



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

**Joint Certification Review of the
Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG)
Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process**

FINAL REPORT

prepared by the

**Federal Highway Administration (California Division Office)
and
Federal Transit Administration (Region IX)**

Final Report – June 28, 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS**PAGE**

Forward	3
Executive Summary	5
Introduction	7
Federal Review Team and Participants	7
Review Process Summary	7
Overview of the Fresno COG Functions	10
Description of the Regional Planning Process	14
Regional Planning Issues	17
General Review Discussion	26
Previous Review Findings	27
Current Review Findings	28
Conclusion and Federal Action	29
Appendix A – Interviewed Local Elected Officials and Transit Operators	30
Appendix B – Review Participants	31
Appendix C – List of commenters from Public Listening Session / Comments Received	32

FORWARD

Pursuant to 23 United States Code (USC) 134(k)(5), 49 USC 5303(k)(5), and 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 450, as amended by Sections 1201, 1202, 20005 and 20006 of Public Law 112-141, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must jointly certify the metropolitan transportation planning process in Transportation Management Areas (TMA) at least every four years. A TMA is defined by the United States (U.S.) Census as an urbanized area with population greater than 200,000.

The certification review process includes:

- A desk audit of information on transportation planning processes, activities, and significant products that result from these processes and activities;
- A site visit by a Federal review team that includes opportunities for input and comment on the transportation process by members of the public, Federally-recognized Tribal governments, local elected officials and providers of public and private transit; and
- The preparation and distribution of a Final Report summarizes the findings and recommendations of the review team regarding the transportation planning as currently practiced in the TMA region.

The primary reason for conducting the review is to determine compliance with Federal transportation planning regulations and requirements, with the opportunity for the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to share its challenges, successes, and actual experiences carrying out the transportation planning process with the review team.

A secondary focus is determining the extent to which the MPO, the State Department of Transportation, and the transit operators in the region work together in carrying out the planning process, and to make recommendations for improving the planning process, as well as to make corrective actions when the process does not meet Federal transportation planning regulations.

The FHWA and FTA have developed joint certification review guidelines that provide agency field staff with considerable latitude and flexibility to tailor the review to reflect local conditions, issues and needs. As a result, every review is almost always different, with the result being that the depth and breadth of certification review reports can vary widely.

FHWA and FTA also are continuously monitoring the transportation planning process between certification reviews. The certification review process is essentially a 'one-time

snapshot' of the planning process, and while a useful tool in determining whether a TMA is meeting the planning requirements, it is important to note that activities listed below are other means by which the Federal agencies monitor the planning process and its compliances with regulations, statues and best practices:

- Review of the MPO transportation planning work program (referred to in the regulations as the Unified Planning Work Program; in California, the term Overall Work Program (OWP) is used) that identifies the work that will be carried out using Federal transportation planning funds, as well as the work products and responsible parties;
- Review of the MPO's 20-year Long-Range Transportation Plan, which should be inclusive of all area modes funded with Federal transportation monies and must be financially constrained to the amount of funding expected to be reasonably available during the Plan's timeframe;
- Metropolitan and statewide transportation improvement program actions;
- Progress in implementing the Congestion Management Process (CMP), particularly in justifying increases in Single-Occupant Vehicle (SOV) road capacity in air quality non-attainment areas;
- Air quality conformity determinations (in non-attainment and maintenance areas), including the quality of the technical process and the models and methodologies used; and
- Periodic interactions with the TMA between quadrennial site visits. Examples include attending committee and board meetings, meetings to discuss specific planning issues, telephone calls, email coordination, etc. The results of these other activities are taken into account during the certification review.

The Federal Certification Review is designed to focus on the current topics of significance in each metropolitan planning area, building on prior reviews and ongoing coordination with the TMAs. The Final Report is a documentation of the Federal Review. The Federal Review team will only issue a Corrective Action(s) if a deficiency is found that does not meet the planning requirements. The reports and final actions are the joint responsibility of the appropriate FHWA and FTA field offices.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents the certification review conducted in 2013 by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) of the Fresno County metropolitan transportation planning process carried out by the Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG), the area's designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO). The MAP-21 requires FHWA and FTA to jointly review and evaluate the metropolitan transportation process in all urbanized areas of more than 200,000 in population, referred to as transportation management areas (TMAs), no less than once every four years. The last certification review and report for this area was completed in 2009.

The Federal review team, consisting of FHWA and FTA staff, conducted an advance review of current documents and correspondence, a site visit, a public meeting and interviews with transit operators and locally elected officials as part of the review process. The site visit took place February 25-27, 2013 at the Fresno COG offices. The public meeting was held on February 26, 2013 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the Fresno COG conference room at the Fresno COG offices in Fresno, California. The interviews were held in conjunction with the site visit on February 25, 2013.

The site visit review included detailed discussions on the following topics:

- Follow-up on 2009 Certification Review Findings/MAP-21 Transitional Issues
- Notable MPO Practices
- Blueprint Process
- Congestion Management Process
- Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy Development Process and Timeline (RTP/SCS)
- SB 375 and SCS
- Federal Transportation Improvement Program Development
- Development of Bus Rapid Transit and High Speed Rail in the Fresno Region
- Listening sessions/Meetings with: The Public, Elected Officials and Transit Operators

Notable strengths include:

- Excellent website – the Spanish translation seems workable
- Good public participation process and outreach - much improved from the previous cert review
- The RTP development process is comprehensive and doing a good job considering that SB 375 is driving an accelerated update, but good planning practice in general
- Veteran staff

- Good travel demand modeling process
- Title VI/EJ – good planning practice shown in analysis procedures

Recommendations

- Spanish language notices – Fresno COG should be positioned to translated major MPO into Spanish in a reasonable period of time; may want to consider an on-call contract with a translation service
- Social media – Fresno COG should probably develop a “social media” policy – i.e., accepting comments via Facebook – what kind of weight matters that are transmitted via social media is given, etc.
- With the understanding that Caltrans has not had the MPOs involved in the development of the SHSP, any safety planning needs done by Fresno COG needs to be coordinated and conducted in conjunction with the SHSP.
- Congestion Management Process – A Corrective Action on CMP was issued with the 2009 Certification Review report. Fresno COG met the conditions of that Corrective Action by developing a basic CMP process and accompanying report. In the course of the 2013 site visit, discussion with Fresno COG staff indicated additional work by Fresno COG and technical assistance from FHWA would be required to have the CMP process fully operational and integrated into the regional transportation planning process.
- While not rising to the level of a Corrective Action, and recognizing that Fresno COG is fully engaged in a major RTP update to meet SB 375’s mandates, Fresno COG shall amend the 2013-14 Overall Work Program (OWP) by 9/30/13 to include a task to develop a comprehensive work plan for a major revision of the CMP process. FHWA will work with Fresno COG in developing the comprehensive work plan. The CMP Revision Work Plan will be included in the 2014-15 OWP, with the expectation that all work associated with revision of the CMP Process shall be completed by 6/30/15. (NOTE: as of the date of this report, Fresno COG had begun moving the OWP amendment through its committee process).

Based on FHWA and FTA’s interaction with Fresno COG as oversight agencies and planning partners, the information received during the course of this review and our current understanding of the transportation planning process in Fresno County, FHWA and FTA jointly certify, as modified by Public Law 112-141, the Moving Ahead for Progress is the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) that the process meets the planning and programming requirements of 23 CFR 450 and 49 CFR 613.

