there have been three rounds of Planning Grants, with typical grants ranging from $170,000 (Round 1, 2018) to $200,000 (Round 2, 2019 and Round 3, 2021). Round 1 and 2 Planning Grants were one-year grant terms, whereas Round 3 grants are two-year grants.[24]

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

The Planning Grant provides a pathway for communities that have suffered historic disinvestment to invest in the foundational capacity building and partnership development needed to advance transforma-tive community-led planning and projects. In many cases, the most under-resourced communities are not equipped with the requisite capacity, staffing or expertise to lead locally on climate action. The Planning Grant thus bolsters long-term capacity to advance community-driven planning by providing grantees with funded time to:

- Build relationships, strengthen partnerships and advance community engagement processes that can support current and future efforts for community-led transformations.
- Identify and prepare for a wide range of greenhouse gas-reducing capital projects, as well as anti-displacement, workforce and climate resilience strategies.

By the end of the Planning Grant term, grantees have conducted community needs assessments, strengthened partnerships with their local governments, completed local land use planning or feasibility assessments and more. Planning Grantees are also more likely to successfully achieve funding for catalytic funding opportunities, such as TCC's Implementation Grant. As of publication, three out of the eight TCC Implementation Grantees (East Oakland, Riverside and Stockton) had previously received a Planning Grant.

2. Provides Catalytic Funding & Multiple, Integrated Projects through Implementation Grants

Implementation Grants provide millions of dollars for capital projects identified through community-led processes, designed to meet local needs while making frontline communities more sustainable and resilient.

Catalytic Funding: To date, full Implementation Grant awards have ranged from $23 million to $66.5 million over a five-year grant term. These awards will result in five capital projects at the low end to 10 capital projects at the highest levels of funding, in addition to anti-displacement, workforce, and climate resilience initiatives.

In Round 3, SGC awarded Stockton and Riverside partial awards of $10.8 million and $9.1 million, respec-tively. Stockton interviewees reported that a $10.8 million grant, while impactful, meant they had to roll back most of their comprehensive, ambitious plans for implementation. With less funding, stakeholders

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24   *Strategic Growth Council. (2020). Transformative Climate Communities Program: Round 3 Planning Grant Recommendations.* https://sgc.ca.gov/meetings/council/2020/docs/20200625-Item6b_TCC_R3_PG_Staff_Report_June_2020.pdf

had to significantly downscale their vision for community transformation. Thus, we highlight the scale of TCC's full grant awards — $23 million to $70 million--as the *minimum* funding level constituting a best practice.

Multiple, Integrated Projects: TCC delivers multiple, coordinated investments at the neighborhood scale. Grantees must implement multiple, integrated strategies that make the whole of the grant greater than the sum of its parts. Projects must achieve significant reductions in greenhouse gases, improve public health and environmental benefits, and expand economic opportunity and shared prosperity. To meet these goals, grantees can choose from a wide range of eligible strategies:

1. Equitable Housing and Neighborhood Development
2. Land Acquisition for Affordable Housing
3. Transit Access and Mobility
4. Solar Installation and Energy Efficiency
5. Water Efficiency
6. Recycling and Waste Management
7. Urban Greening and Green Infrastructure
8. Health and Well-Being Projects[25]

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

Catalytic Funding: The scale of funding offered through TCC is, in and of itself, an equity best practice because we need multi-million, large scale investments to move the needle on inequity. Low-income communities of color have suffered from decades of disinvestment from both the public and private sectors, and we will not reach equitable neighborhood conditions by offering small-scale grants. Making progress against conditions of historic disinvestment requires significant and dedicated funds.

TCC therefore offers multi-million dollar grants to ensure that communities can implement multiple projects that create long-term change and bring community visions to life. This funding is intended to provide the necessary catalyst for a neighborhood to invest in itself and leverage future opportunities for community change.

> " *TCC has opened up doors for Stockton that were not open before. We've been contacted by outside groups who are interested in partnering with Stockton on climate work because they know that we got a TCC partial award... We weren't getting that level of climate attention from the public, from the State before then.*"

> **— Ann Rogan**
> *City of Stockton*

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25   *Strategic Growth Council. (2019). Transformative Climate Communities Program: Round 3 Final Program Guidelines.* https://sgc.ca.gov/programs/tcc/docs/20191104-TCC_Guidelines_Round_3_Final.pdf

Multiple, Integrated Projects: TCC offers a rare, yet critically necessary, opportunity for communities to coordinate multiple climate investments and planning initiatives to maximize equity outcomes. Too often, grants are siloed by narrow issue areas — for example, housing, transportation or workforce. This siloing means that projects may only address one facet of a community's needs, and also requires that communities apply to multiple different grant programs housed under different agencies in order to achieve a holistic community vision.

Construction of Vista Verde Apartments, a 101-unit affordable housing project funded through TCC in Ontario. Credit: City of Ontario

By contrast, TCC streamlines funding in the communities most impacted by poverty and pollution. Grantees choose their own goals, strategies and projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and deliver multiple and shared benefits, all under the same program. TCC communities are thus implementing multiple infrastructure projects — such as affordable housing, renewable energy, public transit and active transportation — in an integrated and coordinated manner.

3. Creates Pathways to Economic Opportunity Through Local, High-Quality Jobs

TCC Guidelines require Implementation Grant applicants to provide pathways to economic opportunity for local residents through a Workforce Development and Economic Opportunity Plan (WDEOP), one of TCC's required Transformative Elements. Applicants are tasked to create plans that will result in "local, high-quality jobs that offer living wages, benefits, worker voice, predictable scheduling, and opportunities for advancement with clear access points for low-income residents in and near the Project Area." Applicants may allocate up to 5% of their budget to support the WDEOP. More details on the WDEOP can be found in the Appendix.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

TCC's WDEOP offers a high-road standard for integrating economic benefits and outcomes into a climate program. We know that we must better align investments that reduce greenhouse gases with opportunities to provide economic benefits and local jobs. This is especially important given TCC's catalytic grant size.

Moreover, the WDEOP importantly invests in career pathways for a clean energy future. Job training and education are vital pathways out of poverty for low-income workers. Gaining skills, earning industry-recognized credentials, and getting access to high-quality jobs improves access to economic opportunity.

Grantees emphasized TCC's workforce component as a unique opportunity to invest in high-impact strategies that encourage high-quality, long-term jobs for local residents. To meet this requirement, multiple TCC communities forged new partnerships to bring workforce resources and programs to neighborhoods that did not previously have them. Grantees also emphasized that being able to provide stipends to workforce

program participants was a game changer. Stipends allowed residents who likely do not have the resources to participate without pay to actively engage in workforce training.

" *We really have realized that a job can just change the life of a family. Having a dependable, well-paying job. And I think that what GRID [Alternatives] offers in solar training and what the Los Angeles Business Council offers is really going to be life changing for families.*

And we already saw it in their first cohort. One of our members signed up her son… He's now working with the union and doing electrical stuff. They've moved out of their tiny apartment and have been able to just improve their quality of life. And that's what we hope to see for so many other folks in our community because the job is so important."

— Veronica Padilla-Campos
Pacoima Beautiful

Workforce Development and Economic Opportunities Plan: Stockton

Stockton's Workforce Development and Economic Opportunities Plan emphasizes high-quality, local jobs in clean energy and offers an example of how a community can leverage TCC to capitalize on existing strengths, expertise and relationships while forging new ground to improve pathways to green jobs. Stockton's plan takes existing community strengths — such as GRID Alternative's and Rising Sun's expertise in green job training programs and Insight Garden Program's re-entry and landscaping program — and weaves them together in new ways to produce four distinct yet interrelated workforce strategies.

Multiple interviewees credited the City of Stockton's FUSE Fellow and AmeriCorps VISTA for providing both extensive workforce development expertise and serving a critical coordinating role to bring multiple workforce strategies together in a cohesive, integrated way. The four strategies work together to provide multiple pathways for green jobs training.

1. **Solar Installation Training Program:** Through TCC, GRID Alternatives will expand their Solar Installation Basic Training 200-Hour (IBT 200) Program to Stockton. Completion of the course will provide participants with industry-specific technical solar installation skills, as well as relevant industry certifications. GRID's IBT 200 program offers a $1,000 program completion stipend, contingent on attendance.
2. **Bus Maintenance Mechanic Apprenticeship Program:** The San Joaquin Regional Transit

District sponsors a three-year Bus Maintenance Mechanic Apprenticeship Program that is certified by California's Department of Industrial Relations – Division of Apprenticeship Standards. TCC will provide a full-time, three-year apprenticeship opportunity to three apprentices. Apprentices are paid Journeyman wages with benefits.

3. **Climate Careers to MC3 Pipeline:** Rising Sun Center for Opportunity (Rising Sun) will form a new partnership with California Human Development (CHD) to provide youth ages 18-24 with pre-apprenticeship pathways. Rising Sun's Climate Career Program, a program that trains and employs youth to provide energy efficiency services, will serve as a pipeline to CHD's Multi-Craft Core (MC3) certification program, a stipended pre-apprenticeship program that prepares participants for careers in unionized building and construction trades. Upon completion of the training program, CHD further ensures strong equity outcomes by placing youth directly in the trades workforce.

4. **Vocational Gardening and Landscaping Training:** The Insight Garden Program will hold weekly classes for inmates reentering the workforce to teach practical skills such as permaculture, landscape design, soil building, organic gardening and conservation, as well as life skills including interpersonal communication, leadership development, community-building and emotional processing. Participants develop skills that they can take to green sector careers in a range of fields including urban gardens, farm-to-table restaurants, environmental education organizations and landscaping companies.

4.   Includes Measures to Mitigate Displacement

TCC requires communities to develop Displacement Avoidance Plans (DAPs) to "establish policies and programs to avoid displacement of current households and small businesses." One of the required Transformative Elements, the DAP asks applicants to identify and adopt new policies and programs to prevent the displacement of very low and low-income households, as well as to prevent the displacement of local and small businesses. Applicants may allocate up to 3% of the total Community Engagement budget to support displacement avoidance activities. See the Appendix for additional details on the DAP.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

Gentrification and neighborhood change are complicated and often painful processes that can impact community cohesion and affordability. Improvements in infrastructure are associated with gentrification, and have the potential to contribute to the displacement of residents and small businesses.[26] As disadvantaged communities, TCC neighborhoods are extremely vulnerable to these forces.

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26   Zuk, Miriam., Bierbaum, A., Chapple, K., Gorska, K., Loukaitou-Sideris, A. (2017). Gentrification, Displacement and the Role of Public Investment. Journal of Planning Literature. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0885412217716439; Chapple, K., Loukaitou-Sideris, A. (2021). White Paper on Anti-Displacement Strategy Effectiveness. https://www.urbandisplacement.org/sites/default/files/images/carb_anti-displacement_policy_white_paper_3.4.21_final_accessible.pdf

While investing in foundational capital projects, it is critical that TCC communities also implement specific strategies to protect current residents and small businesses from the economic pressures often associated with infrastructure investments. The DAP therefore offers an important step towards realizing the concept of investment without displacement.

> " *The fact that a grant requires [an] anti-displacement plan or a workforce development plan, that's very important. Because a grant like this could easily be gotten by a downtown development agency, and they build stuff that causes gentrification. So this grant really had all of that sealed up and locked down in terms of preventing and protecting community, vulnerable communities, in the cases of improvement. That improvement doesn't also mean pushing people out."*

— Arthur Levine
Huerta del Valle

Each community has unique anti-displacement needs and can select from a range of qualifying anti-displacement strategies. For some TCC sites, displacement is already changing the face of the community. Stakeholders in East Oakland expressed that they are grappling with the reality that many Black residents and businesses have already been displaced from the neighborhood. They identified an urgent priority to implement strategies that stem the tide of displacement and ensure that investments do not cause further harm. East Oakland will advance a three-pronged anti-displacement strategy that encompasses (1) culturally competent renter protection and anti-displacement outreach and education; (2) neighborhood stabilization through community organizing; and (3) the design and facilitation of a new program aimed at community-led Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) production and ADU legalization.

For other TCC sites, like in the Northeast San Fernando Valley, displacement is a looming specter that they are fighting to keep at bay. Below, we provide an in-depth look at Northeast San Fernando Valley's Displacement Avoidance Plan (DAP).

Displacement Avoidance Plan: Northeast San Fernando Valley

Pacoima Beautiful, a community-based organization with deep relationships with residents, leads Green Together's DAP, leveraging critical technical expertise from the UCLA Department of Urban and Regional Planning and the UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge. Green Together's DAP weaves together five primary strategies to address overcrowded housing conditions while protecting residents, as well as supporting small business owners from the economic pressures that come with large-scale public investments:

1. **Community Land Trust (CLT) Feasibility Study:** Green Together will use TCC funds to create a CLT feasibility study, including best practices and models that could be adopted for the Northeast San Fernando Valley. This exploration is the first step to producing increased community-controlled affordable housing options.

2. **Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Legalization Action Plan:** Many families live in unpermitted backyard ADUs, which is one of the most available forms of housing for low-income residents. The action plan seeks to identify ways for residents to maintain their housing at affordable levels, while also upgrading and legalizing the ADUs. This action plan will create a database of existing ADUs as well as an inventory of ADU policies, advocacy efforts and funding for legalization, with the goal of identifying strategies to implement a CLT for ADUs.

3. **Tenants Rights:** Green Together will offer tenants rights workshops, develop a train-the-trainer model for in-home charlas or talks to increase community members' competence with tenants rights, and develop a Housing Task Force.

4. **Small Business Assistance:** Pacoima is seeing increased infrastructure investment, including the construction of light rail along the busy Van Nuys corridor. To provide protections for small businesses, Green Together is creating an inventory of small business development programs, hosting annual workshops, providing referral support and follow-up, and developing a Small Business Task Force.

5. **Artists' Business Development:** Pacoima has a rich history of local artists and public art. To provide resources for the artist community, Green Together will identify creative capital, professional development and technical assistance opportunities and host business development workshops.

5. Catalyzes Climate Resilience & Adaptation Planning to Mitigate Climate Risks

Another of TCC's Transformative Elements requires communities to develop Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Plans (CARP) that help communities anticipate and prevent potential negative impacts of climate change. The CARP must describe the Project Area's climate risks, and then identify processes they will use to address climate change-related impacts on vulnerable populations and infrastructure projects. The inclusion of the CARP is a best practice; however, applicants are not allocated specific funding to sup-port the CARP. We recommend that other programs or policies seeking to replicate this element provide dedicated funding for all required program activities including climate adaptation and resiliency. See the Appendix for additional details on the CARP.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

California is already experiencing the impacts of climate change; drought, increased wildfires, extreme heat and sea level rise are present in all areas of our state. Comprehensive climate change action requires both climate mitigation and climate adaptation strategies because greenhouse gas reductions, on their own, will not help impacted communities adapt or build resilience to climate change. Our need to adapt to a changing environment is ever more pressing, particularly among the most impacted and least resourced communities. TCC therefore provides a platform for stakeholders to collaborate around climate risks.

" *The workforce development and the displacement avoidance, the resiliency, those three pillars are the biggest benefit to the work that we can do. And I'm saying this from the perspective of an organization that builds projects. Building projects is great... But I recognize that if we don't have this additional thinking involved and if we aren't working on these other elements, then they're not ultimately going to move the needle... You can't just build projects and expect all the issues to go away. They need to come with these additional support systems and efforts. To me, that's the most exciting part about TCC."*

— **Anonymous**

Equity in Measurement & Analysis

The final step in making equity real is equitable measurement and analysis. In order to consistently improve equity, equity must be measured. TCC requires extensive and regular quantitative evaluation of GHG reductions and project outcomes, and allocates funding to hire an outside evaluator. Moreover, evaluation teams are brought on as meaningful partners, rather than add-ons, to the TCC grant.

1. ***Centers Evaluation in Program Design & Implementation***
2. ***Requires Community Partnership in Evaluation***

1. Centers Evaluation in Program Design & Implementation

Data collection and indicator tracking is considered one of TCC's Transformative Elements; it's a core part of how the program creates positive change. TCC requires extensive evaluation of each TCC site's quantifiable impact that measures progress and outcomes. Evaluators use extensive performance indicators based on TCC's overall framework (reductions in greenhouse gases, improvements in public health and environmental benefits, and expanded economic opportunity and shared prosperity), and evaluate four primary phases (baseline data evaluation, process evaluation, outcome evaluation and impact evaluation).[27]

TCC communities are then allocated funding to select and hire a pre-qualified academic institution as their own TCC Evaluation team. To date, evaluators have completed Year 1 and Year 2 Progress Reports for the first round of TCC Implementation Grants (Fresno, Watts and Ontario), and Year 1 Progress Reports for the second round of Implementation Grants (Northeast San Fernando Valley).[28]

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27   *University of California Los Angeles Luskin Center for Innovation. (2018). Transformative Climate Communities Evaluation Plan: A Road Map for Assessing Progress and Results of the Round 1 Place-based Initiatives.* https://innovation.luskin.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Transformative_Climate_Communities_Evaluation_Plan.pdf

28   *University of California Los Angeles Luskin Center for Innovation. Tracking Groundbreaking Climate Action.* https://innovation.luskin.ucla.edu/tracking-groundbreaking-climate-action/#toggle-id-3

Evaluation is primarily quantitative, but the program also includes qualitative methods that provide additional context and shed light on the nuances of on-the-ground progress. Evaluators also offer annual internal progress memos to the Strategic Growth Council that includes qualitative analysis and suggestions for overcoming any barriers in program implementation. SGC considers these recommendations for future years and rounds of TCC.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

Evaluation is necessary for operationalizing equity. However, the technical expertise required to conduct evaluation on the scale required for TCC is significant and is a potential burden to communities without the resources to implement large-scale evaluation. TCC implements a best practice by allocating funding that allows communities to hire academic researchers trained in quantitative and qualitative analysis. It goes beyond industry standards by incorporating community input on program evaluation, which helps ensure the right metrics are being captured. TCC's quantitative evaluation, paired with qualitative insights, provides a nuanced understanding of on-the-ground progress.

