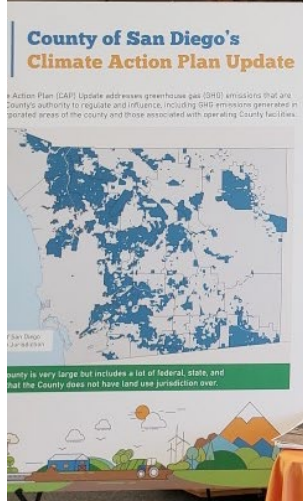# Appendix
09

Equity Implementation Framework

Equity in Action:
A Framework for Climate Action Implementation

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Executive Summary

Climate Action Plans, or CAPs, have the potential to improve climate adaption, resiliency, and lead to more direct investment in communities that experience the most immediate and worst consequences of climate change and bear a greater burden from its impacts (frontline communities). This Equity Framework (Framework) was developed to help ensure equitable implementation of the County's CAP. Equitable implementation means developing strategies that emphasize the culture, history, values, strengths, and needs of frontline communities in ways that enhance inclusive participation, are responsive to community needs, and lead to outcomes that prioritize frontline communities. Accordingly, the Framework is a step-by-step process that guides how to implement CAP actions to be more equitable. Each step in the process includes one or more worksheets that help put into practice lessons learned within the step. The Framework is meant to be a resource for all County departments who are responsible for implementing the CAP.

The Framework supports the [Board of Supervisor's commitment](#) to emphasize environmental justice and equity in the CAP. The Framework was developed through a robust outreach and engagement effort. This included a three-part workshop series with various representatives from community-based organizations that serve the unincorporated area and/or are focused on social equity and environmental justice issues. Participants were compensated for their participation to help craft various elements of the Framework. Additionally, the project team met with other County departments, including those who will be responsible for CAP implementation, to integrate their feedback and perspectives into the Framework. This approach was an effort to put Framework concepts into

Picture 1: Participants at the First of Three Workshops to Develop the Framework

practice during its development by collaborating with community-based groups and building capacity within County departments.

The Framework will help guide CAP implementation and can lead to measurable change and the attainment of equity-based outcomes and co-benefits identified in the CAP. This includes prioritizing frontline communities, increasing green workforce opportunities, reducing the potential for displacement, and increasing resources and services in unincorporated communities. Progress on the Framework will be tracked as part of the CAP Implementation and Monitoring Program, as defined in Chapter 5 of the CAP.

Picture 2: Climate Action Heroes Over the Years

Introduction & How to Use this Document

The Equity Framework (Framework) is a toolkit that explains step-by-step how County staff can integrate social equity and environmental justice in Climate Action Plan (CAP) implementation. The Framework was created utilizing best practice research, informational interviews with other County offices (such as the Office of Equity and Racial Justice and the Office of Sustainability and Environmental Justice), workshops with other County departments through the Sustainability Task Force, and a robust community engagement and outreach effort. Even with CAP implementation, climate change is expected to intensify the impacts of existing environmental hazards within the unincorporated area, and frontline communities are anticipated to experience the impacts first and worst. The Framework aims to assist staff in helping to reduce the unequal effects of climate change and supporting thriving communities.

Accordingly, the Framework includes climate justice, which recognizes climate change as intertwined with social, racial, and environmental concerns that disproportionately impact frontline communities. From a justice perspective, resilience means supporting frontline communities' ability to manage, recover, and thrive in a climate changed future. At the same time, it involves reforming unequal systems to pave the way for a more equitable and just future.

It is important that CAP implementation is approached in ways that represent community priorities. The following vision for climate justice was crafted through a series of workshops with regional community-based organizations that either serve the unincorporated area or are social equity or environmentally-justice-focused (see Appendix C for details). The community-informed climate justice vision is a guiding perspective and is connected to all the steps included in the Framework:

> *"Our vision for climate justice is to create transformational change through an inclusive process that recognizes the roots of systemic inequities and moves to remediate them. This can be achieved by promoting accessibility, racial equity, education, intergenerational collaboration, and economic vitality that supports resiliency, culture and community, natural assets, and the equitable distribution of resources."*

How to Use this Document

The Framework provides background information, resources, and worksheets to assist staff in implementing CAP actions that will lead to more equity-based outcomes. The Framework is laid out across five steps, as detailed in Figure 1. In each step, staff will find materials to help with CAP implementation, including fillable worksheets (in Appendix A), and spotlights on other successful programs or examples. The Framework is designed to be flexible and adaptable to the ever-evolving field of equity work. Staff are encouraged to seek additional opportunities and resources to sharpen their climate equity and social justice implementation skills.

Figure 1: Steps for Equitable CAP Implementation
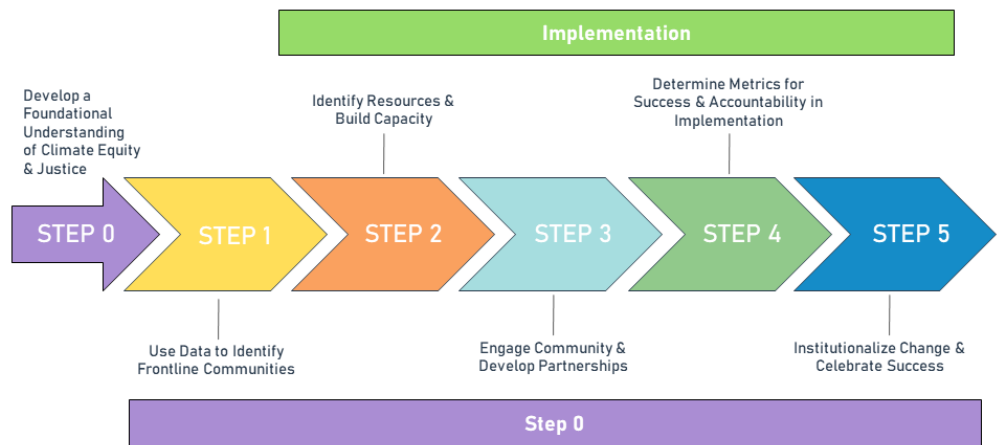
The community-informed climate justice vision is embedded in each step of the framework.

- Step 0 explains the foundations of creating transformational change by identifying the root causes of social inequities.
- Step 1 emphasizes limitations in current data use, and outlines ways to connect social, racial, economic data to climate impacts and disaggregate data to identify often missed populations.
- Step 2 asks how County processes can promote knowledge sharing, including project challenges and successes, to strengthen capacity.
- Step 3 details ways to build an inclusive process that supports culture, community, and natural strengths, and promotes intergenerational collaboration and community voices.
- Step 4 further outlines ways to develop community-informed metrics and track long-term goals to ensure the equitable distribution of resources.
- Finally, Step 5 identifies ways staff can create structural, or fundamental, change and celebrate success.

Appendices are also included to provide additional resources and to detail the approach and methods used in the Framework. The appendices include a Worksheet Packet (A), Glossary (B), Data Sources and Resources (C), and Methods and Approaches (D).

Picture 3: The Mural Developed as Part of the Engagement Efforts Associated with the Framework

Step 0: Develop a Foundational Understanding of Climate Equity & Justice

Step 0 is central to the Framework and is both a pre-step as well as interwoven throughout all steps. Step 0 includes understanding the three types of equity laid out in the CAP: structural, procedural, and distributional (defined in Table 1). Step 0 is to be used before beginning any project to improve integrating equity principles into implementation.

According to the vision for climate justice, implementation of the CAP can result in transformational change. To achieve this, it is important to consider intersections of social, racial, and economic inequalities. This includes "end-point vulnerabilities" – the most visible signs of inequities (e.g., air pollution, access to transportation) and "starting-point vulnerabilities" (e.g., lack of investment in communities, persistent economic challenges, lack of access to education) which manifest due to the underlying root causes of inequities. A transformative approach involves asking how, why, and where inequities exist and persist and working to shift systems in ways that reduce or eliminate inequities.

A transformational approach also involves developing anti-racist strategies that focus on shifting systems, policies, practices, and mindsets to distribute power and resources more equitably. Anti-racist strategies emphasize supporting historically marginalized groups, including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), to ensure fairness and equity. This framing is in alignment with the Board of Supervisor's [Framework for Our Future: Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis](#).

Another important component for equitable climate action championed by the County is [Targeted Universalism](#). Targeted Universalism emphasizes universal goals or outcomes that benefit all populations while setting targeted strategies to ensure everyone can realize the universal goals. An example of this could take place in the development of a tree planting program. The tree planting program could have a goal of increasing tree canopy to all communities. However, the approach to each community would be different depending on the need. In a Targeted Universalism approach, the communities with a higher rate of heat-related illnesses and opportunities for tree plantings would be prioritized and receive more funding over those communities with existing tree coverage.

Table 1: Types of Equity

Procedural Equity	Distributional Equity	Structural Equity
Creating outreach, engagement, and involvement processes that are transparent, fair, and inclusive.	Prioritizing the fair distribution of resources and benefits to communities that will experience the greatest impacts of climate change.	Considers the historical underpinnings that have led to economic, social, and racial inequities to develop plans that seek to avoid future unintended negative consequences.

Transformative Climate Action & Community-Based Priorities

Targeted Universalism and types of equity are general concepts that can be applied across a variety of government and non-government-led initiatives. The Framework also details community-based priorities to inform transformative climate action and ensure co-benefits and equity-based outcomes identified in the CAP are achieved in its implementation. The community-based priorities were identified through the Framework outreach and engagement efforts and are detailed in Table 2.

Cross Cutting Priorities	Description	Examples
Build Resilience and Climate Preparedness	Climate resilience is the ability of individuals, communities, and social, economic, and ecological systems to respond to and bounce back from climate shocks and stressors. Transformative actions will include ways communities can "bounce forward" to thrive in a climate changed environment. Approaching implementation in ways that support climate risk reduction and increase community preparedness can help build resilience.	• Build or repair infrastructure and provide education and training in response to extreme weather events. • Support community cohesion, reliable transportation systems, and community resilience hubs like community centers that are available during natural disasters. • Through community engagement, determine what daily stressors connect to the project, such as, the incremental change in energy burdens, hotter days, and drought. • Expand resilience to include social and economic well-being. • Identify ways communities can connect to the green economy. • Enhance safety through mobility and green infrastructure improvements.
Tailor Implementation to Unincorporated Communities	Unincorporated communities are uniquely diverse and not like many other communities in the region. As a result, it's important tailor climate action implementation to address the unique needs of these communities.	• Build partnerships and trusted relationships with community members by participating in community events, local meetings, meeting trusted leaders, etc. • Research communities utilizing existing data sources, web searches, field visits, etc. before initiating projects to understand their characteristics and unique make-up. • Identify and understand geographical barriers that are specific to unincorporated areas. • Center unincorporated and frontline communities in program development and implementation utilizing a targeted universalism approach. • Commit additional resources to harder-to-reach populations such as some of the unincorporated communities.
Co-creation and Bi-directional Education	Bi-directional education means working with the community, forming partnerships, maintaining ongoing relationships, and building trust. It also means creating communication strategies to share information so that everyone can easily understand. At the same time, learn about cultural and community values, how an action may impact populations, and different approaches to implementation based on the community's knowledge and experiences.	• Increase accessibility in the delivery of communications by minimizing technical jargon, creating information in various languages and visual formats, and overcoming the digital divide by providing printed documents. • Develop interactive workshops and engagement opportunities wherein staff and the community are learning from each other. • Create long-term alliances with community-based organizations and civic groups. Engage early and often to build the community's capacity on the topic the project addresses. Revisit the community to share results and outcomes and respond and act upon community requests. • Identify and overcome obstacles to project-related engagement such as childcare, working hours, travel time, food, compensation, etc.

