



**2017 One Voice Washington D.C.
Priority Submittals - Combined Whitepapers**
February 2017

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Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission
Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board

2017 One Voice Regional Priorities Washington, DC

Establishment of a Central Valley Forestry Corps

Submitted by:

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Establishment of a Central Valley Forestry Corps

SHORT INTRODUCTION OF REGIONAL PRIORITY AND ISSUE:

Half a decade of severe drought has put California's trees under considerable stress. Unusually high temperatures have added to the trees' demand for water, exacerbating an already grim situation. The results are a massive natural disaster for forests within California's Sierra Nevada range. Counties along Central California's San Joaquin Valley (Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, Mariposa, Madera, Fresno, Tulare, and Kern) have been hardest hit. The U.S. Forest Service has identified 102 million dead trees within 7.7 million acres of California's drought stricken forests. In 2016 alone 62 million trees have died, representing more than a 100 percent increase in dead trees across the state from 2015. Millions of additional trees are weakened and are expected to die in the coming months and years. Dead trees create many hazards, including massive wild fire danger and damage to homes and businesses. Although California and the U.S. Forest Service have taken action to address the disaster, additional assistance in removing dead and dying trees is desperately needed.

REQUEST SUMMARY:

A regional partnership in the San Joaquin Valley and its mountain communities comprised of Workforce Development Boards, Local Conservation Corps, and California Community Colleges will implement a 5-year project, the Central Valley Forestry Corps, with costs estimated in the \$13M range. Together we will recruit, train, and deploy 1,000 young adults to remove dead trees and plant new ones.

This program will yield numerous economic, workforce, public safety, and environmental benefits. First, threats from fires would be greatly reduced and tree replacement would help to safeguard against dangers from severe soil erosion. Dead timber could also be used to create and sustain jobs at biomass facilities, where plant material is used to create electricity that is fed into the power grid.

The greatest long-term benefits would result from training unemployed young adults for work. The skills learned, certifications earned, and experiences gained through the Central Valley Forestry Corps are transferable to a wide range of growing, in-demand industries, including, but not limited to: construction, high-value agriculture, manufacturing and logistics, and energy.

This program would be administered by the United States Department of Labor, through interagency agreements with the United States Department of the Interior and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). While we understand this proposal goes beyond the boundaries of Fresno County, we know that in order to have the most success (i.e. funding), a regional proposal is necessary.

REQUEST BACKGROUND AND EXPLAIN THE REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE:

A significant untapped resource exists in Central California's mountain communities and in the San Joaquin Valley – a large number of unemployed young adults. Over 5 years, this project would enroll 1,000 unemployed young adults (18 - 24) into Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) one-stop job centers, then California Community Colleges would train them through a six-week Forestry Tech program, and finally, using federal funds, local conservation corps would employ them for up to 2 months, after which they would be placed in private sector, unsubsidized jobs.

ARE THERE ANY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS?

As mentioned above, the greatest long-term benefits would result from training unemployed young adults for work. The skills learned and experiences gained through the Central Valley Forestry Corps are transferable to a wide range of growing, in-demand industries, including, but not limited to, construction, high-value agriculture, manufacturing and logistics, and energy.

ARE THERE ANY ATTACHMENTS?

No.

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2017 One Voice Regional Priorities Washington, DC

*United States Department of Transportation – Consistent
Policies for Targeted Hiring Programs*

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U.S. Department of Transportation – Consistent Policies for Targeted Hiring Programs

SHORT INTRODUCTION OF REGIONAL PRIORITY AND ISSUE:

Currently the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and its various administrative units lack a uniform policy for targeted hiring initiatives. This discrepancy gets in the way of local workforce development boards implementing additional methods of getting unemployed and underemployed persons back to work. In order to realize the maximum benefit of federal infrastructure projects and achieve President Trump's vision of rebuilding our infrastructure while putting millions of Americans to work, *consistent* policies are needed to address targeted hiring at the operating administrations within the Department.

