SCAG's Environmental Equity Definition
Feedback Exchange with the Natural & Farm Lands Conservation Working Group

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Presentation Overview

- Land Acknowledgement
- Background on SCAG's Equity Work
- Background on SCAG's Environmental Equity Definition
- Feedback and Discussion
- Next Steps
Land Acknowledgment

Image source: Native Land Digital, accessed at https://native-land.ca/

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SCAG's LA office sits on Chumash, Tongva, and Kizh land
Background: SCAG's Equity Work Major Milestones

- SCAG Board adopted resolution on social equity
- Special Committee on Equity & Social Justice established

July 2020

November 2020

- SCAG equity definition and inventory

January 2021

- Draft Racial Equity Framework and Early Action Plan

March 2021

- Early Action Plan final recommendations

May 2021

- Regional Council adopts Early Action Plan
Background: SCAG’s Equity Framework and Early Action Plan

**GOALS**

**Shift Organizational Culture**
Focus SCAG’s internal work and practices on inclusion, diversity, equity, and awareness.

**Center Racial Equity in Regional Planning & Policy**
Bring equity into SCAG’s regional planning functions.

**Encourage Racial Equity in Local Planning Practices**
Promote racial equity in efforts involving local elected officials and planning professionals.

**Activate & Amplify**
Communicate broadly SCAG’s commitment to racial equity and join with others in different fields and sectors to amplify impact.

**STRATEGIES**

**Listen & Learn**
Develop a shared understanding of our history of discrimination and the structural barriers that continue to perpetuate the inequities experienced today.

**Engage & Co-Power**
Create an environment where everyone is included, able to share their experiences, and equipped to talk about racial equity and inequities.

**Integrate & Institutionalize**
Focus on systems change to improve racial equity. Center racial equity in all aspects of work. This involves internal and external systems change. Advancing Racial Equity in Southern California.
"As central to SCAG's work, racial equity describes the actions, policies, and practices that eliminate bias and barriers that have historically and systemically marginalized communities of color, to ensure all people can be healthy, prosperous, and participate fully in civic life."
Background: SCAG's Environmental Equity Definition Objectives

- Build upon and operationalize SCAG's equity work
- Build a shared understanding of environmental equity for SCAG and its stakeholders
- Emphasize environmental equity as a priority in SCAG's work
- Provide a model process for other SCAG topic-specific equity definitions
Researched and compiled *existing definitions* of environmental equity, climate equity, environmental justice across academic institutions, community organizations, government agencies

- Charles Lee, Des Moines Area MPO, Greenaction, Greenlining Institute, Mobilize Green, NAACP, SBCTA, SCAG, UC Berkeley, UCLA Luskin, University of Washington, USEPA

Pulled *key concepts* from existing work

- Impacts of historical injustice and disinvestment
- Need to address and remediate root causes
- Distinction between equality and equity
- Disproportionate and unequal impacts
- Vulnerable populations contribute least to environmental degradation and crises, but feel the impacts "first and worst"
- Not just redistributing environmental harms, but abolishing them
Environmental Equity Definition: Example Potential Applications

- Regional Resilience Framework
- Resolution on Climate Change
- Sustainability Awards
- Policy Committees
- Alternative Fuels & Vehicles
- Sustainable Communities Program
- SoCal Greenprint
- Working Groups
- Inclusive Economic Recovery Strategy
"Environmental equity addresses the actions, policies, and practices that abolish the systemic inequities, marginalization, disinvestment, and exclusion from decision-making processes that have directly resulted in vulnerable people bearing disproportionate and adverse impacts from natural hazards and human activity, so that all people can enjoy access to the physical and social benefits of our natural and built systems."
Differentiate between environmental justice and environmental equity

Be intentional about what populations the definition refers to

Important to acknowledge impact of both natural and human activities

Framing the definition as a practice (actionable) vs. an explanation (informative)

Relate to SCAG's equity and resilience definitions
Is the definition distinct from environmental justice? Does the definition go a step beyond?

Is there something critical missing from the definition? Is there something in the definition that you feel shouldn't be included?

How do you see the definition potentially impacting or being implemented in your work?
We would love to hear any general impressions and feedback you have. If you would like to speak, please use the "raise hand" function, or drop your comments into the chat.
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Next Steps

- Refine definition with your feedback
- Share revised definition with you
- Seek further feedback from other Working Groups
- Finalize definition
Thank You!

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