This certification is valid for four years from the date of this report.

INTRODUCTION

The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) act requires FHWA and FTA to jointly review and evaluate the metropolitan transportation process in all urbanized areas of more than 200,000 in population, referred to as transportation management areas (TMAs), no less than once every four years. The last certification review and report for Fresno COG were completed in 2009.

This report documents the certification review conducted in 2012-13 by the FHWA and the FTA of the Fresno County metropolitan transportation planning process carried out by the Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG), the area's designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO).

FEDERAL REVIEW TEAM AND PARTICIPANTS

- Scott Carson, FHWA California, Federal Review Team Leader
- Eric Eidlin, FTA Region IX
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- Lance Yokota, FHWA California
- Will McClure, FHWA California
- Rodney Whitfield FHWA California
- Vivien Hoang, FHWA California
- Joseph Vaughn, FHWA California
- Erin Harrington, FHWA California
- Christopher Long, FHWA California

REVIEW PROCESS SUMMARY

This section provides an overview of the major review components: a desk audit of current documents and correspondence, a multi-day site visit, a public listening session, and interviews with several locally elected officials and transit operators. These components are discussed in greater detail below. Also in this section is a list of the Federal review team members, a general overview of the review participants, a summary of the public involvement techniques used to notify and solicit input from the public, and the themes identified from the comments received through all of the public input methods.

Desk Audit

The Federal review team conducted an internal review of the files and documentation pertaining to the area's transportation planning process. A review guide prepared by Fresno COG staff was also instrumental in facilitating the desk review. This guide consisted of questions prepared by FHWA and FTA reviewers on a wide range of planning topics to which Fresno COG staff was asked to respond to prior to the scheduled site visit. The review team formulated additional questions based on the responses provided in the review guide and on information found in the MPO's planning documents. The subsequent site visit discussions focused primarily on these follow up questions.

Site Visit

The Federal review team traveled to Fresno, California, for a site visit with the MPO and its transportation planning partners. The site visit took place February 25-27, 2013, at the Fresno COG offices at 2035 Tulare Street, Suite 201, Fresno, CA. The meetings with the transit operators and with the locally elected officials were also held at the Fresno COG offices on February 25, 2013.

Detailed discussions were held with Fresno COG staff on the following topics:

- Follow-up on 2009 Certification Review Findings/MAP-21 Transitional Issues
- Notable MPO Practices
- Blueprint Process
- Congestion Management Process
- Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy Development Process and Timeline (RTP/SCS)
- SB 375 and SCS
- Federal Transportation Improvement Program Development
- Development of Bus Rapid Transit and High Speed Rail in the Fresno Region
- Listening sessions/Meetings with: The Public, Elected Officials and Transit Operators

Public Listening Session

The review team, with the assistance of Fresno COG staff, conducted a public listening session meeting on February 26, 2013 from 5:30 to 7:30 pm at the Fresno COG offices at 2035 Tulare Street, Suite 201, in Fresno, CA. At the review team's request, Fresno COG followed its adopted Public Involvement Process (PIP) and provided a public notice for the listening session in local newspapers, and on the MPO website.

The public had the opportunity to provide oral comments during the listening session and written comments during and after the session.

These efforts contributed to four people that attending the public meeting and providing verbal comments. A list of the participants is included in Appendix C. In addition, FHWA and FTA provided an email address for the transmission of comments after the meeting.

A summary of the comments by the attendees of the public meeting is below:

- Good job of Fresno COG reaching out with its web presence to the public in general; the COG website is very user friendly
- Process is very open to everyone
- Barstow bikeways – need to connect cities, as well as pedestrian, bikeway and general transportation planning around the Fresno State campus
- The Fresno COG committees do an excellent job of vetting the products of the planning process
- COG staff is very unbiased – all viewpoints are represented and sides are not taken
- Staff lets the discussion flow at Committee meetings such as the RTP Roundtable
- Staff presents everyone with detailed, complete information so good informed decisions can be made

Meeting with Transit Operators

The Federal Review Team met with the transit operators at the Fresno COG offices on February 25, 2013. Four representatives of the operators attended, and the following was discussed:

- Good relationship with MPO Staff
- Consolidation of services has been studied, not a lot of positive things to report in terms of consolidation, but for the most part, the transit operators in the region work well together
- They are implementing 511, and good progress being made on an Automated Traveler Information System
- BRT project is progressing, some intelligent signs have been installed to display real-time headway information to riders
- 99 percent of the rural bus ridership is transit dependent – no other way to get around
- FTA discussed with the operators integration of the BRT station with the high speed rail station in downtown Fresno and the degree to which the operators, the City of Fresno, and the MPO are integrated and communicating with each other on these large scale projects

- 24% the local sales tax money has been dedicated to transit, so there is a recognition in the region that transit is worthy of funding with a general transportation tax
- Transit operators feel they have good relationships with the elected officials

Meeting with Local Elected Officials

The Federal Review Team met with the elected officials at the Fresno COG offices on February 25, 2013. Three elected officials attended, and the following was discussed:

- MPO staff – excellent relationship; Board is pleased with the staff’s work and feels fortunate to have a veteran, experienced staff
- Board understands the difference between “Board” decisions and “MPO” decisions
- Executive Director works to “tutor” new Board members so that they quickly understand their roles and responsibilities and can contribute quickly to the decision making process in a positive manner
- It was noted that “having lots of institutional knowledge” that comes with an experienced staff makes the entire decision-making process work more smoothly
- MAP-21 changes in the relationship of transit operators to the MPO Board were discussed, and the Board members were very positive and open to making the changes that may be needed once guidance on this issue is received from FHWA/FTA HQ in DC

OVERVIEW OF THE FRESNO COG FUNCTIONS

The Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG) is a voluntary association of local governments, one of 25 in California and over 500 nationwide. Formed in 1969, it includes the County of Fresno and 15 incorporated cities as member agencies. Fresno COG undertakes comprehensive regional planning with an emphasis on transportation provides citizens an opportunity to be involved in the planning process and supplies technical service to its members.

One of Fresno COG’s main roles is to foster intergovernmental coordination, undertake comprehensive regional planning with an emphasis on transportation, provide for citizen input in the planning process, and to provide technical services to its member governments.

In all of these areas Fresno COG serves as a consensus builder to develop an acceptable approach on how to handle problems which do not respect boundaries. The major function of Fresno COG is the activity generated by its responsibility as a designated transportation planning agency, in compliance with federal and state requirements. Work on each of the program elements in the regional transportation

planning process and on the preparation of plans involves participation of member agency staff where possible.

The regional forum offered by Fresno COG provides for the comprehensive planning and intergovernmental coordination necessary to deal with many complex issues. Relative to its regional planning and coordination role, the agency has the following state and federal designations. Fresno COG's members agencies are listed in the table below:

Fresno COG's Member Agencies

City of Clovis	City of Mendota
City of Coalinga	City of Orange Cove
City of Firebaugh	City of Parlier
City of Fowler	City of Reedley
City of Fresno	City of Fresno
City of Huron	City of Sanger
City of Kerman	City of Selma
City of Kingsburg	County of Fresno

The Fresno COG has a "double-weighted" voting system, which provided for an urban/rural balance as opposed to either area dominating. Each member has a percentage vote based on population. To approve any action the vote must pass two tests:

- Agencies representing **over 40%** of the population must be in favor of an action, and
- **A Majority** of all the members must support the action, that is, **nine** of the sixteen members.