REQUEST SUMMARY:

A uniform policy pertaining to targeted hiring programs implemented by all administration departments within the DOT.

REQUEST BACKGROUND AND EXPLAIN THE REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE:

After years of work, Central California's Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board's (FRWDB) recommended targeted hiring policies for the California High Speed Rail project were deemed constitutional by the DOT's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and adopted by the California High Speed Rail Authority. During the course of this protracted process, discrepancies between the DOT's administrative units became apparent. While the FRWDB's Targeted Hiring recommendations were eventually cleared by the FRA, and nearly-identical recommendations made by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority were cleared by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), confusion still exists within the DOT's other administration units – namely the Federal Highway Administration (FHA). During a meeting with California Department of Transportation's Director, he stated that targeted and/or focused hiring initiatives are not allowed by the FHA. This sentiment has been echoed by those within that administration, despite the fact that targeted hiring initiatives have been allowed by FRA and FTA after full vetting from their legal counsels. What is deemed legal by two administrations within the same department should be allowed by administrations throughout the DOT. Clearly, a uniform policy is needed, the result of which could be increased job opportunities for Americans in disadvantaged communities that need them most.

ARE THERE ANY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS?

There is plenty of historical evidence of targeted hiring policies getting folks back to work during economic downturns. In order to create job opportunities for unemployed and underemployed residents, we are seeking targeted hiring recommendations that were adopted by the CA High Speed Rail Authority. The FRWIB is now recommending across the board for the DOT.

ARE THERE ANY ATTACHMENTS?

Photo featured on the front page of *The Fresno Bee* on April 10, 2014 of a Bay Area resident working on a public infrastructure project in Fresno. With the high rates of unemployment throughout Central California, those jobs should be filled by qualified unemployed Central Valley residents.

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**Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board
Fresno County Economic Development Corporation**

2017 One Voice Regional Priorities Washington, DC

*United States Department of Transportation – Uniform
Policies for Workforce Training Funds*

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U.S. Department of Transportation – Uniform Policies for Job Training Funds

SHORT INTRODUCTION OF REGIONAL PRIORITY AND ISSUE:

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and its various administrations do not have a uniform policy for job training funds. The Federal Highway Administration (FHA) is the only administrative branch currently distributing workforce training money. These funds may only be used for salary reimbursement for on-the-job (OJT) training programs, but not to fund workers enrolled in schools vetted by Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) recognized workforce boards or registered apprenticeship programs.

REQUEST SUMMARY:

The FHA should have a policy allowing funding of both OJTs and vocational classroom training. This policy should be applied to all DOT administrations. Furthermore, we request that all administration departments within the DOT identify workforce training funds linked to DOT projects.

REQUEST BACKGROUND AND EXPLAIN THE REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The aforementioned discrepancy gets in the way of local workforce development boards and community partners implementing additional methods of getting unemployed and underemployed persons back to work. In order to realize the maximum benefit of federal infrastructure projects and achieve President Trump's vision for rebuilding our infrastructure while putting millions of American's to work, *consistent* policies are needed.

ARE THERE ANY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS?

Making additional workforce training funds linked to DOT projects available would undoubtedly boost our regional economy. Our Valley does not lack human capital, what we are missing is an educated and job-ready population to take advantage of the millions of dollars of federal DOT infrastructure investments in the Central Valley. Giving low-skill or no-skill workers the tools for advancement will ultimately lead them to securing good jobs – and will protect them from future economic downturns like the Great Recession in 2007-2009. Sadly, many low-skill workers who experienced job loss then are still unemployed today.¹

ARE THERE ANY ATTACHMENTS?

No.