2. Requires Community Partnership in Evaluation

Beginning in Round 2 of TCC, the program allows communities to select their own evaluation teams, who are then incorporated into each site's Collaborative Stakeholder Structure and considered partners on the grant. In this capacity, third-party evaluators join meetings of the Collaborative Stakeholder Structure and work closely with community members, partners and stakeholders to document progress, challenges and stories from the community. Evaluation teams conduct extensive surveys, focus groups and interviews in order to learn directly from community members about what they think is working and what could be improved.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

Rather than research being conducted as an outside activity that can often be nonreciprocal, extractive or tokenizing, TCC evaluation teams are considered partners in implementation.[29] In being able to select their own evaluators, TCC communities exercise increased agency in ensuring that evaluation is an integrated part of the overall process. By working collaboratively together, researchers and TCC stakeholders build deeper working relationships and derive meaningful and grounded research outcomes to support successful implementation.

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29 *Creger, H. (2021). Making Racial Equity Real in Research. The Greenlining Institute.* https://greenlining.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Greenlining-Making-Racial-Equity-Real-2020.pdf

GRID Alternatives staff and trainees install rooftop solar in the Northeast San Fernando Valley. Credit: GRID Alternatives

EQUITY ON THE GROUND

TCC forges a pathway to a new planning paradigm — one that centers community voices and plans with communities, rather than for communities. The program requires multiple stakeholders, including community-based organizations and residents, to collectively govern and manage multi-million dollar grants. Achieving real collaborative governance and community ownership is critical to realizing the promise of community-led investments. It is also a significant lift, especially for the communities that have experienced the most disinvestment over preceding decades.

On the ground, our TCC communities are meeting the challenge by pioneering innovative approaches to collaborative governance and shifting away from top-down community engagement models. They offer a roadmap for the key ingredients needed at the community level to anchor, manage and implement large capital investments and forward community visions.

In this section, we highlight the following best practices for equity on the ground:

1. ***Collaborative Governance Ecosystem of Strong Community Anchors, Supportive Local Government & Comprehensive Technical Assistance***

2. ***Strong Project Management for Effective Collaborative Governance***

3. ***Meaningful & Equitable Community Engagement Models***

1. Collaborative Governance Ecosystem of Strong Community Anchors, Supportive Local Government & Comprehensive Technical Assistance

Across the TCC communities in our study, successful multi-stakeholder governance was dependent on the balance of three key stakeholder types:

- Strong Community Anchor
- Supportive Local Government
- Comprehensive Technical Assistance Provider

Collaborative Governance Ecosystem

ROLE
Ground collaborative in resident leadership and solutions

ROLE
Provide administrative and fiscal capacity to achieve community-led visions

ROLE
Support collaborative in filling expertise, skills or capacity gaps
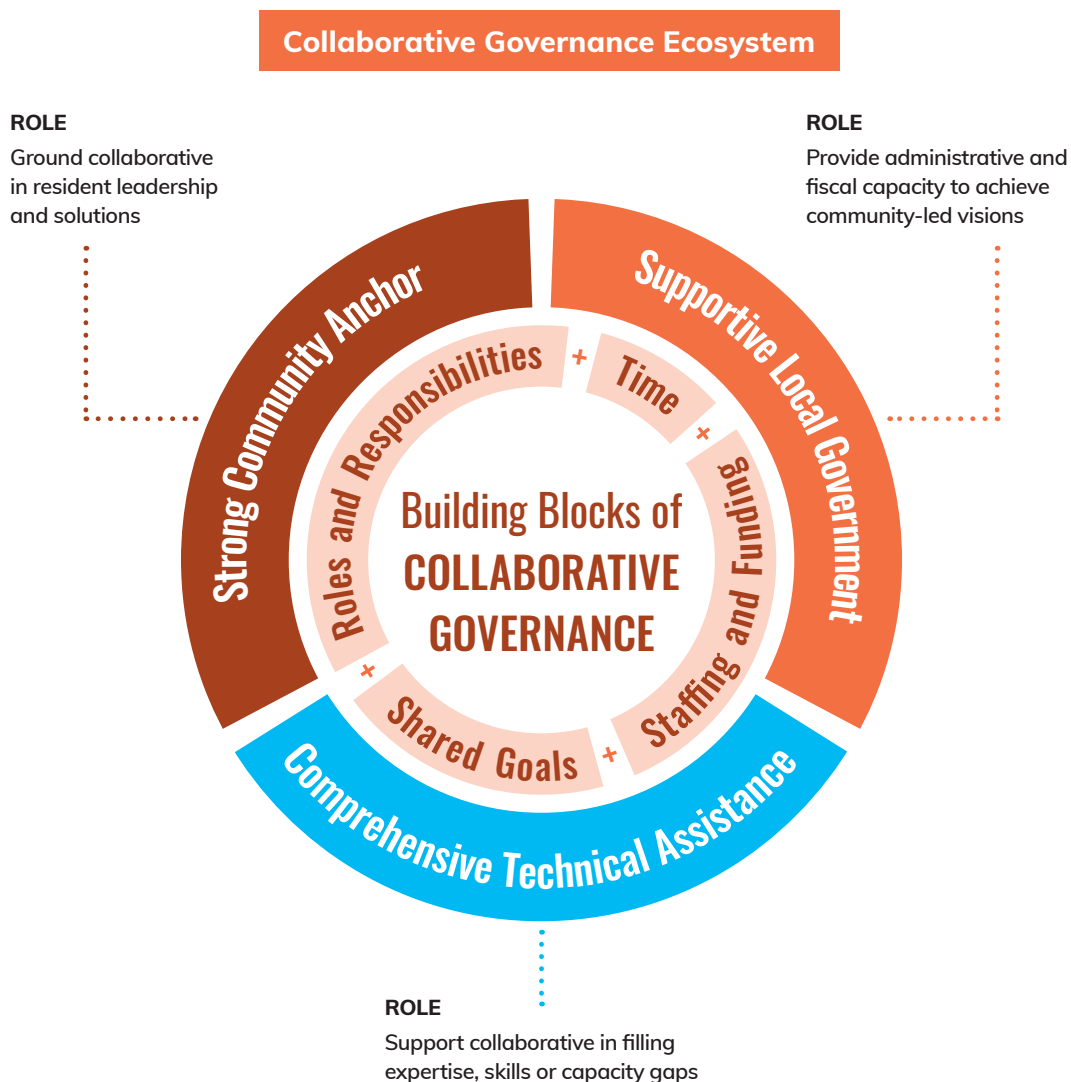
Collaborative Governance Ecosystem. *A strong community anchor, supportive local government and comprehensive technical assistance supports successful multi-stakeholder governance.*

Strong Community Anchor: The community anchor is a community-based organization or coalition which organizes or engages directly with residents and has a history of strong relationships, trust and cultural competency with impacted communities. This community anchor should serve as a vehicle for residents to engage, lead and have ownership over the collaborative project. Having a strong community anchor, with sufficient capacity to dedicate staff time towards collaborative governance as well as the political weight to act as lead partners, is critical to grounding any project in resident-identified priorities and visions.

Supportive Local Government: Government partners may include local governments, regional governments and public agencies that can offer significant administrative and fiscal capacity, as well as management over public infrastructure projects. In order for local governments to be strong partners, it is crucial that key political decision-makers buy into a collaborative, community-driven effort, grounded by shared agreements and clear roles and responsibilities. Local government should support such community processes as ways to advance local climate action planning goals. In addition to the support of decision-makers, it can also be extremely helpful to have dedicated implementing staff who support the community-led spirit of the grant.

> " *Make sure that the right collective impact partners are at the table. Make sure that decision-makers from the city entity... and also implementers from city departments, from school districts, from housing, active transportation, rapid transportation... are at the table. Because I think the right voices need to be there to not only help design and strategize as to whether the projects themselves and the solutions can be implemented, but how they can be implemented."*

— *Evette De Luca*
The Social Impact Artists

Comprehensive Technical Assistance Provider: As previously discussed, technical assistance is a vital component in supporting applicants and grantees through complex funding programs. For community-led investments, TA should be directed towards supporting the community partners in filling expertise, skills or capacity gaps such as data analysis, project management, fiscal management, conflict mediation, community engagement, strategic planning, building community capacity and more.

> " *To have someone... who can focus explicitly on helping to vet the community partners, helping to build their capacity — because a lot of these partners are so chronically under-resourced and frankly understaffed that they could benefit from help putting together a budget. It's very difficult to know how to translate a very technical TCC application document into a project proposal. And so tactically, that's where the State or third-party actor could have played a much more hands-on role to say, we recognize that under-invested and disinvested communities just literally don't have the capacity."*

— *Ann Rogan*
City of Stockton

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

Based on our comparative evaluation, the TCC communities that had a strong community anchor, engaged and committed local government and supportive, comprehensive technical assistance were more likely to have efficient, collaborative and community-driven application and grant management processes. In particular, interviewees from communities with a robust community anchor had confidence that their collective work was grounded in and accountable to the community and would lead to direct and meaningful benefits for project area residents. They reported stronger working relationships, higher levels of trust, lower levels of friction, easier times surmounting obstacles, and more joy in their collective work together.

It is equally important to align partnerships around a shared set of values and vision for community transformation from the outset. Establishing a shared vision at the start allows partners to understand what they are trying to accomplish together and how each partner can contribute to that collective vision over time. Partners with an existing foundation of relationships, trust or history of working together were also more likely to be able to advance successful collaborative governance models.

By contrast, the TCC communities included in our research that described distrust and frustrations in working together were ones in which the pre-existing conditions and balance of power significantly favored government partners over community-based ones. This includes applications with local government as the lead Grantee, as well as where the community anchor either didn't have as deep a history of resident engagement or didn't have enough capacity or political power to engage on equal terms with local government.

Northeast San Fernando Valley

Northeast San Fernando Valley's Green Together Collaborative offers a singular model of collaborative governance led by community.

Pacoima Beautiful anchors the collaborative, building off of decades of organizing with residents. Pacoima Beautiful then brought together other partners who shared a common vision of improving quality-of-life for residents and mitigating environmental pollution, as well as a shared understanding of the importance of deep community organizing. They leveraged a supportive relationship with the Los Angeles Mayor's Office to move the project forward and coordinate with other City agencies. Perhaps most significantly, they then brought on Community Partners, a nonprofit organization that provides fiscal sponsorship services, to serve as the Grantee. In this capacity, Community Partners acts as the administrative backbone and provides critical technical assistance for the overall project.

- **Strong Community Anchor:** Green Together is anchored by Pacoima Beautiful, a local environmental justice organization. As a member-based organization, Pacoima Beautiful has been working with residents for over 20 years. They engage over 10,000 members and have established strong working partnerships with other stakeholders and public agencies. The trust and consistent engagement that Pacoima Beautiful has built with

community members ensures that Green Together's work remains accountable to resident needs, priorities and visions.

- **Supportive Local Government:** Green Together leverages a strong working relationship with the Los Angeles Mayor's Office. While the Mayor's Office is not a formal TCC partner, the office has been supportive of the effort. The Mayor's Office has thus been critical in coordinating other City departments to implement TCC.

- **Comprehensive Technical Assistance:** Community Partners, an organization that provides fiscal sponsorship services, serves as the Grantee for Green Together. While they fill the role of the Grantee, we are classifying them as "technical assistance" because they bring significant administrative expertise and capacity in support of community vision, without which the collaborative could not function. Community Partners is unique in being able to perform the grant management role that usually only local governments can fulfill, and they are responsible for overall grant management, including managing TCC's intensive fiscal, administrative and reporting requirements.

2. Strong Project Management for Effective Collaborative Governance

TCC communities marshalled existing strengths and new partnerships to meet TCC's extensive project management requirements. TCC communities must demonstrate the management and financial capacity to oversee, manage and implement large infrastructure projects. Each site must also coordinate a coalition of dozens of partners, each with their own distinct and sometimes disparate workstreams, to meet the complicated and resource-intensive requirements of a large government grant. Because project man-agement plays such a central role to the process, dedicated and strong project management is a critical component for successful collaborative governance.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

Moving from the TCC application, which is onerous in its own right, to the day-to-day management of TCC grant implementation requires efficient project management systems, capacity and dedicated staff. Communities must be prepared to commit extensive project management capacity in order to realize TCC's myriad benefits.

For many TCC sites, project management responsibilities are taken up by the Grantee. The Grantee, in most cases to date, has been local government. Relative to community-based organizations, local govern-ments often have more fiscal capacity and experience administering government grants. In these cases, leveraging the existing infrastructure that local government can provide can be critical to the success of the collaborative effort. It is also critical to ensure that communities have the resources, capacity and dedication to navigate the tensions between fulfilling complex and bureaucratic project management requirements and remaining in service of a community-led process and vision.

> " *Management of this grant is on a whole other level. And, frankly, look at the resources that Community Partners has brought to the table in order to manage this effectively so far: Their CEO is on regular phone calls. They have multiple folks from their finance department and then also from their grants department and their contracts department that are on phone calls. They're bringing tons of resources.*"

— **Anonymous**

In other cases, nonprofit organizations have played central project management roles in collaborative governance. As we highlight above, Stockton leveraged two nonprofits — Third City Coalition and The Greenlining Institute — to drive grant and project management activities during the Planning Grant term and the Implementation Grant application period. Moving into the management of the TCC Implementation Grant, primary project management responsibilities will fall to the City of Stockton.

In the Northeast San Fernando Valley, Community Partners, an organization that provides fiscal sponsorship services, serves as the Grantee for the collaborative. Community Partners is responsible for overall grant management, including managing TCC's intensive fiscal, administrative and reporting requirements. They bring significant administrative expertise and capacity, without which the collaborative could not function, and can do so because their mission is to support fiscally sponsored projects with administrative, finance and contract-related expertise.

3. Meaningful & Equitable Community Engagement Models

Our TCC evaluation revealed multiple commonalities between the communities best able to conduct meaningful community engagement. We found that deep, responsive and successful community engagement shared the following qualities:

- **Led by organizations with a history of engagement with local residents in low-income neighborhoods of color.** The most successful instances of community engagement within our TCC evaluation were led by at least one community organization with a strong history of working directly in the local community with disadvantaged groups.

- **Proactively mitigated barriers to access.** For instance, by ensuring language access in outreach materials and at events; by conducting community engagement where residents spend their time, such as parks, schools, churches or, in Ontario's case, health hubs; providing transit passes; and by providing childcare and food at events.

- **Compensated community members for providing their expertise.** Examples include Stockton's Climate Leaders program or East Oakland's Resident Leader program, which trained and organized a handful of residents who live in the community to help co-develop and co-lead community outreach and engagement efforts with local non-profits.

- **Expanded outreach efforts to additional demographics.** For example, through awareness campaigns or resident leader programs, which are programs that train local residents to organize and engage their neighbors around particular issues.

- **Incorporated residents into decision-making governing bodies.** Within our analysis, each TCC Implementation Grant recipient incorporated at least 1-2 resident representatives within their governing councils.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

- **Led by organizations with a history of engagement with local residents in low-income neighborhoods of color.** Every community has its own history, culture and social and economic dynamics. Community-based organizations with deep roots in the community are able to design community engagement processes that are grounded in the context of local needs, priorities, challenges and assets. These types of organizations are positioned to approach the planning process with cultural competency, are embedded in community networks and hold community trust.

- **Proactively mitigated barriers to access.** Many residents in disadvantaged communities are struggling to meet their basic needs, are primary caretakers, work long hours or hold multiple jobs. Because these residents may not have time to participate in community engagement meetings and workshops, especially those held during weekdays, community meetings can exclude the very residents they are supposed to engage. Some TCC sites in our evaluation were able to mitigate this barrier by holding engagement events at places where people live, work and play, as well as by providing food and childcare through non-TCC funding. Interviewees also provided interpretation and translation services for events and outreach materials to ensure language access when working with non-native English speakers.

Residents "greenlining the hood" in a vacant lot that has been transformed into a community garden in South Stockton. Credit: Rise Stockton

- **Compensated community members for providing their expertise.** Community engagement requires that community members contribute valuable time and unique expertise. They should be compensated appropriately for their efforts. Due to the scale of community engagement events and constrained budgets, providing monetary compensation for all attendees is often not possible. Instead, many TCC sites in our analysis provided stipends to residents that participated in resident leadership programs or contributed to the engagement process in other ways, such as supporting facilitation during community meetings or conducting outreach with neighbors.

- **Expanded outreach efforts to additional demographics.** Many community-based organizations focus their day-to-day work on engaging particular demographics, such as a specific racial group. Thus, in neighborhoods where there are diverse demographics, the most successful community engagement leaders recognized and worked to engage demographics that they have not historically engaged.

- **Incorporated residents into decision-making governing bodies.** Community participation should not end at project selection. Incorporating residents into decision-making governing bodies — and compensating their work — ensures continued accountability to resident needs throughout the lifecycle of the program.

CHALLENGES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Systemic Inequities   Funding Structures   TCC Planning & Implementation Grants

The Transformative Climate Communities program offers an important model for facilitating community-led change, but the program is not without its challenges.

TCC contends with systemic, deep and long-standing inequities around community capacity, funding, planning and preparedness that make it difficult for communities to advance their local visions. To counter these systemic inequities, we must invest in community capacity and community-led transformations at all levels. This is the goal of TCC, but TCC alone cannot overcome systemic inequities. Against widening inequality and worsening climate impacts, our communities cannot afford to wait to live in healthy, thriving and resilient neighborhoods.

