

All About Community: Sharing Challenges and Solutions in Addressing Past Community Harm

Discussion Session #1

How have the communities your organization serves been impacted by inequitable policies or practices? In what ways is your organization working to create equity as it relates to a specific policy or practice?



California Association of
Councils of Governments

Discussion Questions

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Discussion Session #1: Resources

Resource Title	Source	Link
Law Enforcement and the Communities they Serve: Supporting Collective Healing in the Wake of Harm	International Association of Chiefs of Police	https://www.theiacp.org/CollectiveHealing
Principles of Healing-Centered Harm Reduction	Reframe Health and Justice Collective	https://reframehealthandjustice.medium.com/principles-of-healing-centered-harm-reduction-5e728cf20e56
Trauma-Informed Community Building and Engagement	Urban Institute	https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/98296/trauma-informed_community_building_and_engagement.pdf
Community Healing and Restoration	City of Oakland	https://www.oaklandca.gov/resources/community-healing-restoration
Community Replenishment: undoing the Damage of "Urban Renewal"	Third Way and Transportation America	https://www.thirdway.org/memo/community-replenishment-undoing-the-damage-of-urban-renewal

Group #1

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- Freeway widening: sound walls built to address sound but nothing to address air quality. Roseland area not incorporated into city for decades, starting to recognize disparities in this community.
- Freeway running through community divides city
- Merced: railroad tracks divide city, lot of development in N Merced instead of S.
- Why is moderate or low income housing always multi family, why not low income single family
- Pigeon hole options that are available to low income - e.g. free bus passes, why can only certain people access cars?
- Trip reduction programs targeted to people who have cars, don't often do this work in low income communities
- Looking at ways to increase access across freeway that divides community but don't have history of when impacts first started
- Transportation investments made in most politically involved areas rather than areas where investments are needed the most
- We're just on the cusp of acknowledging past harms
- Would like to screen all decisions on criteria including air quality, GHG, community impact
- Need to ask communities how they've been impacted; hard for agency to know, may make incorrect assumptions
- Build relationships and recognize experiences
- TDM: How balance need to incentive riders of choice vs transit dependent? Grappling with charge to reduce trips rather than charge to improve mobility for everyone. For biking, loaned E-bikes to help people experience e-bikes and potential to replace car; shifting to bringing bikes to people where they work. Barriers - cost, time, safe storage; community outreach - learning how to link with local promotores
- Bilingual staff important; also need to publish materials in multiple languages

Group #3

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Mike Costa (Placer County TPA): historic underinvestment in public transit services.
Nephele Barrett (Mendocino County COG): underinvested areas coincide with tribal communities.

Christine Corrales (San Joaquin COG): EJ exposures coincide with redlined communities, particularly Stockton, top 5% on Cal Enviroscreen.

Anita Au (SCAG): Underinvesting in vulnerable communities. Electeds don't all see the landscape the same, don't recognize problems.

Veronica Farwell (Caltrans - Equity Analyst @ CalTrans Office of Race & Equity)
Mike: NorCal Megaregion - interdependent regions across transportation, economy, social/community.

Christine: Unclear if past legacy has been fully acknowledged. More institutionalization and operationalization of equity needed.

Anita: SCAG has yet to have an equity office, upper management is aboard. Racial Equity Early Action Plan was released. Engagement + Co-Power, direct partners are local jurisdictions, so cooperative solutions that work for all, recognizing that locals are the ones who actually implement equity.

Christine: relationship building key to equity work, cultivating trust, especially in most impacted communities that have legitimate reasons to distrust gov't.

Veronica: Addressing past harms, run up against systemic barriers. Authentic community engagement is a relatively new concept.

Mike: Monumental challenges, resources not up to task. Storytelling is key to advancing equity issues. How do we incorporate more successes on how public programs have positively impacted vulnerable communities.

Christine Corrales: Storytelling includes past negative harms/challenges, so acknowledging those histories/narratives is key to trust-building.

Anita Au: storytelling does really improve morale, equity work can be exhausting and traumatic.