Fresno COG is partially supported by contributed dues from its 16 members; however, the major revenue sources include federal and state grants. The agency has no taxing or legislative authority.

Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA)

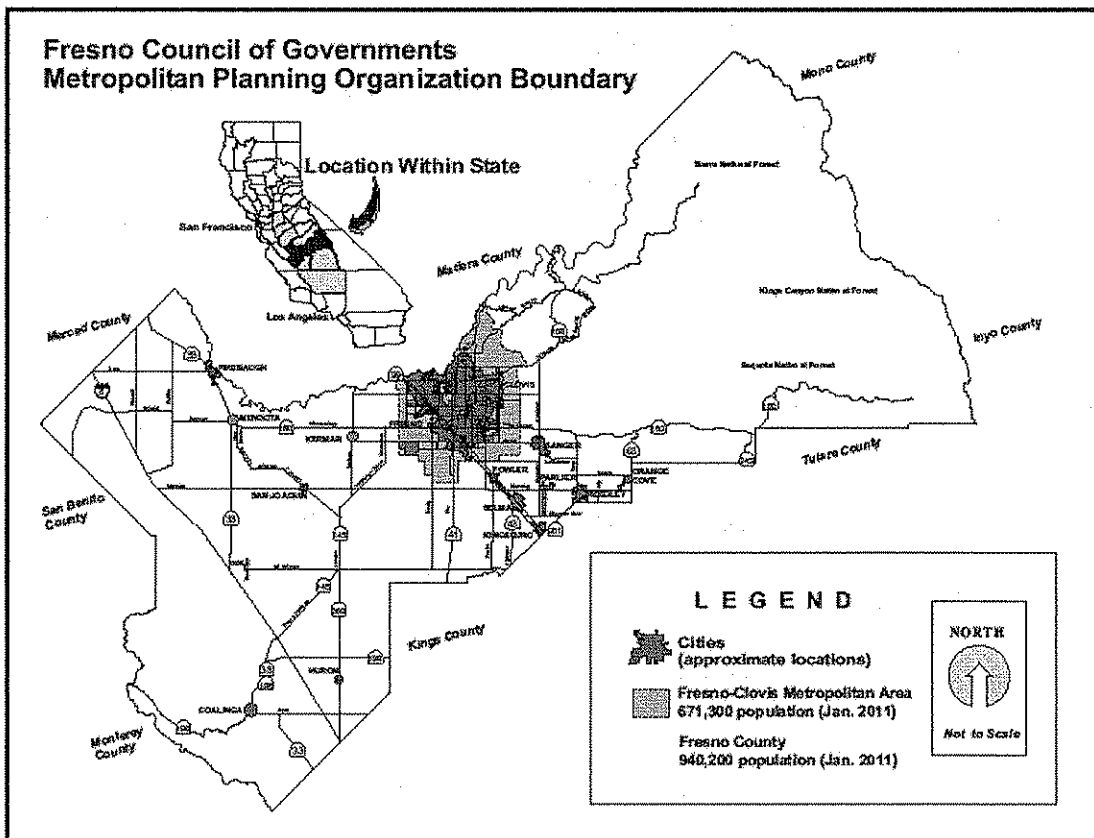
Pursuant to state law, Fresno COG has been designated as the RTPA for the Fresno County regional area, and has the following responsibilities:

- Plans & Programs
- RTP Regional Transportation Plan
- TSME Transportation Systems Management Element
- RTIP Regional Transportation Improvement Program

- TCM Transportation Control Measures
- Transportation Development Act Administrative Functions
- Administrative Function Period
- TDA fund apportionment Annual
- TDA fund claims, make allocations Monthly
- TDA fiscal and compliance audits Annual
- Unmet Transit Needs finding Annual
- Transit Productivity Evaluation Annual
- TDA performance audits Triennial

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Fresno COG is the federal designated MPO for Fresno County. Pursuant to this designation, the agency, in cooperation with the state, is responsible for implementing a continuing, coordinated and comprehensive transportation planning process for Fresno County.



The scope of policy making responsibilities include the following:

- Evaluation and recommendation of alternative policies, plans and programs for consideration by responsible public agencies.
- Acting as the metropolitan planning organization for transportation planning for Fresno County.
- Serving in a review capacity to see that all programs, assistance and grants-in-aid covered under Executive Order 12372 are consistent with areawide plans and programs.
- Review and approval of Transportation Development Act (Local Transportation Fund and State Transit Assistance Fund) claims by member governments for transit, pedestrian and bikeway, and road projects pursuant to the State Transportation Development Act.
- Allocation of components of the OWP to be developed among Fresno COG's planning staff, other public agency staff or private consultants.
- Maintenance of appropriate financial and meeting records for the entire planning program.
- Establishment of representative advisory committees as needed to assist in the preparation of plans, programs and project review.
- Compliance with Congestion Management System and air quality conformity requirements.

Areawide Planning Organization

Pursuant to federal law, Fresno COG is the designated Areawide Planning Organization for the Fresno County Region, As such it is required to adopt related housing, land use and open space elements when appropriate.

Transportation Management Area

As an urbanized area with over 200,000 population, Fresno County has been designated as a Transportation Management Area TMA. TMAs are subject to special requirements regarding the fulfillment of responsibilities assigned by provisions of the Congestion Management System, and application of project selection and certification procedures. Fresno COGs governing board is comprised of local elected officials. These officials also sit as the governing board of the Fresno County Rural Transit Agency (FCRTA), or as in the case of the City of Fresno, have administrative control over Fresno Area Express (FAX). Fresno COG sitting as the Transportation Policy Committee includes a Caltrans representative.

Measure C Sales Tax Planning Responsibilities

With the reauthorization of Measure C in 2006, Fresno COG is responsible for developing the Strategic Implementation Plan in conjunction with its member agencies, and Caltrans. The Fresno County Transportation Authority was assigned legal

responsibility for the strategic implementation of the expenditure plan for the revenues raised by the 1/2 cent sales tax. 1/2 cent local sales tax proceeds along with other federal, state and local funds to provide the revenue foundation for delivery of Measure C projects.

Local Clearinghouse

In accordance with Executive Order 12372, the state has designated Fresno COG as the Local Clearinghouse for the Fresno County region, with the responsibility to review and comment on local applications for state and federal funding assistance. The process is designed to provide an opportunity for inter-jurisdictional coordination of federal and federally assisted activities within regional areas.

Census Data Center

Fresno COG has assumed responsibility as the Affiliate State Census Data Center for Fresno County. Staff responds to requests for census information from member agencies and the public. There is also a requirement for continuing coordination with the Bureau of the Census relative to public dissemination of census reports, announcements, and maintenance of census geography.

In 1996-97 Fresno COG developed and implemented an internet "home-page" which allows direct access to census, housing and economic information. Other information items have been maintained on-line as well, including COG's regional directory, agendas, minutes, and other appropriate items. Fresno COG recently completed a major upgrade of the web page in its efforts to incorporate improvements in visualization techniques and to "go green" by placing all agenda materials and attachments on the website in HTML format.