Historic and current-day practices of disinvestment also mean that the communities that need large-scale investments

Compost demonstration at the Huerta del Valle community garden in Ontario. Credit: OntarioRealFood.org

the most also have the least capacity to successfully apply for, compete for, and implement programs and policies. At the level of grant administration, TCC's ambitious scope all but guarantees that communities will then struggle with capacity challenges through both the grant application and management phases. To meet these challenges, we recommend that SGC provide increased guidance, resources and technical assistance to support communities to advance their community visions.

Our evaluation revealed overarching challenges in the following categories:

1. *Systemic Inequities*
2. *Funding Structures*
3. *TCC Planning & Implementation Grants*

SYSTEMIC INEQUITIES

Our Most Under-Resourced Communities Have the Least Capacity, & More Approaches Are Needed for Community Transformation

Due to a history of discriminatory government practices, our most under-resourced communities have borne the brunt of generational disparities in socioeconomic and health outcomes, as well as in ownership over the decisions that impact them. Equity requires investing in these very communities that have long been neglected by institutional power, and these communities are rightly the focus of TCC's catalytic grants.

At the same time, our most under-resourced communities are the very same communities with the least existing capacity and staffing to apply for and manage large infrastructure investments. The communities included in our analysis have successfully secured TCC grants and serve as models for community-led transformation, and even they have been stretched thin to meet the grant application and management requirements. Moreover, TCC is just one program; we need a broader ecosystem of well-funded, targeted, equity-focused programs to shift the larger structural inequities that exist in our economy and society.

To meet these challenges, we offer our vision for how we must resource greenlined, community-led transformations at all levels from planning to implementation. We must build the overall ecosystem and capacity of community leadership, so that all communities have the ability to have ownership over the decisions that shape their lives and neighborhoods.

In this section, we highlight the following challenges and recommendations for addressing systemic inequities:

CHALLENGES

Under-Resourced Communities Contend with Ecosystem Gaps

Lack of Sufficient Funding to Engage the Most Impacted Residents

Under-Resourced Communities Lack Shovel-Ready Projects

One Program Alone Can't Shift Systemic Inequities

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS & FUNDERS

Invest in Large-Scale, Greenlined Community Investments

Transform the Behaviors, Cultures, Institutions & Systems that Harm Communities of Color

CHALLENGE:
Under-Resourced Communities Contend With Ecosystem Gaps

Legacies of historic disinvestment have resulted in critical gaps in local ecosystems, across the key actors we identified within our "Best Practices" evaluation: community anchors, local government and technical assistance. Through our evaluation, we found that many communities lacked a robust ecosystem of organizations with issue-area or technical expertise. They may also lack institutional support from local government and academic institutions.

Gaps in the local ecosystem mean that communities must be creative when trying to find partners to fill those gaps. As a result, TCC sites struggled with application development and program implementation.

> "*Especially if you're talking about marginalization, they should expect that these communities don't have the infrastructure... They don't have the experience. That's the reason why there's marginalization.*"

— **Dillon Delvo**
Little Manila Rising

Ecosystem Gap: Community Anchor

- **Content Expertise:** TCC sites must develop strategies across a range of issues, including greenhouse gas mitigation, anti-displacement, workforce, climate adaptation and resilience, and community engagement. However, historic disinvestment in nonprofit capacity around these issue areas means that many disadvantaged communities do not necessarily hold the full spectrum of expertise necessary to competitively apply for and implement all aspects of TCC.

- **Administrative Capacity:** TCC Grantees must demonstrate sufficient fiscal, management and administrative capacity to manage and implement multi-million dollar infrastructure investments. Most nonprofits do not have the capacity or infrastructure to manage large government grants, nor are most nonprofits set up for grant or project management. Grant requirements thus implicitly privilege institutional partners over grassroots ones, and make it challenging to successfully apply for TCC without a lead local government partner. In fact, of the eight Implementation Grants which have been awarded as of this publication, only the Northeast San Fernando Valley project has a nonprofit organization as the lead Grantee.

> "*The level of detail and the level of time it takes to do this work and to apply, it's a big effort. And I don't think it would have happened unless a city or some other large agency decides to do that work. It's a tough process.... And if we really wanted to be born out of community, access is critical. And if the process itself is not one that a frontline community organization can do while also being an organization that does its day-to-day work, you do have to challenge the access.*"

— **Alexandria McBride**
City of Oakland

Ecosystem Gap: Local Government

- **Content Expertise:** Some local governments lack department capacity to tackle climate action and research. This reduced capacity stems from an absence of dedicated climate action resources and departmental expertise. TCC stakeholders in Stockton expressed that having a local government department dedicated to climate action would have streamlined the onerous process to identify climate risks and corresponding solutions.

- **Administrative Capacity:** Within our study, local governments had limited resources to dedicate to pursue and implement TCC grants. In two of our Case Studies, local governments leveraged administrative capacity through the FUSE Fellows and AmeriCorps VISTA programs, programs that place corps members with nonprofits or local governments. Although these programs can provide needed expertise and capacity, they are also limited term, one-year programs. Term limits compromise program capacity through turnover and the loss of institutional knowledge. In many cases, the need for an institutional partner prevents communities from applying for TCC at all. Applications are only possible in supportive local ecosystems, and many governments or public agencies may not be supportive of community-led efforts, may not prioritize climate change action, or may lack the capacity themselves to apply for grant funding.

Ecosystem Gap: Technical Assistance Provider

- **Content Expertise:** TCC Implementation Grants require communities to provide data and analysis on local conditions related to demographics and climate risks. Local academic institutions can provide technical capacity to help communities find and analyze the necessary data through previous research, such as existing studies that cover the TCC communities, and the production of new research to complete grant proposals. In California, large research institutions with the capacity to produce new research for TCC communities are not often located in under-resourced communities, which means that many of these communities are at a disadvantage when it comes to developing competitive applications.

- **Administrative Capacity:** TCC communities have leveraged technical assistance providers in numerous ways, from overall grant administration to support focused specifically on community engagement, proposal development or environmental planning. Each of the communities in our evaluation benefited enormously from technical assistance, but the overall availability and quality of technical assistance varies widely across communities.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

This creates a chicken and egg scenario; in order to successfully apply and implement large grants like TCC, communities must have the capacity to do so, but capacity is most often created through a history of previous investments. Our research focused on successful TCC applicants, many of which developed creative, albeit sometimes resource-intensive, solutions to address ecosystem gaps to secure TCC funding. Yet many under-resourced communities do not have the capacity to overcome these gaps, and may decide against pursuing TCC or other grants due to a lack of capacity.

Ecosystem Capacity Gaps: Stockton

South Stockton has long experienced environmental burdens from multiple freeways, heavy industry and the Port of Stockton. Interviewees shared that there has not been consistent and dedicated investment into a local environmental justice ecosystem until the TCC grant. Stockton overcame the gaps in its ecosystem by leveraging significant technical assistance and federal programs. However, these remain ad hoc band-aids over deep, systemic inequities. Communities like Stockton need much more support and resources than TCC alone can provide.

Community Anchor Capacity: While Stockton's community-based organizations have long been fighting for safer, healthier and more prosperous neighborhoods, Stockton did not historically have a robust ecosystem of environmental justice organizations.

Importantly, TCC's Planning Grant played a central role in increasing Stockton's capacity to advance environmental justice. Their Planning Grant process saw the birth of a new, 15-organization coalition called Rise Stockton, which focuses specifically on local environmental justice issues. Here, the funding provided through the Planning Grant served as the necessary catalyst for new organizational infrastructure that could address the nonprofit climate capacity gap.

> *It always just felt like we had such a huge deficiency because we didn't have the organizations. It baffles me that we could be this educational equity and historic preservation org, and in the course of one year we're now one of the leading EJ organizations in the city. It speaks to the scarcity of programs and initiatives and organizations… in our community."*
>
> *— **Dillon Delvo***
> *Little Manila Rising*

Local Government Capacity: While Stockton's TCC effort had a huge champion in Mayor Michael Tubbs, the City as a whole was still struggling to recover from its 2012 bankruptcy. Local officials were initially skeptical of devoting City resources to a grant opportunity that might or might not materialize. In a sign of the City's internal capacity struggles, the lead project manager for Stockton's TCC application was employed through AmeriCorps VISTA, a federal program administered through the Corporation for National & Community Service. Additionally, the City lacked a dedicated department for climate and environment-related issues, which presented challenges for assessing climate risks and advancing robust solutions at the city level.

" *We're a disadvantaged community. We don't have an Office of Sustainability that's regularly monitoring all the metrics associated with the climate and can tell me offhand what are the most significant climate risks facing our city. We don't have the resources to just track that all the time in the hopes that it leads to money down the line."*

— **Grant Kirkpatrick**
City of Stockton

Technical Capacity: Interviewees cited that the city does not have a University of California campus or local technical experts that can provide scientific expertise and skills. Without the technical capacity offered by these establishments, Stockton's TCC stakeholders faced additional challenges, particularly when identifying and quantifying local climate risks for their application. Because this type of scientific data was not readily available, South Stockton's TCC applicants resourcefully tapped a FUSE Fellow's previous relationship with Stanford to complete the climate resiliency and adaptation plan requirements.

CHALLENGE:
Lack of Sufficient Funding to Engage the Most Impacted Residents

Community engagement rarely receives the deep investment it requires and deserves. Within the context of the TCC program, much of community planning happens during the Planning Grant implementation (historically funded at $100K–$200K per grant year) and Implementation Grant application processes (an unfunded process). Once an Implementation Grant is awarded, communities may allocate up to 8% of their budget for activities associated with the Community Engagement Plan.

Interviewees that participated in both the Planning and Implementation Grant processes cited a lack of funding to sufficiently engage the most impacted residents in their communities, during both the application and implementation stages. Many residents are from working families with busy schedules, childcare constraints and transportation constraints. Community engagement that reduces barriers to participation is time, resource and labor-intensive.

" *One difficulty was allotting the actual amount of money to community engagement that was necessary... Instead of [East Oakland Collective] doing community engagement and communications and marketing, to have somebody dedicated and really paid to do that... More money to pay resident leaders would have been cool... And matter of fact, the TCC grant wouldn't even cover food. It wouldn't cover food, childcare...That's a big part of community engagement that's crucial."*

— Marquita Price
East Oakland Collective

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

Without adequately resourced community engagement processes, TCC and other programs like it will not be able to reach and engage the very people they are designed to reach. The meaningful and early involvement of residents, neighborhood councils, and community anchors such as houses of worship or educational institutions is necessary in order to create deep and broad stakeholder engagement and ensure that TCC is meeting core community needs.

Interviewees expressed that, at minimum, community engagement should be resourced to include at least one full time staff to manage the engagement process and additional staff to implement; website development and other marketing materials; stipends for resident participation; and food and childcare to support workshop attendance.

CHALLENGE:
Under-Resourced Communities Lack Shovel-Ready Projects

Many communities cited difficulty with TCC's requirements for shovel-ready plans, which are pre-developed projects that can start construction upon securing investment. TCC requires that 50% of the funding be allocated to shovel-ready projects upon grant application. The remaining projects may then take the first year of implementation in order to meet shovel-ready requirements.

Shovel-ready requirements are appealing for grant administrators because pre-approved projects can move more quickly to implementation. However, shovel-ready requirements privilege communities with the resources and capacity to pre-develop plans and projects without prior guaranteed funding. Shovel-ready requirements also prevent innovative, community-led projects from gaining the necessary support and resources to turn them into reality.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

Shovel-ready projects are not equity-ready. Due to the legacy of injustice, underinvestment and

disenfranchisement in our most marginalized communities, shovel-ready requirements are antithetical to equity. Communities with limited resources are simply not positioned with pre-existing portfolios of potential infrastructure projects.

Moreover, community-based stakeholders are the least likely to have developed project-ready project ideas. Shovel-ready projects are usually drafted by developers or local government, and are less likely to meaningfully incorporate the needs and priorities of community stakeholders. In our evaluation, projects that meet shovel-ready requirements tend to be those that haven't been vetted by community. Shovel-ready requirements can therefore preclude the most innovative, community-driven ideas.

❝ *The program is supposedly here for disadvantaged communities, but what they were asking for was basically a community that somehow had just a shelf full of ready-to-go plans that if only they were to have funding, they could suddenly do. And that's just not the position of any disadvantaged community that I know of. So the readiness requirements and all sorts of other requirements in the grant just really were significant deterrents to the City in terms of applying."*

— *Grant Kirkpatrick*
City of Stockton

CHALLENGE:
One Program Alone Can't Shift Systemic Inequities

TCC should be uplifted as a program that makes cross-cutting investments in our most under-resourced communities, in ways that are governed by those communities.

But TCC is only one program. TCC funds multiple and integrated neighborhood-level projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. TCC alone doesn't shift how local jurisdictions relate to community needs and priorities, can't control for larger forces of neighborhood change, and can only chip away at the root causes of systemic, generational inequities.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

TCC is One Project Within Wider Local Context: While grassroots and nonprofit stakeholders reported building increased familiarity with City staff through TCC, TCC is only one project. Some interviewees reported that TCC, on its own, was not enough to develop trust. Building genuine trust with local government and shifting bureaucratic institutions requires not just a day-to-day partnership, but also that those institutional entities commit to intentional equity work and repair.

" *The trust is still not there. And the reason why is not just because of how we are engaging with them in this project... It's because EOC is in multiple projects at one time... So just because one department or one project is meeting with the community every two weeks, it don't mean that everything is all good. There's still other departments that are doing wrong by the community...*

— **Marquita Price**
East Oakland Collective

Moreover, TCC is only one project within a jurisdiction's portfolio of policies and projects. While stake-holders may share decision-making and invest in community-led projects through TCC, TCC doesn't necessarily influence how other departments or staff engage with community members, or what kinds of development projects are greenlit by a local jurisdiction.

" *I don't really think power has changed in the City because we're dealing with a very small chunk of the City of Ontario. If you really look at the City of Ontario, it's still building warehouses left and right... all of that has not really been touched by this. I think in this small sort of enclave of Ontario, we have this really nice working collaborative relationship with the organizations doing the work of TCC and the City staff implementing the TCC grant. And that's great. But I wouldn't say it's translated on a global level to the entire City: planning, decision making, elections."*

— **Arthur Levine**
Huerta del Valle

TCC Alone Can't Address Systemic Inequities: TCC is a pioneering program focused on catalyzing community-led greenhouse gas reducing projects at the neighborhood scale. These goals are critical in order to mitigate climate change and create significant, tangible and immediate community benefits, but they are not intended nor sufficient to address underlying systemic inequities. TCC neighborhoods sit in communities burdened by an extractive, oppressive system of racial capitalism that has resulted in generational inequality, environmental racism, forced poverty and political disenfranchisement. TCC alone does not address the root causes of poverty, affordability and pollution, nor does TCC prevent continuing practices of disinvestment and industrial pollution outside of the TCC Project Area.

" *We're coming after years and years of community members living, decades of people living in a certain way... These are really valuable efforts. But I think it's hard. We have an uphill battle to try to get to the underlying issues that Pacoima is facing."*

— **Anonymous**

GRID Alternatives staff and trainees preparing for rooftop solar installation in the Northeast San Fernando Valley. Credit: GRID Alternatives

RECOMMENDATION FOR POLICYMAKERS & FUNDERS:
Invest in Large-Scale, Greenlined Community Investments

We must raise the bar on community transformation and invest in the change we want to see.

Funders and policymakers must support and resource our most under-resourced communities' capacity and pathways to implementation, to begin to address the systemic inequities that we have described above. Here we offer specific recommendations informed by our TCC research on how the field must support and resource community capacity and community-driven projects.

Fund Community Organizing, Capacity & Community-Led Solutions

This research has made abundantly clear that in order to make equity real, we have to support the community infrastructure needed to sustain long-term organizing efforts. To build community capacity, we have to invest in that capacity. We must support communities in getting ready for transformative change, and shift resource allocation from mainstream organizations to the grassroots.

This means funding at a scale that we have not yet seen. We must significantly fund community organizing, capacity, planning and leadership. This capacity building must then be paired with financial resources for the creative capital investments needed to transform our neighborhoods into thriving communities.

Achieving this vision will require marshalling both the public and private sectors to put resources behind this vision of community transformation. And it will require trusting our communities with capital, without requiring that they prove to us that they are worthy of the opportunity to thrive. Equity is not just a commitment – it is a practice. And it is time to put funding behind that practice.

> " *I think there's a movement amongst philanthropy today, as we're trying to decolonize, that there has to be trust and there just needs to be unrestricted funds. Because at the end of the day, we're still learning, we're still trying to build our own infrastructure and we're trying to do what's right for our community. But it constantly feels like there is no trust."*

— *Dillon Delvo*
Little Manila Rising

Cycle of Community Transformation

Cycle of Community Transformation. *We must support sustained community leadership and transformation from visioning to project development to implementation.*

- **Sustained Community Visioning, Planning & Partnerships:** Overall, we must shift funding to the grassroots and resource long-term organizing, base-building, community engagement and planning. Across the board, communities need funded time to establish shared visions, develop partnerships, build skills and identify specific priorities and strategies. This foundation-setting work is often a prerequisite to a community being able to pursue a specific policy, program or funding opportunity, and yet communities are currently asked to shoulder this work without specific resources attached.

  In our evaluation, the TCC communities that were most successful in building collaborative governance and securing early TCC resources were those that were built upon years of community organizing. The Northeast San Fernando Valley and Ontario TCC projects were able to capture early rounds of TCC funding precisely because both had built deep relationships and identified community priorities and solutions over a period of years.

  First, communities need to coalesce with aligned partners and build a shared space or container that can hold the deep planning work ahead. During this early phase of community visioning, communities may engage in activities such as developing overall vision (including relationship mapping and identifying community priorities) and assessing community needs and strengths (including localized equity analyses, asset mapping and power mapping).

With this foundation, communities then require funded time to identify, prioritize and develop strategies to address community-identified needs. Communities also require resources to engage in cross-sectoral engagement and better connect organizing efforts to policy or project opportunities. Throughout, communities are organizing residents, developing local leadership, strengthening partnerships and overall building up the capacity of the local ecosystem.