Veronica: [Krista Tippett](#), great speaker for self care

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- SLOCOG:
 - Steps to remediate
 - Completed an assessment to evaluate language used in hiring and a number of agency resources. Contract included several staff and board member trainings, some of which were open to the public.
 - Trying out new ways to engage communities both quantitatively and qualitatively.
 - Staff maintains an internal Equity Team that meets regularly.
 - Internal Equity Team is putting together a toolkit for the agency using GARE as a guide.
 - Staff spearheaded a Regional Equity Team that has met a few times and recently chose leadership.
 - Acknowledging impact: working to improve practices but has not explicitly acknowledged this with the public. Need a deeper understanding of our agency's specific impact over time. The assessment covered current practices and resources.
 - Equity has been more staff-driven than policy driven from the electeds on the board; executive director is very supportive.
- Alameda CTC
 - Communities of concern/equity priority communities is way to try to remediate
 - Agency has not done an assessment and identified ways that equity has not been placed at the forefront. This is an issue.
 - Equity and equality are not the same. When we talk about funding, racial equity is not the lens used. The effort is more to make things "equal" by population, but it needs to shift to giving people what they need.
 - Every program and plan has an error because there has not been an effort to do an equity assessment.
 - Concrete steps:
 - Internal culture and engagement community, which is new and is a corrective measure that has been going on for a year. Committee where staff pushes equity forward. Executive director support has been key. There is a representative from each department who takes information back to their teams.
 - Planning team is doing a Racial Equity Action Plan.
 - DEI training was mandatory and across agency. Findings were presented to commission chair, and there is a commission-level committee of electeds focused on DEI issues.

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1. Examples: funding investments, freeways bisecting communities, pollution impacts on community health
- 2.
3. Creation of the Lifeline Transportation Program
4. Piloting "participatory budgeting"; Community choice grant

SHS is the main street for our rural communities, however, engagement for livability needs only occurred with agency, not community. Complete Street element added to PID phase of project planning. Equity program developed but resistance at executive level.

Developing equity baseline data/dashboard for transparent/open-source data.

Shift the engagement/engineer power dynamic in program/project development to address the internal struggle.

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1. Listening and learning/ reaching out to all community members may have been lacking
 - a. Disadvantaged/low-income communities
 - b. Homeless
 - c. Tribes
2. SLOCOG
 - a. After Black Lives Matter Protest; more focus on equity and forming equity team and discussions
 - b. Internal team to address and discover DEI actions
3. San Cruz now starting a conversation
4. Review of past practices (policy, funding, planning) and making accommodations/changes for previously marginalized groups (low income, low income schools in those areas
5. MTC establishing equity team and updating HR practices. Equity Platform created and presented to the Board.
6. Alameda CTC internal equity team and Commission DEI committee
7. Alameda CTC planning and funding investment practices include greater consideration implementing projects and programs that benefit low-income communities
8. Best practices are emerging for public transportation
 - a. Organizational structure
 - b. Housing Policies
 - c. Budget/Funding policies
 - d. Communication and outreach (expanded)

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1. Bulldozing neighborhoods, bisecting communities without power. Commission not providing an equitable platform to get feedback. Failure to provide staff that speaks the language of the community and provide comfort. Notices were only in one language, meetings only at 9 am. Advertise job posting in diverse platforms and restructure internal working policies to individualize processes and make the workplace and spaces more equitable. Look at education requirements and shift requirements to reflect current needs. Technological barriers, internally and externally, that limit community involvement and hiring pools.
 2. Leadership delivered the message. Staff level deliver the message at community level ie. planning process. Racial equity statement developed, guidepost for how we do our work. Reception: not sure..but people glad its developed- "lets see if you act on that". Trust but verify.
 3. Notices in more than one language; in person meetings at different locations; evening meetings. Staffing is an issue. Drafting racial equity statement. Formed working group with community members. Listening sessions with community, CBO, exec leadership listening to "grievances" re: transportation system, harm and what they want to see if the future. Creating a racial equity action plan and long range transportation plan. Allocation based on equity plan. Equity indicators included for each project. At project initiation include equity. Internally, support for equity does not extend to staff/agency practices despite Equity Action Plans or commitments to community.
 4. Going to community early and often. At HQ side being transparent, if you make a commitment follow through. Not just extracting information but show you're valuing the input and doing something with it. Implement the feedback we hear.

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