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¹ The Hamilton Project; Washington, DC

Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board
CA Clean Transportation Tech. & Solutions (CALSTART)
San Joaquin Valley Manufacturers Alliance
Mazzei Flying Service
City of Mendota
City of Reedley

2017 One Voice Regional Priorities Washington, DC

SUSTAINABLE AVIATION PROJECT

Submitted by:
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Establishment of Sustainable Aviation Project

SHORT INTRODUCTION OF REGIONAL PRIORITY AND ISSUE:

According to the Lung Association's 16th annual "State of the Air" report, the drought is making air quality worse in the Central Valley with Fresno County leading as the worst county in the state for soot pollution. Therefore, Fresno County has a demonstrated need for innovative projects that focus on the reducing carbon footprint.

The Sustainable Aviation Project (SAP) seeks funding from the United States Department of Labor and the United States Environmental Protection Agency to begin the first deployment of production electric aircraft in commercial flight training service in the United States in a joint effort between the City of Reedley, City of Mendota, Reedley College, Mazzei Flying Service, CALSTART, San Joaquin Valley Manufacturers Alliance, and the Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board. The electric aircraft will operate out of four (4) airports in Fresno County; Fresno Chandler Executive Airport (KFCH) in southwest Fresno, Reedley Municipal Airport (K032) in Reedley, Mendota Municipal Airport (KM90) in Mendota, and Fresno Yosemite International Airport (KFAT) in Fresno. The project will establish the first network of electric aircraft charging infrastructure at regional airports in the world and transform the San Joaquin Valley into a center for innovation related to sustainable aviation and advanced electrified aircraft.

REQUEST SUMMARY:

The partnership between the seven agencies mentioned above will work toward the recruitment, training, and placement of veterans, youth, and career seekers from disadvantaged communities surrounding the airports served by the project. SAP is requesting \$1,500,000 to begin implementation of the project. Ultimately, harmful pollutant emissions will be reduced by nearly 1 ton per year and Greenhouse Gas emissions will be reduced by over 92 tons per year, and simultaneously lower the cost barrier of flight training for aviation careers.

REQUEST BACKGROUND AND EXPLAIN THE REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE:

SAP is designed to be a model for replication across airports from Bakersfield to Sacramento and beyond. It will align Fresno County with development work for aerial Personal Rapid Transit vehicles being conducted in the Bay Area and Northern California. Regionally, there are over forty (40) regional airports, most of which are highly underutilized. The four (4) airports that form the initial network of support and charging infrastructure for SAP are representative of the majority of these airports. Lessons learned from deployment of the charging infrastructure and operation of the aircraft associated with SAP will be applied to expansion of an electric aircraft support network in the future to include airports in our region and beyond.

SAP will eliminate the use of leaded aviation gasoline at a rate of 7 gallons per hour of flight training operation per aircraft. Over the ten (10) year life of SAP, that equals a reduction of 196,000 gallons of leaded aviation gasoline.

SAP will revitalize the flight training at each of the participating airports due to the lower cost of operation for the electric aircraft. The potential for drawing further private investment into Fresno County with the inherent job growth potential from that investment through this project is significant and would be pursued as part of the long term plan for the project.

ARE THERE ANY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS?

SAP will validate and prove the cost savings and value of electric propulsion for aircraft; that will lead to more development of electric aircraft which will eventually pave the way for electric aerial Personal Rapid Transit vehicle deployment in the San Joaquin Valley.

The Sustainable Aviation Project will directly benefit the health of the low income neighborhoods around the airports of Fresno, Mendota, and Reedley by reducing NOx emissions by 7.326 tons and HC emissions by 61.05 tons over the ten (10) year life of the project. The project will also reduce noise levels from these aircraft operating in flight training activities by 90%. In addition, this project will open the door to new career opportunities in aviation for youth and veterans in these communities by lowering the cost barrier for flight training, and by providing competitive assistance grants for youth interested in aviation as a career.

ARE THERE ANY ATTACHMENTS?