> " *There's a lot more legislative work and lawmaking and ordinance passing that needs to be done to facilitate organizations like ours doing the work that we're trying to do, because we know it's the right thing. And getting State support doing it."*

— *Arthur Levine*
Huerta del Valle

Moreover, we must resource this continued community planning between grant application cycles. Lasting community change simply won't be accomplished through one cycle of funding. Transformation takes time and builds off of shared visions, partnerships, trust and expertise built over years or even decades.

Sustained funding is also necessary for cases when communities are unsuccessful in achieving grant funding. In these cases, oftentimes the container for collaborative work immediately disappears. The momentum, staff time, shared purpose and convening simply ends. At the same time, residents' trust in community engagement and planning processes degrades when the planning work abruptly ceases and no improvements have been made to their neighborhoods. This creates an inefficient and wasteful stop-start dynamic, where communities come together for discrete grant proposals and then disband immediately in the absence of funding.

Instead, we must resource the community structures and continuity that our communities can depend on. To start, we recommend implementing SB 1072 (Leyva, 2018)[30] and permanently funding the Regional Climate Collaboratives program.[31] The Regional Climate Collaboratives program provides capacity building services to assist in developing the community-driven leadership, knowledge, skills, experience and resources to identify and access public funding for climate change mitigation and adaptation projects.

The philanthropic sector must also step in to support long-term community transformation. Philanthropy can provide the critical resources needed to develop community capacity, organizing and planning. Such resources, especially when offered as unrestricted or general operating funds for an organization or coalition, can support the long-term capacity building and planning needs of communities.

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30   *Regional climate collaboratives program: technical assistance, Cal. Public Resources Code § 71131(2018).* https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180SB1072

31   *Strategic Growth Council. Community Assistance for Climate Equity Program. Retrieved from* https://sgc.ca.gov/programs/cace/

- **Project Development & Pre-Development:** Once community vision, priority needs and strategies have been identified, significant work, staff time and technical skills are required to turn those strategies into a portfolio of projects.

  As we have explored, our most under-resourced communities are simply not prepared with a pathway of shovel-ready projects. Under-resourced communities, by definition, lack the staffing, infrastructure or technical expertise to turn community ideas into pre-approved projects that can begin construction immediately upon securing investment.

  Therefore, government programs and philanthropic institutions must also invest in the pre-development needs of our communities, supporting and connecting communities with technical assistance to translate community vision into project-ready portfolios ready for future investment. Pre-development funding includes funding that pays for the activities that need to occur before construction begins, such as economic feasibility studies, architectural and engineering work, and site/lease acquisition costs.[32]

- **Grant Application Processes:** We must resource application and proposal development processes. Grant application processes are not only unfunded, but they emerged in our research as the sites of the most meaningful and intensive community engagement.

  For TCC, the grant proposal phase could take up to a year to prepare, and asks applicants to detail a history of community engagement during proposal development. Interviewees described contributing significant pro bono labor during application development, involving months of engaging residents, meeting, collaborating, strategizing, grant writing and more.

  These are simply resources that not all communities have to contribute. Our most under-resourced communities are the least likely to be able to float significant periods of pro bono labor in the hopes of receiving eventual grant funding.

> **"** *If you want people to be strung along in this process, they don't know if they're gonna get this money or not, you want them to spend all this time and do all this engagement — there needs to be incentives along the way. It can't just be, 'Well, I hope all that pays off or it doesn't'... They need to know that there's some more tangible outcome to this, that's guaranteed, or else they can't really stake all their time and resources on that hope. The capacity piece is a huge gap that needs to be filled."*
>
> — *Grant Kirkpatrick*
> *City of Stockton*

Therefore, we must resource application development, especially for grants that are highly resource-intensive to prepare. Funding could be disbursed when applicants meet progressive benchmarks in their application, and would support the continued collaboration of the applicant partners. These application

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32   Carol, D. (2020). *The Case for an Infrastructure Predevelopment Fund. Milken Institute Review.* https://www.milkenreview.org/articles/the-case-for-an-infrastructure-predevelopment-fund

Pacoima Beautiful's Community Launch in March 2022. Credit: Andres Rivera

incentives would also mean that community partners will have still received some compensation for their efforts even when unsuccessful in securing a grant.

- **Programs for Community Transformation:** Finally, we must resource many additional programs for community transformation and capital investment.

  This evaluation has focused on TCC, but TCC is only one approach. We need so many more approaches to resource and support community-led transformation. Our communities have dreams and visions ranging from community land trusts to distributed clean energy and more. We need as many funding sources as there are ideas.

  We also need to scale the approach. Our neighborhoods have been shaped and carved out by exclusionary and racist public policies, policies that segregated African Americans and other communities of color into less desirable neighborhoods and then starved those neighborhoods of public dollars, services and resources.

  Countering decades of disinvestment and unjust systems requires that we make transformational investments in our most under-resourced communities, in ways that are governed by those communities. In Greenlining's *Greenlined Economy Guidebook,* we offer principles and standards for how to create more equitable community investments that can redress the lasting harms that have resulted from our system of racial capitalism. We offer the following six standards for equitable community investments:[33]

  1. **Emphasize Race-Conscious Solutions.** Race-conscious policies like redlining and urban renewal got us to this point, and race-neutral approaches can't fix the underlying inequities. Investment needs to target and prioritize the most impacted communities.

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33   Cooper, S. (2020). *Greenlined Economy Guidebook. The Greenlining Institute.* https://greenlining.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Greenlined-Economy-Guidebook-2020.pdf

2. **Prioritize Multi-Sector Approaches** Programs may be siloed, but problems are not. We need to prioritize approaches that address multiple issues and sectors at once.

3. **Deliver Intentional Benefits.** Benefits cannot trickle down to communities; they need to go directly to the people in the most impactful ways, while avoiding increasing or creating new burdens.

4. **Build Community Capacity.** Long-term disinvestment and discriminatory policies can erode a community's capacity for leadership, organizing or political capital. Acknowledging the ways that structural racism has impacted the capacity of communities of color to undertake community development projects is a key part of improving investments.

5. **Be Community-Driven at Every Stage.** Lifting up community-led ideas and sharing decision-making power is an important element of truly community-centered investment. Community members and organizations should be part of every phase of the project or policy, from goal-setting to analysis.

6. **Establish Paths Towards Wealth-Building.** We need community ownership of assets and opportunities to continue building wealth. In a Greenlined Economy, as many people as possible should be able to participate in wealth building, which will include a broader set of pathways beyond homeownership with lower barriers to entry.

RECOMMENDATION FOR POLICYMAKERS & FUNDERS:
Transform the Behaviors, Cultures, Institutions & Systems that Harm Communities of Color

In addition to moving resources to under-resourced communities, funders and policymakers must transform the behaviors, cultures, institutions and systems that harm communities of color. Policymaking in this country has been wielded to exploit and extract resources from vulnerable communities, and government actions at all levels have led to the disinvestment and segregation of our neighborhoods. Philanthropy, too, rests upon racial capitalism and the amassing of extraordinary wealth amist extreme income and wealth inequality.

Systems of power, including policymakers and funders, must therefore do the work to dismantle racism and the practices that contribute to harm and oppression. Institutional power needs to make the internal shifts necessary to prioritize racial equity, push for structural transformation and close racial disparities.

FUNDING STRUCTURES

Policy Solutions Must Address Funding Restrictions that Limit Community-Led Transformation

Communities may have ambitious visions on how to transform their neighborhoods, but funding restrictions limit the scope of such visions.

TCC Implementation Grants have not received consistent funding, and State grants in general impose restrictions on how funding is disbursed and can be used. Such restrictions severely hamper the ability of community-based and nonprofit organizations to deeply engage residents, partner on large infrastructure grants and transform their neighborhoods.

We must therefore pursue policy change to ensure that funding is available and accessible for communities that have been systematically marginalized, and to ensure that such funding supports rather than obstructs community-led transformations.

In this section, we highlight the following challenges and recommendations for addressing inequitable funding structures:

CHALLENGES

TCC Program Has Received Inconsistent Funding

Reimbursement-Based Grants Create Cash Flow Problems

State Restrictions on Funding Food & Childcare Discourage Community Engagement

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE GOVERNOR & LEGISLATURE

Secure Permanent Resources for the TCC Program

Authorize State Agencies to Permit Advance Payment

Authorize All State Agencies to Permit Community Engagement Expenditures

CHALLENGE:
TCC Program Has Received Inconsistent Funding

TCC is one of the most innovative and transformative programs tackling both poverty and pollution at the same time. Yet, the program has received inconsistent funding out of annual appropriations of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund:

- FY 2016-17: $140 million
- FY 2017-18: $10 million
- FY 2018-19: $40 million

- FY 2019-20: $51 million
- FY 2020-21: $0
- FY 2021-22: $115 million

This makes it extremely challenging to resource the program and long-term community-led transformation. To make up for this shortfall, SGC paused rolling out the program in its second year, and instead combined the appropriations from two fiscal years to fund Round 2 of TCC. In Round 3, SGC significantly reduced grant amounts in order to be able to fund all the grantees. Budget legislation passed as this report was being finalized in September 2021 opens the door for improvement in the funding situation if momentum is maintained.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

Our communities need transformative investments now. As of this publication, TCC has awarded Implementation Grants to eight communities across California. We are excited that eight communities have received TCC Implementation Grant funding thus far. However, the funding awards have been variable over time, making it more challenging to achieve the catalytic effect of large-scale investment. In Round 1, Fresno received the largest grant award of $66 million. By Round 3, the award amounts had been cut in more than half: East Oakland received the largest grant award of $28 million, and Stockton and Riverside both received partial awards of between $9-10 million each.

Moreover, we know that there are many other systematically under-resourced communities that need this funding as well. Communities that suffer from environmental pollution and injustices, coupled with economic marginalization, should have access to the opportunity provided by TCC to holistically vision, plan and implement community-led strategies for sustainable, economically vibrant communities.

> " *My own vision of TCC is that there would just be enough funding so that it wouldn't be so Hunger Games, with all these communities vying against each other that all need funding, that are all facing these health threats from climate change."*
>
> — *Dillon Delvo*
> *Little Manila Rising*

In particular, 18 communities have received TCC Planning Grants to bring communities together, build stakeholder support and envision more sustainable futures. Without sufficient funding available for the Implementation Grants, these Planning Grant communities run the risk of further eroding community trust in planning processes and getting stuck in the planning stage without funding and pathways for implementation.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE GOVERNOR & LEGISLATURE:
Secure Permanent Resources for the TCC Program

We recommend that the Governor and Legislature consistently resource and fund the Transformative Climate Communities program. We are encouraged to see that the program received $115 million for the 2021-22 fiscal year, with a commitment to $420 million over three years. This is a step in the right direction and a level of funding that, if sustained, can truly tap into the program's potential.

As we have explored, community transformation requires sustained and long-term investment. While we are excited to see a commitment to multi-year funding for TCC, there is no guarantee that this funding will in fact be allocated in future years. Therefore, we recommend that the Governor and Legislature secure a permanent source of funding for TCC, to be able to advance community-led solutions in environmental justice communities across California.

TCC delivers multiple emission-reducing strategies – like affordable solar-powered housing with access to clean public transit and active transportation – in a coordinated way that can transform communities into models of economic and environmental sustainability. The program fosters an integrative, collaborative approach to comprehensively address the needs of communities impacted by environmental pollution, and could be one of the State's most effective tools in supporting climate resilience in communities across California.

> *It would be so wonderful for environmental justice communities all over the state... We wish that everybody could get this funding and that it doesn't have to be such a small group of cities."*

*— **Esther Portillo***
Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice

CHALLENGE:
Reimbursement-Based Grants Create Cash Flow Problems

California State grants are disbursed on a reimbursement, rather than advance payment, method. Moreover, advance payment of State grants is considered to be a "gift of public funds," in that the State "receive[s] no benefit and the subsequent receipt of goods/services cannot be guaranteed." Such gift of public funds is prohibited by the California Constitution.[34] We have anecdotally heard that advance payment of funds may be seen as a risk of public dollars.

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34   *State of California Department of Finance. Fiscal Systems and Consulting Unit Frequently Asked Questions*
     https://www.dof.ca.gov/Accounting/FSCU/FSCU_FAQs/

The completed Bradley Green Alley in Pacoima. Credit: Trust for Public Land

Practically speaking, this means that after submitting highly detailed budgets, workplans and project plans, meeting rigorous readiness requirements and winning a competitive process, grantees of State funds are not immediately granted those funds to commence work. Instead, grantees must first complete deliverables using their own funding, and then submit for reimbursement.

For TCC, partners must front costs and complete deliverables, and then submit invoices on a bi-monthly basis. This process must go through several stages, as TCC partners and sub-grantees must submit invoices to the lead Grantee, who then submits to the SGC. In order to receive reimbursement, the same process is followed in reverse: reimbursement is distributed first to the lead Grantee, who then disburses to the remaining TCC partners. Because of this, multiple stakeholders reported that it could regularly take up to five months to get reimbursed for expenses.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

The reimbursement model of State grants presents significant cash flow challenges for community-based organizations and nonprofits. Most grassroots organizations simply do not have available extra resources to float several months of payroll and expenses, and even the larger nonprofit organizations we spoke with expressed frustrations with the reimbursement model. The reimbursement model means that non-profit organizations without significant reserves are the least likely to be able to sustain TCC, and it may disincentivize organizations from applying altogether.

State Grants Distributed on Reimbursement Basis

Ontario

Huerta del Valle, a grassroots nonprofit that operates several community gardens, is developing the Ontario Carbon Farm, a project to compost organic waste from landfills. At the time of our interviews, stakeholders reported that they hadn't yet been able to execute the project because they did not have the available cash to pay for required site permits. The permits were budgeted for within the TCC grant, but the reimbursement policy of State grants meant that Huerta del Valle had to first pay for the permits and then submit for reimbursement.

> " *These are not funds that are deposited in [our] account and that are readily available to us, but rather these are funds that are reimbursed later. And for us, being a small nonprofit organization that hasn't been around for long, this has been very challenging with regards to our ability to be able to meet the permit requirements. One permit alone costs $17,000, and our organization doesn't have that kind of money. And other things depend on that, like being able to build the well, the infrastructure, site logistics."*

— *Maria Alonso*
Huerta del Valle

Even more established nonprofits described frustrations with the reimbursement model. GRID Alternatives Inland Empire described that the reimbursement policy created challenges not only with cash flow, but, then also subsequently challenges to credit. Interviewees described needing to secure short-term bank loans to complete the TCC deliverables. Securing those loans is dependent on showing the banks that you have money coming in on a 90-day period. However, when reimbursement from the State from TCC regularly exceeded 90 days, GRID reported an inability to pay off those loans before interest accrued.

> " *The TCC program doesn't look as attractive to us from a financial-sustainability-of-an-organization standpoint. It just doesn't. That is the main impediment to wanting to be involved in these programs in the future."*

— *Jaime Alonso*
GRID Alternatives Inland Empire

East Oakland

The East Oakland collaborative reported struggling to maintain partnerships because of the reimbursement policy, through which organizations often had to wait months to receive compensation for completed work. During the Planning Grant period, the Planning Grant co-managers, the East Oakland Building Healthy Communities, had to step out of the collaborative due to cash flow challenges presented by delayed payment.

>" *We lost one partner, we mainly lost them because the money was coming too slow. Everybody didn't have the luxury of waiting months later after you already did work to get paid."*

— Marquita Price
East Oakland Collective

POLICY RECOMMENDATION:
Authorize State Agencies to Permit Advance Payments

We must pass legislation to authorize all State agencies to permit and distribute advance payments to both grantees and sub-grantees, in order to mitigate cash flow problems and ensure equitable access to State funding.

While many agencies are not permitted to disburse advance payments, there have been significant exceptions to this rule. Under the State Contracting Manual, advance payment is permitted "when specifically authorized by statute."[35] SB 854 (2018)[36] established Health and Safety Code (HSC) § 39603.1, which authorizes the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to provide advance payments.[37] CARB then issued a regulation permitting advance payment to grantees across its programs, provided that the grantees meet specific criteria.[38]

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35   *Department of General Services (2017). State Contracting Manual - Volume 1* https://www.dgs.ca.gov/OLS/Resources/Page-Content/Office-of-Legal-Services-Resources-List-Folder/State-Contracting

36   *Cal. SB 854 (2018)* https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180SB854

37   *"The state board may provide advance payments to grantees of a grant program or project." Cal. Health and Safety Code § 39603.1* https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=HSC&division=26.&title=&part=2.&chapter=3.&article=

38   *California Air Resources Board. Final Regulation Order.* https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/classic/regact/2019/advancepayment2019/fro.pdf

Recognizing that the prohibition on advance payment penalizes nonprofit and community-based entities, recent programs and policies have sought to include advance payment within their program structure. The California legislature has been supportive of these efforts:

- AB 1530 (Gonzalez Fletcher, 2017) allows for advance payment up to 25% of the total grant award for tree management programs in urban areas.[39]
- SB 1072 (Leyva, 2018) allows for advance payment in consultation with the Department of Finance.[40]

These are important efforts to permit advance pay on a case-by-case basis. However, these individual efforts on their own cannot solve a structural problem.

Therefore, we must pass legislation giving all State agencies the authority and discretion to make advance payments. The current reimbursement policy severely restricts the ability of nonprofit and community-based organizations to sustain their own financial viability under State grants. Advance payment would therefore ensure more equitable access to State funding and would support grant and program implementation.

" *Making sure folks have their resources is the first step in making sure they can come to the table and help to make decisions appropriately."*

*— **Alexandria McBride***
City of Oakland

In the absence of advance payment by the State, SGC strongly encourages local jurisdictions serving as TCC grantees to provide advance payment. The ability for local governments to offer advance pay is dependent on local financial capacity and typically requires City Council authorization of a specific amount of funds. Two of the Round 3 Grantees, East Oakland and Stockton, are thus able to offer advance payment to their partners.