Cross Cutting Priorities	Description	Examples
Ensure Equitable Distribution of Resources and Opportunities	Ensure benefits flow to those who need it the most and identify the potential for unintended and unequal adverse impacts from climate action implementation.	• Engage a wide range of stakeholders in development and implementation processes. • Develop a program or project that can be adaptive to feedback and other external factors that might change. • Determine if the project or program will need consultants or support workforce development and prioritize the use of local talent when allowed by County contracting. • Identify any disproportionate burdens to frontline communities associated with the project, program, or policy and develop ways to reduce these burdens.
Elevate Intergenerational Community Voices, Power, and Leadership	Recognizing the inherited burden of climate impacts on older adults and youth at the intersection with frontline communities is crucial. Youth and older adults are also a vital bridge to communities – they serve as trusted community members, information sources, and potential educators for their families and communities. Therefore, empower and engage older adults and youth through outreach and engagement efforts and find ways to bring them together.	• Deploy social media campaigns and other creative outreach approaches to connect with youth. • Utilize the County's student worker positions, internships, and other youth-focused workforce development opportunities to hire youth to help with development of policies, projects, and programs. • Partner with schools, youth clubs, and libraries to provide leadership training for Black, Indigenous, and People of color (BIPOC), historically marginalized, rural, youth, and others that often do not have a platform in sustainability efforts. • Leverage senior centers or other older adult programming to share information.
Utilize Nature-Based Solutions	Nature-based solutions are methods that can enhance climate mitigation and help communities build overall resilience to climate impacts. Nature-based solutions may include biodiversity, greenhouse gas sequestration, and tree planting programs. At the same time, participatory processes can ensure long-term benefits and establish ways to reduce adverse impacts associated with nature-based solutions.	• Increase access to open space, green space, and tree canopy coverage in frontline communities. • Learn how community values, customs, and knowledge systems connect to nature to align nature-based solutions and community priorities. • Increase educational opportunities with tribal communities to learn about Traditional Ecological Knowledge and find ways to support collaboration. • Integrate nature and the natural environment into development projects and programs. • Avoid displacement that could result from improving green infrastructure by prioritizing community involvement, creating tenant protections, and ensuring residents benefit from and can access the improved spaces without being displaced by rising costs.
Support a Just Transition to a Green Workforce	Implementation should prioritize creating high-road careers with family-supporting wages, long-term career pathways, worker protections, and high safety and health standards, whenever feasible.	• Require "skilled and trained" workers in large-scale commercial building decarbonization projects. • Increase access to career training programs to support green workforce development especially in areas that are accessible to unincorporated residents. • Pilot new and innovative projects that could support transition to, "green collar" careers.

Preparing for Implementation

Step 0 encourages staff to prepare for implementation of CAP actions. This includes becoming more familiar with various equity concepts to understand how to integrate equity in CAP implementation projects. CAP actions fall into three categories: policies, programs, and incentives. Use Chapter 5 of the CAP to determine if your CAP action is a policy, program, or incentive. Table 3 explains how the approach to actions differs depending on which category it fits into and how to address equity within each.

Table 3: Policy, Program, or Incentive

	Policy (also known as Requirement)	Programs (also known as Initiatives)	Incentives
Examples of CAP actions	New or amended regulations as part of the County Code updates. These may also include actions mandated by the Board through codes, ordinances, policies, or other mechanisms.	Programs provide the structure for many CAP measures and might also include financing or incentives.	Financing, or other benefits, provided to encourage the public to make changes to reduce GHG emissions. This could include things like upfront payments for purchasing electric vehicles.
Key Considerations	Policies have substantial implications for social equity, as they represent enduring actions that will direct County resources and efforts. Due to their long-lasting effects, they can significantly influence the equitable *distribution* of benefits over the long-term in ways that reinforce *structural* equity.	Program benefits must be *meaningful* to communities, meaning that programs center community identified needs and priorities. Co-creation with community can help ensure programs are useful and well-utilized.	Prioritize structuring incentives in ways that have *direct* benefits for communities rather than employing trickle-down approaches. Also of note, incentives may ask participants to pay upfront costs to later be reimbursed. The upfront costs, regardless of amount, can burden frontline communities or deter participation.

Spotlight: Electric Vehicle Programs

Rebates promoting electric vehicle adoption can be a barrier for low-income households due to the need for upfront vehicle costs, credit, and income. Research on two State-level California clean vehicle rebate projects shows disproportionate benefits - more rebates per household were distributed to higher-income communities with higher levels of education and fewer residents of color. The study found that income caps and tiered rebate amounts somewhat helped distribution to lower-income communities but did not close the gap. Programs and incentives can innovate to address these barriers and directly support frontline communities.

Step 1: Use Data to Identify Frontline Communities

Step 1 is focused on centering data-driven approaches in implementation. This includes learning best practices for identifying frontline communities through quantitative and qualitative data. Utilizing data to identify frontline communities helps to achieve the equitable distribution of resources identified in the vision for climate justice, by knowing who needs what.

Data Best Practices

The County is continuously working to find ways to improve data collection and analysis to prioritize frontline communities. This includes relying on existing federal and State resources like Justice40 Initiative and CalEnviroScreen 4.0, and local efforts like the Community Health Statistic Unit's Health Equity Tools, the Environmental Justice Element of the General Plan, the Office of Sustainability and Environmental Justice's StoryMap, or the Office of Equity and Racial Justice's Equity Indicator Report. These are great starting points for identifying frontline communities. Appendix B includes additional data resources and indicators useful in identifying communities with the greatest need. These resources can also help to identify community strengths, utilizing an asset-framing approach. Asset-framing is a method of thinking and approach to data that is human-centered and defines communities by their strengths rather than their deficits. Asset-framing helps support a positive environment and can lead to more positive outcomes.

Indicators also help to develop an understanding of how social, economic, racial, and other factors intersect and could be influenced by CAP actions. For instance, a tree planting effort may have a primary goal of reducing GHG emissions, but also has the co-benefit of improving air quality and reducing the urban heat island effect. Additionally, an expanded tree canopy can promote walking. To determine where to prioritize tree planting, staff may consider data on current tree canopy and/or green space, where there are air quality or asthma issues, and what communities have unshaded sidewalks. This demonstrates a more holistic approach to prioritizing where to plant trees.

Here are some additional approaches for identifying frontline communities:
- *Utilize qualitative data to identify communities with the greatest needs.* This will require field visits and engaging residents directly in their community such as at community events.
- *Use more granular or detailed data such as block, neighborhood, or school district.* Qualitative data or health and education data can be used to supplement common data sources to identify frontline communities and their needs (Community Toolbox). For example, the California Department of Education provides school-specific demographic data, including language usage and income level information.
- *Identify groups based on shared experiences or interests.* Shared experiences might include being part of an intergenerational family. Common interests might include a community's focus on poverty or violence prevention (Community Toolbox).
- *Disaggregate data.* Aggregated data (information from multiple sources in a single indicator or category) may overlook the communities that most need access to resources. Disaggregated data divides information into more specific groups, uncovering detailed sub-categories that reveal unique needs and characteristics of different groups within a larger population.
- *Develop a layered or intersectional approach to data.* Equity is complex and single indicators or traditional methods may conceal communities with the most need. Many individual and community social, economic, and physical characteristics can intersect to produce climate vulnerabilities. For instance, members of unincorporated communities may face unreliable transportation, lack of access to healthcare, and high energy costs, making them especially vulnerable to climate impacts, particularly during disasters.

- *Include longitudinal data.* Understanding community changes over time is crucial. Communities may face multiple pressures that impact community stability such as cost of living. Staff can track community changes over time or develop project specific qualitative and quantitative baseline measures to track changes (Community Toolbox).

> ### Spotlight: Qualitative Data
>
> Communication and data gathering should take a multipronged approach to span the digital divide and engage frontline communities. The La Presa and Spring Valley Community Transportation Needs Assessment shows the power of engaging communities to understand their lived experience with transportation challenges.
>
> Rather than relying strictly on quantitative data, for example, County staff used public workshops and a short survey (in English and Spanish) to engage community members and ask them about their perception of traveling in their community. While data metrics showed strong neighborhood walkability, many locals felt unsafe walking or bicycling. This community engagement helped identify a need for making walking and biking a safer transportation option through pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements.

In addition to identifying best practices for utilizing data to identify frontline communities, it is also helpful to identify where pitfalls can occur and how to avoid them. Table 4 lays out common pitfalls, such as focusing on pre-existing data or what can easily be measured, and strategies for equity-focused data use.

Table 4: Data Use Pitfalls and Solutions

Pitfall	Description	Strategies for Equity-Focused Data	List of Potential Indicators or Measurements
Measuring what can easily be measured	There is a tendency to focus on existing data or metrics that are more easily measured. This approach misses capturing the full picture and often excludes populations like unincorporated communities. Existing data also may not be aligned with community priorities.	• Uncover inequities that are more difficult to measure • Develop qualitative data through community engagement • Identify what is important to the community • Co-develop indicators of progress with the community	• Qualitative narratives on climate impacts in frontline communities • Community-defined metrics for assessing climate equity
Emphasis on quantitative and aggregated data	Aggregated data misses the differences among populations in communities. It also leads to a lack of comprehensive understanding of the whole issue or population and instead focuses on a single issue.	• Work with communities to define indicators that make sense to the project and community • Develop qualitative measures that can inform more targeted approaches • Disaggregate data across measures that are important to the community	• Create maps illustrating local community needs and strengths • Disaggregate data with climate impacts across race, class, gender • Develop an intersectional understanding of how data intersects across populations (e.g., how employment opportunities in the green workforce intersects with gender and race).

Pitfall	Description	Strategies for Equity-Focused Data	List of Potential Indicators or Measurements
Measuring outcomes at one time point	Measuring at one time point does not capture long-term issues that are important to social equity such as displacement that could be connected to climate investments like improved green infrastructure.	• Include long-term data trends and measures • Engage community to track and report impacts over time • Collaborate across departments to share knowledge about equity across key indicators (e.g., housing, employment, greenspace)	• Develop assessments before, during, and after implementation • Track changes over time and share info with other departments • Assess what populations are experiencing improvements from a project over time
Measuring only one type of equity	There is a tendency to focus on the most visible inequities or "end-point vulnerabilities" (e.g., lack of environmental amenities) instead of "starting point" vulnerabilities or the root causes of persistent inequities.	• Operationalize structural equity such as employment, civic engagement, housing affordability and ownership • Understand "starting-point vulnerabilities", the factors that contribute to persistent inequities • Develop baseline understandings of communities and track disparities over time • Understand that procedural equity is a trust building and reparative process that can be measured through qualitative engagement	• Develop an understanding of pre-existing disparities across populations • Develop qualitative measures for procedural equity such as participation and effective collaboration • Develop measures to assess trust and relationship development • Identify and measure place, race, and class divides, and increases in participation across these divides • Conduct a root cause analysis
Failure to measure community strengths	Communities possess valuable strengths, including social networks, culture, and resilience and can be leveraged to better serve communities. This approach is commonly referred to as asset-framing and is helpful in creating a positive environment when working with communities.	• Work with communities to identify community strengths and how they can be enhanced • Take a place-based view which includes community, culture, nature, and how people live and work in their communities	• Develop a community strengths map which could include libraries, places of worship, community centers, parks, cultural centers, and gathering places • Develop a plan with the community to utilize and enhance strengths as part of project implementation

Qualitative Data Strategies

The common pitfalls of data use outlined in Table 4 can be improved through qualitative data collection. Qualitative data gathering involves working with communities to identify root causes of inequities and to align community priorities and project goals. Qualitative data can be supplemented with relevant quantitative metrics to provide a holistic picture of frontline communities. Best practices for qualitative data involve a participatory approach that actively engages communities in the decision-making process in ways that value inclusion, bi-directional learning, and diverse perspectives (see also Step 3).