No

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City of Fresno

2017

One Voice Regional Priorities Washington, DC

**SUPPORT INCREASED FUNDING FOR
VETERANS BOULEVARD INTERCHANGE**

Submitted by:

Bruce Rudd, City of Fresno

SUPPORT INCREASED FUNDING FOR VETERANS BOULEVARD INTERCHANGE

SHORT INTRODUCTION OF REGIONAL PRIORITY AND ISSUE:

Funding for transportation infrastructure falls severely short of local needs. The City of Fresno advocates for increased funding for transportation infrastructure through the Federal-aid Highway Program to support Veterans Boulevard Interchange.

REQUEST SUMMARY-PROVIDE SPECIFIC DETAILED“ASK”:

- 1. Current sources of funding for transportation infrastructure are severely inadequate.**
- 2. The City of Fresno advocates for increased federal funding to support large-scale transportation infrastructure needs which include \$44.5 million for Veterans Boulevard/State Route 99 (SR-99) Interchange.**

REQUEST BACKGROUND AND EXPLAIN THE REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE:

Existing block grants and competitive funding sources are significantly oversubscribed, with nearly all programs receiving requests for projects which exceed available funding by hundreds of millions of dollars. In some cases, federal discretionary programs receive billions of dollars of requests over above available funds. For example, in 2016 the Federal TIGER program received \$9.3 billion in requests for \$500 million of available funds. While needs go unfunded, local roadways deteriorate, traffic conditions worsen and regional economic growth is stifled.

Like nearly all municipalities nationwide, the City of Fresno has a backlog of critical transportation infrastructure projects. One such project is the Veterans Boulevard Interchange at SR-99. Veterans Boulevard is a regionally significant project which will construct a six-lane connecting arterial roadway in northwest Fresno, an interchange at State Route 99, grade separations over the Union Pacific Railroad, High Speed Rail line and Golden State Boulevard and improve ancillary roadways surrounding the project. The project has been phased to most effectively secure funding. To date, \$75.5 million of the necessary \$120 million in funding has been identified. The \$44.5 million gap in funding is primarily due to fuel tax revenues which have remained flat and continue to decrease as a result of greater fuel efficiency and local sales tax measure funds which were negatively impacted by recession-era spending patterns.

Investing in Veterans Boulevard demonstrates a federal commitment to transformative infrastructure which will improve traffic flow and goods movement, facilitate pedestrian movement, reduce vehicle emissions and stimulate the economy through job local creation. The project will also improve east-west connectivity between north Fresno and the rural communities west of Highway 99.

IF NOT A TRANSPORTATION RELATED REQUEST, ARE THERE ANY TRANSPORTATION POLICY CONNECTIONS?

N/A

ARE THERE ANY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS?

Investment in transportation infrastructure projects can have a significant impact on local economic indicators by generating increased demand for goods and services as well as employment opportunities, particularly in the skilled trades. Infrastructure also spurs private investments near the project area which can have lasting economic returns for the region.

ARE THERE ANY ATTACHMENTS?

No

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2017 One Voice Regional Priorities Washington, DC

United States Department of Transportation

High Speed Rail Training Facility

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High Speed Rail Training Facility

SHORT INTRODUCTION:

Create policy or regulations that require high-speed rail training facilities be located alongside high-speed rail testing facilities in the Central Valley.

REQUEST SUMMARY:

Provide support to create Fresno as the hub for training workers for high-speed rail for the entire country. A permanent facility of this kind will be necessary to keep up with the advancing technology, especially if the United States wishes not only to utilize this system but gain an innovative presence in the industry worldwide.

REQUEST BACKGROUND:

In Fresno County the High Speed Rail project is well underway. This is a monumental project that will require a skilled labor force to construct and maintain the high-speed rail system. The purpose of the request is to establish a campus intended for training workers for the construction of and maintenance of the high-speed rail. Because the high-speed rail is new to the United States it is necessary to train workers not only to build but also maintain the high-speed rail line in a world of ever-changing technology. Fresno County has both the land and population to make a high-speed rail educational center a success, not only for the State of California, but for the entire country.