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39 *"The director may authorize advance payments from a grant awarded to a nonprofit organization that is located in or providing service to disadvantaged or low-income communities. The advance shall not exceed 25 percent of the total grant award." Urban forestry, Cal. Public Resources Code § 4799.07, 4799.08, 4799.09, 4799.10, 4799.11, and 4799.12 (2017)* https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB1530

40 *"The council shall provide advance payments of grant awards, over a period of not more than three years, to recipients to initiate and implement the collaboratives in a timely manner. In consultation with the Department of Finance, the council shall adopt guidelines imposing additional requirements relating to the provision of advance payments and the use of the advance payments by the grant recipient to ensure that the moneys are used properly." Regional climate collaboratives program: technical assistance, Cal. Public Resources Code § 71131(2018).* https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180SB1072

CHALLENGE:
State Restrictions on Funding Food & Childcare Discourage Community Engagement

Across California State programs, important community engagement expenses, such as the provision of food and childcare during outreach or organizing activities, are prohibited. Individual agencies are responsible for issuing this guidance, and have likely crafted their guidance based on several key policies:

- Similar to advance payment, food and childcare services may be interpreted to be unconstitutional gifts of State funds.
- The Department of Finance has issued guidance prohibiting such gifts, in order to align with the Generally Accepted Account Principles.[41]
- Governor Brown issued a 2011 Executive Order prohibiting the use of taxpayer dollars on "swag" such as free giveaway and gift items.[42]
- Food and childcare may also be categorized as "indirect costs," which are not supported by many agencies.

We have anecdotally heard that these restrictions may exist because taxpayer dollars are intended to be publicly accessible and used to provide public services (such as sidewalks), and should not be utilized to serve individuals. Moreover, while we categorize the provision of food and childcare services as community engagement costs, they are likely treated as separate expenses with their own unique considerations by the State.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

This restriction on grant funding severely restricts meaningful community engagement and organizing. TCC requires community engagement and resident participation, yet project partners are not allowed to use grant funding to pay for food or childcare. Providing food and childcare at community engagement events is a best practice that increases access to events that are often scheduled on weeknights or weekends — times that people must prepare meals and care for their families. Residents are asked to take time out of their busy lives and share oftentimes traumatic personal experiences, and yet these basic resources are not covered by the TCC grant.

> " *How do you expect them to come to a meeting when they got a kid? But the funding, we can't use it for any of that. And so by default, what you do is bake in privilege, someone who either has childcare or the ability to afford it, or is eating at home, and they don't need to come in and get food here. So you bake in privilege when you leave out the basics to make it more accessible for parents and folks who might be hungry."*
>
> **— Anonymous**

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41   Governmental Accounting Standards Board. *https://www.gasb.org/home*

42   *Office of Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. (2011, February 18). Governor Brown Eliminates "S.W.A.G" [Press release]. https://www.ca.gov/archive/gov39/2011/02/18/news16911/index.html*

In this way, impacted residents, the very population whose needs TCC seeks to address, are thus discouraged from participating in activities related to TCC. In other cases, understanding how vital it is to support residents with stipends, food and childcare, community-based organizations will bear the community engagement costs out of their own pockets, further exacerbating capacity issues.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION:
Authorize All State Agencies to Permit Community Engagement Expenditures

We must work with the Department of Finance and implementing agencies to permit important community engagement expenditures, including providing food and childcare for residents to participate in outreach and organizing opportunities. We understand the need to safeguard taxpayer dollars, and argue that robust community engagement is critical to developing community-informed projects for public investment. Providing food and childcare during public meetings and outreach events is a publicly accessible activity that should be supported by State funding.

An exemption for this already exists. State-sponsored conferences are permitted to provide meals to conference attendees.[43] We should build upon this exemption to authorize agencies to exercise their own discretion over expenses essential for community engagement, such as food and childcare.

In the absence of public funding for community engagement activities, the philanthropic sector must marshall resources to cover gaps in community engagement resources.

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43   *Cal. Code of Regulations. § 599.635.1. https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Document/IB5C922605D9711E4A9828577DD5F1BF2?viewType=FullText&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=StatuteNavigator&contextData=%28sc.Default%29*

TCC PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS

Planning Grants Must Be Strengthened as the Foundation for Community Transformation

As we discussed in our "Best Practices" analysis, the Planning Grant is critical to providing communities with funded time to engage in planning, partnership development and community engagement activities. With more consistent guidance creating a clear pathway between Planning and Implementation Grants, the Planning Grant could realize its potential in setting communities up for long-term success.

In this section, we highlight the following challenges and recommendations to maximize equitable outcomes through TCC's Planning and Implementation Grants:

CHALLENGES

Lack of Planning Grant Collaborative Governance Requirements Can Inhibit Shared Decision-Making

Not All Planning Grants are Eligible for Implementation Grants

Planning Grantees Require Additional Guidance to Prepare Readiness for Implementation Grants

RECOMMENDATIONS TO SGC

Ask Planning Grant Applicants to Describe their Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships in Greater Detail

Expand Implementation Grant Eligibility to the Top 25%

Provide Increased Guidance to Prepare Planning Grantees for Implementation Grants

CHALLENGE:
Lack of Collaborative Governance Requirements Can Inhibit Shared Decision-Making

While Planning Grants require applicants to identify a Lead Applicant and at least one Co-Applicant, applicants are not required to develop a collaborative governance structure to identify specific roles, governance and decision-making processes. This is in contrast to the Implementation Grants, which require formal Collaborative Governance Structures.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

This is a missed opportunity to begin building a foundation of collaborative governance in the planning process. Planning Grants are intended to foster strong and diverse partnerships, and it is important that such partnerships, especially when working across power differentials with local government, are grounded by explicit structures of shared decision-making. Without agreed upon governance, partners may default to traditional top-down decision-making processes that privilege institutional entities over grassroots ones.

Weak Collaborative Governance: Eastern Coachella Valley

Existing power imbalances and a top-down process required consistent advocacy from the participating community-based organization and community leaders to ensure that the plan reflected community priorities. In addition, the absence of strong collaborative governance requirements within the Planning Grant meant that the partners were not required to devise as clear roles and responsibilities as did Implementation Grantees.

In the absence of defined roles and responsibilities, Eastern Coachella Valley's Planning Grant demonstrated a top-down process and power imbalances between the local government and community-based partners.

The Planning Grant was led by several local government entities, who partnered with the community-based organization Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability (LCJA) and a consulting firm. While LCJA led community engagement activities, they were not included in all decisions and had to advocate on an ongoing basis to ensure incorporation of community voices in the process and plan. Stakeholders expressed frustration that insufficient local and state resources hindered community outreach and engagement efforts, that the consulting firm responsible for creating the climate resilience plan didn't directly engage with residents, and that the action plan initially left out several key resident recommendations until intensive revisions ensured the inclusion of these recommendations.

> ❝ *It definitely brought different sectors together for this one effort... But there's different perspectives that organizations or agencies or elected officials have of community... Additionally, we led all these engagement efforts in the unincorporated areas, but the process would have benefited from increased engagement by the County and other stakeholders."*

— *Rebecca Zaragoza*
Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability

RECOMMENDATION TO SGC:
Ask Planning Grant Applicants to Describe Their Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships in Greater Detail

The Planning Grant application asks applicants to describe community need, consistency with local and regional plans, and how a Planning Grant would advance both State planning priorities as well as the applicant's ability to meet the TCC Transformative Requirements. In addition, we recommend that SGC ask applicants specifically about multi-stakeholder partnerships within the Planning Grant application.

The application should ask applicants to outline roles and responsibilities for all partners and stakeholders, including processes for involving community representatives and community-based organizations in decision-making. This would provide greater transparency around the applicant partnerships and help to ensure that such partnerships were rooted in community voice.

CHALLENGE:
Not All Planning Grants are Eligible for Implementation Grants

While Planning Grants are intended to help prepare communities for Implementation Grants, the eligibility requirements for the two grants are inconsistent. Planning Grants are available for communities that fall within the top 25% of CalEnviroScreen rankings, which meets the threshold for "disadvantaged

communities" as defined by the California Environmental Protection Agency.[44] By contrast, Implementation Grants go further than the commonly used "disadvantaged communities" designation to target funding to "communities in which more than half of the area overlaps with census tracts in the top 10% of the CES rankings, and the remaining 49% of the project area overlaps with census tracts in the top 25% of CES rankings."[45]

SGC explains that they have prioritized Implementation Grant funding to the top 10% of disadvantaged communities in part because the TCC program has received inconsistent funding year to year and they want to ensure the greatest impact with very limited dollars. With more consistent funding, we hope that the program could align eligibility between the Planning and Implementation Grants to the top 25% disadvantaged communities in California.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

Communities that have received Planning Grants may not be eligible for Implementation Grants, disrupting the pathway from planning to implementation. Interviewees expressed feeling frustrated by this inconsistency, and residents reported a continued pattern of planning fatigue and increased distrust of their local government partners for pursuing planning without implementation dollars.

In addition to inconsistency between Planning and Implementation Grant thresholds, a 10% restriction excludes communities that may not meet the 10% threshold yet still systematically face pressing environmental, economic and public health challenges. CalEnviroScreen 3.0, which identifies California communities most impacted by pollution, defines disadvantaged communities as the top 25% scoring areas.

Planning Grants Ineligible for Implementation Funding: Eastern Coachella Valley

Eastern Coachella Valley received a Planning Grant in round one, and engaged stakeholders in four unincorporated communities and the City of Coachella. The resulting "Eastern Coachella Valley Action Plan for Climate Resilience" creates a detailed roadmap to identify and prioritize projects that increase climate resilience, reduce greenhouse gases and provide equitable access to housing.

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44   Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. Draft CalEnviroScreen 4.0. https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/4af93cf9888a424481d2868391af2d82/page/home/?data_id=dataSource_2-1762adfe08c-layer-5%3A5169

45   Strategic Growth Council. (2019). Transformative Climate Communities Program: Round 3 Final Program Guidelines. https://sgc.ca.gov/programs/tcc/docs/20191104-TCC_Guidelines_Round_3_Final.pdf; https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen

> " *We have huge needs, particularly in Eastern Coachella Valley...*
> *And we felt that applying for a Planning Grant would set us up for*
> *implementation dollars... We were funded for a Planning Grant... and*
> *we're really proud of those plans. And yet we can't access the money.*
> *And that is a continued source of frustration."*

— *Erica Felci*
Coachella Valley Association of Governments

However, Eastern Coachella Valley's Project Area falls outside of the 10% of CalEnviroScreen rankings. This is reflective of a geographic equity challenge, as rural communities have lower population densities and less concentrated socioeconomic data. As a result, many rural communities don't appear within the top 10% of CalEnviroScreen. Following the planning effort, residents described a sense of planning fatigue and broken promises.

> " *The challenges come from the implementation, that hasn't really*
> *happened. People get hopeful and then that hope can be killed again by*
> *seeing that nothing happens and nothing comes from it... And now it's*
> *been a year and you haven't heard anything about it. So you think it's*
> *something that has died once again."*

— *Anonymous*

In response to SB 351 (Hurtado, 2019), SGC recently released an Investment Framework for Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities (DUC), which allows any DUC communities that have received TCC Planning Grants in previous rounds to be eligible for Implementation Grants.[46] This is a step in the right direction, and will allow communities like Eastern Coachella Valley to now be eligible for TCC Implementation funding.

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46   *Strategic Growth Council. (2021, June). Transformative Climate Communities Program (TCC) - Investment Framework for Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities (DUCs). https://sgc.ca.gov/meetings/council/2021/docs/ 20210629-TCC_DUC_Staff_Report_June_2021.pdf*

RECOMMENDATION TO SGC:
Expand Implementation Grant Eligibility to the Top 25%

All Planning Grants should be eligible to receive Implementation Grants, and Implementation Grant eligibility should be expanded to communities that fall within the top 25% of CalEnviroScreen rankings.

To achieve this, the TCC program must achieve consistent and sufficient funding overall. As we have previously recommended, we call on the Governor and Legislature to secure a permanent funding source for the TCC program.

CHALLENGE:
Planning Grantees Require Additional Guidance to Prepare Readiness for Implementation Grants

The Planning Grant offers a critical foundation for communities to begin preparing for capital investment, and interviewees reported using the Planning Grant to coalesce around a collective foundation of shared vision and partnerships. In Rounds 1 and 2 of the program, TCC Planning Grants were one-year terms. Now in its third round, SGC has extended the Planning Grant term from one to two years. We believe that this adjustment will have a positive impact, giving communities the necessary space, time, and resources to develop strong, community-led greenhouse gas mitigation projects. We also recommend that an extended grant term must be paired with commensurate funding.

However, moving from broad community priorities to preparing the demanding Implementation Grant application remains a significant leap — a leap that could be better supported with additional guidance throughout the Planning Grant process. Implementation Grants fund shovel-ready capital projects, and the application accordingly requires that applicants develop a portfolio of projects that meet detailed readiness requirements such as CEQA documentation, site control and permitting. As we have previously discussed, our most under-resourced communities are the least likely to have such ready-made portfolios of potential infrastructure projects and would benefit from additional support transitioning from a Planning Grant to being prepared to submit a strong application for the Implementation Grant.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

Even with the foundation of a one-year Planning Grant, grantees scrambled to prepare shovel-ready and community-informed Implementation Grant applications. Planning Grantees that went on to secure Implementation Grants shared that the Planning Grant did not adequately prepare them to develop a competitive Implementation Grant. They reported that they did not receive adequate information about Implementation Grant requirements as they were designing and implementing their Planning Grant efforts.

> " *I think the Planning Grant needs to be a far more guided process. It kind of blows my mind that something this complicated and this specific didn't come with a Planning Grant that was very specific as to what we should have been doing for an entire year... to better position us to pursue implementation funds... To me, the Planning Grant should be a very clear path to the implementation. You should be leaving your Planning Grant with essentially an application for implementation."*

— *Grant Kirkpatrick*
City of Stockton

RECOMMENDATION TO SGC:
Provide Increased Guidance to Prepare Planning Grantees for Implementation Grants

Planning Grants are intended to build readiness for communities to pursue future funding, including the TCC Implementation Grant as well as other aligned funding opportunities. This flexibility is a best practice, and allows communities to coalesce around their priorities, partnerships and planning in ways that make sense for their local contexts. We uplift the TCC Planning Grant as a great example of a funding opportunity dedicated solely to community-based planning.

For Planning Grantees who wish to pursue future TCC Implementation Grants, we recommend that SGC offer increased guidance and pre-development support on how grantees should be using the planning term to build readiness. In these cases, grantees should receive specific information about how they can meet readiness requirements and transform their community-led priorities into eligible project types and Transformative Element strategies. This would support an application process where residents and partners feel more prepared with adequate direction, time, staffing and resources to develop community-led plans that can subsequently translate into Implementation Grant projects.

Now that most Round 1 and 2 Planning Grants are closed out, SGC is conducting an internal analysis of the accomplishments and challenges associated with the Planning Grant. This analysis will inform both the structure of the Planning and Implementation Grants, as well as the kinds of technical assistance provided. We look forward to seeing the findings from this analysis.

Implementation Grant's Ambitious Scope is Both Its Promise and Challenge

As we discussed in our "Best Practices" evaluation, the Implementation Grant offers catalytic funding for interwoven, community-driven infrastructure projects to reduce greenhouse gases. Its ambitious scope is both its promise and its primary challenge. Our interviewees all reported that managing a collaborative project of this size has stretched their capacity. TCC is a huge lift, and asking our most under-resourced communities to meet intense project-readiness requirements all but guarantees capacity challenges.

To meet these capacity challenges, we offer recommendations to SGC on how they could provide increased guidance, resources, technical assistance and peer learning to support TCC communities. Implementation of these recommendations would require SGC to go beyond its role as only the grant administrator, to also serve as a true government partner supporting and incubating community-led transformation.

CHALLENGES

- Application is Extraordinarily Demanding, Complex & Confusing
- Leverage Match Requirement is Prohibitive
- Management & Reporting Requirements for Collaborative Projects is Huge Capacity Lift
- TCC Stakeholders Contributed Significant Uncompensated Time & Labor
- Bottom-Up Community Visions Constrained by Top-Down Grant Requirements
- Leverage Funding Requirement is Prohibitive

RECOMMENDATIONS TO SGC

- Expand Application Technical Assistance to Identify Creative Solutions
- Offer Increased Guidance on Expected Capacity & Staffing Needs
- Lower the Leverage Match Requirement
- Allow Funding Flexibility & Adaptive Management
- Provide Technical Assistance to Reduce Administrative Burden
- Conduct Internal Evaluation to Streamline Grant Administration
- Offer Robust Capacity Building to Support Transformation
- Facilitate Peer-to-Peer Learning Between TCC Communities

CHALLENGE:
Application is Extraordinarily Demanding, Complex & Confusing

The TCC application can be described as requiring a marathon's amount of work condensed into the timeline of a sprint. Applicants must submit detailed threshold requirements, workplans, budgets, narratives and supporting data for each project and Transformative Element, as well as overarching narratives describing the collective and integrated work.

The TCC communities understand that successful management of TCC is dependent on meeting rigorous eligibility requirements. Stakeholders were prepared to meet those requirements, but reported that deciphering the grant requirements and what was being asked of them was a huge day-to-day challenge. Trying to understand the many grant requirements added an additional layer of administrative burden to an already complex proposal process.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

As we have consistently underscored, our most under-resourced communities have the least amount of staffing or technical expertise. All of our interviewees, from small grassroots organizations to local government bodies, characterized the Implementation Grant application as a demanding and exhausting sprint to the finish. Stakeholders were excited to have ultimately achieved grant funding and were hopeful for the future, but reported feeling drained and frustrated by the complex application process.

