C/CAG Equity Assessment and Framework Development Project

Partner Agency and CBO feedback on Equity Perspectives

Background: The Project Team, consisting of C/CAG and consultant team staff, met with San Mateo County Agency Partners and Community Based Organizations in two separate meetings to obtain perspective regarding:

- Historical perspective
- Connections between C/CAG's program areas and equity
- CCAG Existing Conditions Analysis - Initial menu of indicators to be explored
- Equity definitions

Participants were provided with background handouts of example government agency equity definitions, excerpts from initial research on history related to San Mateo County inequities, and equity metrics as a starting point for discussion. Government agencies represented in the Agency Partner Meeting included the San Mateo County Transit District, SamTrans, County of San Mateo, County Office of Sustainability, San Mateo County Health, Peninsula Clean Energy, and Commute.org. The Community Working Group Meeting included representatives of the Youth Leadership Institute, Samaritan House, Nuestra Casa, Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, and the Housing Leadership Council. The following summarizes the input the project team received from the two conversations.

Input on San Mateo County Historical Perspective

	Agency Partner Meeting, 8/30/22	**Community Working Group Meeting, 9/9/22**
What elements of the overall historical narrative should we convey/focus on?	- History of limits to homeownership - a big difference in serving homeowners vs renters - intergenerational nature of homeownership and wealth. In energy, homeowners are over subsidized - Already looked at equity priority zones - landlocked. - On stormwater - specifically there's an interesting opportunity to pay tribute to the land resources and water resources. Referring to Ohlone land and other communities - can be inspiring areas of work.	- Land acknowledgement practices at county level- and opportunity to educate why we do it. - The history of blockbusting and redlining. - Suburbanization and white flight connections to car culture - embedded decades long project to see the vehicle as an extension of oneself. The car is a status symbol. Drive-throughs and the eating of unhealthy foods, diabetes, etc.

	● We are a county of people of color - we've been the majority - 60% people of color - for many years. There's a disconnect between representatives and the population that lives here.	● Land use and zoning - where you have industrial, light industrial, and residential - isn't just the obvious discrimination but is really important. For example, exclusively or predominantly zoning for high density residential in Equity Priority Communities. ● Transportation - Hwy 101 - part of the division. East Palo Alto/Palo Alto. East Menlo Park/Menlo Park.
What are some important resources that we should seek out?	● Historical perspective on housing - Home for All resources & Turner Center at Berkeley - statewide housing production trends and opportunities. History re. deferred housing production over the last few decades leading to the affordability crisis we're having here. Diversity of housing affordability - but also a big middle-income housing gap. ● Seattle and Portland examples acknowledging native people's stewardship of land and water resources. ● BOS resolution on advancing racial equity. See Board report for historical narrative.	● Are there community elders that have a history of the area?

Input on the Connections between C/CAG's Program Areas and Equity

	Agency Partner Meeting, 8/30/22	Community Working Group Meeting, 9/9/22

What are equity connections C/CAG may want to consider?	● Transportation
	  o 90% of SamTrans riders are low income - 60% are extremely low income. The nature of the labor market really impacts bus service. Broader span of need - has to do with working conditions - blue-collar shift-based workforce.
	  o Before the pandemic, Caltrain created an equity plan. How do we make things more accessible on a monetary basis? Housing availability is a key part of the equation.
	  o Can't forget N/S physical barriers to E/W movement - needs work
		● Transportation
		  o Bicycle infrastructure and livability – 15-minute cities - to get to our home to essential needs within 15 minutes without a car and have proper land use to be able to get around.
		  o Equity can mean racial equity but it's more than that. What about a woman feeling safe enough to walk or bike?

- o Gas tax & electrification of autos - there's an equity issue - who pays taxes vs who doesn't. If all households above $200k get electric cars, others will subsidize their movement.
- Housing/land use
  - o Some people don't live near places where they can walk, bike, etc.
  - o Affordability - people that may have had to move out of the county due to housing costs - impact transportation.
- Energy
  - o Difficulty of serving renters re. energy programs. This gets into gentrification, housing insecurity, etc. How do you incentivize landlords to take care of their apartments? There's a public health piece - high pollution of gas stoves - children 40% more likely to show asthma symptoms.
- Water
  - o Location is important - higher likelihood of flooding impacts - infrastructure issues around drainage. Bayfront communities are at greater risk.
  - o Areas that flood tend to be lower income areas. Areas to implement improvements to avoid those impacts are typically a mile upstream in areas that may be higher income or may be in different cities. Try to focus on multi-benefit improvements.
  - o If streets don't have safe and comfortable ways of getting around, there will be impacts when flooding occurs due to lack of infrastructure, impacting areas with greater dependence on walking, biking, etc.
  - o Trash-related issues - multifamily dwellings. Improper waste facilities. Cuts across issues.
  - o Ensuring culturally relevant information available in the right languages.
- Air quality/climate