The proposed facility is part of a broader vision associated with the location of the California High-Speed Rail Authority's heavy maintenance facility in Fresno County. That vision includes an educational center, transportation operations facility, an ongoing training site, a facility for businesses and countries to showcase their products, and an industrial park for companies that provide services and products to the high-speed rail. As this burgeoning industry grows, it will be able to rely upon both the training and the firsthand experience of the professionals involved in the project from its earliest stages.

The need for the training facility is necessary as we have a high unemployment rate and lack of skilled workers to fill the jobs that the construction of high-speed rail will provide. Fresno County is among California counties with the highest rates of poverty (26%) opposed to California's 15.3%. Identified as an economically distressed area due to its low per capita income figures, the region is representative of those areas needing to diversify job opportunities through technical training. With the construction of high-speed rail and the need for a trained labor force to fill the jobs the training facility is exactly what is needed to grow our local economy.

Fresno County has a collaborative team which includes workforce, economic, and community development organizations that developed a strategic plan to implement our vision. To assist the create of a state of the art high speed rail training facility workforce, Fresno County's eighteen public and private universities, community colleges, and technical institutes are ready to implement cutting edge curriculum. We are asking for your support to make Fresno County the hub for high-speed rail training for the United States.

ARE THERE ANY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS?

First and foremost the training facility would provide training to our unemployed population as well as our underemployed. By creating the opportunity for a brighter future this would have a direct economic impact to Fresno County as well as the Central Valley. The California High Speed Rail will bring much needed

business and capital to numerous industries in the Central Valley; help eliminate over 12 billion pounds of greenhouse gas emissions annually to combat global warming; encourage the savings of 2.0-3.2 million barrels of oil each year; and generate total projected employment of 2,388,000 jobs over the life of the project including direct, indirect, and induced jobs.

ARE THERE ANY WATER POLICY CONNECTIONS?

There are no water policy connections.

ARE THERE ANY ATTACHMENTS?

To follow.

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CommuniFresno Economic Opportunities Commission (Fresno EOC)

2017

One Voice Regional Priorities Washington, DC

TITLE

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT (CSBG)

Submitted by: Brian Angus, CEO

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SHORT INTRODUCTION OF REGIONAL PRIORITY AND ISSUE:

Fresno EOC respectfully asks that the One Voice Delegation promote the continued funding of the Community Services Block Grant program, the source for emergency, human service interventions, and economic development Fresno EOC extends to our county's most vulnerable residents.

We also ask that members encourage our local Congressional delegation to support and co-sponsor reauthorization of the Community Economic Opportunity Act when it is reintroduced this session. The Act authorizes funding for the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG). We have been pleased that our congressmen have consistently recognized the value of CSBG to their constituents and have all supported reauthorization and stable funding for the program. Maintaining federal CSBG funding is the single most important tool our community has to mitigate the impacts of emergencies such as the drought, and to create economic opportunities for our most needy residents leading to self-sufficiency. Fresno EOC is the locally designated steward of CSBG funds for Fresno County.

REQUEST SUMMARY:

1. Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding in the amount of \$750 million for FY '18.
2. Reauthorization of CSBG: Community Economic Opportunity Act (when introduced)

REQUEST BACKGROUND AND EXPLAIN THE REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE:

CSBG honors local assessment and design of programs that meet urgent local needs and generate economic opportunities. It correctly requires governance of the CSBG-funded agency by locally appointed and elected leaders, as well as those representing service recipients. CSBG funding makes it possible for Fresno EOC to deliver emergency services such as food and utility assistance to thousands of our county residents ravished by the drought; it continues to be the lifeline for many still devastated by the economic downturn. In addition to emergency services, CSBG has been the catalyst for the creation of vital human services such as the Sanctuary Youth Shelter, its transitional living centers, Central Valley Against Human Trafficking (CVAHT), the Conservation Corps, and SOUL charter school. CSBG also invests in the creation of programs that promote economic opportunity and self-sufficiency. Examples include CDFI, having lent more than \$22 million to entrepreneurs unable to access financing through traditional means, a growing solar installation enterprise, and the creation of social enterprises such as catering and recycling that employ and train disadvantaged workers and generate discretionary revenue to underwrite new initiatives such as support for beginning farmers. CSBG is particularly critical to our county, where one in four live in poverty. It is a responsible, local instrument allowing for local determination and the creation of local solutions to ameliorate the persistent, unabated poverty our region has