Application Management: Stockton

Stockton community-based and local government stakeholders alike described the application process as highly demanding. Managing the application followed a tiered process:

- SGC provided the Grantee with application instructions and guidance, as well as blank narrative templates and workbooks.
- The City of Stockton, serving as the Grantee, delegated application materials to the partners.
- Partners drafted and completed application materials.
- Any questions along the way were referred to a third-party technical assistance provider.

Partners expressed that while this process appeared orderly on paper, in practice, application development felt confusing. Guidelines instructions were not always clear, and deciphering those instructions involved numerous rounds of back-and-forth between partners, the City, the technical assistance provider and SGC. This was a time-consuming process, and for partner organizations, also led to confusion over whether guidance was being mandated by SGC or shaped by the City.

> " *There's a lot of lack of clarity in reference to what is acceptable, what is not acceptable... The challenge is just being able to interpret what the Guidelines are in language that is then digestible for different partners. There would be fine text within the Guidelines that then we would question the City, 'What does that mean?' And then the City would then have to question SGC to find out what it means."*
>
> — *Anonymous*

RECOMMENDATION TO SGC:
Expand Application Technical Assistance to Identify Creative Solutions

SGC should offer comprehensive and tailored technical assistance that goes beyond identifying what is an eligible or ineligible grant activity, and that would instead offer problem solving and solutions thinking. SGC already offers application technical assistance, to support applicants in the development of their project scope, calculation of greenhouse gas emissions and developing a complete application.[47] We suggest that SGC build upon this approach and standardize it in two primary ways.

First, we recommend that SGC provide publicly accessible technical assistance guidance and documentation. This could include offering materials related to understanding data, working through the Transformative Elements, and clear guidance outlining ways that applicants might creatively meet the grant requirements. This support would be equally important during both the Planning Grant application, when communities are building the foundation for collective work together, and the Implementation Grant proposal, when applicants are submitting shovel-ready projects for applications.

Secondly, we recommend that SGC offer increased hands-on and tailored technical assistance to help applicants identify creative solutions to application challenges. SGC should support applicant communities on how small grassroots organizations may apply innovative approaches to meeting the grant requirements, pulling from lessons learned or successful strategies seen in other TCC communities. SGC should also leverage the expertise of other State agencies to offer specific subject matter guidance. This support would help applicants to identify creative workarounds that fit their local contexts and still meet the grant requirements.

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47   Strategic Growth Council. TCC Program Technical Assistance. https://sgc.ca.gov/programs/tcc/resources/technical_assistance.html

" *We're trying to implement projects that are going to make our entire state and our community healthier and better. We're doing the State's work for them. So they should help us a lot more. They're the ones who are ultimately responsible for strategically developing our state and addressing these climate issues, right? So we're out here saying we're on the ground, we're going to do it, but we need a lot more help."*

— Arthur Levine
Huerta del Valle

RECOMMENDATION TO SGC:
Offer Increased Guidance on Expected Capacity & Staffing Needs

Understanding that TCC is a complex, interlocking grant, we recommend that SGC provide more up-front details and information regarding the application and grant management requirements. Implementation of TCC is a huge undertaking, involving the implementation of projects and Transformative Elements, the coordination of multiple partners and the management of intensive administrative and reporting elements. Understanding that each community is different and will have varying levels of existing capacity and re-sources, we recommend that SGC offer a clearer minimum expectation of what the application and grant management processes will entail.

Our interviewees expressed general lack of clarity over what was expected of them at multiple points in the application or grant management process. As we have seen, stakeholders reported feeling confusion in the application process, stretching capacity to meet complex reporting requirements and being unpre-pared for the amount of uncompensated staff time TCC would require.

With all of our Case Study communities reporting similar feelings of confusion and frustration, SGC needs to more firmly guide applicants and grantees around what is expected of them at all points in application through grant management.

" *These funds have a lot of restrictions and there's a lot of work and detail that has to be provided in order to obtain those funds and reimbursement. So I think it's really making everybody aware of how much work is necessary on the back end. Not just the work of what you're committing to fulfill, but all the logistics behind it--all the documentation necessary, all the evidence that needs to be submitted... It's critical that everybody understands that it's more than just the implementation. There's also the logistics and the planning that requires a lot of attention and support from all parties."*

— Jasmine Silva
Community Partners

Moreover, SGC should specifically provide increased guidance or expectations around the capacity and staffing likely required from both the Grantee and other partners to manage an Implementation Grant. We have also seen that even after receiving a Planning or Implementation Grant, TCC stakeholders contributed significant pro bono labor to meet the many deliverables.

SGC should therefore provide direction on the amount of staffing and capacity that TCC will likely require. This would help applicant communities to identify where they might have gaps in existing staffing and whether they could surmount those gaps. It would also support applicants in having a more realistic and grounded understanding of the significant capacity required to staff an Implementation Grant.

> " *[SGC should] come to the table with a human capital and staffing plan. To say, 'Here's what you need to do successfully, based on other communities that have done this. If you want to do this but don't have a path to having the human capital that you need, here's some creative ways that you can think about how to build that staff capacity inside and outside of the city.'"*
>
> — *Ann Rogan*
> *City of Stockton*

CHALLENGE:
Leverage Funding Requirement is Prohibitive

The Implementation Grant requires that applicants must leverage additional funding sources that equal 50% of the total requested grant funds. Funds must be committed at the time of application, and can only be expended after the grant has been awarded.

The leverage funding requirement is intended to catalyze and secure additional investment in historically disinvested communities. While TCC offers a significant amount of funding, TCC's impact is multiplied when additional leverage funding is dedicated to the same concentrated project area. However, the leverage match requirement is a huge limitation that limits the overall eligibility of potential applicants.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

Our most under-resourced communities are the least likely to have multi-million dollars worth of capital investment potential lying around. In addition to being prohibitive for many potential applicants, the sizable leverage match means that sources of leverage funding are most likely to come from large-scale infrastructure or public agency investments rather than truly community-derived project types. Stakeholders from multiple communities reported that securing leverage match projects was challenging, and that it was even more challenging to identify sources of leverage funding that directly met resident-identified priorities.

" *There is a 50% leveraging requirement of the grant, which was in our case, $14.2 million. Obviously, none of our community partners were going to have projects where they could commit $14.2 million. I have no idea what disadvantaged community just has folks lying around with that kind of capital, who are willing to wait over a year to A) find out if we win and then B) wait a significant period to start work pending that grant funding coming in...*

Our Public Works Department was willing to leverage the money that they put up for that project to basically make us eligible for TCC. It still speaks to the community in terms of bike paths, a safer, more connected route to the school... I wouldn't say it's a very direct benefit to a lot of the residents, but it was something we needed in order to be eligible for grant funding."

— *Grant Kirkpatrick*
City of Stockton

According to SGC, while some applicants have indeed been unable to meet the leverage match requirements, other applicants have come back again in future funding rounds with stronger leverage funding commitments. In addition, SGC notes that the applicants who have been able to meet the leverage match requirement end up superseding the required amount significantly.

More analysis and research is needed to better understand the kinds of communities who are able and unable to meet the leverage match. We remain concerned that the requirement may continue to concentrate resources in those communities that already possess a certain degree of capacity, and that the leverage match requirement privileges large infrastructure projects that may be less likely to meet resident needs.

RECOMMENDATION TO SGC:
Lower the Leverage Match Requirement

SGC should lower the leverage match requirement, to allow more communities to be able to meet this threshold in ways that are responsive to community needs and visions. While we agree that some amount of leverage funding can help to amplify the investment and project benefits concentrated in a neighborhood area, we believe that greater flexibility is required. Overall, we would like to see SGC remove any unnecessary barriers to under-resourced communities being able to receive or be eligible for funding.

This could look like reducing the leverage match requirement to a lower percentage, or applying a sliding scale standard dependent on the operating budget of the lead applicant. Further analysis, including an analysis of past applicants who failed to meet the leverage requirement, as well as an analysis of the types of leverage projects submitted, is needed in order to determine the recommended threshold.

CHALLENGE: Management & Reporting Requirements for Collaborative Projects is Huge Capacity Lift

Once a community secures a TCC grant, they face further capacity strains. TCC is a complex program by design, and its implementation is similarly complex. SGC requires rigorous grant reporting, budgeting and tracking to ensure the integrity of public funds. All of our Case Study communities described that understanding the technical grant requirements and meeting the reporting requirements remained incredibly challenging.

Moreover, TCC implementation requires an unprecedented level of coordination and alignment. Partners must coordinate with each other across complementary projects and Transformative Elements, align community engagement strategies across the Project Area, and in many cases, work with multiple local government agencies with distinct internal processes. This required coordination adds another layer of complexity to an already complicated grant.

> " *There's so many layers of what we have to do. The indicator tracking, the jobs, getting the timing of the community engagement to work out… Because now there's so many more partners, that just even the timing of community engagement with design development has to happen within a certain amount of time. And you add the complexities of working on projects that involve multiple city agencies, it's really challenging."*
>
> *— Anonymous*

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

The TCC communities understand that a grant of this scale necessitates an enormous amount of work and coordination, but emphasized that they were still unprepared for just the amount of work, staffing and capacity required. All of our nonprofit interviewees, including even those who worked at large, statewide organizations with expertise in infrastructure project delivery, expressed that meeting the collaborative management, implementation and reporting requirements of TCC was more work than they had anticipated. This capacity strain was then felt even more strongly by partners at the grassroots level who haven't had the same level of project management experience. Stakeholders expressed needing additional staff, exceeding budgeted hours and overall stretching their capacity to its limits.

> " *These are young Black men, the prime people that everybody says they want to engage and get on the right path… But this project stuff is new to them. And we only have so much capacity to help them. They're the homies, but we don't get paid to — and the capacity is slim — to help them."*
>
> *— Marquita Price*
> *East Oakland Collective*

CHALLENGE:
TCC Stakeholders Contributed Significant Uncompensated Time & Labor

All of our TCC communities reported contributing significant uncompensated time and labor in order to build a robust, community-informed, collaborative and shovel-ready application for TCC. Both community-based and nonprofit stakeholders, as well as local government representatives, described lacking requisite capacity and needing to contribute uncompensated time. This pro bono labor occurred in several stages:

Pre-Proposal to Application: Community engagement and decision-making around shared vision occurs during many months of pre-proposal work. On top of that, preparing a collaborative application consisting of specific projects and strategies may take between several months to a year. This pre-proposal and application time is uncompensated.

> " *There was really not a whole lot of funding available to actually support all the community groups that needed to be involved in the actual application. So since October 2019, we've had no funding as it relates to TCC to cover the capacity needed to get to where we are today. So that's almost a year now. Everybody's been spending hours and hours and hours completely uncompensated. I would say that's a huge missing piece of it, and I think it speaks directly to equity."*
>
> — *Grant Kirkpatrick*
> *City of Stockton*

Post-Award Consultation: After being awarded an Implementation Grant, grantees enter into a "Post-Award Consultation" period to finalize the contract between the State and the Grantee. This period lasted a year for Round 1 and 2 grantees, and approximately six months for Round 3 grantees.

Grant Implementation: Once awarded a grant, many of our interviewees described needing to contribute more time than they budgeted for. While TCC funds both direct and indirect personnel time, the requirements of the grant remain so large that nearly all of our interviewees reported contributing pro bono labor. This extra labor may take the form of the frequent meetings needed to coordinate between partners, managing the implementation of the projects, community engagement activities and more.

> " *The cost to us to even be able to use grant funds was so heavy that we're just hemorrhaging money trying to keep the possibility of doing this alive. Let alone actually doing it. And that's not going to work. You know, the only types of organizations that are going to go after and access these funds... are going to be cities or very, very well funded groups that have a lot of capital to spare. And that's not the kind of groups that I think TCC aims to benefit, you know? So it's a huge miss."*
>
> — *Arthur Levine*
> *Huerta del Valle*

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

All together, this can represent *several years of uncompensated labor* to bring TCC to fruition. Our community-based interviewees expressed continued commitment to bringing tangible benefits to their communities, but remained frustrated over how much unpaid staff time it was costing their organizations.

Our public sector interviewees also expressed how difficult it could be to manage collaborative processes well when they were not sufficiently staffed to do so. Bringing local government to the table in service of a community vision and getting them to sustain large-scale, long-term collaboration requires funding their staff time appropriately.

CHALLENGE:
Bottom-Up Community Visions Constrained by Top-Down Grant Requirements

As with any program or policy, TCC constructs a container around what the program aims to achieve and the kinds of activities that are eligible for funding. Moreover, as a large-scale program containing many component parts, TCC requires that applicants meet exhaustive requirements around eligible projects and funded activities.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

While TCC in many ways asks for a bottom-up approach through its community engagement and collaborative governance requirements, meeting the extensive grant requirements at the same time forces a top-down process. Community engagement for TCC may start from a broad vision, but the pragmatism of pulling together an application forces that community engagement to be filtered into narrow eligible project types.

At the same time, the Grantee, which as we have previously discussed is often a local government body, can set the terms of engagement and what kinds of proposals get prioritized. TCC thus navigates a tension between incentivizing more bottom-up community engagement, that then needs to meet top-down conditions imposed by both the program structure and the lead Grantee.

> " *It did feel contrived, at times, that it was all top-down coming from the City. If the City didn't already approve the ideas that were gonna be discussed, they wouldn't be discussed in the first place. There were boxes and limitations on what was going to be open to discussion or ideas. And that was the one area where I feel like it wasn't genuine community engagement. It was kind of like you can choose a red apple or a green apple, but you can only choose apples...*

And again, that's also part of the TCC structure from the beginning, being that it's so prescribed and so structured, with SGC writing this massive book on what can and cannot be the funded project types."

— Arthur Levine
Huerta del Valle

RECOMMENDATION TO SGC:
Allow Funding Flexibility and Adaptive Management

SGC should anticipate and build in the need for adaptive management over funding and implementation.[48] TCC Grantees propose projects and their associated budgets sometimes years before implementation breaks ground. But as the COVID-19 pandemic, deep economic recession and escalating climate impacts have demonstrated, we are living in deeply uncertain and complex times.

" *A weakness is just the way grants are written now are always so black or white. There's no opportunity for wiggle room. And they're really restrictive."*

— Jasmine Silva
Community Partners

A more adaptive approach to budgeting and implementation would allow communities to respond appropriately to real world conditions, challenges and needs. In response to COVID-19, stakeholders reported that SGC did allow TCC communities to request project modifications. These changes did, however, have to go through a time-consuming approval process that delayed project implementation and how quickly TCC could deliver tangible improvements and benefits to communities. Understanding that changes in conditions are inevitable over a five-year grant term, SGC should proactively build in adaptive practices to support the changing needs of communities.

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48   *Adaptive management is a structured, iterative process of robust decision-making in the face of uncertainty. Adaptive management practices was originally applied to the management of natural resources, and has begun to be implemented in international development contexts. USAID. (2021). Discussion Note: Adaptive Management. https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/dn_adaptive_management_final2021.pdf*

RECOMMENDATION TO SGC:
Provide Additional Technical Assistance to Reduce Administrative Burden

SGC should offer increased trainings, guides, templates and technical assistance to support TCC communities with the administrative and reporting requirements of an Implementation Grant.

As we have discussed, the Implementation Grant requires rigorous grant reporting, budgeting and tracking. SGC does provide guidance around the project management requirements, and meets on a regular basis with the lead Grantee. However, interviewees identified that given the complexity of the grant, more frequent touchpoints with the whole project team throughout the grant term would be helpful. Some stakeholders expressed wishing to be able to communicate directly with SGC for guidance, rather than needing to relay their questions first to the Grantee. Others expressed the need for more resources or training refreshers throughout the grant term.

In particular, stakeholders expressed that additional resources related to project management and accounting expertise, staffing, tools and systems would be beneficial. A particular point of difficulty was understanding the budgeting and invoice process. Thus, templates, video guides and trainings (focused on tips, best practices and lessons learned) on how to complete the financial and administrative pieces of the grant would be particularly useful. This is especially critical during the start of the grant term, to ensure that all partners are completing reports and invoices correctly.

> " *It's really important that the organization has multiple opportunities to go through a training process or a refresher process. There's been so much time in between the actual announcement that we were going to be awarded this money, then the actual project planning and launch efforts, and then the actual start of the work."*
>
> — *Anonymous*

RECOMMENDATION TO SGC:
Conduct Internal Evaluation to Streamline Grant Administration

SGC should hire a third-party evaluator and conduct an internal evaluation of their own grant management processes and requirements in order to streamline overall grant administration. SGC reports that they have recently implemented a process to reassess and streamline the grant on a regular basis. We are glad to hear this, and look forward to seeing the program improvements that result from this.

TCC is a relatively new program, and SGC is developing in real time how to translate holistic community visions into manageable project types on the back end.

In our analysis, SGC could, however, do more to streamline and organize the grant comprehensively. We

recommend that SGC conduct an internal evaluation to better understand the complicated labyrinth of internal State requirements and government processes that impact TCC. An overall internal evaluation would help SGC to take a step back from day-to-day grant administration and assess how their internal administrative processes could be improved or streamlined to support the TCC communities.

" *I think someone needs to sit down and organize this grant program... The grant itself is really, really well done and is really progressive and innovative in many, many ways. But the way that it's being administered feels riddled with governmental process. That makes it complicated."*

— *Anonymous*

Such an evaluation would also help SGC distinguish which grant requirements are necessary or statutorily required, and which requirements are in fact just custom or accepted practice within agency or State funding practices more broadly.[49] SGC could then clearly articulate the requirements that are statutorily required and non-negotiable in the guidelines, and let go of those requirements that aren't necessary and that in fact impede equity. This would help to reduce the number of administrative specifications that applicants or grantees have to meet and increase overall accessibility of the grant to under-resourced communities.