Table 5: Qualitative Data Tools

Qualitative Data Method	Description
Data Walks	Data walks are a method of sharing information with stakeholders to cross-check assumptions in data and center community. The goal is to inform staff and empower stakeholders (ChangeLab Solutions, Urban Institute).
Photovoice	Photovoice is a method that can stand alone or be implemented in workshops. Individuals are asked to document and distribute elements of their surroundings using images, videos, or text to illustrate life within their communities and share their lived experiences around a particular issue or prompt. This approach can increase staff awareness about community resources and issues (Changelab Solutions; Community Toolbox).
Community Asset Map	Community assets are elements such as nonprofit organizations, community member skill sets, buildings, schools, and parks that exist within communities and improve overall well-being. Community asset mapping involves working with communities to identify and map community assets. Maps are helpful in new program development to identify resource connections and needs within communities and to mobilize residents (UCLA Center for Health Policy Research).
Community Narratives	Community narratives can assist staff in developing an understanding of community experiences that can include past and current injustices, current experiences with climate change, reflections on past experiences with policies or programs, or to learn about culture or perceptions of place, daily realities, and community priorities. Narratives can also give context to quantitative data. Gathering community narratives includes interviewing community members, documenting conversations, and writing reflections after attending events (Othering & Belonging Institute).
Root Cause Analysis (RCA)	RCA is a method used to uncover the underlying reasons for a problem's existence, such as the persistence of a specific inequity or the breakdown of trust between a particular community and the government. In this process, stakeholders affected by the issue come together, sharing their experiences and relevant data to investigate the problem, trace its root causes, and problem solve. This collaborative approach can provide deep intervention and can uncover the less visible factors of persistent inequities (Advancing Health Equity; Institute for Learning).
Collaborative Design Sessions or Workshops	Workshops are a strong way to engage diverse stakeholders, including community members, experts, and decision-makers. Staff can create sessions to center the needs and perspectives of marginalized or vulnerable groups in collaborative ways to uncover community needs, priorities, and strategies. The goal is to collaborate to promote equity, reduce disparities, and enhance resiliency (Participatory Workshops: A Sourcebook of 21 Sets of Ideas and Activities).
Develop Hyperlocal Data	There are new and innovative ways to engage communities and empower them in the data collection and monitoring process. Technology can assist community members in monitoring and tracking project implementation (see Spotlight: Qualitative Data). Staff may want to take a Crowdsourcing or Citizen Science Approach, where public volunteers help in collecting and classifying data, such as CitizenScience.gov.

Step 2: Identify Resources & Build Capacity

Step 2 is focused on building internal capacity, at all levels of staff, to increase coordination and leverage related County efforts. Capacity building can help better utilize resources and strengthen partnership approaches and engagement. Internal capacity building also includes increasing skill development to effectively incorporate social equity into CAP implementation. Capacity building helps integrate collaboration and accessibility emphasized in the vision for climate justice.

Capacity Building & Internal Coordination

Capacity building falls into two main categories: competency building and internal coordination, both of which require resources. Competency building includes improving abilities in the long term which incorporates systemic thinking, handling uncertainty, and supporting cooperation among a wide range of stakeholders. Research shows that staff buy-in and training can improve the effectiveness of equitable implementation. Part of competency development is acknowledging personal and positional power, privilege, and perspective. Privilege can include factors such as social status, race, gender, language, and cultural, political, and economic power. These factors also extend to environmental privilege, where disparities exist in access to environmental amenities like clean air and water, green spaces, and safe neighborhoods. Staff may not have a comprehensive view of how climate impacts are affecting frontline communities because they do not have the same lived experience. Recognizing these disparities and acknowledging the lived experiences of communities are crucial elements in fostering equitable implementation. The importance of reflecting on environmental and economic privilege was also a central concern for community representatives involved in the Framework engagement process.

Spotlight:
Putting San Diego County on the High Road: Climate Workforce Recommendations for 2030 and 2050
This report builds upon California's significant efforts to identify specific policy tools and investments to support workers as the state transitions to a carbon-neutral economy. Findings from this report can be applied across CAP actions that might impact the workforce.

Internal coordination includes developing the skills and abilities required to understand the intersections of equity and climate impacts to be able to draw connections to other departments or projects and coordinate and collaborate across programs. For example, Public Health Services might be interested in increasing walkability to combat chronic disease issues like diabetes which overlaps with Climate Action Plan's goal of reducing reliance on greenhouse gas emitting-cars. As a result, these two teams can work together towards achieving their common goal by pooling resources like staff time and funding. Other coordinated internal processes may include meeting with other departments who have worked on similar projects, with the same community, or otherwise might have information to share about challenges, successes, and lessons learned. Knowledge sharing integrated throughout different projects and across departments leads to more effective use of resources with better community outcomes. Table 6 details various strategies to enhance capacity building and increase internal coordination.

The County has established various resources to help with improving equity efforts. Figure 3 includes a very high-level, non-exhaustive, identification of some resources available that are helpful starting points for building internal capacity and improving internal coordination regarding equity-focused initiatives (Appendix B: Data and Equity Resources provides additional County, state, and national resources). Each department likely has additional efforts and approaches to applying an equity lens that you can also explore. Some additional resources include: each departments' Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Teams, the Departmental Diversity and Inclusion Champions, and the Office of Equity and Racial Justice's Partner and Strategy Circle.

Table 6: Capacity Building and Internal Coordination Strategies

Strategies to Enhance Capacity Building and Internal Coordination	
Capabilities	Enhance staff's ability to engage in equity work by allocating funds and scheduling staff time to prioritize equity-based strategies. This may include time and budgets for community engagement, tracking equity impacts, and community follow-up.
Educational Opportunities	Prioritize ongoing education to understand equity and climate impacts and develop practical skills for effective project implementation. This may consist of workshops or conferences that share current data trends, approaches to community engagement, case studies, and innovations for equitable implementation.
Coordination	Develop internal coordination, including creating opportunities for staff members to share insights, collaborate on solutions, and coordinate activities. For example, regular interdepartmental meetings can be used to discuss ongoing projects and share best practices, or the County's InSite communication board can be used.
Supportive Culture	Establish a culture that encourages collaboration and innovation on improving equity-based approaches. This may include mentorship, such as pairing experienced staff with new employees to guide them in incorporating equity into their work or working with the established justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion teams.
Continuous Improvement	Set equity goals and regularly evaluate them. Ensure that lessons learned, and feedback are incorporated into processes to update methods, policies, and practices on equity. This may include quarterly or monthly reviews to assess the effectiveness of current practices in promoting equity and making the necessary adjustments.
Constraints	Identify and remove constraints to equitable implementation. This may include project reflections, identifying additional budget and time needs, community engagement needs, and barriers to interdepartmental collaboration.

Figure 2: Mapping the County's Equity Policies and Offices
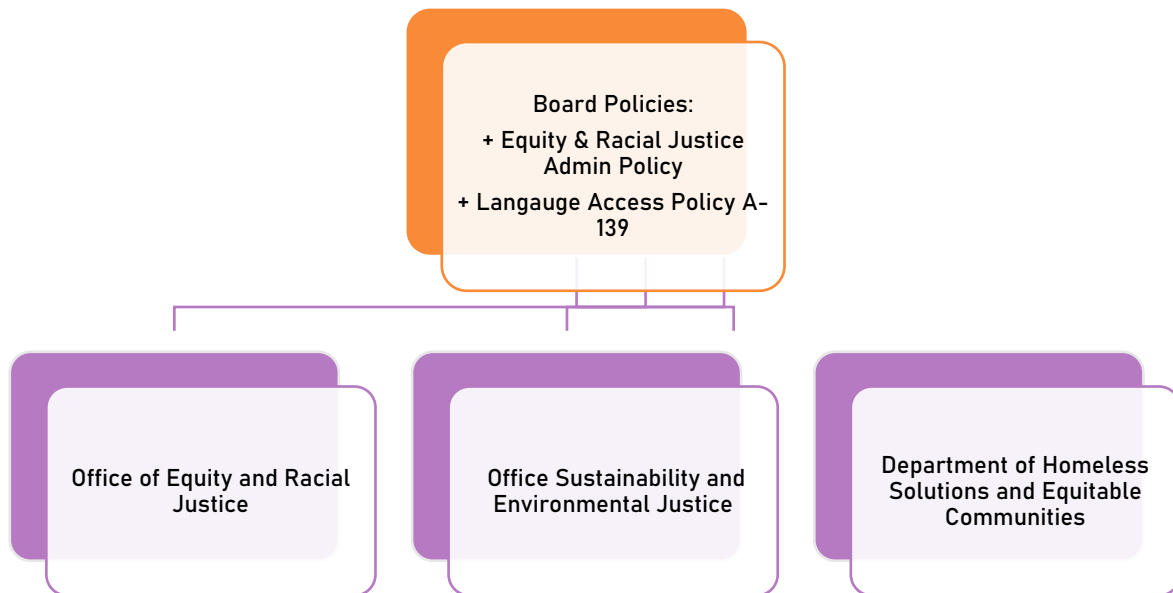
Step 3: Engage Community & Develop Partnerships

Community engagement and involvement can occur across all project steps and is explained in detail here in Step 3. Partnerships are also important to strengthen the implementation process in ways that promote a culture of cooperation, collaboration, and exchange of knowledge. Outreach, engagement, and partnerships create an inclusive process, as emphasized in the vision for climate justice.

Community Engagement Best Practices

Inclusive and dynamic outreach and engagement is key to achieving procedural equity and helps move towards distributional and structural equity as showcased in the spectrum of community engagement in Figure 3. Equitable engagement requires that staff identify underrepresented and underrecognized community members, particularly within frontline communities, and ensure that the engagement and outreach is fair and inclusive. Many frontline communities might lack trust in the government due to histories of disinvestment or lack of representation. It is important to consider the emotional and psychological labor involved with some communities' participation in the projects.

Best practices for engagement involve sharing power and developing community-driven processes that bridge staff and community. This co-creation process involves strong collaboration where staff engage in learning alongside communities and can produce outcomes that more effectively meet the needs of frontline communities. A co-creation process also shows the community that their expertise and leadership is important and so is the collective power of staff and the community in building transformational change. Importantly, placating or tokenizing through information sessions or public comment may show some care for communities, but this approach alone is unlikely to foster community building and strong partnerships.

Figure 3 is adapted from the International Association for Public Participation's *Spectrum of Public Engagement*. A transformative approach actively develops co-creation and moves towards community ownership whenever possible. Additionally, successful community engagement is not only understanding best practices but also understanding what to avoid, described in Table 7.