DESCRIPTION OF THE REGIONAL PLANNING PROCESS

Fresno COG has entered into a number of agreements and Memorandums of Understanding to assist the agency with carrying out its responsibilities in conjunction with local, state, regional and federal governments. The institutional arrangements cited herein are specified within the Fresno Council of Governments Joint Powers Agreement and were made to improve linkages between the regional planning process and planning processes of member governments. Member agencies bear ultimate responsibility for implementing major portions of Regional Plans.

Fresno Valley Air Pollution Control District

Fresno COG, along with the other seven Metropolitan Planning Organizations in the Fresno Valley, is party to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Fresno

Valley Air Pollution Control District which was revised and adopted September 9, 2009. The MOU defines a coordinated and cooperative process aimed at maximum effectiveness and compatibility of air quality and transportation plans, compliance with the provisions of the Surface Transportation Act of 2009-Reauthorization Bill and the conformity provisions of the Clean Air Act, and at ensuring the most effective use of existing resources and avoiding duplication of effort.

Also the MOU specifically provides for participation in development of transportation control measures required pursuant to the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments. The eight Valley MPOs have provided the staff and analytical support necessary to develop emission inventories, emission budgets, and transportation control measures for SJVAPCD to include in State Implementation Plans (SIPs) for the Fresno Valley. During the upcoming year, the eight Valley MPOs will also be charged with addressing the requirements of AB 32 and SB 375 regarding climate change and greenhouse gas emissions. The scope of required activities for the cooperative planning has been included in a valleywide work plan, and those activities applicable to the Fresno COG are included in the Fresno COG OWP.

Eight County Memorandum of Understanding

The eight counties of the Fresno Valley Air Basin encompass 27,280 square miles, and are home to over 4 million residents. While large in size, the valley is not a heavily urbanized area like Los Angeles or the Bay Area but consists of a variety of urbanized centers with a great deal of rural territory in between. These urbanized centers have unique transportation characteristics which can best be served by localized planning, while the broader regional issues can be adequately coordinated through the existing MOU's that are in place. It is our opinion that the multiple MPO approach is the most suitable for large suburban/rural areas such as the Fresno Valley.

The eight Fresno Valley regional transportation planning agencies have executed a Memorandum of Understanding in response to requirements for a coordinated, comprehensive, regional transportation planning process contained in the new Federal Transportation Act, MAP-21. This MOU was revised and adopted September 21, 2006. Specifically this MOU provides for the close coordination of planning activities where interregional issues are involved. Areas currently being coordinated are the Regional Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, air quality conformity process, transportation control measures, congestion management planning, Blueprint planning and transportation modeling. The MOU establishes a strong working relationship between the eight existing transportation planning agencies and satisfies federal requirements to have a cooperative agreement between agencies located within the nonattainment area boundaries.

This formalized working relationship has proven quite effective. Those activities involving the Fresno COG staff or resources are outlined in the Fresno COG OWP.

Fresno-Madera Agency on Aging

A long-standing Memorandum of Agreement exists between the Fresno COG and the Fresno Madera Area Agency on Aging. The memorandum recognizes the individual responsibilities each agency has for developing various plans and programs and reviewing specified federally assisted projects under state and federal mandates. Each agency agreed to a review and comment process relevant to all long-range planning activities and annual work programs. A provision was made for any actions by either agency to be consistent with the plans and policies of the other. Specific assurances were also made for the close cooperation and coordination in the review of federally assisted projects and for the sharing of information.

Transportation Policy Committee

Under a Memorandum of Understanding adopted between Fresno COG and the State Business Transportation and Housing Agency, Fresno COG established an Areawide Transportation Policy Committee for Fresno County. The Transportation Policy Committee is composed of the Mayor of each of the cities in Fresno County, the Chair of the Fresno County Board of Supervisors, and a representative of Caltrans. One of the main functions of the Transportation Policy Committee is to carry out the continuing, comprehensive and coordinated transportation planning process for Fresno County.

Policy Making Process

Policy decisions are made by the Fresno COG Policy Board composed of the Mayors of each incorporated city and the Chairman of the County Board of Supervisors, or their designated representatives.

The Board is assisted in making decisions by the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC), composed of the Chief Administrative Officer of each member agency or their designated representatives. With the exception of urgency matters, all items must first be considered by the PAC before submission to the Policy Board.

The Board and PAC are assisted in the decision making process by staff of the member agencies, citizen and interest group input, and various technical advisory committees including: the Transportation Technical Committee; Model Steering Committee; Social Services Transportation Advisory Council, MAP-21 Sub-Committee; Association for the Beautification of Hwy. 99; Environmental Justice Task Force; Measure C Citizen's Oversight Committee, Freight Advisory Committee and the Airport Land Use Commission.

The relationship of Fresno COG's decision making processes and the decision making processes of member governments is enhanced through participation of member representatives at the policy, administrative and technical levels. Through such participation and interaction Fresno COG intends that its policies reflect the interest of its members, and member government policies also may reflect concerns of the Region.

REGIONAL PLANNING ISSUES

MAP-21 Implementation

On July 6, 2012, President Obama signed into law the new federal Surface Transportation Act, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) (P.L. 112-141). MAP-21 is the first long-term highway authorization enacted since 2005. The intent of MAP-21 is to create a streamlined, performance-based, and multimodal program to address the many challenges facing the U.S. transportation system. These challenges include improving safety, maintaining, operating, and rehabilitating current infrastructure conditions, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency of the system and freight movement, protecting the environment, and reducing delays in project delivery. MAP-21 builds on and refines many of the highway, transit, bike, and pedestrian programs and policies established in 1991 under SAFETEA-LU.

MAP-21 makes significant changes to the federal transportation program and funds surface programs for federal fiscal years 2012-13 and 2013-14. MAP-21 does not address the issue of the declining balance in the Federal Highway Trust Fund; instead funds the two year program with ten year of "savings" and "consolidation" of other federal programs. There are now six core formula programs; National Highway Performance Program (NHPP), Surface Transportation Program (STP), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), Railway-Highway Crossings (set-aside from HSIP), Metropolitan Planning along with two new formula programs; Construction of Ferry Boats and Ferry Terminal Facilities and Transportation Alternatives (TA). Though the programs have changed, the States have flexibility over the distribution of funding programs which allowed for a MAP-21 funding proposal that implements maintaining the status quo of SAFETEA-LU funding level for overall funding.

Fresno COG has noted some concerns regarding implementation and funding of the new legislation. The two-year bill has been enacted into law but the full implementation and programming specifics are still being developed at the federal and state levels. Fresno COG actively engages in all MAP-21 implementation discussions and collaborates with interested parties, Caltrans, the California Transportation Commission (CTC), local agencies and FHWA to ensure that MPO input is provided

when the implementation legislation and or guidance for federal fiscal year 2013-2014 is drafted.

Funding

Fresno COG staff, the transit operators and the locally elected officials all noted during the site visit that adequate funding is their issue of priority. In the Fresno COG region, the key problem facing all transportation modes is still the lack of available funding for system preservation, system management and system expansion. Existing transportation state funding for local streets and roads have been impacted and continue to be at risk because of the State's economic situation. Although the State's finances are at a point where obtaining additional transportation dollars to address these local needs may be difficult, the prospects of having insufficient local road funds reallocated to address the state's budget woes is a real concern for cities and counties.