RECOMMENDATION TO SGC:
Offer Robust Capacity Building to Support Transformation

In addition to the TCC-funded technical assistance provided to support grantees to meet requirements such as reporting and invoicing, we recommend that SGC invest in broader capacity building for the TCC communities. In this context, we define capacity building as resources and supports to strengthen the "systems, structures, cultures, skills, resources and power" needed to sustain collaborative governance.[50] The TCC communities would greatly benefit from increased support in building the additional capacity needed to achieve collaborative governance and sustain momentum after the TCC grant term ends.

For next year's process evaluation, UCLA Luskin plans to learn from grantees about how they define community capacity building, as well as the areas where they could use the most capacity building assistance. SGC should build upon this evaluation to incorporate capacity building robustly into program management and implementation.

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49 The Management Center. "That's how we've always done it!" (A guide to using PTR). https://www.managementcenter.org/article/thats-how-weve-always-done-it-a-guide-to-using-ptr/

50 Nishimura, A., Sampath, R., Le, V., Mahar Sheikh, 1., & Valenzuela, A. (2020). Transformational Capacity Building. Stanford Social Innovation Review. https://rvcseattle.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Fall2020-Feature-Nishimura-Capacity-Building_1.pdf

RECOMMENDATION TO SGC:
Facilitate Peer-to-Peer Learning Between TCC Communities

SGC should facilitate increased network collaboration and peer-to-peer learning between TCC communities. SGC did conduct cohort site visits and peer learning sessions in 2019 with the Round 1 Grantees. We recommend that SGC build upon this foundation to facilitate greater peer-to-peer learning, between both grantee communities as well as prospective applicants.

TCC asks communities to implement multiple infrastructure investments and holistic strategies, grounded by deep community engagement and a shared collaborative governance structure. To date, the TCC communities have developed approaches, frameworks and strategies on their own, confronting similar kinds of challenges ranging from the specifics of project management tools to big picture questions around collaborative governance models. While our interviewees reported researching whatever publicly available documentation they could find from the other TCC communities during the application phase, they lamented not being able to talk directly with the other TCC grantees.

Instead of operating in relative isolation, SGC should facilitate peer-to-peer learning between TCC communities. Building intentional spaces for knowledge exchange between past and current applicants and grantees would help to create a community of peers to learn from each other, share models and best practices, and tackle common challenges in real time. This would assist applicants when they are developing their overall proposal and approach, and continued peer-to-peer connection would allow grantees to support each other during implementation.

This peer-to-peer learning could occur at multiple scales, connecting both the community-based or non-profit stakeholders across TCC communities with each other, as well as facilitating connections between the local government partners across geographies.

Overall, we believe that a more coordinated field of practice could accelerate community transformation in ways that communities working just on their own cannot. Through peer learning and leveraging local strengths, communities could deepen their collective understanding of common obstacles and opportunities to advance community-led visions.

> **"** *There are other cities that have done TCC, and it seems kind of ad hoc how we have to reach out and get that information, versus having SGC create a more intentional space for knowledge exchange… Demystifying or making the former grants and lessons learned more accessible to help the future applicants or grantees."*

> — ***Alexandria McBride***
> *City of Oakland*

Collaborative Governance is Challenging, and Additional Guidance Is Needed

Operationalizing collaborative governance sits at the heart of TCC. The Collaborative Stakeholder Structure serves as the backbone for collective work, grounding TCC in multi-stakeholder collaborations, shared decision-making and community-led priorities. The CSS also represents a new form of governance for many communities, especially those who come from fragmented ecosystems or with histories of distrust of local government. Operationalizing collaborative governance is therefore also enormously challenging, and communities must find new ways to work together in pursuit of a common vision.

We therefore offer recommendations to SGC on how they can provide increased guidance, models and best practices to support and strengthen collaborative governance.

In this section, we highlight the following challenges and recommendations to support community-led planning and multi-stakeholder governance:

CHALLENGES

Partnering with Local Government Can Be Challenging

Collaborative Governance Moves at the Speed of Trust

Evaluation Lacks an Assessment of Procedural Equity

RECOMMENDATIONS TO SGC

Offer Models & Best Practices for Collaborative Stakeholder Structures

Support Local Government Partners to Operationalize Equity

Evaluate Procedural Equity

CHALLENGE:
Partnering with Local Government Can Be Challenging

Local and regional government are key parts of the local ecosystem and in any collaborative effort. As previously discussed, local governments are often explicitly or implicitly the required lead applicant on many grant applications.

However, government has also been the perpetrator of local inequities, particularly against people of color, low-income communities, indigenous peoples, tribal nations and immigrant communities. Therefore, navigating relationships with local government, whether as a lead applicant or partner, in service of a community-led vision remains challenging.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

Applications Led by Local Government: In cases where local government serves as the Grantee, government has the authority to set the table on their own terms. Government may engage residents or partner with community-based organizations, but it is less likely that government entities will partner with stakeholders who fundamentally challenge the status quo. Local government may also not be aligned on a vision grounded by equity or deep community engagement, and the governance model will likely be more hierarchical.

> " *When a city or a public health department or a county or a large system takes the lead in any collaborative structure, there is going to be more hierarchy. And the governance structure is going to reflect the model of the lead."*

> — *Evette De Luca*
> *The Social Impact Artists*

Local government serves as the Grantee in four out of five of the communities in our evaluation. In each case, partners worked together to align towards a common vision and successfully achieve resources for their collective work. At the same time, stakeholders also reported having to navigate historical and present-day distrust, conflict over vision and values, and community engagement and planning processes that were more top-down than bottom-up. These tensions are almost always universally present when different stakeholders, especially those who hold differing levels of institutional power, come together around a shared goal.

Applications Led By Local Government

Ontario

The City of Ontario serves as the Grantee, and the City also anchors the existing Healthy Ontario Initiative (HOI), a collective impact effort focused around resident-led action planning. HOI has been a strategic and effective venue for community engagement, but remains a City-convened table. The same is true for Ontario's TCC application, which is built upon significant collaboration and partnership, but is ultimately led by the City.

> " *Ontario was City [driven] all the way, but with this track record of engaging [community]. It's this top-down kind of engagement, 'The City wants to work on this, let's gather residents to work on this with us.' Rather than, 'The residents want to see this change. Let's put pressure on the City to do this with us.' So this is a different approach."*
>
> — ***Arthur Levine***
> *Huerta del Valle*

Eastern Coachella Valley

The Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) served as the Grantee for the Planning Grant, and the planning effort was a County-led process. While CVAG contracted with a community-based organization for community engagement activities, in our analysis, that organization should have been given a greater leadership role in the project. The local and state resources dedicated to community engagement were inadequate, and the primary output of the Planning Grant, an Action Plan for the region, was not initially representative of community priorities prior to a comprehensive and intensive revision process.

> " *The concept of bringing these agencies together, especially here in our region, for something that was focused on the Eastern Coachella Valley was really cool. And a really great opportunity... But it was still somewhat of a difficult process... The process would have been stronger if the consulting firm who was creating the plan were more present in the community."*
>
> — ***Rebecca Zaragoza***
> *Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability*

East Oakland

The City of Oakland serves as the Grantee for both the Planning and Implementation Grants. While key City decision-makers were supportive of a community-led vision, the process was constricted by bureaucracy from both City and TCC grant requirements. In terms of line staff, interviewees indicated that the City of Oakland's primary Planning Grant project manager provided administrative support but did not proactively work to address community needs. Furthermore, the City had ultimate authority over the content and tone of East Oakland's Planning Grant document.

> *There's the automatic power issue that has to be dealt with coming as a city agency to the table... and being in charge of paying invoices and making sure people are getting paid on time. That dynamic was one that we had to constantly check and ensure that community members had a level opportunity in providing feedback. I know from the City side, though, there was also just contractual requirements that made certain decisions hard to work through."*

> — *Alexandria McBride*
> *City of Oakland*

Stockton

The City of Stockton serves as the Grantee for both the Planning and Implementation Grants. While the City was involved in both processes, the period leading up to and during the Planning Grant was more collaborative and community-driven. During this period, the community-based partners engaged residents to better understand their priorities for a healthier environment. During the Implementation Grant application, however, the focus shifted from community engagement to project selection. The City necessarily had to take on a larger role, and priority projects were filtered through multiple lenses of community input, City priorities, feasibility and grant eligibility.

> *The more raw grassroots organizing that we were doing under Greenlining the Hood... was a lot more robust to me. It seems to me like a lot of people show up when there's money on the table...Then all of a sudden people care about Stockton. But the reality is that there was no money on the table with Greenlining the Hood... I think there's a lot more professional organizing when it comes to TCC--we're looking at fulfilling the grant requirements. So that's just different."*

> — *Anonymous*

Applications in Partnership With Local Government: Even in cases where local government did not serve as the Grantee, partnership with local public agencies is required. Planning and implementation requires the co-ordination or compliance with existing general or local plans, and many infrastructure projects must be led by a local agency. In such cases, these projects then inevitably run into familiar challenges of needing to navigate complex bureaucracies, adhere to government timelines and engage with staff who may not hold participatory values.

Application in Partnership With Local Government: Northeast San Fernando Valley

The Green Together collaborative is the only Implementation Grant awarded thus far with a nonprofit, rather than a local government entity, serving as the Grantee. At the same time, however, Green Together does have to partner with City agencies to implement several key transportation projects.

Without the City as the lead, it falls to the nonprofit stakeholders to try to coordinate four separate public agencies from the outside. Stakeholders expressed frustration over having to wade into complicated and entrenched bureaucracies in order to deliver streetscape improve-ments for their community.

" *The strengths are that this is being done by community-based organizations and nonprofits leading the charge. That's a strength and I think it's something we all obviously want to see succeed.*

But the weaknesses are exactly that. It's the same side of one coin, right? Because the lead is a nonprofit, it's harder for us to move our City partners at the speed and with the sort of interest that we need them to have... We do need to call on the Mayor's Office for help."

— Anonymous

CHALLENGE:
Collaborative Governance Moves at the Speed of Trust

As we discussed in our "Best Practices" evaluation, the collaborative governance required by TCC is a model for strengthening community-led decision-making. The Collaborative Stakeholder Structures required in the Implementation Grant charges applicants to devise a multi-stakeholder governance structure, including community-based organizations and residents, to manage the implementation of TCC.

Operationalizing collaborative governance sits at the heart of TCC. Operationalizing collaborative governance, especially in our most under-resourced communities, is also time and resource intensive. The communities included in our evaluation described challenges in building new working relationships with their local government partners, working through conflict, feeling stretched for capacity and navigating staff turnover.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

Collaborative Governance Most Challenging with Local Governments: TCC asks for collaborative governance, but this can be hardest to pursue in under-resourced communities where partners have not worked closely together. Stakeholders in some of our TCC communities reported variations on "building the plane while flying it" — needing to develop formal CSS in real time while also developing projects, Transformative Elements and the overall coordination of interwoven elements.

> " *The biggest challenge is that we just didn't really have anything to work from... The City did not have a tendency to collaborate... And the State... did not have great examples of how this should be done. So we were really building from scratch."*
>
> — *Jasmine Leek*
> *Third City Coalition*

As we have examined, many local governments are also not accustomed to participatory governance models. Community-based and City stakeholders alike expressed frustration over the amount of energy expended on bringing local governments more in line with a model based on shared decision-making and authority.

❝ *There was this tension between what the City needed for its own peace of mind and what this process required of us. For example, the City feels very strongly that it needed to retain final decision-making authority because at the end of the day, if you look at the grant agreement, we're the ones that are liable if something goes wrong... At the same time, obviously, if we're trying to move towards a more equitable group and we're trying to make decisions from a more shared powers perspective, that's not a very ideal way of looking at it."*

— *Grant Kirkpatrick*
City of Stockton

Mediating Conflict Requires Resources: Collaborative governance isn't just about shared decision-making when everything is going smoothly. Collaborative governance comes into play in situations where there is disagreement or conflict. In these cases, it can be challenging to build robust collaborative governance when there is no funding attached to stand up that structure. Operationalizing collaborative governance requires human capital and resources to engage in conflict mediation or restorative justice processes, and to move forward the collective work to align on decision-making and overcome histories of distrust.

Conflict Mediation within the Collaborative Stakeholder Structure

East Oakland

East Oakland's community partners reported that the City staff leading the TCC Planning Grant process often created inequitable conditions by not proactively offering information, support or resources. Community organizations struggled in their work with this staff member, spending uncompensated time to provide equity training. They shared that, on top of this labor, they themselves had to seek out conflict mediators within the community to help repair the situation.

❝ *We had to do a lot of teaching and equity training that we were not paid for... I feel like both sides — the City and us — needed more resources to achieve true equity. When we were having issues, we would spend our extra time trying to find elders in the community to mediate conversations."*

— *Marquita Price*
East Oakland Collective, East Oakland

Stockton

Stockton Rising built a new model of shared governance between nonprofit partners and the City of Stockton. Given that partners did not have a deep history of working together, partners anticipated that situations of tension or conflict might occur over the course of multiple years of implementation. Partners hoped to include anti-racism trainings and conflict mediation within the CSS, in order to better align partners on a shared set of values and give teeth to collaborative governance in times of disagreement. However, given the many other needs of grant funding, there were not enough resources to allocate to conflict mediation and anti-racism trainings that would have helped operationalize and support collaborative governance.

> *One of the things that we're running up against is that there's conflict mediation and conflict resolution process[es] listed in the Collaborative Stakeholder Structure, but it's not funded. And so we're having to deal with questions like... 'Will the City accept an unfunded mandate in the Collaborative Stakeholder Structure if there's no funding attached to it?'"*
>
> — *Ann Rogan*
> *City of Stockton*

Collaboration Stretches Capacity: On average, our TCC Implementation Grant communities have between 10-17 partners as part of their CSS. Each partner is responsible for their own deliverables, but collectively, the partners together are responsible for the successful and community-driven implementation of TCC.

Building alignment among so many partners requires many meetings and lots of coordination. Stakeholders described feeling stretched to balance their TCC responsibilities with their many other pre-existing responsibilities.

> *It's labor, right? It's co-laboring. And so that requires a consistent kind of follow through and showing up in spaces. And so the challenge is continuing to have the time... Our most appreciable resource that we don't get back is our time. And so it is very challenging because it's been a lot of meetings."*
>
> — *Anonymous*

Staff Turnover Complicates Collaboration: The long grant period for TCC (five years for the majority of TCC cities) is a huge benefit to delivering deep and wide-ranging benefits for communities. At the same time, all of our TCC communities reported staff turnover between the application, planning and implementation processes. Effective collaborative governance is built not only on the formal structure devised in the CSS, but also on the relationships, familiarity and trust that partners hold with each other. With every staff transition, stakeholders described needing to re-build buy-in, relationships and historical memory.

> *Navigating transitions has been difficult... It's a well-intentioned requirement, but because it's taken so long to actually start implementing the project, there's been a lot of changes in project leads. And I think that changes the dynamic of the implementation phase and the usefulness of this required structure."*

> — *Silvia González*
> *UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge*

RECOMMENDATION TO SGC:
Offer Models & Best Practices for Collaborative Stakeholder Structures

The Collaborative Stakeholder Structure represents an important new approach to managing large infrastructure projects. As we explored in our "Best Practices" evaluation, the CSS supports increased community decision-making over the projects happening in their neighborhoods.

To support communities in building robust local governance and overcoming the challenges inherent in operationalizing shared decision-making, SGC should provide guidance and emerging models and best practices for the CSS. The CSS offers a promising approach that, tied to higher best practice standards, could be replicated and scaled for a new model of greenlined community investments.

These models should include compiling documentation of TCC communities' CSS (roles and responsibilities, governance, meeting structure etc.) and making those models easily available to current applicants. This should also include identifying and analyzing common best practices, ingredients for success, anticipated decision-points, conflict mediation strategies and more.

When coupled with our recommendation to facilitate peer-to-peer learning, TCC communities would be better prepared with both 1:1 connections with other grantees and examples of collaborative governance models. Communities would then be able to learn from other communities undergoing similar local processes, map out key collaborative governance decision points, build off of existing best practices and implement creative solutions being workshopped in other communities.

Moreover, TCC communities are in fact pioneering new and innovative approaches to collaborative governance. Cataloguing these best practices in an accessible manner would be a huge asset to any community engaging in multi-stakeholder partnerships.

RECOMMENDATION TO SGC:
Support Local Government Partners to Operationalize Equity

To better support local government partners to operationalize equity and collaborative governance, SGC should provide tailored assistance for the local government partners.

First, upon grant award, SGC should fund and require that the government partners on the TCC grant undergo mandatory trainings centered on racial equity and collaborative governance. As we have explored, our TCC communities entered into collaborative relationships with different pre-existing levels of shared work, trust and understandings of racial equity. Many of our stakeholder interviewees reported wanting to conduct equity trainings, especially for their local government partners, but not having the extra funding to do so.

As a model, SGC has taken the lead on advancing racial equity within State government. Over 30 State agencies, led by SGC and the Public Health Institute, are engaging in the Capitol Collaborative on Race & Equity (CCORE), a racial equity capacity-building program for California State employees.[51] In 2020, SGC also approved a landmark Racial Equity Resolution.[52]

We should require the same kinds of commitments from the local government stakeholders engaged in TCC. SGC should support local and regional government partners to embed racial equity within their own institutional cultures, policies and practices. Racial equity trainings would be a starting place to support TCC stakeholders in developing a shared vision of confronting racism and injustice.

In addition, SGC should also provide funding and support for conflict mediation. As previously explored, multiple stakeholders highlighted the need for conflict mediation or external facilitation. Without specific resources devoted to conflict mediation, however, communities are left to struggle on their own in times when collaborative governance is tested.

CHALLENGE:
Evaluation Lacks an Assessment of Procedural Equity

TCC is pioneering not only in delivering catalytic and multi-benefit investments, but also in changing how stakeholders engage with each other, make decisions and share power. However, TCC's evaluation measures only the outcomes of the former.