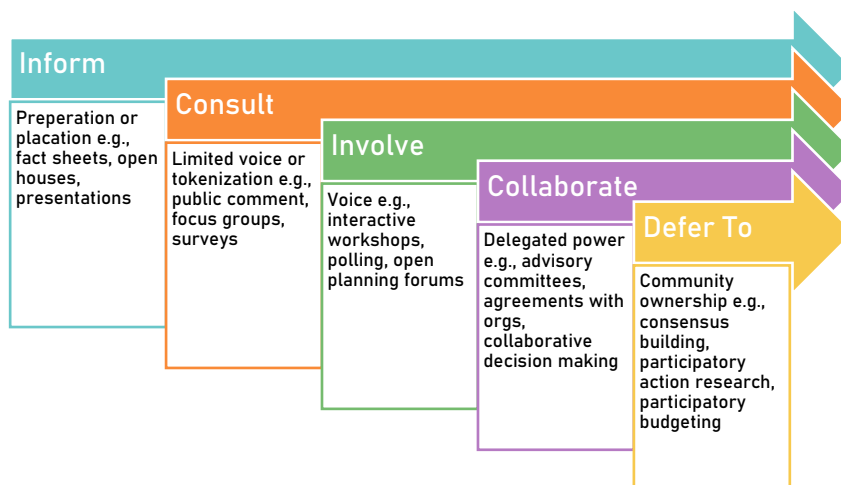*Figure 3: Spectrum of Community Engagement*

Outreach Pitfall	Strategies to Avoid/Address the Concern
Representation: Engaging with the same individuals and communities repeatedly can lead to burnout and inadequate representation of frontline communities.	Ask trusted partners to invite others to participate in intentional conversation or use qualitative data approaches, such as Community Narratives (see Table 5) to identify additional groups.
Communication: Relying on only one form of communication and not looping back once a project is done to share the outcomes.	Utilize various outreach platforms and tools from traditional to digital and always be sure to offer a report out to communities at the conclusion of projects.
Past Harm: Not adequately acknowledging past harms or existing distrust with the government or only using engagement to tokenize communities.	Take time to learn about and verbally address or acknowledge past harms, especially at the beginning of a project.
Top-Down: A one-directional share of information does not encourage co-creation or input from the community.	Integrate ways of collecting feedback into presentations or discussions.
Economic and Time Barriers: Only holding meetings during traditional working hours or not providing resources like stipends, childcare, food, etc. as part of events or workshops.	Incentivize participation, when possible, especially on more complex projects; hold meetings after 5pm; provide childcare, food, and access to transportation for in-person meetings.
Power Dynamics: Not acknowledging the unequal power between County staff and a community member.	Be approachable, listen well, and be open to criticisms even if they are unrelated to your project.
Political Process: A focus on consensus-building that does not allow for different ideas or quieter voices to be heard.	Make sure there are ample opportunities for different perspectives to be heard even when trying to build consensus and facilitate meetings so no one person overpowers. Small group engagement during workshops can help quieter voices share their thoughts.
Informational but not Inclusive: Only allowing community members to inform a process rather than helping influence or shape outcomes.	Hold visioning sessions at the beginning of projects and look for flexible project elements that can be co-created. Plan for feedback sessions throughout the project and be transparent about where there are opportunities to influence versus not.
Overlooking Place and Culture: Communities might operate with a different culture or approach to the work which might differ from the County's usual approach.	Take the time to learn about where you are working and how that community does business so you can be culturally aligned. Hold meetings in community spaces that are familiar and accessible.

Identifying Interest-Holder Groups & Strengthening Partnerships

Interest-holder, also known as stakeholder, identification includes individuals, populations, organizations, for-profits, government entities, and others that will be affected by or can affect implementation. For instance, this may include people or groups who have influence in communities such as religious leaders or youth who can be strong informants to family members. Ensuring adequate representation is essential for achieving procedural equity in outreach and engagement efforts.

There may also be some resistance to assistance or distrust of government. Continuous engagement with communities is essential for gradually building knowledge and trust within them. The consistent presence of County staff and ongoing information sharing further supports partnership and trust-building efforts. This may include actions such as meeting people in their communities at community events, or school and church gatherings.

Staff can collaborate with community-based organizations or civic associations (collectively referred to as community-based groups herein) to reach interest-holders and facilitate engagement. Community-based groups are substantial community assets that may provide essential economic, social, and public health services. With their networks, knowledge of communities, and expertise, community-based groups play a vital role in reaching hard-to-access

populations vulnerable to climate impacts. However, community-based groups may face capacity challenges, such as resource development, technology, staff recruitment, leadership needs, program evaluation, and other program-related issues. Despite these factors, community-based groups can be strong partners in creative problem-solving, implementation, connecting to networks, and facilitating partnerships to ensure community needs are represented and met. It is, therefore, essential to develop a relationship of support and reciprocity to help strengthen the capacity of community-based groups so they can continue to achieve their mission. This may include actions such as compensation for their time or providing technical assistance.

While issue-holders might be directly impacted by implementation, partners might not be directly impacted, but instead have common interests with the County. Partnerships are crucial to long-term implementation success. There are partnership arrangements such as government-community-private partnerships, community-government, interdepartmental, and project-based, all of which can support innovative programs. Increasing the capacity for partnerships also promotes a culture of cooperation, collaboration, and knowledge exchange. Partnerships can enhance bidirectional learning and foster co-creation opportunities. One way to make partnerships effective is by learning from other County departments about their existing relationships and leveraging them across different projects. It is also important to note that top-down approaches, where local governments maintain control of the process and partnerships that do not have clear terms (e.g., time, expected effort, and goals), foster distrust between government and partners. Co-creating partnership agreements that clearly identify resources and define responsibilities, expectations, and goals will support effective partnerships (see the Community Toolbox). It is also important to note that partnerships can go beyond relationships of exchange (e.g., funder-recipient) to improve overall effectiveness of climate actions.

One group that is often left out of project development is youth. Younger generations have inherited the burden of climate impacts and will bear the most significant consequences. At the same time, they are underrepresented in political processes and leadership positions. Youth are also an essential bridge for climate urgency and information, as they are trusted sources of information for their communities. Resources such as the Youth Participatory Action Research Hub at the University of California Berkely can assist with developing youth engagement. The following are recommendations for youth engagement:

- Create adult allies to build leadership skills and empower young people.
- Create opportunities that encourage attendance and participation from youth.
- Develop activities that ensure youth are included and given responsibilities and leadership roles.
- Ensure youth are compensated and have transportation to activities (follow best practices for engagement).
- Partner with schools and other youth-oriented organizations to share information and recruit leaders.

Figure 4: Outcomes of Successful Community
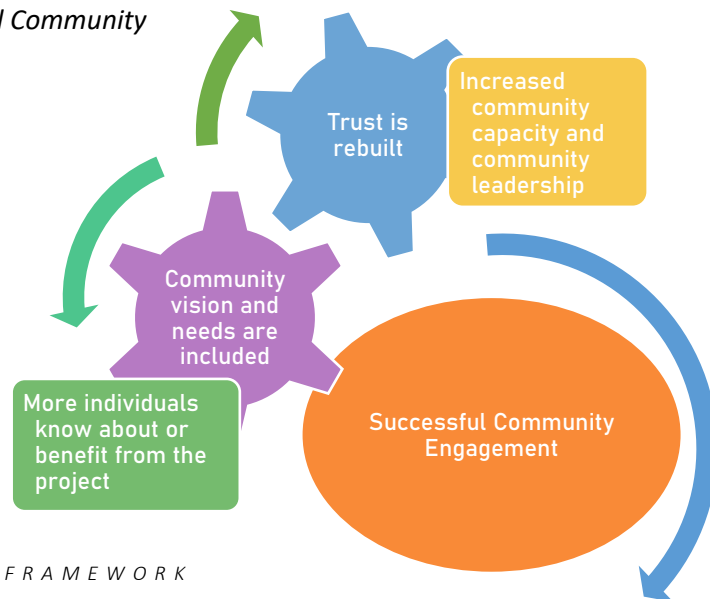
Step 4: Determine Metrics for Success & Accountability in Implementation

Step 4 provides a roadmap for how to co-create metrics of success and accountability and how to develop ways to monitor CAP implementation. This step is critical to tracking equity goals and assessing equitable outcomes. Step 4 involves developing collaborative strategies and gathering qualitative data from the community about their priorities, assessment of whether an action was successful, and how it can be improved. This step is also very important for remediating systemic inequities referenced in the vision for climate justice because it ensures accountability.

Metrics for Success

What success looks like may be different in each project. Hearing from the community on what they define as success is key for developing metrics that reflect community priorities. It is also important to establish baseline metrics (conditions at the start of the project) and then metrics to track during and after project implementation. One way to approach establishing metrics of success, is by framing them within the context of the types of equity previously discussed.

Table 8: Metrics to Measures Success Across Equity Types

Procedural Equity Metrics	Distributional Equity Metrics	Structural Equity Metrics
• Who is showing up to workshops, meetings, and engagement opportunities? • Who is not showing up or disengaged? • How many opportunities were there for feedback or input, and in what formats? • How is information gathered and incorporated into the project? • How is participation incentivized? • How are people recognized for their contributions, especially those impacted by unjust systems?	• In which communities are resources being allocated and made available? • Which groups are accessing resources, and which are not? • How does resource access support different demographic groups (e.g., income levels, renters/owners), and is this impact equitable across these groups?	• What are "starting point vulnerabilities" (i.e., root causes of inequities)? • How can partnerships help shift structures, policies, practices, and mindsets for structural change? • What equity indicators can be tracked over the long-term (e.g., employment, civic engagement, affordability)?

Utilizing Qualitative Data to Co-Determine Success & Accountability

Accountability plays a crucial role in assisting staff in monitoring and tracking project goals and ensuring they align with the established equity outcomes determined in previous steps. Ideally, project elements reflect the established community-informed priorities and metrics can be established to track equitable implementation. Staff will want to consider the following approaches in accountability tracking:

- Involve the community in the monitoring process.
- Collaborate with the community to revise strategies when not achieving desired outcomes.
- Increase transparency by developing a data and information sharing plan for ongoing monitoring of the project and its outcomes.
- Ensure benefits flow to the intended population segments.
- Determine a plan to institutionalize, or embed, change, including program longevity.
- Communicate success and challenges to others.

An important concept to Step 4 is *ground-truthing*. Ground-truthing involves verifying quantitative data through on-the-ground observations by community members who have firsthand knowledge and expertise about their neighborhoods. One example is through Data Walks that cross-check assumptions in aggregated or collected data. Ground-truthing centers community members' expertise in cross-checking or refining data and assumptions obtained from secondary sources (see LA Green Zoning Program). Ground-truthing is a strategy that ensures quality data, grounds projects in community needs, and builds accountability.

Much like the qualitative data tools laid out in Table 5, ground-truthing can ensure implementation is leading to the desired outcomes and can do the following:
- Establishes continuous feedback from the community to adjust projects and report back to the community.
- Increases transparency between County staff and the community.
- Allows the community to validate or challenge assumptions.
- Ensures outcomes and benefits flow to the intended population segments.
- Builds relationships which improves future implementation collaborations.

Community Priorities & Long-Term Metrics

Through the co-creation process, staff can collect information and data to determine community priorities. Once community priorities are identified, they can be brought back to the community to refine and ensure alignment. For example, Table 9 outlines key priorities identified through the Framework engagement process mapped across the types of equity. These priorities can then be translated into metrics for measuring success. For instance, the priority of climate impact preparedness included in Table 9 could translate to metrics around how resilient or well-prepared community infrastructure is to handle extreme weather events.