A California local streets and roads needs assessment was released in 2010 which identified a funding shortfall of over \$70 billion over the next 10 years. Based on the 2010 information, in order to bring the road system to a level where the taxpayer's money can be spent cost effectively, approximately \$56 billion of additional funding is needed for pavements alone and a total of \$79 billion for a functioning system over the next 10 years. This is \$7.5 billion more than what was estimated in the 2008 study. An updated local streets and roads needs assessment was completed in 2012 and the results were released in January 2013.

Also, in 2010, the CTC launched the development of a statewide multi-modal transportation needs assessment report through the collaboration with chief executive officers of MPO's, Regional Transportation Planning Agencies, Caltrans, transit agencies, rail, ports and airports, to better understand the needs of the state's transportation system.

The results of the Statewide Transportation System Needs Assessment, which was completed in 2011, reflects a 10-year projection of anticipated federal, state and local revenues and a summary of investment needs for a transportation system that integrates pedestrian and bike facilities, transit, passenger/commuter rail, highways, local streets and roads and access to ports, airports and the planned high speed rail system. The needs assessment shows that within the state of California we are about \$295.7 billion (or 45%) short of the revenues needed to complete the system management and system expansion projects that are currently planned within the 10-year period of 2011-2020.

Traditional sources of local funding, even when augmented by a locally approved 1/2% sales tax, are inadequate to meet identified transportation needs within Fresno.

County. Local options, such as development fees, public/private partnerships and other revenue enhancements have been and continue to be pursued.

Fresno COG noted that they were actively pursuing the following policies during the coming years is aimed at securing additional transportation funds:

- Aggressively program the "county share" of any available state highway improvement funds and pursue Interregional Road Improvement Program funding; seek to maintain its funding position within the currently adopted State Transportation Improvement Program.
- Actively seek supplemental federal and state funding to help support self-help sales tax counties such as Fresno.
- Work to strongly leverage local sales tax revenues to insure the maximum state and federal financial participation in its transportation project delivery

Travel Demand and Air Quality

Modifying travel demand is an increasingly important issue for the future, both in terms of congestion management and air quality. Current financial, energy, and environmental resources are overburdened, and the seriousness of this region's air quality problems may lead to implementation of more stringent measures to reduce future vehicle travel. Public transit continues to play a major role in undertaking any proposed transportation systems management activities. With the additional responsibility of meeting ARB required greenhouse gas emission reduction targets in the future, it becomes even more critically important that the state and federal governments continue or increase their present level of resource allocation to support local transit and intercity rail programs.

The Federal Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 placed tough new requirements on the sources and causes of air pollution in areas which fail to meet federal ambient air quality standards, such as the Fresno Valley Air Basin. The Amendments require substantial reductions from all sources of air pollution, including transportation, and establish a strengthened transportation conformity requirement to ensure that these reductions are achieved. The term "air quality conformity" refers to the *process* whereby transportation plans, programs and projects are shown to conform to the requirements of the Clean Air Act Amendments and applicable State Implementation Plan (SIP).

The Fresno Valley Air Basin is designated nonattainment for ozone and particulate matter. The Fresno-Clovis Metropolitan Area is designated by EPA as an attainment/maintenance area for carbon monoxide. On December 12, 2008 EPA redesignated the Fresno Valley Air Basin to attainment/maintenance for the National Ambient Air Quality Standard for PM10, and also approved the maintenance plan for the

area. As a result of the federal designations, conformity determinations must demonstrate conformity for ozone, CO, PM10, and PM2.5. FHWA/FTA last issued a finding of conformity for the 2013 Federal Transportation Improvement Program and the 2011 Regional Transportation Plan, Amendment #2 on December 14, 2012.

Consistent with federal direction for a coordinated basin-wide approach to dealing with these pollutants, the Fresno Valley Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs) have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as discussed in the "Organization and Management" chapter under the "Cooperative Agreements" section. The eight Valley RPAs also have a MOU between and among themselves and the Fresno Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District. Fresno COG is an active participant in planning programs undertaken pursuant to the MOUs. Fresno COG staff participates in coordinating valley traffic modeling activities relative to air quality requirements, and provides assistance in the consistent application of EMFAC 2007 within the Fresno Valley. (EMFAC 2007 is the model developed by the California Air Resources Board which is used to calculate emission rates from all motor vehicles, such as passenger cars to heavy-duty trucks, operating on highways, freeways and local roads in California.) Fresno COG has participated in the development of the updated EMFAC 2011 which will be used in Transportation Conformity once EPA finds it available for use.

The Fresno Valley Regional Planning Agencies are also committed to strategic planning for traffic and air quality modeling activities to support continued plan and program development.

State and federal agencies must continue to play a strong role in the partnership of implementing control strategies to achieve emissions reductions. The most significant vehicle emission reductions are achieved through the implementation of the California motor vehicle control program. Local programs to control transportation activities can contribute to improvements in emissions; however, continued state and federal actions to improve emissions performance directly at the source, are critically important.

Livable Communities and Transit Oriented Development

Transportation influences where people live, work and do business. Federal transportation legislation recognition that transportation decisions have an enormous impact on our air, water and land use patterns, sets the stage for the recent focus by federal agencies on Livable Communities. The objectives of the Livable Communities Initiative are to improve mobility and the quality of life by:

- Strengthening the link between transit and community planning;
- Promoting increased public participation in the planning process; and
- Increasing access to employment through high quality transit services.

This initiative also promotes walkable communities that allow residents options for mobility beyond the automobile. Walking and bicycle trails encourage an active living that in turn protects against such health related issues as obesity and diabetes - diseases that are associated with a sedentary life style.

In an effort to improve mobility and enhance the quality of life in our communities, transportation plans need to coordinate transit planning with community development planning. Livable communities are those in which housing, schools, parks and convenient transit services are within easy walking distance. Those transit services should link the residents with employment and shopping opportunities. Livable communities will evolve from a combination of careful land use decisions and well developed design guidelines. Both land use and transportation planning must consider alternatives to automobile use. Such alternatives as walking, transit and bicycling should be built into the community planning process. The benefits of mixed use neighborhoods should be recognized as another mechanism for establishing livable communities. During the 1996-97 fiscal year, COG became a "Transportation Partner" with the Center for Livable Communities and has since continued that association. This association gives COG and member agencies access to a broad array of diverse resources to begin building awareness of this critical issue.

In 2006, the eight Fresno Valley COGs initiated the Blueprint planning process which integrates land use, transportation and resource planning for the region to address growth to the year 2050. The process, which promotes smart growth and efficient use of land, has moved into the planning implementation stage by engaging the 62 cities and 8 counties in the Valley in planning for more livable communities.

Capacity Problems/Corridor Needs

While local tax dollars raised by Measure C are helping build needed major facilities, many local streets will experience serious capacity problems in the future. Fresno COG proposes to identify the magnitude and urgency of these problems. A major unresolved issue is the demand for an east-west travel corridor in the northern portion of the FCMA and southern portion of Madera County. This issue involves a new river crossing between the two counties and Fresno COG will continue to study potential problems and facilitate discussions between the jurisdictions. North/south circulation in the FCMA north of McKinley also needs to be analyzed to better define the local impact of improvements in the SR 168 corridor.

Utilizing Fresno COG's transportation model, local agency staff will continue to identify capacity constraint problems associated with the planned circulation system. At issue is whether or not the Circulation Element of the local General Plans will provide for street and highway development and other modal capacity sufficient to accommodate anticipated mobility needs; what service levels would be associated with future

development; and how improvements might be phased. The level of service analysis will be consistent with work required for the Congestion Management System analysis.

