

# South Bay Cities Council of Governments

January 9, 2023

TO: SBCCOG Steering Committee

FROM: Jacki Bacharach, Executive Director  
Jonathan Pacheco Bell, Senior Project Manager

SUBJECT: Proposed Equity Principle

## **Adherence to Strategic Plan:**

*Goal B: Regional Advocacy.* Advocate for the interests of the South Bay. Strategy 6 – Identify challenges and opportunities that transcend municipal boundaries and work with the cities for the SBCCOG to assume the leadership to address the threats and capture the opportunities.

## **BACKGROUND**

Equity is part of the national conversation. Today, organizations are taking a closer look at equity in their programs, services, and actions. A commitment to equity is a way for organizations to address past wrongs while creating meaningful pathways to achieve equality and justice. Increasingly, the prevalence of an organization's equity policy is being factored into competitive grant funding. One way to maintain organizational accountability is to create an Equity Principle to guide your work. While the South Bay Cities Council of Governments pursues equity in its services and programs, the organization lacks a guiding principle.

In response, Executive Director Jacki Bacharach tasked SBCCOG's regional planner, Jonathan Pacheco Bell, with drafting an Equity Principle for the organization.

Following are the steps that were taken to develop the proposed Equity Principle for your Steering Committee's consideration.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRINCIPLE**

First, staff reviewed SBCCOG's existing programs and services that have an equity aspect, whether stated or implied. This included SBCCOG's homeless and senior services under the [Social Welfare, Equity, Access](#) program, efforts to accelerate affordable housing, sustainability and climate change work, energy efficiency services and programs, leadership in bringing affordable fiber broadband to the South Bay, targeted community outreach and more. This review provided a baseline understanding of how equity permeates our work and goals.

Second, staff researched the creation of meaningful Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) priorities for organizations. The literature reviewed focused on more recent DEI resources prepared during the COVID pandemic. Best practices include:

- Candidly Analyze Your Current Efforts
- Identify and Embrace Areas of Opportunity
- Be Open to Criticism from Internal or External Voices
- Develop Values Collaboratively
- Use Clear and Actionable Language
- Recruit and Retain a Diverse Workforce That Reflects Your Principles
- Commit To and Carryout Principles

Third, since SBCCOG’s Mission and Vision are program-oriented, a statement added to the Guiding Principles seemed an appropriate place to include Equity that would be meaningful and guide our operations and approaches. Staff analyzed SBCCOG’s Guiding Principles to see where an Equity Principle could fit and what, if anything, is missing regarding equity imperatives.

These steps informed the development of a first draft of the Equity Principle.

Fourth, staff presented the first draft of the Equity Principle at SBCCOG’s All-Staff meeting on September 13, 2022. This review was conducted as a roundtable discussion with team members from SBCCOG’s various programs and service areas. The conversation was collaborative, with staff members’ comments and ideas building upon each other. Recurring themes included a desire to frame the Equity Principle as *goal oriented* and *actionable* through SBCCOG programs and services. This team discussion produced the proposed Equity Principle before your Steering Committee.

#### PROPOSED EQUITY PRINCIPLE

The proposed Equity Principle proposed by the staff:

- **Advance equality in the South Bay by intentionally pursuing equity through our programs and services.**

An alternative:

- **Pursue equitable outcomes in all services and programs for the South Bay.**

#### RECOMMENDATION

Discuss the draft Equity Principle addition to SBCCOG’s Guiding Principles inserted as the third bullet from the bottom – see current guiding principles below. Select wording for approval by the Board of Directors.

## CURRENT GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles state the manner in which the mission and vision are carried out and guide the conduct of the organization.

The SBCCOG shall:

- Promote cooperation among member agencies in the discussion of issues of mutual interest.
- Act collaboratively on programs or activities that can be better accomplished collectively than by any one jurisdiction.
- Acknowledge each jurisdiction's independence while advocating for the South Bay with one voice.
- Support member proposals that further the mission, vision and goals of SBCCOG.
- Identify challenges and opportunities that transcend jurisdictional boundaries.
- Seek solutions to issues of common concern without duplicating or harming other agencies' efforts.
- INSERT HERE
- Represent the interests of the South Bay with other governing bodies and organizations.
- Seek resources from county, regional, state and federal agencies that will benefit the South Bay.