It is also essential to recognize that inequities can be worsened by how we measure equity and how those measures guide implementation efforts. One common problem is to focus on measuring distributional equity and outcomes at one specific time point. For instance, a frontline community might be selected for a green infrastructure project and assume long-term benefits for that community. However, research indicates affordability and displacement may arise, particularly with green space and infrastructure improvements. One way to ensure lasting benefits is to monitor outcomes over time to ensure ongoing support for frontline communities and attempt to prevent negative effects.

It could be helpful to develop a monitoring and accountability program to assist with tracking implementation. This could include empowering the community to help track success through a formal or informal working group or steering committee that would monitor project implementation and ensure community needs are being met. This approach is also valuable in thinking about how to move towards community co-ownership.

	Equity Priority	Description
Procedural Equity	Inclusion	• Generational disparities • Representation from underserved and historically marginalized populations
	Community Engagement	• Engage with youth • Develop community-based partnerships and ongoing relationships
	Education	• Create bi-directional education • Consider language, format, and the digital divide
Distributional Equity	Flow of Benefits	• Ensure benefits flow to those who need it the most • Need to overcome the renter/owner problem
	Climate Impact Preparedness	• Disaster preparedness (shocks like wildfires and storms) • Respond to daily stressors (the incremental change in energy burden, hotter days, and drought)
	Pollution	• Recognize existing pollution burdens such as groundwater contamination, air pollution, and other toxic burdens • Need a future orientation – how will uneven burdens worsen with climate change?
	Affordability	• Housing, including displacement and development
Structural Equity	Social Inequity	• Recognize existing environmental and economic privilege • The need to develop an intersectional understanding of climate and social needs across populations
	Safety in Communities	• Recognize issues of safety and mobility in rural areas • Understand how safety is impacted by climate action implementation from the community perspective
	Economic Inequality	• Workforce development for underserved and historically marginalized populations. • Recognize how isolation and mobility influence economics
	Daily Stressors	• Food access, mobility, energy burdens • Recognize how professionals will be burdened by climate changes (inability to work, hotter days, commutes) • Need to understand how climate will exacerbate economic challenges
	Geography	• Understand rural culture and place • Understand isolation and mobility issues

*Identified in the Framework community engagement process (see Appendix C for details)

Step 5: Institutionalize Change & Celebrate Successes

This step underscores the importance of institutionalizing projects by linking them to sustained resources, support, and opportunities for community ownership. It is important to remember that equity is not an endpoint but a continuous process. The institutionalization of projects represents a transformative strategy that promotes structural changes, ensuring ongoing community benefits, and holds true to the vision for climate justice.

Institutionalizing Change

To help long-term shifts to more equity-based outcomes, it is imperative new, successful approaches are promoted throughout the County enterprise. This could look like posting stories to InSite (the County's internal website), presenting at interdepartmental meetings, and showcasing the work to external partners. Externally, this could mean identifying opportunities to present at conferences, publishing case studies, or joining a community of practice. Achieving equity takes incremental shifts in processes and a commitment to create positive feedback loops.

Celebrating Successes

Celebrating success within a program is an important part to creating more success. When there is dedicated time to celebrate wins, especially within community, it breaks down otherwise perceived barriers and continues to build towards a more relational, or person-to-person, way of getting the work done. Celebrating success also offers an opportunity to highlight the roles of internal and external partners in implementation thereby continuing to improve relationships. Celebrating success could look like an informal gathering, a media push, or simply sending thank you cards and emails. Some questions to ask yourself when preparing to celebrate success can include:

- How are you celebrating collectively and reflecting on this process?
- How are you documenting your successes? What can be shared with others?
- What strategies, narratives, and practices helped moved this forward?

Picture 4: Folklórico Dancers at the 3rd Annual Ramona Earth Day Festival

Appendix A: Worksheets

This worksheet will help you identify some equity considerations in your pre-implementation efforts. The goal of this worksheet is to begin making connections between your implementation project and equity. Review the questions and write your answers in the space provided. It is okay if some questions go unanswered, the process of working through the Framework will help to answer many of the proposed questions.

Pre-implementation questions for project	Write your current knowledge and initial ideas
Is the project a policy, program, or incentive?	
What are the potential climate impacts associated with the project?	
Which populations will be *directly* and *indirectly* affected by the project and how?	
What are the possible differences in access to project resources and how can inequitable access be addresses?	
How can you work with the community to co-create the project (see Step 3)?	
How will you increase frontline communities' knowledge about the project?	
How can frontline communities' lived experience inform the project?	
How will the project support consistent and reliable outcomes for frontline communities?	
How will project benefits be communicated to frontline communities?	
How might the equity outcomes connect to equity goals in other sectors (e.g., health, housing, workforce development)?	
If an incentive, are there opportunities to reduce any upfront costs or need for funds?	
If an incentive, how are benefits directly impacting those with the least amount of resources?	
If a policy, how have past relevant policies impacted inequities?	
If a policy, could this policy intensify any disparities?	

This worksheet will help you (1) identify the equity gaps and equity goals related to the CAP measure or action and (2) identify potential data sources and indicators that can assist in prioritizing your project focus. Refer to Tables 5–7 to support your assessment.

Identify equity gaps			
Describe the equity gaps connected to the CAP measure or action. What equity-related goals (e.g., reduce energy burden, support community assets, resilience building) can the project support?	Describe equity gaps:		
	List equity-related goals:		

Assess data sources	Data source or indicator(s) 1	Data source or indicator(s) 2	Data source or indicator(s) 3
What data will your team need to identify communities and issues that intersect with the measure or action? (e.g., CalEnviroScreen 4.0;).			
What advantages and limitations exist for each data source?			
What equity indicators or qualitative data will you use to better understand the community and their needs?			

Identify potential issue-holder groups and how much the project will impact them. Integrate this information into an engagement plan and consider any known relationships with the County that can affect engagement.

Issue-Holder Group	What is the degree that each stakeholder group will be impacted by the project? (1-5, 1=Not at all, 5=Direct impact)	How will the group benefit or be negatively impacted by the project? Are there past harms (e.g., broken trust) that should be considered?	What approach will your team take to ensure an inclusive and engaged process? How will you move towards co-creation?
General Public			
Frontline Communities			
Community-Based Groups			
Advocacy/social movement groups			
Community Planning and Sponsor Groups			
Labor or Industry Groups			
Private-for-Profit Business Sector			
Other County Departments			
Other Public Agencies			
Other			

Identify potential partnerships that connect to equity outcomes. The goal of this worksheet is to identify opportunities for mutually beneficial partnerships that align with project equity goals.

Equity outcomes and partnerships	Provide answers
What are some potentially mutually beneficial partnerships?	
What community-based partners will benefit from or have shared goals with the project?	
What County departments have shared goals with the project?	
What for-profit partners could support the project (if applicable, e.g., workforce development)?	
Where has trust been broken in the past with potential partners (e.g., disinvestment, communication)? How can trust be rebuilt?	
How will decisions be made to ensure everyone has an opportunity to provide input?	
How will the project help develop effective, long-term relationships and trust among diverse partners?	
How are partnerships being built with community members, beyond community-based organizations?	

Use the following question set to explore what metrics you can use to measure success.

Questions about metrics	Provide answers
During what points of the process will you assess implementation progress?	
What metrics are being used to establish the baseline?	
What opportunities exist for community members to assist in accountability tracking?	
Have you been able to leverage implementation efforts to address other needs the community has identified?	
What are the long-term plans for measuring implementation of the project and intended or unintended consequences?	
How can you adapt if the project is not achieving the intended goals?	

Complete the following table to reflect on project goals, who was negatively or positively impacted, the missed opportunities, and what lessons should be shared with other departments or leadership.

List Project Goals and Populations Affected	Reflect on the project with your team and the community: What went well, what did not, and what opportunities were missed?			Describe what can be improved?
	List Positive Impacts	List Unintended Impacts	List Missed Opportunities	
Goal 1:				
Goal 2:				
Goal 3:				
Goal 4:				
Goal 5:				
How will you share lessons from your project? List opportunities to share your experiences.				

Appendix B: Definitions

Accountability: Involves creating processes where individuals, groups, organizations, or government are held responsible for their actions and developing transparent processes and reporting to evaluate accountability. Accountability includes relationships between those held to account and those who hold them to account and ensuring that power is exercised responsibly and effectively across public and private sectors [38]

Adaptation: The adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities [39].

Anti-racism: The active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices, and attitudes so that power and resources are redistributed and shared equitably [40, 41].

Belonging: Having the right and opportunity to contribute a meaningful voice and participate in the design of social and cultural structures [42].

Climate equity: Addresses historical inequities imposed on people of color and proposes a fair distribution of the burdens and benefits of climate solutions to attain equal access to resources and opportunities regardless of one's background and identity [43]

Climate justice: Climate justice is defined as the concept that no group of people should disproportionately bear the burden of climate impacts or the costs of mitigation and adaptation [44]. In addition to the definition, Step 0 includes the climate justice vision developed during the Framework engagement with input from community leaders.

Co-benefits: Holistic benefits for our region and people that create healthy, resilient, and equitable communities and economic opportunities through climate action [45]

Co-creation: The collaborative process of designing programs and solutions in partnership with interested and impacted stakeholders, communities, and individuals [46].

Community-Based Organization: An organization formed to serve a specific community of people as a result of shared interest, identities, and or attributes such as religious beliefs or shared conditions. Such communities may include members of diverse backgrounds, various stakeholders, public elected officials, advocacy groups, and business leaders [47]

Community resilience: Refers to the ability of communities to cope with and recover from past disasters as well as their ability to strengthen their capacity to confront and respond to future hazardous events

Distributional equity: Fair distribution of resources, benefits, and burdens. Prioritizes resources for communities that experience the greatest inequities and most disproportionate impacts and have the greatest unmet needs [12].

Environmental Privilege: The construction of exclusive environmental amenities such as clean air and water, open space, and safe neighborhoods accrued through the exercise of economic, political, and cultural power [26].

Equity: Equity is just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential [48].

Frontline communities: Frontline communities are historically marginalized communities that experience the most immediate and worst impacts of climate change and other injustices and are often communities of color and low-income [12]

Ground-Truth: Ground-truthing is a process of validating quantitative data through on-the-ground observations. Given that community members have their own observations and expertise about their neighborhoods, they are able to provide an understanding that can either verify or correct data collected about their neighborhood [49].

Intersectionality: A framework that describes the ways in which systems of inequality based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, class, and other forms of discrimination "intersect" to create unique dynamics and effects that cannot be disentangled [11, 50].

Maladaptation: Adaptation efforts that worsen a situation, or transfer the challenge from one area, sector, or social group to another [51].

Marginalized: A person or group is considered marginalized if they have been systemically isolated from resources necessary to thrive by a socially dominant group, often by means of segregation, separation, and lack of access [52].