The Fresno COG will continue to work with the cities of Fresno and Clovis and the County to assure that all transportation control measures, such as signal synchronization and computer traffic control systems as contained within the CMAQ program are implemented. A grant funded Intelligent Transportation System Early Deployment Study was completed in 1999-2000 and a valleywide ITS plan consistent with the Fresno County plan was completed in 2001. Fresno COG's ITS plan will be updated in the coming year.

Local Maintenance, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and New Construction

Although the focus of the Fresno COG's efforts, as a Metropolitan Planning Organization, has often been FCMA transportation planning, it is well recognized that Fresno County and 13 rural cities contribute funding toward the transportation planning process. With this in mind, the Fresno COG will continue to program work activity which assists in the development of and management of rural area street systems. The traffic model has been expanded to incorporate a countywide system, and will be further refined to allow analysis within rural cities. Rural mobility and connectivity is of extreme concern due to the nature of our economic base in the Central Valley.

Agriculture is the cornerstone of the valley economy, and is also a key element in the economic health of California. As with any industry, agriculture depends on the ability to move goods from farm to market. This involves an extensive network of local, regional and state roadways that require ongoing maintenance and rehabilitation. Both state and federal emphasis appears to be on efforts to revitalize the manufacturing base, improve the movement of international trade, and support tourism. It would seem equally important to emphasize the need to support and maintain the basic local goods movement system that allows for a healthy and vital agriculture economy. Ongoing review and analysis of inconsistencies between the City of Fresno, City of Clovis and Fresno County Circulation Elements continues. This review considers computer analysis of the planned circulation network of the agencies based upon land use and growth assumptions.

Public and Social Service Transportation

Rural service needs focus on five main issues: (1) continuation of adequate common carrier service, (2) reciprocal fare/transfer programs between rural and metropolitan area services, (3) service to rural residents who live beyond city service area boundaries, (4) adequate and stable funding for additional transportation improvements and (5) uniform fare throughout rural system.

Closer coordination and cooperation between both public and social service transportation must occur to avoid possible duplication. Efficiency, overall economy, and quality are to be pursued through the consolidated approach.

The focus of both state and federal policy is to seek improved performance of public transit operators. In past years a priority for Fresno COG has been to annually evaluate the performance of individual transit lines and subsystems based upon accepted productivity measures. This information comprises the "Transit Productivity Evaluation" and serves as input to the "Short Range Transit Plan" (SRTP) updates and will continue to be developed.

FTA has mandated transit operators to provide better justification of transit services and facilities based on financial capacity. With reduced federal and state funding assistance and the need for maintaining high productivity, public transit operators have focused on developing efficient transit operations and prudent capital programs. There is a need to develop long-term financial strategies to ensure long-range as well as short-range transit plans are justified and a deterioration of transit services can be prevented. These efforts are now being addressed and will continue to be an integral part of the transit planning process.

Involvement of private enterprise in the provision or support of transit operations appears to have lessened as an FTA emphasis area. Fair labor provisions which preclude actions of transit operators from adversely affecting public employees with use of federal assistance pose other problems. Transit operators will continue to consider the potential for private enterprise where greater efficiencies in the existing systems may be gained.

Involvement of private enterprise in the provision or support of transit operations appears to have lessened as an FTA emphasis area. Fair labor provisions which preclude actions of transit operators from adversely affecting public employees with use of federal assistance pose other problems. Transit operators will continue to consider the potential for private enterprise where greater efficiencies in the existing systems may be gained.

Aviation

Fresno County's Airports play a vital role in the goal of achieving a fully functional and integrated air service and airport system that is complementary to the regional transportation system. The role and function of the nine (9) public use airports in Fresno County's airport system, based on the categories set by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), found in the 2013-2017 National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS), are summarized in the following table:

AIRPORT	SERVICE LEVEL	CATEGORY	LOCATION
Fresno Yosemite International Airport (FYI)	Commercial Primary <i>Military-Air National Guard Station</i>	Small Hub	City of Fresno
Fresno Chandler Executive	Reliever	Regional	City of Fresno
Sierra Sky Park	Privately Owned General Aviation	N/A	City of Fresno
Reedley Municipal	General Aviation	Local	City of Reedley
Firebaugh	General Aviation	Basic	City of Firebaugh
William R. Johnston Municipal	General Aviation	N/A	City of Mendota
New Coalinga Municipal	General Aviation	Basic	City of Coalinga
Harris Ranch	Privately Owned General Aviation	N/A	City of Coalinga
Selma Aerodrome	Privately Owned General Aviation	N/A	City of Selma

The airport and the compatibility of the surrounding land uses is a continuing issue. Local agencies must maintain their diligence in the areas surrounding the airports so as not to create conflicts with incompatible uses because of high noise levels and potential safety hazards. The Fresno COG contributes to the regional and statewide effort to provide oversight of land uses in and around airports through staff support of the Fresno County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC), which is responsible for conducting Airport Compatibility Land Use determinations and relevant planning activities.

Rail

Rail planning in Fresno County has traditionally focused on eight primary issues:

1. Consolidation of all Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway and Union Pacific mainline rail traffic onto the present Union Pacific mainline tracks through Fresno.
2. Additional intercity train service for the Fresno route.
3. Construction of a new multimodal station in Fresno.
4. Obtaining abandoned trackage through Fresno County for future local transportation purposes.

5. Long range planning and corridor preservation for future commuter, light rail or other mass transit uses in Fresno County.
6. Expansion of train service rather than dedicated bus service to Sacramento (north of Stockton) as a logical expansion of valley train service (currently 2 trains in service).
7. The potential of commuter light rail in Fresno County.
8. Participation in State high speed rail feasibility studies.

Of particular importance recently and in the year ahead is California's high-speed rail project. Fresno COG has in the recent past and will in the future devote considerable staff time and resources to the many different high-speed rail issues. These issues include further refinement of the preferred alignment and station location; securing a heavy maintenance facility in Fresno or its vicinity and other economic opportunities; station area planning and design; potential use of eminent domain; and numerous jurisdictional, financial, environmental, and social equity issues.

Measure C

In its role as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency for Fresno County, Fresno COG is legislatively responsible for preparing an Expenditure Plan for revenues generated by Measure C Fresno County's 1/2 cent sales tax for transportation purposes. The original Measure C was passed in 1986 and had a twenty year life span that would have expired on June 30, 2007. The voters of Fresno County chose to reauthorize a Measure C Expenditure Plan that identified \$1.7 billion in multi-modal projects and programs implemented over 20 years, from 2007 through 2027. The Plan had the unanimous support of Fresno COG, Fresno County Transportation Authority, the county of Fresno and all fifteen cities.

The next step in the process was the development of a Strategic Implementation Plan which identifies the timing, priorities and financial strategies necessary to deliver the \$1.7 billion program in a timely manner. Implementation Plans have been completed for the Regional Public Transit Program, Local Transportation Program, Regional Transportation Short-Term and Fresno Airport Subprograms, Administration/Planning Program, Alternative Transportation Program, Environmental Enhancement Program and the Regional Transportation Mitigation Fee Program and the School Bus Replacement Program.