- o Strategy - Designing narrower streets & connecting to services people need.
- o Think about communities of color and having access to various assets. Move beyond food deserts. Consider other scarcity indicators such as hospitals and schools. Walkability. Childcare.
- Housing/land use
  - o How do we connect everybody to safe and sufficient, healthy housing that is within walking & biking proximity to essential needs. Housing affordability is the biggest thing that's missing.
  - o Having quality affordable homes to allow people to thrive. When teachers are tired from commuting, they're not on their A game. Access to a safe and stable home allows people to focus on other elements of their wellbeing.
  - o It is counterproductive to design a system where people are forced to commute from further and further away to workplaces. Employees are working here but spending elsewhere. It's also unsustainable environmentally.
  - o Having more affordable housing for our really low income communities, reimagining what family housing looks like.

	- Those subject to climate change are those generating the fewest GHG pollutants contributing to it. In the world of grants - some jurisdictions that have the capacity to obtain funds are those that are contributing more to the issue. - Parks and trees may not be as accessible in lower income areas/towns. - History of redlining - resulting in neighborhoods that are more affordable being closer to the freeways and impacted by pollution. How will electrification help address these kinds of issues? ● Hazardous pollution - Industrial sites - still making decisions about where these land uses take place in proximity to low income communities. - Mercury pollution issue along the Bay - subsistence fishing issue - requirements regarding outreach. - Potential of pollutant surfacing as groundwater tables rise.	● Energy - Energy efficiency products can be expensive - how do we make them more affordable? The community in many cases may already know the ideal thing to do, but can't afford it. - Ensuring that our most vulnerable populations have access to energy savings programs that are accessible and affordable. ● Water - Don't want to use bottled water anymore. Different types of water in different communities, including East Palo Alto. ● Air Quality/Climate - How state mandate or local zero emission policies will impact people of color.

CCAG Existing Conditions Analysis – Data & Indicators to be Explored

	Agency Partner Meeting, 8/30/22	Community Working Group Meeting, 9/9/22
What types of data/ information/ perspective should we seek to gain a fuller understandin g of existing conditions and the reality of	● Undocumented people. By far the biggest demographic hit by the pandemic were people not eligible for state and federal resources. ● Had a lot of data at the County collected re. undocumented & displacement - need to get better to capture that population. We are a very wealthy county and part of that is due to displacement.	● Local data-derived from the communities themselves. Story sharing. There are several grassroots orgs that have locally rooted data collection. ● Appreciate geographic information on a map, but what is usually lacking is information right down to the census block. ● What are the indicators of access? Ex. what % of the population in the census block live within 15 min of a grocery store, etc. ● Sometimes people provide supplemental assistance at school - such as SNAP - to identify populations of need. What schools have the most needs in their communities? ● Identify families that receive public benefits or go to community clinics because they don't have access to any benefit.

living in EPC's in SMC?	● The County has its own vulnerability index. Also, resources within the Office of Community Affairs. ● Communities in low lying areas - pollutants coming from the ground.	● Ensure people with disabilities indicators include people with mental and emotional health. ● There are databases that ID state surplus land - having a database with those sites would be great. ● Key indicator of equity is access to high speed broadband. Very important. ● What about infrastructure for graywater infrastructure?