Procedural equity: Procedural equity is to create processes that are transparent, fair, and inclusive in developing and implementing any program, plan, or policy, ensuring that all people are treated openly and fairly, and increasing the civic engagement opportunities of communities that are disproportionately impacted by climate change [12]

Resilience: The ability to prepare for changing conditions and withstand, respond to, and recover rapidly from disruptions. For example, implementing nature-based solutions and building improvements, like planting trees and native landscaping and installing green roofs, can help mitigate extreme heat [53]

Structural equity: Involves making a commitment to correct past harms and prevent future unintended consequences, address the underlying structural and institutional systems that are the root causes of social and racial inequities and including adaptation strategies to eliminate poverty, create workforce development, address racism, increase civic participation, protect housing availability, increase education, and provide healthcare [12].

Targeted Universalism: An approach that sets universal goals or outcomes that benefit all, then develops targeted strategies for different groups to reach these outcomes. Actions that address gaps between different groups are inextricably linked to actions that address gaps between a group and a universal goal or outcome. Disparities are measured in relation to desired outcomes, not just by comparing different groups [54].

Vulnerable populations: Vulnerable populations include, but are not limited to women; racial or ethnic groups; low-income individuals and families; individuals who are incarcerated or have been incarcerated; individuals with disabilities; individuals with mental health conditions; children; youth and young adults; seniors; immigrants and refugees; individuals who are limited English proficient (LEP); and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning (LGBTQQ) communities, or combinations of these populations. Vulnerable populations in the unincorporated county include EJCs, low-income persons, communities of color, linguistically isolated persons, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and persons experiencing homelessness, among others [12].

Appendix C: Resources

This appendix serves as a guide to data, tools, initiatives, and organizations promoting equity, sustainability, and justice. The resources in this appendix are organized across the following sections: (A) County of San Diego Resources, (B) State of California Resources, (C) Data Sources and Resources (County, Regional, State, and National), (D) Essential Resources to Enhance Knowledge about Equity, (E) Resources for Outreach and Engagement, and (F) Resources for Partnership Development.

A. County of San Diego Resources

Climate Action Plan Dashboard

This dashboard shows how the 2018 Climate Action Plan's 26 quantifiable, achievable, and enforceable measures are performing.

Community Health Statistics Unit (CHSU)

The Community Health Statistics Unit (CHSU) provides health statistics that describe health behaviors, diseases, and injuries for specific populations, in addition to health trends and comparisons to national targets. CHSU aids in effective decision making and helps to identify opportunities for preventive efforts through the use of data reporting, visualizations, and predictive analytics.

Department of Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities (HSEC): Office of Equitable Communities

Supports under-resourced and vulnerable groups, immigrant, and refugee communities, and those at risk of homelessness. HSEC coordinates County efforts, fosters collaboration with external partners, and promotes equity for all San Diegans.

Environmental Justice Element of the General Plan (August 2021)

The Environmental Justice (EJ) Element is a part of the County of San Diego's General Plan, which focuses on addressing and incorporating environmental justice into land use planning and decision-making processes. The element aims to promote equitable distribution of environmental benefits and burdens across different communities, particularly those that have been historically underserved or disproportionately affected by environmental hazards.

Equity and Racial Justice Administrative Policy

The purpose of the Equity and Racial Justice Administrative Policy is to create consistent procedures across the county that promote equity and racial justice by integrating, organizing, and implementing these concepts into the routine operations of departments.

General Plan

The San Diego County General Plan applies to the unincorporated area of the county and reflects an environmentally sustainable approach to planning that balances the need for adequate infrastructure, housing, and economic vitality while maintaining and preserving existing communities, agricultural areas, and open spaces.

Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (JEDI) Team

The (JEDI) Team is a dedicated group within the County of San Diego focused on promoting justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion across all aspects of County operations.

Leon L. Williams Human Relations Commission (HRC)

The HRC is an advisory body dedicated to promoting human rights, equity, and social justice within the county. The HRC works to address discrimination, prejudice, and intolerance, fostering a more inclusive and respectful environment for all residents.

Office of Equity and Racial Justice (OERJ)

The San Diego County Office of Equity and Racial Justice is dedicated to ensuring all residents have equitable access to opportunities and resources through policy development, community engagement,

and collaboration with stakeholders.

Office of Equity and Racial Justice's Partner & Strategy Circle

OERJ's Partner & Strategy Circle is a monthly collaborative forum made up of stakeholders from various sectors dedicated to advance equity and racial justice initiatives throughout the county and to address systemic disparities and promote inclusion.

Office of Sustainability and Environmental Justice (OSEJ)

The San Diego County Office of Sustainability and Environmental Justice strives to address environmental challenges while ensuring that all communities have access to a healthy and sustainable environment through initiatives such as sustainability planning, environmental justice assessments, and community engagement.

Public Health Services (PHS): Health Equity

The Public Health Services Department's health equity website is part of the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency. One can find information on the history, current initiatives, and resources related to health equity within PHS

Regional Decarbonization Framework (RDF)

A strategic plan developed by the County of San Diego to guide the region's transition toward a low-carbon future. It outlines comprehensive policies and initiatives aimed at achieving deep decarbonization across multiple sectors, including energy, transportation, and land use.

Sustainability Task Force

The San Diego County Sustainability Task Force is a collaborative effort involving various county departments dedicated to implementing the Climate Action Plan (CAP) and advancing sustainability initiatives by working to mitigate climate change, enhance environmental resilience, and promote sustainable practices across the county, ensuring a greener and more resilient future for all residents.

B. State of California Resources

CalBRACE Adaptation Toolkit

Allows health officials to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to a range of climate sensitive health impacts with a unified climate and health adaptation strategy. Key principles for the framework include adaptive management, evidence-based public health practice, and engaging stakeholders.

California Department of Education Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)

The LCAP is a three-year plan that describes the goals, actions, services, and expenditures to support positive student outcomes that address state and local priorities. The LCAP provides an opportunity for LEAs (county office of education [COE], school districts and charter schools) to share their stories of how, what, and why programs and services are selected to meet their local needs.

California Department of Justice's Bureau of Environmental Justice

The Bureau of Environmental Justice's mission is to protect people and communities that endure a disproportionate share of environmental pollution and public health hazards.

California Department of Public Health Climate Change and Health Profile Reports

The reports present projections for county and regional climate impacts, the climate-related health risks, and local populations that could be vulnerable to climate effects. The information is based on available science compiled from previously published, state-sponsored research and plans.

California Energy Commission (CEC)

The California Energy Commission (CEC) is California's main energy policy and planning agency.. The commission's main function is to advance energy innovation and efficiency, promote renewable energy sources, and develop energy policies that support the state's environmental goals.

Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD)

The Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) collects and manages data from dozens of health plans, thousands of health facilities and prescription drug manufacturers, and tens-of-thousands of healthcare workforce practitioners and produces a variety of tools to make the data useful and meaningful.

C. Data Sources and Resources (County, Regional, State, and National)

California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool: CalEnviroScreen

CalEnviroScreen is a screening methodology that can be used to help identify California communities that are disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution.

California Department of Public Health- California Heat Assessment Tool

This tool allows users to explore and understand how extreme heat will impact specific communities across the state.

California Department of Public Health- Climate Change and Health Vulnerability Indicators (CCHVIz)

Climate change and health indicators, narratives, and data to provide local health departments and partners tools to better understand the people and places in their jurisdictions that are more susceptible to adverse health impacts associated with climate change, specifically extreme heat, wildfire, sea level rise, drought, and poor air quality. The assessment data can be used to screen and prioritize where to focus deeper analysis and plan for public health actions to increase resilience.

California Department of Public Health- CA Healthy Places Index (HPI)

HPI maps data on social conditions that drive health — like education, job opportunities, clean air and water, and other indicators that are positively associated with life expectancy at birth. Community leaders, policymakers, academics, and other stakeholders use the HPI to compare the health and well-being of communities, identify health inequities and quantify the factors that shape health.

California Department of Public Health- Health Mobility Options Tool (ITHIM)

ITHIM calculates the change in deaths, years of life shortening and disability, and costs due to changes in air pollution, physical activity, and traffic injuries.

California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod)

CalEEMod quantifies ozone precursors, criteria pollutants, and greenhouse gas emissions from the construction and operation of new land use development and linear projects in California. The model integrates data from CalEnviroScreen®, Cal-Adapt®, and the Healthy Places Index (HPI)® to identify potential climate risks and environmental burdens within the project vicinity.

CEC Data Exploration Tools

Data exploration tools provide an easy and accessible way to explore data and visualize trends, outliers, and patterns. CEC interactive maps and dashboards empower users to access, explore, analyze, and download various energy related datasets.

California Environmental Protection Agency- Urban Heat Island Index

Defines and examines the characteristics of the urban heat island and creates an Urban Heat Island Index to quantify the extent and severity of urban heat islands for individual cities.

California Environmental Protection Agency- Urban Heat Island Interactive Map

Shows the urban heat island effect for each census tract in and around most urban areas throughout the state.

Cal-Adapt

Cal-Adapt provides the public, researchers, government agencies and industry stakeholders with essential data & tools for climate adaptation planning, building resiliency, and fostering community engagement.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention Environmental Justice Dashboard

Explore data on environmental exposures, community characteristics, and health burden — factors important to understanding and addressing environmental justice issues.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network

Brings together health data and environmental data from national, state, and city sources and provides supporting information to make the data easier to understand. The Tracking Network has data and information on environments and hazards, health effects, and population health.

City of San Diego Climate Equity Index

The City of San Diego's Climate Equity Index was developed in 2019, and revised in 2021, to measure the levels of access to opportunity residents have within a census tract and assess the degree of potential impacts of climate change on these areas.

County of San Diego's Regional Equity Indicators Report and Data

The data portal presents 2021 data that includes 34 indicators organized into ten thematic categories with information on each indicator. The report gives further context on equity disparities across the ten themes that include education, food systems, civic engagement, early childhood development, housing, health, infrastructure, jobs and finance, crime and the legal system, and parks and natural resources.

County of San Diego's Data Portal

The County's Data Portal supports using public data to promote government transparency and better inform decision-making. The Open Data program provides data from a variety of County efforts in one accessible portal.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Flood Map Service Center (MSC)

Official online location to find all flood hazard mapping products created under the National Flood Insurance Program, including your community's flood map.

Health Center Program Uniform Data System (UDS)

Each calendar year, the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) Health Center Program awardees and look-alikes are required to report a core set of information, including data on patient characteristics, services provided, clinical processes and health outcomes, patients' use of services, staffing, costs, and revenues as part of a standardized reporting system known as the UDS.

Indicators of Climate Change in California

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) researches and presents indicators in periodic reports describing how California's climate is changing and how these changes are affecting the state. Indicators are scientifically based measurements that track trends in various aspects of climate change.

Live Well San Diego

The Live Well San Diego indicators capture the collective impact of programs, services, and

interventions provided by the government and community partners striving to improve the quality of life so that all San Diego County residents can be healthy, safe, and thriving.

[Nonprofit Institute at the University of San Diego (NPI)](#)

NPI houses the [San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative](#) and the [Equinox Project's Quality of Life Dashboard](#) (QoL). The QoL Dashboard measures and benchmarks several environmental and economic trends throughout the region and calls attention to the ways in which local nonprofits, government and businesses are working together to ensure San Diego County is on a path to greater health, wealth, comfort and sustainability for current and future generations.

[Office of Sustainability and Environmental Justice](#) [(OSEJ) Storymap](#)

Environmental justice tool that visually represents environmental health concerns in neighborhoods of the San Diego region by census tract. This visual "library" of health indicators will help raise awareness on this topic and provide information for the public's use in planning, advocacy, or education.