Management Systems

Under the previous legislation of SAFETEA-LU there were 5 management systems that were an optional part of the planning process (Bridge, Pavement, Public Transportation, Highway Safety, and Intermodal). Under the new legislation, MAP-21, that was enacted into law on July 6, 2012; there is more of a focus on performance management for

each of the systems. MAP-21 established national performance goals that include safety, infrastructure conditions, congestion reductions, system reliability, freight movement and economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and reduced project delivery delays. Congestion Management Process (CMP) requirements remain in effect under MAP-21.

GENERAL REVIEW DISCUSSION

As part of the certification review process, the team provided Fresno COG staff with a review guide – called a Desk Audit Questionnaire – containing questions to which they were asked to respond. The review team’s evaluation of the responses to the review guide questions, review of pertinent documents, and our prior knowledge of the region, formed the basis for the discussions held during the site visit. Although the 2012-13 Desk Audit Questionnaire and Responses are not included in this report they are available by request

The desk audit contained questions on the following topic areas:

- Follow-up on 2009 Certification Review Findings
- MAP-21 Transitional Issues
- Organizational Structure, Board Membership and Planning Boundaries
- Agreements and Contracts
- Overall Work Program (OWP)/Self-Certification/Procurement Procedures
- Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)
- Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) and Project Selection
- Program Delivery/Project Monitoring and List of Obligated Projects
- Financial Planning/Fiscal Constraint
- Public Participation/Public Involvement
- Title VI, ADA and Environmental Justice
- Congestion Management Process (CMP)
- Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)
- Environmental Mitigation
- Consultation and Coordination
- Travel Demand Forecasting
- Safety in the Transportation Planning Process
- Security in the Transportation Planning Process
- Air Quality Conformity
- Visualization Techniques
- Integrating Freight into the Transportation Planning Process
- Land Use and Livability

Unless the above listed topic is specifically discussed in the Review Findings section below, the review team found the MPO to be in compliance with the applicable laws, regulations, policies, procedures and guidance relating to the topic.

PREVIOUS REVIEW FINDINGS

Those interested in reading the complete discussion of these suggestions and recommendations may obtain the 2009 Certification Review Report by contacting FHWA or FTA. It was found that Fresno COG has taken those recommendations and incorporated many of them into its ongoing business practices.

Notable Practices

The 2009 review complimented Fresno COG for examples of good planning practice in the following areas:

- Board, Transit Operator and Intergovernmental Relationships
- FTIP/OWP/AQ modeling and Travel Demand Forecasting
- Blueprint Planning Process

Recommendations

Most of the recommendations have been adopted by Fresno COG since the 2009 review:

- Evaluate all agreements/MOUs over 10 years old
- Document Operations and Maintenance Cost Estimation Methodology
- Rewrite current Public Participation Plan
- Improve the process for updating web pages
- Improve communication with the Board
- Document consultation process
- Improve Travel Forecasting Model Validation Methodology
- Complete an EJ TAZ analysis
- Consider CMP partnering
- Document SOV analysis methodology
- Improve documentation of the overall transportation planning process
- Complete an evaluation of work load/staffing

Corrective Actions

Two Corrective Actions were issued in the 2009 review, and both were resolved within the timeframes given by the review team:

- Complete transit planning agreement/MOU with the City of Clovis
- Update the CMP process/process document

CURRENT REVIEW FINDINGS

The review team commends Fresno COG for its exceptional work and efforts in certain areas as detailed under notable strengths. With the exception of portions of the Congestion Management Process, the Federal Review team found no major issues in the transportation planning process.

The review team reached consensus on these findings after considering all the information that was gathered throughout the review process, including the comments we received from the public, transit operators and local officials, and each member's experience in dealing with the MPO.

Notable strengths include:

- Excellent website – the Spanish translation seems workable
- Fresno COG has “gone green” by making all agenda packet items available in HTML format on its website
- Good public participation process and outreach - much improved from the previous cert review
- The RTP development process is comprehensive and doing a good job considering that SB 375 is driving an accelerated update, but good planning practice in general
- Veteran staff
- Good travel demand modeling process
- Title VI/EJ – good planning practice shown in analysis procedures

Recommendations

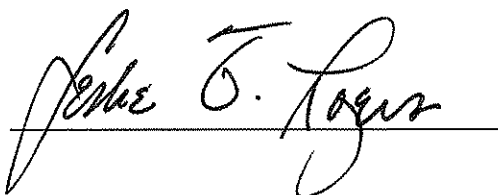
- Fresno COG should consider looking at its Joint Powers Agreement, which is 30 years old – so that when a regionally significant project comes up that the MPO will be involved (referencing the HSR and BRT projects)
- Spanish language notices – Fresno COG should be positioned to translated major MPO into Spanish in a reasonable period of time; may want to consider an on-call contract with a translation service
- Social media – Fresno COG should probably develop a “social media” policy – i.e., accepting comments via Facebook – what kind of weight matters that are transmitted via social media is given, etc.
- With the understanding that Caltrans has not had the MPOs involved in the development of the SHSP, any safety planning needs done by Fresno COG needs to be coordinated and conducted in conjunction with the SHSP.

- Congestion Management Process – A Corrective Action on CMP was issued with the 2009 Certification Review report. Fresno COG met the conditions of that Corrective Action by developing a basic CMP process and accompanying report. In the course of the 2013 site visit, discussion with Fresno COG staff indicated additional work by Fresno COG and technical assistance from FHWA would be required to have the CMP process fully operational and integrated into the regional transportation planning process.
- While not rising to the level of a Corrective Action, and recognizing that Fresno COG is fully engaged in a major RTP update to meet SB 375's mandates, Fresno COG shall amend the 2013-14 Overall Work Program (OWP) by 9/30/13 to include a task to develop a comprehensive work plan for a major revision of the CMP process. FHWA will work with Fresno COG in developing the comprehensive work plan. The CMP Revision Work Plan will be included in the 2014-15 OWP, with the expectation that all work associated with revision of the CMP Process shall be completed by 6/30/15. (NOTE: as of the date of this report, Fresno COG had begun moving the OWP amendment through its committee process).

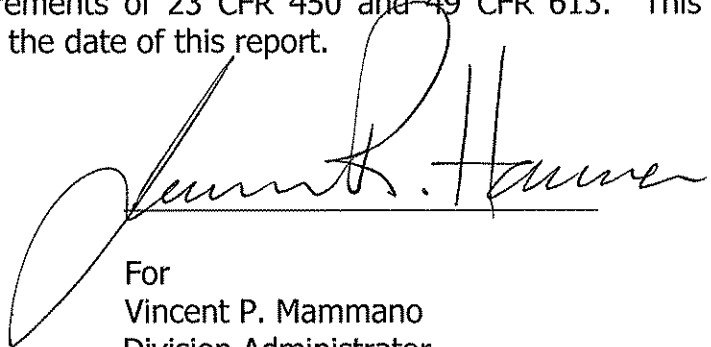
CONCLUSION AND FEDERAL ACTION

The Federal review team found the review to be very productive and we thank Fresno COG and all of its partners for their cooperation. Based on our review and understanding of the transportation planning process in Fresno County, we have noted Fresno COG's strengths and issued no Corrective Actions. We have asked Fresno COG to amend its 2013-14 OWP to include a task to develop a work plan for a comprehensive revision of its CMP process, include that work plan in the 2014-15 OWP, and to complete the work and have the revisions integrated into the regional planning process by 6/30/15. In addition, as part of our regular oversight activities between certification reviews, FHWA and FTA will work with Fresno COG in implementing the changes brought by MAP-21 to the regional transportation planning process.