TCC's formal program evaluation assesses what we call distributive equity (the fair distribution of benefits

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51 *Strategic Growth Council. Governing for Racial Equity: California's Capitol Collaborative on Race & Equity. https://sgc.ca.gov/ programs/hiap/racial-equity/. This work builds upon the 2018-2019 Government Alliance for Race and Equity Capitol Cohort pilot initiatives. Government Alliance on Race & Equity. https://www.racialequityalliance.org/*

52 *Strategic Growth Council. (2020, August). California Strategic Growth Council's Racial Equity Resolution. https://sgc.ca.gov/ news/2020/docs/20200826-Racial_Equity_Resolution.pdf*

and burdens, prioritizing benefits to those communities with highest need).[53] These are important out-comes to track, and are consistent with common State government evaluation practices that focus on calculating quantifiable program and project outcomes.

The program's evaluation framework, however, does not substantively include a rigorous and ongoing analysis of the CSS, or what we call procedural equity (inclusive and accessible engagement and repre-sentation, including the ability to participate in all stages of decision-making).[54] While the program does require that grantees adhere to the CSS' structure and processes as identified in the grant agreement, such requirements primarily measure fidelity to design, rather than providing a qualitative evaluation of procedural equity.

EQUITY IMPLICATIONS

As the adage goes, we cannot manage what we cannot measure. Without an ongoing evaluation of the CSS, we are left with a hazy understanding of how well the CSS may or may not be functioning. It is also unclear how accountability is assessed for the CSS. Projects, for example, must meet tangible deliverables and achieve benchmarks in order to show progress for TCC. By contrast, it is unclear how the ongoing exercise of collaborative governance will be held to milestone benchmarks.

Moreover, the omission of procedural equity from the evaluation framework also points to the lack of high-road standards for collaborative governance. SGC pioneered a new approach for State grants by requiring CSS, and applicants must develop comprehensive governance structures in order to be eligible for grants. However, once the grant moves into implementation, those structures aren't held to ongoing standards of collaborative governance delivery.

RECOMMENDATION TO SGC:
Evaluate Procedural Equity

SGC should evaluate procedural equity and the ongoing functioning of the Collaborative Stakeholder Structures (CSS).

The CSS is the backbone for collective work, grounding TCC in multi-stakeholder collaborations and com-munity-led priorities. As we have previously examined, the CSS also represents a new form of governance for many communities, especially those with histories of distrust of local government.

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53   University of California Los Angeles Luskin Center for Innovation. (2018). Transformative Climate Communities Evaluation Plan: A Road Map for Assessing Progress and Results of the Round 1 Place-based Initiatives. https://innovation.luskin.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Transformative_Climate_Communities_Evaluation_Plan.pdf

54   Bell, D., & Carrick, J. (2017). Procedural environmental justice. R. Holifield, J. Chakraborty &G. Walker.(Eds.), The Routledge Handbook of Environmental Justice, Abingdon: Routledge.

A rigorous assessment of the functioning of the CSS is therefore critical to understanding how communities are working together to deliver multiple benefits. Such an analysis could support TCC communities to improve their collaborative governance practices in real time, and course correct in cases of roadblocks or conflict. A procedural equity evaluation could also begin to uplift common ingredients, best practices or models that could be replicated by other communities seeking to make community-led investments.

We anticipate that such a procedural equity evaluation would be largely qualitative in nature, and would require that evaluation practices be even more deeply embedded within the functioning of the CSS. An evaluation focused specifically on the CSS could look at existing social conditions, successes and challenges of the CSS, fidelity to program design and recommendations for improvement. Such an evaluation would examine the relative strength or weakness of TCC partnerships, document promising models as well as common pitfalls for collaborative governance and more. Additional research and analysis is required to develop high-road standards for collaborative governance, metrics of success and appropriate evaluation methods.

CONCLUSION

Decades of underinvestment and unjust systems have left low-income communities of color with high levels of poverty and pollution, outdated and weak critical infrastructure, and limited access to public services. Against widening inequality and worsening climate impacts, our communities cannot afford to wait to live in healthy, prosperous, resilient neighborhoods.

To advance equitable processes and outcomes, we must invest in community-led transformation from two complementary scales: we must change the structural conditions from the top-down so that our communities can thrive, and we must support communities from the bottom-up to build their capacity to achieve self-determination. Our vision is of a world where all communities have ownership and autonomy over the decisions that shape their lives and neighborhoods. Fundamentally, we seek a realignment and transformation of community power.

TCC is a groundbreaking model for community-led, neighborhood-based transformation. It points the way forward for not only California-based climate programs, but other programs across the country that are just beginning to take shape now in response to the climate crisis. In this way, TCC can have outsized impact on climate and economic solutions if we can collectively leverage the insights and learnings that communities have pioneered from the program.

California's Governor and Legislature have an opportunity to build on the investment the State has made and improve TCC, so that it can become an even stronger model for community transformation and addressing legacies of discrimination and neglect against disinvested, low-income communities of color. We call on policymakers to take on this charge, and look forward to working with communities, funders and other stakeholders to uplift the lessons learned, best practices and recommendations from the Transformative Climate Communities program in order to drive community-led transformations at every scale.

Community bike rides with the Original Scraper Bike team in Oakland. Credit: Higher Ground Neighborhood Development Corporation

APPENDIX

TRANSFORMATIVE CLIMATE COMMUNITIES: ROUND 3 FINAL PROGRAM GUIDELINES FY 2019 – 2020

Following the passage of AB 2722 (Burke, 2016), SGC undertook a nearly yearlong process to develop the TCC Program Guidelines. This guidelines development process included multiple rounds of public comment and input to turn the authorizing legislation into a comprehensive, multi-million dollar grant program. As co-sponsors of the legislation, Greenlining and the California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) offered extensive feedback on how to design the program to best meet community needs, elevate community leadership and deliver multiple, intersecting benefits.

The TCC Program Guidelines offers a best practice in equitable program design. Key sections of the Guidelines are included here:[55]

Collaborative Stakeholder Structure

The Lead Applicant and all Co-Applicants must form a Collaborative Stakeholder Structure to develop and submit one (1) application. The Collaborative Stakeholder Structure also should include residents and community-nominated members such as community-based organizations that are not Co-Applicants.

Partnership Agreement

Applicants must develop a Partnership Agreement that is signed by the Lead Applicant and all Co-Applicants that describes the governance, organization and financial relationships of the Collaborative Stakeholder Structure.

The Collaborative Stakeholder Structure will govern implementation of the entire TCC Grant. Applicants may design their Collaborative Stakeholder Structure to best align with their needs, but the Partnership Agreement must, at a minimum, include the following:

- Identification of the Grantee;
- Roles and responsibilities for the Grantee and all Partners, residents, and/or community-nominated members;
- Governance of the Collaborative Stakeholder Structure including: processes for handling disputes and procedures to change, add, or remove members;

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55   Strategic Growth Council. (2019). *Transformative Climate Communities Program: Round 3 Final Program Guidelines.* https://sgc.ca.gov/programs/tcc/docs/20191104-TCC_Guidelines_Round_3_Final.pdf

- Legal and financial considerations including: liability provisions, financial relationships between the Grantee and Partners, the process Grantee will use to reimburse the Partners, and procurement processes;

- Transparent decision-making processes;

- Non-discrimination clause;

- Meeting facilitation procedures including frequency of meetings, minimum number of meetings open to public, means for publishing meeting agenda and notes for public access; and

- Process for involving community representatives and community-based organizations in decision-making.

Community Engagement

Applicants may allocate up to eight percent (8%) of their budget for eligible community engagement and outreach activities during grant implementation.

To ensure that grant funds provide direct, meaningful and assured benefits to disadvantaged communities, the TCC Program requires that Applicants work with community members and stakeholders through direct engagement. Applicants must involve residents and businesses from the Project Area and key stakeholders in all phases of TCC Proposal development and implementation. TCC Proposals should be designed to meet residents' needs that have been identified through a documented outreach and engagement process.

Applicants must also use proven methods of engagement to facilitate direct participation of community residents, including ensuring translation of meetings and materials, scheduling of meetings at times that are convenient to community members, and engaging community members in information gathering as well as outreach.

TCC Proposals must develop a Community Engagement Plan with two (2) main sections:

1. Description of Community Engagement during Proposal Development

Priority will be given to TCC Proposals that meaningfully included residents and key stakeholders during proposal development, from the visioning process to selecting Strategies and Projects using proven methods of community engagement such as Participatory Budgeting. This section of the Community Engagement Plan must describe, at a minimum:

- Key stakeholders and residents, including any existing neighborhood organizations or advisory councils serving the Project Area;

- Recent history of resident engagement in neighborhood issues of the proposed Project Area, including involvement in any planning or community development activities administered by the local government or other administrative entities; and

- Process that has been used to identify the needs of residents and other stakeholders during the TCC Proposal development phase and selection of proposed projects and, if applicable, the relationship of this process to any pending planning activities or public improvements for the Project Area within the time frame of implementation.

2. Description of Future Community Engagement

This section must describe strategies and methods that will be used to engage residents and key stake-holders during grant implementation. Priority will be given to proposals that include a robust governance structure and combination of activities to meaningfully engage community stakeholders. This section of the Community Engagement Plan must describe, at a minimum:

- Timeline of proposed community engagement activities;
- How the public will be informed of implementation progress, including updates on project performance and other Indicators being tracked, as well as implementation progress on the Displacement Avoidance and Community Engagement Plans;
- The ways in which community will provide feedback on implementation of the project;
- Process that will be used to receive formal feedback from the community; and
- How the Collaborative Stakeholder Structure included the Partnership Agreement will support implementation of the Community Engagement Plan.

Displacement Avoidance

Applicants may allocate up to three percent (3%) of the total Community Engagement budget to support displacement avoidance activities performed by technical assistance providers and nonprofits.

TCC Proposals must include a Displacement Avoidance Plan that details the actions Lead Applicants and Partners will take to establish policies and programs to avoid the displacement of existing households and small businesses within the Project Area. Applicants will describe how their Displacement Avoidance will be successfully implemented and evaluated to ensure that it has the intended impact.

The Displacement Avoidance Plan must include, at a minimum:

- Description of displacement vulnerability among existing households and small businesses within the Project Area;
- Description of the policies, plans, ordinances or programs that are already in place to avoid displacement;
- Identification of additional new policies and programs that will be pursued to avoid displacement among existing households and businesses within the Project Area.
  - At least three (3) new policies or programs to prevent the displacement of very low and low-income households.
  - At least two (2) new policies or programs to prevent the displacement of local and small businesses.
  - Applicants are encouraged to define quantifiable goals for selected policies through the community engagement process.
- Identification of the entities responsible for and involved in implementing each new policy and program, and whether the implementing entities are the Lead Applicant or Co-Applicants; and
- If a project is subject to State Relocation Law and a relocation plan is required by State Relocation Law (Gov. Code, § 7260 et seq.) and Section 6038 of the Relocation Assistance and Real Property Guidelines (25 Cal. Code of Regulations, div. 1, ch. 6, § 6000 et seq.) for the Project Area, Applicants must provide a copy of the relocation plan.

Workforce Development and Economic Opportunities

Applicants may allocate up to five percent (5%) of their budget to support workforce development and economic opportunities.

TCC Applicants must develop a Workforce Development and Economic Opportunities Plan that accomplishes the two (2) goals below:

1. Create workforce development and training programs with career pathways for residents of the Project Area.

Education and training initiatives should include pre-apprenticeship programs that use industry standard developed curriculum such as the Multi-Craft Core curriculum developed by the North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU) and are tied to state-certified apprenticeships.

Applicants must demonstrate demand for the proposed education and training initiatives. Applicants will be asked to explain how demand is determined in their local region.

Training programs should:

- Target occupations and industries that support TCC Proposal implementation;
- Reduce barriers to employment;
- Address the range of employment readiness needs of local residents and individuals with employment barriers;
- Lead to partnership with local workforce development boards and other key stakeholders, including organized labor and education providers, and;
- Align and enhance high-performing education and training programs that have a proven record of leading to high-quality, industry-recognized credentials and labor market advancement.
- Organizations leading the workforce development and training programs should use existing formalized pathways or partnerships with potential employers or industries, and have a demonstrated track record of providing training with sufficiently high rates of completion, post-training job placement and job retention. Previous experience should be similar in scale, scope and activities to the proposed TCC workforce development programs. Applicants may be asked to verify the track record of the organization through the Bureau for Private and Post-Secondary Education (BPPE), the Division of Apprenticeship Standards, their local workforce board, or by using outcome data provided by a State Agency funder (ex. ETP or Chancellor's Office).

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Workforce development and training programs must meet all of the following criteria:

- Train participants for jobs and skills that are transferable;

- Result in recognized credentials (e.g., certifications, certificates, degrees, licenses, other documentation of competency and qualifications) to support long-term, stable employment and career development. Credentials should follow guidance established by the California Workforce Development Board. Stipends to cover basic costs may be provided to participants during training. Programs that provide recipients with more than one type of skill or credential should be prioritized;

- Focus on high-quality employment. Factors commonly considered to influence job quality include, but are not limited to: local living wages; benefits provided: health insurance, paid leave, sick leave, child care services; opportunities for advancement; geographic accessibility and commute distance; job strain, scheduling, flexibility; working conditions and health risks; and job retention or duration of employment; and,

- Recruit trainees who are residents of the Project Area.

2. Provide economic opportunities through the creation of high-quality jobs.

Applicants must develop a plan that will result in the creation of local, high-quality jobs that offer living wages, benefits, worker voice, predictable scheduling, and opportunities for advancement with clear access points for low-income residents in and near the Project Area. The jobs created may – but do not have to – be tied directly to Projects that are part of the TCC Proposal.

Recruitment practices that could provide benefit from a TCC grant would use targeted recruitment strategies, consistent with federal and state law, to direct training opportunities to residents and/or businesses within the TCC Project Area, low-income residents, residents of disadvantaged communities, veterans, and/or residents displaced or otherwise impacted by project development. Organizations and individuals responsible for recruitment should have proven track records working among barrier and diverse populations by providing evidence of previous similar experience.

Tools to support targeted hiring may include, but are not limited to:

- Community Benefits Agreement (CBA): A contract between community-based organizations and project proponents or agencies that identifies benefits to be provided as part of a project or program. CBAs commonly feature hiring priority for low-income individuals and prevailing wage requirements. CBAs may also include provisions for ongoing community engagement to ensure continued success.

- Labor agreements or community workforce provisions: Comprehensive agreements between labor unions and project proponents (e.g., contractors, developers) or local agencies (e.g., transit agencies, cities) to achieve breadth of objectives including uniform labor standards. These agreements may extend across multiple projects. Applicants may choose to prioritize projects with established labor agreements or community workforce provisions that contain targeted hiring provisions.

- Contract provisions: Contract provisions between a Grantee and Partner or subcontractor that include criteria for targeted hiring that provides quality jobs.

Lead Applicant and/or partners can collaborate with local non-profit organizations for successful implementation of targeted hiring.

Climate Adaptation and Resiliency

Climate adaptation and resiliency provisions should be integrated into the Vision Statement, Strategies, Projects, and Transformative Plans of the TCC Proposal.

Applicants must describe how the TCC investment and leverage-funded projects will increase resiliency of the Project Area to the anticipated impacts from climate change. This includes describing:

- Climate change risks and exposures within the Project Area, such as additional days of extreme heat or precipitation, flooding, sea level rise and drought;
- Anticipated impacts of climate change risks and exposures on the community, including vulnerable populations; and,
- Anticipated impacts of climate change risks and exposures on the built environment.

Based on the risks and anticipated impacts, Applicants will describe the processes they will use to identify and prioritize adaptation measures to:

- Address climate change-related impacts and exposures for vulnerable populations; and
- Increase resiliency and functionality of proposed infrastructure projects.

ABOUT

The Greenlining Institute

The Greenlining Institute works toward a future when communities of color can build wealth, live in healthy places filled with economic opportunity, and are ready to meet the challenges posed by climate change. To achieve this vision, Greenlining is committed to building a just economy that is inclusive, cooperative, sustainable, participatory, fair and healthy. Our multifaceted advocacy efforts address the root causes of racial, economic and environmental inequities in order to meaningfully transform the material conditions of communities of color in California and across the nation. We act as an incubator of new policy ideas, a bridge builder between people, communities and government, and an advocate to build momentum for transformative change.

Authors

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Associate Director, Capacity Building,
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Emi is a bridge-builder and policy advocate, dedicated to supporting community-led solutions. As the Associate Director of the Capacity Building team, Emi leads Greenlining's place-based work to meaningfully connect communities to the organization's policy strategies. To reverse decades of disinvestment and racist policies, we must double down on community ownership of the solutions. The Capacity Building team supports low-income communities of color from the bottom-up to gain equitable opportunity to lead their own transformations. The team also works to change systemic and policy conditions from the top-down so that our communities can thrive. Emi has significant experience supporting local stakeholders with strategy and partnership development, as well as extensive experience in developing and implementing policy strategies that center community capacity building and leadership. Emi graduated from Vassar College with a B.A. in History.

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Rachel works to advance strategies that address the social, economic, and environmental impacts of pollution on low-income communities of color. She is currently pursuing a Master of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of California Los Angeles' Luskin School of Public Affairs, where she studies topics at the intersection of transportation equity, environmental justice, and land use. Prior to graduate school, Rachel worked at The Greenlining Institute where she leveraged talents in storytelling, fundraising, and multi-stakeholder collaboration to grow the organization's racial and economic equity policy programs. She launched her career in San Francisco at Mission Economic Development Agency, where she provided low-income Latinx families with essential services for economic stability. Today, Rachel serves on the board of a transportation advocacy non-profit called TransForm, the WTS-UCLA student chapter, and Planners of Color for Social Equity UCLA. She graduated from the University of Michigan with a B.A. in Environmental Studies.