[San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Open Data Portal](#)

Hosts all the data collected by SANDAG. Here, you can download raw figures and visualizations that show what life is like in the San Diego region.

[San Diego Unified School District: School Plans for Student Achievement](#)

The School Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) identifies and addresses the instructional needs of students and specifies how funds provided through the Consolidated Application will be used to accomplish the goals outlined in the plan.

[School Accountability Report Card (SARC)](#)

California public & nonpublic, nonsectarian schools annually provide information to the community to allow public comparison of schools for student achievement, environment, resources & demographics.

[Southern California Association of Governments](#) [(SCAG) Active Transportation Database](#)

The Active Transportation Database (ATDB) was developed to collect and store bicycle, pedestrian, wheelchair, and scooter/skateboard volume counts from infrastructure and planning projects across Southern California.

[The State of Equity Measurement from the Urban Institute](#)

This guide is a comprehensive approach to measuring social equity including definitions and measurement approaches for equity in service fields that could apply broadly with special consideration for energy efficiency programs.

D. Essential Resources to Enhance Knowledge about Equity

[Barcelona Lab for Urban Environmental Justice and Sustainability](#)

The [Policy and Planning Tools for Urban Green Justice: Fighting Displacement and Gentrification and Improving Accessibility and Inclusiveness to Green Amenities](#) is a toolkit that offers strategies for ensuring that urban greening initiatives are equitable and just.

[California Environmental Justice Alliance](#)

The California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) is a coalition comprising grassroots organizations dedicated to advocating for environmental and social justice, particularly focusing on addressing issues such as environmental pollution and climate change impacts in low-income communities and communities of color throughout California.

[Center for Community Energy and Environmental Justice](#)

> Offers technical assistance to community organizations, including environmental and energy justice assessments, government system navigation support, grant acquisition and administration enhancement, as well as decision-making participation promotion and community champion training.

[Changelab Solutions, Section 9. Developing Baseline Measures](#)

> This resource offers information on the value of Baseline Measures and how they can be used to track the progress and success of a project.

[Climate Adaptation Knowledge Exchange (CAKE)](#)

> CAKE is a platform where users can access case studies and resources detailing adaptation implementation, and social equity.

[Gender and the Climate Crisis: Equitable Solutions for Climate Plans (Report)](#)

> The Center for Biological Diversity sought to learn if gender and solutions related to gender were included in municipal climate plans. Twenty-one climate plans from cities across the United States were analyzed for this report, representing approximately 10% of the U.S. population.

[Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE)](#)

> GARE is a national network of governments working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all. GARE provides resources, training, and support to government agencies to help them address institutional racism and promote racial equity in their policies and practices.

[Groundwork USA](#)

> Groundwork USA is a non-profit organization dedicated to community revitalization through environmental improvement projects, brownfield remediation, environmental education, and workforce development initiatives, achieved through partnerships with local organizations and residents across the United States. [Groundwork San Diego Chollas Creek](#) is active particularly in creating climate safe neighborhoods and mapping connections and the project [Historical Segregation and Climate Vulnerability](#).

[Greenlining Institute](#)

> The Greenlining Institute is a California-based organization dedicated to promoting racial and economic justice through policy advocacy, research, organizing, and leadership development, with a focus on empowering communities of color and other marginalized groups.

[Othering & Belonging Institute](#)

> The Othering & Belonging Institute is an interdisciplinary research and policy organization based at the University of California, Berkeley that focuses on understanding and addressing issues related to social inclusion, belonging, and exclusion on both a local and global scale. The institute has tools for engaging and training on [Targeted Universalism / Equity 2.0](#) and the [Transformative Research Toolkit: Strategies and Resources for Community-Driven Knowledge and Action.](#)

[The CREATE Initiative](#)

> The toolkit [Sharing in the Benefits of a Greening City a Policy Toolkit In Pursuit of Economic, Environmental, And Racial Justice](#) serves as an informational guide on climate displacement and green gentrification and how to address these issues.

[Urban Institute](#)

> The Urban Institute is a nonprofit research organization focused on analyzing social and economic issues to inform public policy. The institute has many resources including the report titled, [In the Face of Gentrification: Case Studies of Local Efforts to Mitigate Displacement](#) which provides information

about how communities are affected by gentrification and how and includes examples of cases in which local efforts have attempted to mitigate displacement as a result of gentrification.

E. Resources for Outreach and Engagement

California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) and PlaceWorks Inc. SB 1000 Implementation Toolkit

The SB 1000 Implementation Toolkit serves as a comprehensive guide for local governments, planners, community organizations, and stakeholders tasked with crafting Environmental Justice Elements or policies for their General Plans in compliance with SB 1000 regulations.

Civic Well's Participation Tools for Better Community Planning.

Offers an array of public participation tools tailored for health-promoting land use and transportation planning, emphasizing their efficacy in lower-income, underserved communities, while also discussing the importance of resident involvement and fundamental principles for successful community planning

International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)

IAP2 provides guidelines, resources, and training to support organizations and individuals in implementing equitable public participation practices. This includes the Spectrum of Public Engagement referenced in this Framework.

Urban Sustainability Directors Network, From Community Engagement to Ownership

This resource outlines ways to ensure communities are direct participants in every step of the decision process for developing policies that directly affect them, empowering them and granting them ownership.

F. Resources for Partnership Development

Collaborating for Equity and Justice Toolkit

This toolkit is designed as a companion to the Nonprofit Quarterly publication "Collaborating for Equity and Justice: Moving Beyond Collective Impact." Each principle in the publication is accompanied by case studies, resources, and tools.

Community Planning Groups and Sponsor Group Training

This training equips participants with the essential knowledge and tools to effectively fulfill their roles and responsibilities under the Brown Act, the Public Records Act, and Board Policy I-1 requirements.

Live Well San Diego Partners and Community Leadership Teams

The Partners are organizations and agencies that collaborate with the County of San Diego to advance the Live Well San Diego goals, which include promoting healthy, safe, and thriving communities. The Community Leadership Teams are local groups of residents, stakeholders, and representatives from various sectors who work together to address health and social issues in their communities.

Private Sector Partnerships: The Climate Resilience-Economy Nexus: Advancing Common Goals

This report identifies ways economic development and climate resilience can work together, showcasing real projects and common goals like building resilient infrastructure, creating jobs, and prioritizing equity in vulnerable communities.

SANDAG's Regional Plan Social Equity Working Group

The working group focuses on addressing social equity issues within the development and implementation of regional plans, particularly in areas such as transportation, housing, and environmental policy.

Appendix D: Methods & Approaches

This section describes the methods and collaborative approach between the University of San Diego (USD) and the County of San Diego's Planning and Development Services (PDS) Climate Action Plan (CAP) team in developing this Framework. The four key components to developing the Framework included: (1) a review of equity-focused efforts regionally, in California, and nationally, as well as academic research on equity in climate action; (2) developing a four-part workshop series to identify and integrate priorities from Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) serving or residing in unincorporated areas; (3) interdepartmental collaboration and feedback from County staff; and (4) updates to County staff, CBOs, and other stakeholders. The sections below further describe the four key components that support the development of this Framework.

REVIEW: EQUITY-FOCUSED REPORTS AND ACADEMIC RESEARCH ON EQUITY IN CLIMATE ACTION

The USD team reviewed equity-based climate efforts to identify best practices in indicator and metrics usage, community engagement, and trends in equity approaches. The review also included academic literature that documented best practices and pitfalls of equity in climate action efforts. This research served as a baseline understanding of best practices and innovative efforts in prioritizing equity across the CAP's five emission reduction sectors: the Built Environment and Transportation, Energy, Solid Waste, Water and Wastewater, and Agriculture and Conservation. In particular, the following reports and frameworks were instrumental in guiding the development of this Framework.

- *Racial Equity Impact Assessment & Implementation Guide, Oakland*
- *Cleveland Climate Action Plan*
- *Portland Climate Action Through Equity*
- *City of Sacramento Racial Equity and Sustainability Toolkit*
- *City of Portland Equity Toolkit*
- *Thrive Rural Framework*
- *The Climate Equity Community Task Force, King County*

WORKSHOP SERIES DEVELOPMENT

In line with the County's jurisdiction, the four-part workshop series emphasized engagement from representatives in unincorporated and frontline communities. The Framework team engaged Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) that work in or reside in unincorporated areas to learn about their work and priorities as representatives of unincorporated or frontline communities.

Community-Based Organization (CBO) Identification and Selection

In March 2023, the team conducted research of the County's 23 Community Planning Areas, categorized into North County, East County, and Backcountry. The USD team cross-referenced the 2020 Census and CalEnviroScreen 4.0 data to understand each unique community's population demographics and climate risks. Limitations of the Census data was considered, including its historical undercounting of racial and ethnic minorities, persons who do not speak English fluently, lower income persons, those experiencing homelessness, undocumented immigrants, young mobile persons, children, and members of the LGBTQIA+ communities. For this reason, extra efforts were made to identify and include CBOs that work on social justice issues across the region.

CBOs were compiled based on existing records from the County's CAP list of stakeholders, and County partnerships, such as those developed as part of the Regional Decarbonization Framework, and The Nonprofit Institute's Climate Asset Map Database. Inclusion criteria included CBOs (a) located in or serving unincorporated areas, or (b) a focus on underrepresented or hard-to-reach populations as described above, or (c) a focus on one or more of the five CAP emission reduction sectors. A total of 197 CBOs were identified and submitted to the County's PDS team for consideration. Final selection was determined by the County team based on geographic region, environmental and/or social justice focus, and previous working knowledge of CBOs. Ultimately, 26 CBO representatives participated in workshops, three of whom served as

panelists. Importantly, the process of identifying CBOs in unincorporated areas highlighted the need for a more comprehensive database of organizations and civic groups, particularly with identifying organizations serving the Backcountry.

Community Engagement

The development of the community engagement process was guided by best practices and previous County initiatives. The engagement process followed the principles of the International Association for Public Engagement (IAP2) Public Participation Framework (see Step 3).The USD and County team designed the four-part workshop series with the following goals: (1) determine the CBOs' priority concerns, (2) integrate community voices into the development of the Framework, (3) elicit feedback on the Framework, and (4) reinforce accountability by presenting the final product to participants. Each of the four workshops is described below.

Workshop One: August 2023

The goal of the first three-hour in-person workshop was to build community among participants and County staff. The Lakeside Public Library was identified as an accessible location within the unincorporated community. The focus of the first workshop was to meet community participants where they were in terms of climate and CAP knowledge and to ground the Framework development in frontline and unincorporated area community experiences. Workshop attendees included 14 CBO representatives, 3 County staff members from The Office of Environmental and Racial Justice (OERJ) and The Office of Sustainability and Environmental Justice (OSEJ), a local artist, a moderator, and four USD research team members. CBO workshop attendees were compensated for their time.
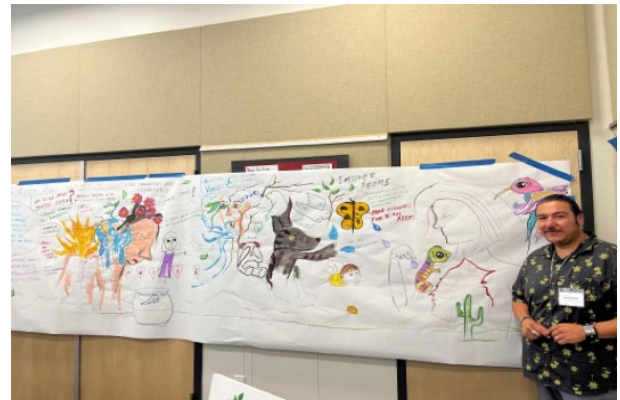
Picture 1: Muralist Gerardo Meza with the mural he crafted during the workshop.