In conclusion, FHWA and FTA hereby jointly certify as modified by Public Law 112-141, the Moving Ahead for Progress is the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) that the process meets the planning and programming requirements of 23 CFR 450 and 49 CFR 613. This certification is valid for four years from the date of this report.



Leslie T. Rogers
Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration



For
Vincent P. Mammano
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

Appendix A

Interviewed Locally Elected Officials and Transit Operators

Local Elected Officials

Amarpreet Dhaliwal, City of Fresno
Gary Yep, City of Keenan
Jose Flores, City of Clovis

Transit Operators

Shonna Halterman, City of Clovis
Ken Hamm, City of Fresno/FAX
Jeffery Webster, Fresno County
Moses Stites, FCRTA

Appendix B

Review Participants

Federal Review Team

Scott Carson, FHWA California
Eric Eidlin, FTA Region IX
Faith Hall, FTA HQ DC
Jack Lord, FHWA California
Cecilia Crenshaw, FHWA California
Ken Kochevar, FHWA California
Lance Yokota, FHWA California
Rodney Whitfield, FHWA California
Vivien Hoang, FHWA California
Erin Harrington, FHWA California
Christopher Long, FHWA California
Joseph Vaughn, FHWA California

Fresno COG

Tony Boren
Barbara Steck
Les Breshears
Mike Bitner
Kristine Cai
Kai Han
Kathy Chung
Peggy Arnest
Melissa Garza
Lindsey Monge
Brenda Veenendaal
Suzanne Martinez
Lauren Dawson
Clark Thompson
Rob Terry
Marla Day
Laural Fawcett

Caltrans

Erin Thompson, Caltrans HQ

Appendix C

List of Commenters from Public Listening Session / Comments Received

Jeffrey Webster, FCRTA
Tom Gaffery, Fresno State
Phoebe Seaton, CRLA
Moses Stites, FCRTA

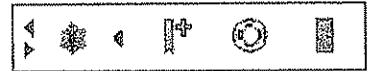
Fresno COG Certification Review Letter

Tom Gaffery [tgaffery@csufresno.edu]

Sent: Friday, April 05, 2013 8:27 PM

To: Cert.Review

Attachments: Fresno COG cert review Gaf~1.pdf (49 KB)



Please find attached a letter in regards to Fresno COG's certification review.

Thank you,

Tom Gaffery

--

Thomas W. Gaffery IV, MBA
Facilities Operations Manager
California State University, Fresno

FRESNO STATE

Discovery. Diversity. Distinction.

April 5, 2013

Mr. Scott Carson
Federal Highway Administration
650 Capitol Mall, Suite 4-100
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Carson:

I am writing as a follow-up to the public listening session that occurred in February 2013 as a part of the Certification Review process for the Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG).

My interactions with Fresno COG staff has been in the following capacities:

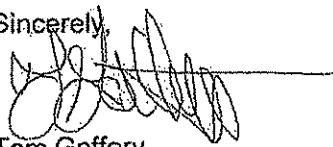
- At-large member of the Fresno COG's Regional Transportation Plan Roundtable (RTP Roundtable)
- California State University, Fresno representative

My duties at Fresno State include responsibility for a number of transportation-related initiatives. In this role, Fresno COG staff has been instrumental in providing data and guidance in relation to a number of transportation initiatives, particularly in connection to our Barstow Bikeways Project.

As a part of the RTP Roundtable, Fresno COG staff is always open to feedback and responsible to queries.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at tgaffery@csufresno.edu or 559.278.7317.

Sincerely,



Tom Gaffery
Executive Assistant to the Vice President for Administration

Office of the Vice President for Administration

California State University, Fresno
Harold H. Haak Administrative Center
5200 North Barton Avenue M/S ML52 Fresno, California 93740-8014

P 559.278.2083 F 559.278.2928 www.FresnoState.edu/adminserv

THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

FW: FCOG Federal Certification Review Comments

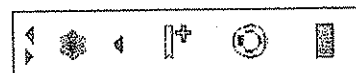
Ruby Renteria [rrenteria@crla.org]

Sent: Monday, April 15, 2013 7:11 PM

To: Cert.Review

Cc: Eidlin, Eric (FTA)

Attachments: CRLAFCOGcomments.pdf (299 KB)



From: Ruby Renteria

Sent: Monday, April 15, 2013 4:10 PM

To: 'certreview@fhwa.dot.gov'; 'Eric.Eidlin@dot.gov'

Cc: Phoebe Seaton

Subject: FCOG Federal Certification Review Comments

Hello,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with comments. On behalf of California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc., please see attached comments for Fresno Council of Governments Federal Certification Review.

Sincerely,

Ruby Renteria

2115 Kern Street, Suite 370

Fresno, CA 93721



CALIFORNIA RURAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE, INC.

FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE, CHANGING LIVES

January 29, 2013

Scott Carson
Federal Highway Administration
650 Capitol Mall, Suite 4-100
Sacramento, CA 95814

Eric Eidlin
Federal Transit Administration
201 Mission Street, Suite 1650
San Francisco, CA 94105

RE: Comments for the Fresno Council of Governments Federal Certification Review

Dear Mr. Scott Carson and Mr. Eric Eidlin:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments for the certification review and evaluation of the region's transportation planning process carried out by the Fresno Council of Governments (FCOG). By informing the certification review and evaluation, we hope to ensure that FCOG carry out a planning process that adequately and equitably addresses the existing transportation needs of the entire region.

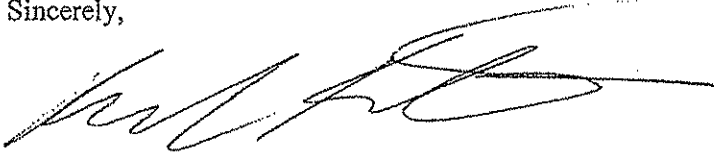
California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. (CRLA) is a statewide organization, which represents low income individuals, families, and communities throughout rural California. CRLA's Community Equity Initiative works to address and eliminate infrastructure and service disparities and deficiencies in disadvantaged, low income communities and, accordingly, address and eliminate barriers to necessary funding and for basic infrastructure and services within these communities. Hundreds of thousands of Californians, disproportionately those in small, disadvantaged communities in rural areas, live without adequate - or any - public transportation options or the infrastructure to support access to public transportation. The 2014 RTP/SCS poses an important opportunity for FCOG to reach out to these communities and include them in the planning efforts.

Per state and federal regulations, MPOs must provide adequate public notice and opportunities to comment on proposed RTPs. While FCOG has improved its outreach processes, such as through a mini-grants program, its certification review should assess the adequacy of FCOG's outreach efforts, especially given the demography of the COG's jurisdiction. The planning process can demonstrate consideration of and responsiveness to community input by documenting how specific comments will be considered as required by Transportation Conformity Regulations of Title 40 CFR Part 93.105.

Minority and low-income communities would significantly benefit if FCOG could demonstrate compliance with Title IV, which can be achieved in part by establishing mechanisms to ensure that issues raised by these communities are appropriately considered in the decision-making process.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. Please feel free to call me at (559) 233-6710 ext. 313 if you would like to discuss them further or should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruby Renteria', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ruby Renteria
Community Worker, Community Equity Initiative
California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc.
2115 Kern Street
Fresno, CA 93721