become all too well known for.

ARE THERE ANY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS?

The Community Service Block Grant provides flexible local funding, the issuance of which is governed by a locally-designated and representative board that has, in Fresno, prioritized economic stimulus and entrepreneurship. Perhaps most significant is Fresno Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) that, since 2009, has made loans totaling \$22 million to 519 businesses who were also provided over 7,000 hours of training and technical assistance. Before the formation of Fresno CDFI, Fresno EOC made over 375 micro loans to small, minority, refugee farmers to help them establish farming operations in the U.S. to support their families. Fresno EOC has been at the vanguard of social enterprise, creating economic opportunity. Examples include turn-key industrial recycling operations, food production, commercial vehicle detailing, Nielsen Conference Center, construction and solar PV and solar water heater installations, landscaping and grounds maintenance, and catering. Each of these enterprises hires and trains disadvantaged workers, teaching job skills, and life skills leading to self-sufficiency. With state cap and trade investments Fresno EOC Energy Services Department has leveraged federal DOE weatherization funds to add rooftop solar installations to its available energy savings measures. In 2016, we installed over 900,000 watts of solar PV (roughly 300 homes), all low-income, as required by state Cap and Trade legislation.

ARE THERE ANY ATTACHMENTS?

- Pictures showing CSBG-supported activities. **WILL SEND PICTURES LATER**

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Fresno Council of Governments

2017

One Voice Regional Priorities Washington, DC

Regional Transportation Plans

Change Adoption From 4- to 8-Year Cycles

Submitted by:

Tony Boren

Executive Director, Fresno COG

Regional Transportation Plans – Change Adoption from 4- to 8- Year Cycles

REQUEST SUMMARY

Allow Regional Transportation Plans to be updated every 8 years instead of every 4 years.

REQUEST BACKGROUND AND EXPLAIN THE REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is a long-term blueprint of a region's transportation system. Usually, RTPs are conducted every four years, or 5 years in air quality attainment areas, and ensures that the horizon of the plan extends at least 20 years. The plan identifies and analyzes transportation needs of the metropolitan region and creates a framework for State and Federal funding as well as program and project priorities. These plans are normally the product of recommendations and studies carried out and put forth by a Metropolitan planning organization (MPO). *MPOs were formed under the 1962 Federal-Aid Highway Act and are required for any urban area with a population of greater than 50,000.* The function of developing the RTP must be carried out by the MPO in cooperation with the Air Pollution Control District, Department, local government agencies, public transit owners and operators, and Native American Tribal Governments in the region.

Fresno COG, as the MPO for the Fresno region develops the RTP which involves a very extensive process that includes years of modeling, forecasting, planning, public outreach and widespread environmental review. This strategic planning process involves many statutory requirements and because of the intense coordination and collaboration required with the various state, local, and federal agencies, as well as the public, it ends up being a very costly project to complete. Furthermore, and more importantly, by the time the RTP is completed, there is little or no time for the implementation of the Plan and/or to assess performance outcomes before it is time to start developing the next RTP. The RTP would be more useful if it was not required to be updated so often, which would also have significant time and cost savings--making the process of planning and programming much more efficient.

ARE THERE ANY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS?

Significant expense is required for MPO's to update a RTP. Required elements include EIR's, extensive public outreach, and hundreds of hours of staff and public engagement time.

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