The workshop was facilitated by Anita López of Soy López Consulting. Anita is an experienced consultant with a history of working in public health and policy, is a State-trained climate fellow, and possesses deep knowledge about social equity in the region. A muralist, Gerardo Meza of Meza Arte visually captured voices and ideas that emerged during the workshop (see Image 1). There were interactive art materials at every table (construction paper, markers, play-doh, and wikki sticks). Posters, table tents, and printed handouts with environmental and equity definitions were available to participants.

The morning began with a warm-up activity and overview presentation of the CAP to help set the tone for the day and create a baseline understanding of the project. Next, the facilitator led a panel discussion with three panelists representing the Backcountry, the peri-urban part of the unincorporated County, and North County to share their perspectives and community engagement experiences. A substantial portion of the workshop included engaging participants to gather their thoughts, priorities, and concerns about each of the CAP's five emission reduction sectors. In this activity, participants were divided into small groups and received workbook packets with an example of a potential CAP action. The groups then rotated through five stations to have more in-depth conversations facilitated by County staff. USD researchers were at each station to transcribe conversations.
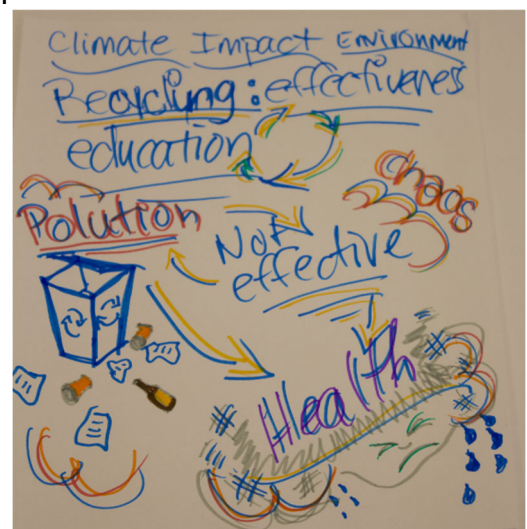
Workshop Two: September 2023

The second workshop took place virtually to reduce transportation burden and maximize total attendance with 17 CBOs, 4 County representatives from PDS, and 3 USD team members. The focus of the second workshop was to summarize the findings from the first workshop, provide a deeper understanding of the Framework, and demonstrate how feedback from the first workshop was being integrated into the Framework. The workshop included facilitated breakout rooms where participants were asked guiding questions about three draft CAP measures: a tree planting program, an electric vehicle incentive, and a water efficiency policy. These examples were selected because they were identified as CBO priorities in Workshop 1 and they fit into the three general categories of CAP measures: a program, an incentive, and a policy.

Therefore, feedback from participants could be incorporated across other similar CAP measures. The workshop was facilitated by County staff and transcribed by dedicated notetakers. During the workshop, participants utilized a collaboration board to share their ideas visually (see Image 3). This touchpoint allowed participants to see how the information they shared was being analyzed and directly applied to the Framework, giving them an opportunity to agree or disagree with the findings.

Picture 3: Collaboration board from Workshop #2

Workshop Three: October 2023

The third workshop also took place virtually with attendance from 13 CBOs and 3 representatives from the County's OERJ and OSEJ. This workshop focused on sharing a draft of the Framework steps to receive participant feedback and co-create a climate justice vision statement that would further guide the development of the Framework (see Images 6 and 7). Interactive Poll Everywhere surveys were utilized to elicit information and feedback. Smaller breakout rooms, facilitated by County staff, allowed participants to brainstorm their ideas on a collaboration board of their vision for climate justice (see Image 6). A vision statement was drafted as the final exercise of the workshop and later refined by staff and the USD team (see Image 7). A proposed final version of the vision statement was emailed to participants via a Google Form to offer feedback and refinement.
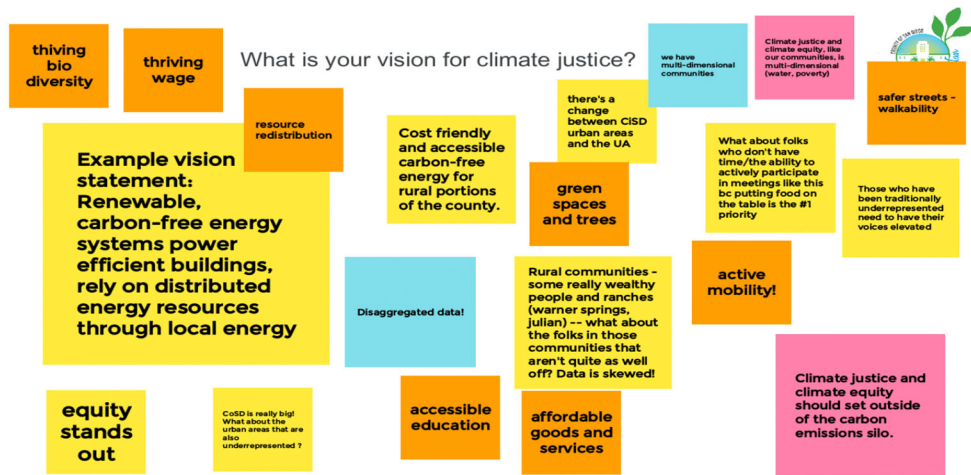
Picture 4: Collaboration board from Workshop #3

Workshop 4: Closing the Loop April 2024

It is important to continuously update partners on how their voices were heard and integrated in the development of a project and elicit feedback for improvement. *Workshop 4: Closing the Loop* invited all CBO participants to reconnect virtually for a presentation on the Framework development and how specifically their work was incorporated. This workshop provided a detailed summary of each step of the Framework, asked CBOs for feedback on the entire participatory process, celebrated successes, and provided opportunities for future collaboration. Workshop 4 attendance included 10 CBO representatives, 1 County staff member from OERJ, and 3 USD team members.

Interdepartmental Collaboration – County of San Diego

Ensuring that the Framework aligned with the County's ongoing justice and equity-related initiatives was a priority throughout. Efforts were taken to ensure information sharing and engagement with County staff. Best practices for creating equity-based collaborations involve engaging and gathering feedback from staff directly involved in the work, incorporating insights from the research team who bring a unique knowledge set, and deeply engaging with the community to develop a robust and comprehensive Framework [55]. Accordingly, the following offices and departments were engaged in the development of the Equity Framework:

- Office of Equity and Racial Justice (OERJ)
- Office of Sustainability and Environmental Justice (OSEJ) and their work on the Regional Decarbonization Framework
- Sustainability Task Force, consisting of County departments that support implementation of the Climate Action Plan
- San Diego County Air Pollution Control District

The following County resources were referenced to support the development of the workshop series and Equity Framework:

- [Regional Decarbonization Framework (Consultancy project for the County by UCSD School of Global Policy and Strategy and USD-EPIC, 2021-2023)](#)
- [Environmental Justice Element of the General Plan (August 2021)](#)
- The Climate Action Plan Unincorporated Area Survey

Internal Collaboration and Engagement

Engagement with department members included updates on equity initiatives, identification of available resources, preferred definitions of environmental and equity terminology, and learning from their recent experiences with community engagement. Staff from OERJ and OSEJ were also invited to participate as workshop series attendees alongside CBO representatives. Finally, staff from the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District, OERJ, and OSEJ provided input on a version of the draft. Below lists each engagement, that is further described below:

- Climate Action Plan Integration:
  - A Cost/Benefit Analysis discussion with Ascent Environmental
  - [Climate Co-benefit virtual public workshop, CAP Team (March 21, 2023)](#)
- OERJ and OSEJ Early Engagement:
  - OERJ meeting (June 2023)
  - OESJ meetings (Summer 2023)
- PDS and USD Workshop Debrief and Next Steps discussion (August 2023 in person and after each Workshop virtually)
- Sustainability Task Force Presentations (October 2023, February 2024)
- Live Well Advance Conference & School Summit (November 2023)
- OERJ, OSEJ, and San Diego County Air Pollution Control District Internal Review

Climate Action Plan Integration: Engaging with ongoing efforts in the Climate Action Plan was an important component. Key activities included discussions with consultants from Ascent Environmental and MCubed, who were developing cost-benefit analyses, and USD team attendance at the Climate Co-benefit virtual public workshop on March 21, 2023. This involvement offered a broader view of the climate action plan developments and developed stronger connections across CAP efforts.

OERJ and OSEJ Early Engagement: Building from and connecting the framework to ongoing county efforts was important. Along with inviting OERJ and OSEJ staff to the CBO workshops, three meetings were conducted to learn about the work of these offices. In June 2023, the framework team met with OERJ to understand their activities and perspectives. Discussions covered community engagement, targeted universalism, and internal coordination and collaboration. Two separate meetings with OSEJ focused on their current projects, particularly the Regional Decarbonization Framework, and on sharing their experiences and best practices for community engagement. The meetings ensured that the framework was aligned with their efforts and enhanced by the lessons learned from their equity-based projects.

In addition, interdepartmental collaboration helps avoid overburdening communities and replicating efforts.

PDS and USD Workshop Debrief and Next Steps: In August 2023, the USD led the PDS staff in an in-person reflective discussion about the outcomes of Workshop 1. It was essential to capture staff perspectives on the engagement and ensure data was collected from their viewpoint. The discussion involved asking staff to share key insights, overall impressions, challenges related to equity work, innovative ideas that emerged from the workshop, and issues that were still unresolved. The USD also presented early-stage thematic coding of Workshop 1 notes.

Sustainability Task Force: Ariel Hamburger and Dr. Nichole Wissman virtually presented components of the Framework to the County's internal Sustainability Task Force in October 2023 and February 2024. The Sustainability Task Force was established as part of implementation of the County's 2018 CAP and includes participation from staff across County offices who are involved in CAP measures. In the first presentation, the focus was to share the community engagement process and early iterations of the Framework steps since these same staff are likely to be the ones utilizing the Framework once the CAP is adopted. The second presentation focused on updating STF members on the Framework engagement process and to request feedback on Step 2: Identify Resources & Build Capacity. In both sessions, members were invited to ask questions and to provide feedback.

Live Well Advance Conference & School Summit: Ariel Hamburger and Dr. Nichole Wissman presented components of the Framework at the *Live Well Advance Conference and School Summit* (November 2023). They developed an interactive session to share the community engagement process and the Framework components. Session attendees were invited to participate in an activity in which they were presented with an example measure from the five CAP emission reduction sectors (Built Environment and Transportation, Energy, Solid Waste, Water and Wastewater, or Agriculture and Conservation) and asked guiding questions about how to implement the measure equitably. Participants also had the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on the Framework approach.

Review: In early 2024, OERJ, OSEJ, HHSA, and San Diego County Air Pollution Control District staff were invited to review and provide feedback on the equity framework. All staff were well-versed and engaged in equity-related work. Two meetings were held with Shalem Lopez-Aboody from San Diego County Air Pollution Control to describe the types and feedback needed and then for Shalem to share their input (February and March 2024). OSEJ, OERJ, and HHSA provided in-document feedback (March and April 2024). This was important to the development of the framework and served to make needed adjustments and increase accountability for the process.

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