



## BayCAN Equity Work Group Foundational Document

### Background and Rationale

Through landscape analysis, content-based research, and personal interviews with experts in the fields of adaptation and climate justice the BayCAN team has seen that embedding equity into adaptation approaches is increasingly considered standard best practice<sup>1</sup>. As such, we believe that this is a topic which many members would benefit from learning more about. (This is also in-line with feedback received after the equity panel at the February 14, 2019 BayCAN meeting.)

In order to provide our members with the best opportunities to incorporate equity and climate justice into their adaptation work, BayCAN has decided to form an Equity Work Group to take a deeper dive into this topic with those who are most interested and to inform the network in general. The work group will create a space for relevant parties to share knowledge on the subject in addition to collaboratively explore how we might develop our work around this topic as a network.

### Early Findings and Activities

Many of the individuals interviewed during the landscape research phase<sup>2</sup> and during subregional meetings either suggested or supported the idea of forming a collaboratively-run working group. Throughout the interview process with these adaptation planners, community

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<sup>1</sup> "Advancing Climate Justice in California," Climate Justice Working Group, August 2017

"Addressing Social Vulnerability and Equity in Climate Change Adaptation Planning in the San Francisco Bay Area," ART Bay Area, BCDC, June 2012

"Community-driven Climate Resilience Planning," NACRP, May 2017

"Community-Based Climate Adaptation Planning," The Pacific Institute, July 2012

"Equitable Community Driven Climate Preparedness Planning," USDN, May 2017

<sup>2</sup> Personal conversation with: Hannah Doress, San Mateo County; Julia Kim, Local Government Commission; Jasneet Sharma, San Mateo County; Sascha Peterson, Adaptation International; Hoi Fei Mok, ICLEI USA; Samuel Diaz, Resources Legacy Fund / OPR; Javier Padilla, SFPUC; Patrick Pelegri-O'Day, City of Alameda; Nahal Goghaie, Environmental Justice Coalition for Water; Sheridan Enomoto, Greenaction; Dorette English, CDPH; Sona Monohot, Greenlining Institute; Kelly Malinowsky, State Coastal Conservancy; Kevin Bayuk, Urban Permaculture Institute; Ameer Raval, Asian Pacific Environmental Network

leaders, and climate justice advocates, consistent themes centered on the importance of advancing equity at the *procedural* as well as *distributional* level. For example, in adaptation planning, while it is important to prioritize and fairly distribute resources to the most vulnerable communities (“distributional equity”<sup>3</sup>), the process by which you engage communities in the planning itself -- through the structures of decision making, community engagement processes, etc -- is equally important (“procedural equity”<sup>3</sup>). This same principle applies to BayCAN -- while BayCAN aims to help its members advance equity within their adaptation work, the process by which we do so must also be equitable and inclusive in form.

In this spirit of collaboration, a *Work Group Planning Team* was formed to collaboratively flesh out the details of the work group. The planning team, made up of a handful of interested volunteers from within BayCAN’s existing membership, met twice to discuss the necessary steps to launch the work group. One of the key items the planning team agreed upon is that the BayCAN Equity Work Group should begin its formation *in partnership* with at least one community-based partner. This is in accordance with the established best practice (as described by Urban Sustainability Directors Network, National Association of Climate Resilience Planners and The Pacific Institute in each of their cited reports, as well as many other interviewees) that it is best to have community collaboration at the very first phases of the process. Such community partners will, through paid stipends, join the working group from the outset to voice key concerns around what equitable adaptation looks like, as well as help provide insight into the ways BayCAN can continue to advance equity as an organization. Other activities will be co-determined with the partners themselves to ensure there is mutual benefit from their participation.

### **Community Collaboration Approach**

After further consultation with equity advocates, and upon the approval of the Interim Steering Committee, the EWG Planning Team (by way of an appointed subcommittee) worked to build relationships and make a partnership agreement with two community-based partners: Nahal Ipakchi, of EcoEquity Consulting, and Phoenix Armenta, of West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project. These partners will join us in planning for and hosting regular work group meetings over the coming year. These partners will be paid an hourly stipend for their work over the course of the coming fiscal year, as approved in BayCAN’s FY 2020 budget.

Through their partnership and participation, Nahal and Phoenix will provide their own perspectives, drawn from years of experience working in community within realms of equity and climate justice, on what equitable adaptation looks like in order to inform our work within

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<sup>3</sup> Equitable Community Driven Climate Preparedness Planning,” USDN, May 2017

the Equity Work Group. These perspectives will work to “ground truth” our discussions within the work group and inform whatever projects we may take on. Our partnership is only the beginning of what could, upon the discernment of the broader work group, become a larger scheme for community partnership. This approach is our way to begin, with what current resources allow.

Finally, meaningful community involvement also applies to BayCAN membership in general. The interim steering committee has agreed that BayCAN is interested in expanding membership to also include more equity-focused NGOs. However, there are larger questions around how to ensure that such NGO/CBO participation in BayCAN is sufficiently aligned with equitable community engagement best practice (for example, through paying stipends to participants). Due to the complicated nature of the issue, it may be valuable to have a group of experts (and non-expert interested members) such as the Equity Work Group who can provide insight into best practice in order to guide BayCAN down the most appropriate path in collaborating with community based organizations. Because of this, providing such guidance is listed as one of the proposed objectives of the work group.

## **Proposed Goals and Activities for the Equity Work Group**

### **Goals**

The working group is intended to do two things:

1. Act as a space for members to advance procedural and distributional equity within their existing and future adaptation initiatives through knowledge sharing and brainstorming -- fostering an environment of a “community of practice” in which members learn together.
2. Provide a venue for interested parties to collaboratively explore what approaches BayCAN could take to advance equity as the network continues to evolve.

### **Activities**

1. On a regular basis, bring together BayCAN members and equity leaders across the 9-county region who are interested in advancing equity within their jurisdictions to learn from one another and collaboratively explore the best ways to embed equity into adaptation planning.
2. Based on this collaboration, help BayCAN in its regular activities learn how to continue to advance equity as a network by:
  - a. Keeping abreast of best practices in climate adaptation;
  - b. Helping brainstorm / recommend additional equity programming for interested BayCAN members beyond the work group;

- c. Facilitating CBO participation / membership within BayCAN as appropriate;
  - d. Building partnerships and engagement with BayCAN as an entity.
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### **About BayCAN:**

The Bay Area Climate Adaptation Network (BayCAN) is a collaborative network of local government staff and partnering organizations helping the Bay Area region to respond effectively and equitably to the impacts of climate change. BayCAN focuses on adaptation challenges in water supply, sea level rise, wastewater and stormwater management, fire risk, ecosystem and parks, and public health. BayCAN convenes its members and partners regularly for region-wide collaborative meetings at the regional and sub-regional level in order to foster collaboration, communication and develop a Bay-area wide approach to climate response. In July 2019 it launched an Equity Work Group, comprised of local government staff, community based organizations, and environmental justice advocates. [www.baycanadapt.org](http://www.baycanadapt.org)

### **Development of Equity Work Group led by:**

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### **BayCAN Leadership:**

Bruce Riordan, BayCAN Director  
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Sarah Church, Alameda County Office of Sustainability; BayCAN Vice-Chair