Equity Definition Input

	Agency Partner Meeting, 8/30/22	Community Working Group Meeting, 9/9/22
What does equity mean to you?	● Acknowledge the history/background of oppression and barriers & systems that prevent people from accessing services. ● Listen to our communities. Make sure voices of disenfranchises are heard. Consider taking public comment on the draft equity definition. ● Access is very important. Language, disability, visual disability. Could be time of day. Day of the week. ● Access and opportunities for people to thrive and overcome inequities / obstacles that have disproportionately impacted certain groups. How can we work together to address these issues?	● It is about recognizing the ways that our communities of color have been historically disinvested, neglected and marginalized. And now putting the effort in uplifting these communities so that they are at the table, included, and recognized. ● Everyone has access to what they need and provided support for obtaining what they need ● Removing barriers in access to government services or any services to help disadvantaged communities before. ● Fairness and justice as distinguished from equality. Equity recognizes that we don't all start at the same place and must adjust programs, etc with that context. Equity is adjusting the possibilities to the needs of all people. ● Helping people where they're at and distributing power.
Does your agency/org have an equity definition, and if so, what is it?	● The County uses Policy Link's definition - create conditions for everyone to reach their full potential. Explicit about race but not exclusive to race. Embrace racial and social justice framework. Intersectionality of different communities & demographics. ● SamTrans developed a plan called Reimagine SamTrans, that includes four principles, one of which	● Calling out racial equity, power and privilege. We center young people of color and are becoming an anti-racist organization and are addressing the anti-blackness within our own organization and programming. Working to hold space to identify & call out racism in our communities. Identifying who are the most disconnected

	is social equity. Criteria consist of zero-car, low income, and non-white households.	people in our communities and analyzing what the systems are that have created that.
Which of the public agency equity definitions provided in the handout resonate with you?	● US EPA definition - concerns will be considered as part of the processes - making sure communities that are affected are engaged in the process. ● Addressing process equity is important. Like the framing of the word "fairness" in the Oakland definition. Does equity go beyond a level playing field? ● Like Oakland and San Jose are very outcome oriented - will have safe, reliable, transportation. Identity will not have any detrimental effect on life outcomes. ● Like the specificity of City of Cincinnati's Energy definition. ● Like King Co WA definition - mentioned as pro equity - actively doing things that support those that we know are oppressed. ● Like the Oakland definition and their emphasis on an equitable process. Circumstances change, etc. Re. San Jose - prefer definitions re. dignity.	● Would choose Oakland's Geographic Equity Toolbox definition. ● Like Oakland's definition as well, although could reframe it as a positive instead of the negative. ● Like the OR/WA Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) definition on the first page. Particularly like "inclusion of representatives from the marginalized and underserved communities". ● Like that process equity definition (from IBR) - process is key to realizing equity and should be included in our definition of equity. ● CA Department of HCD definition stands out. ● State of Oregon definition - "Equity acknowledges that not all people, or all communities, are starting from the same place". Later on, it says to achieve racial equity you need to do x, y, z - can't keep as is. ● SFMTA's, King County's Office of Equity, and State of Oregon's DEIA ● EPA definition
Are there any other equity definitions that you would like for us to consider?	● Cindy Chavez's pledge. The concept of going beyond avoiding harm. Make sure it's actionable. Don't want to sit on the shelf. ● Elk Grove and Sacramento - We're a small agency with staffing among 2 agencies. Follow the County.	● CEN's (Center for Excellence in Non-Profit) - Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access, and Liberation (IDEAL) Framework

Equity Definition Examples Cited by Agency Partner and CWG Meeting Participants:

- California Department of Housing and Community Development - Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing - Guidance for All Public Entities and for Housing Elements: "Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing: Meaningful actions, in addition to combating discrimination, that overcome patterns of segregation and foster inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity based on protected characteristics. Specifically, affirmatively furthering fair housing means taking meaningful actions that, taken together, address significant disparities in housing needs and in access to opportunity, replacing segregated living patterns with truly integrated and balanced living patterns, transforming racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty into areas of opportunity, and fostering and maintaining compliance with civil rights and fair housing laws. The duty to affirmatively further fair housing extends to all of a public agency's activities and programs relating to housing and community development."
- CEN's (Center for Excellence in Non-Profit) - Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access, and Liberation (IDEAL) Framework:
  - "Inclusion: CEN believes it is a universal human right. It moves beyond diversity and toward creating an equitable environment, where the richness of ideas, backgrounds, and perspectives are harnessed. Inclusion is the act of creating space where each person is authentically valued, respected, and supported.
  - Diversity: Our different identities such as age, race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, physical/mental ability, sexual orientation, spiritual practice/beliefs, employment status, geographic location, or other characteristics.
  - Equity: When a person or group receives the unique opportunities needed to reduce or eliminate barriers, equity is demonstrated. It is a process that begins by acknowledging an unequal starting place and works to correct and address imbalance. Equity ensure that people have the opportunity to grow, contribute, and develop, regardless of their identity.
  - Access: Also referred to as accessibility, this refers to the equitable right, engagement, or entry for everyone, regardless of human ability and experience. For organizations, it refers to how they encompass and celebrate characteristics and talents that each individual brings. It is about representation for all.
  - Liberation: The gaining of equal rights or full social or economic opportunities for a particular group, including the protection from abuse or exploitation. It is ultimately freedom from oppression, allowing one to be their whole self."
- City of Cincinnati Office of Environment & Sustainability - Equity Definition: "Achieving energy equity in Cincinnati involves recognizing this unfair distribution of energy burden [defined as the percentage of a household's annual gross income that goes toward payment of annual utility costs], expanding the inclusion and participation of underserved communities in energy programming, and creating opportunities to make housing stock more efficient and reduce costs for our most vulnerable residents. These costs are often referred to as "energy burden," or the percentage of income a household spends on their energy needs. Lower incomes, less efficient housing, limited access to energy efficiency programs, and decades of discriminatory housing policies such as redlining can explain the higher energy burdens faced by these groups."
- City of Oakland Department of Transportation (DOT) - Geographic Equity Toolbox: "In Oakland, the City defines equity as fairness. It means that identity—such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or expression—has no detrimental effect on the distribution of resources, opportunities and outcomes for our City's residents."
- City of Sacramento Office of Diversity & Equity:

- "Equity: The City of Sacramento's definition of racial equity is adapted from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity's definition. Regardless of one's identity, equity is when all people have just treatment, access to opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their well-being and achieve their full potential while identifying and eliminating barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. (Adapted from the Government Alliance on Race & Equity definition of racial equality)
  - Racial Equity Statement: The City of Sacramento affirms racial equity as a core value in which race does not affect life outcomes. We acknowledge historical racial inequities and are committed to transparent, deliberate and actionable solutions that will remedy those inequities and serve all our diverse communities."
- City of San Jose DOT - Emerging Mobility Action Plan: "The City of San José believes mobility is a human right. We, the staff of the City's Department of Transportation (DOT), want all people to have safe, affordable, reliable, and sustainable transportation options. That way, all San José residents have access to the opportunities and resources necessary to thrive…"
- County of San Mateo, Equity Definition:
  - "San Mateo County is committed to advancing equity. To meet this commitment, all staff must have a shared foundational understanding of equity and help to identify ways to create and support the conditions that foster equity within all County operations. Equity is just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. (PolicyLink). To achieve equity, we must create the conditions that allow all to reach their full potential."
- King County Office of Equity and Social Justice - Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan 2016-2022: "Equity is fundamental to the society we seek to build. It is an ardent journey toward well-being as defined by those most negatively affected. Our end goal is for full and equal access to opportunities, power and resources so all people may achieve their full potential. The process of advancing toward equity will be disruptive and demands vigilance. Being "pro-equity" requires us to dismantle deeply entrenched systems of privilege and oppression that have led to inequitable decision-making processes and the uneven distribution of benefits and burdens in our communities. Similarly, we must focus on those people and places where needs are greatest to ensure that our decisions, policies and practices produce gains for all."
- Policy Link – The Equity Manifesto:
  - "It begins by joining together, believing in the potency of inclusion, and building from a common bond.
  - It embraces complexity as cause for collaboration, accepting that our fates are inextricable.
  - It recognizes local leaders as national leaders, nurturing the wisdom and creativity within every community as essential to solving the nation's problems.
  - It demands honesty and forthrightness, calling out racism and oppression, both overt and systemic.
  - It strives for the power to realize our goals while summoning the grace to sustain them.
  - It requires that we understand the past, without being trapped in it; embrace the present, without being constrained by it; and look to the future, guided by the hopes and courage of those who have fought before and beside us.
  - This is equity: just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Unlocking the promise of the nation by unleashing the promise in us all."
- SamTrans - Reimagine SamTrans Final Report: The equity guiding principle includes the following language:

- o "Direct resources to provide high quality service in communities with the greatest transportation disparities and mobility needs.
  - o Prioritize service, infrastructure, and pilot projects in SamTrans Equity Priority Areas.
  - o Support access to jobs and workforce development opportunities from Equity Priority Areas.
  - o Seek to accommodate the transportation needs of workers with non-traditional work hours.
  - o Minimize missed trips (Do Not Operate/DNOs) on routes serving Equity Priority Areas."
- ● Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors President Cindy Chavez and Councilmembers Sylvia Arenas, Maya Esparza, Magdalena Carrasco, Raul Peralez, and Sergio Jimenez - [Equity Pledge](#):
  - o We… commit to:
    - ▪ Sharing power and resources with the communities we serve.
    - ▪ Transform the systems that have oppressed people of color, poor people and women for generations.
    - ▪ Ensure equity, inclusivity and social justice.
    - ▪ Dismantle systems of oppression.
    - ▪ Capital development policy, budgets, portfolios and programs which are developed with the community and in accordance with community equity priorities, informed by a perspective on historic and existing inequities, to include a description of their contribution to improving equity in community conditions.
    - ▪ An equity policy agenda aimed at ensuring determinants of equity through our communities, with a clear and defined focus on communities where our needs are greatest. These determinants include child and youth development, economic development and jobs, environment and climate, health and human services, housing, information and technology, the justice system, and transportation and mobility.
    - ▪ Ensuring that government operations, programs, and services are equitable in design and service delivery – responsive and adaptive, focused on those whose needs are greatest – and collaborative with other local and regional service providers.
    - ▪ Developing an organization in which all employees are change agents, and promote equity within our organization through training, equitable and systematic workforce development at all levels, and expansion of equitable access to resources and decision making. A workforce will be created and maintained that is racially diverse and culturally responsive in order to provide equitable, high quality services to all our communities.
    - ▪ Infrastructure system master plans, including lines of business and other strategic planning processes, which include clear objectives and measures of progress to advance equity and social justice that are informed by and sensitive to priority populations and key affected parties. These plans will also include analyses of equity impacts from their operations, services, and programs.
    - ▪ Ensuring that equity goals and responsibilities within the organization are clearly incorporated into work plans and budgets at the departmental, division, and section levels.
    - ▪ Recognizing that our Digital Divide manifested by a lack of technology access remains a central barrier to achieving equity in our communities, we will invest in the infrastructure, resources, and partnership necessary to bridge this chasm.

- Strengthening our communication strategies and community outreach to ensure that our under-served residents have the opportunity to be engaged and informed about events, programs and services, regardless of technological access, language, and immigration status.
    - Only through significant and sustained commitment to investing in the resources and structural changes necessary to meaningfully advance Equity can we hope to uplift our communities with the greatest need to ensure justice and prosperity for all of our residents."
- SFMTA Racial Equity Action Plan – "Racial equity is a set of social justice practices, rooted in a solid understanding and analysis of historical and present-day oppression, aiming towards a goal of fairness for all. As an outcome, achieving racial equity would mean living in a world where race is no longer a factor in the distribution of opportunity. As a process, we apply racial equity when those most impacted by the structural racial inequities are meaningfully involved in the creation and implementation of the institutional policies and practices that impact their lives."
- State of Oregon - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan: "Equity acknowledges that not all people, or all communities, are starting from the same place due to historic and current systems of oppression. Equity is the effort to provide different levels of support based on an individual's or group's needs in order to achieve fairness in outcomes. Equity actionably empowers communities most impacted by systemic oppression and requires the redistribution of resources, power, and opportunity to those communities. Racial Equity means closing the gaps so that race can no longer predict any person's success, which simultaneously improves outcomes for all. To achieve racial equity, we must transform our institutions and structures to create systems that provide the infrastructure for communities to thrive equally. This commitment requires a paradigm shift on our path to recovery through the intentional integration of racial equity in every decision."
- US Environmental Protection Agency - Environmental Justice Definition: "Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income... Fair treatment means no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from… operations or policies. Meaningful involvement means:
    - People have an opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health;
    - The public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision;
    - Community concerns will be considered in the decision-making process; and
    - Decision makers will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected."
- Washington and Oregon State DOT's - Interstate Bridge Replacement Project (IBR): "The Interstate Bridge Replacement program defines equity in terms of both process and outcomes.
    - Process Equity means that the program prioritizes access, influence, and decision-making power for marginalized and underserved communities throughout the program in establishing objectives, design, implementation, and evaluation of success.
    - Outcome Equity is the result of successful Process Equity and is demonstrated by tangible transportation and economic benefits for marginalized and underserved communities… Together, Process Equity and Outcome Equity contribute to addressing the impacts of and removing long standing injustices experienced by these communities."