

**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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**Fresno Council of Governments**

**2017**

**One Voice Regional Priorities Washington, DC**

**Funding to construct a new bridge along State Route 269**

**Submitted by:**

**Tony Boren  
Executive Director, Fresno COG**

## **Funding for the Construction of a new bridge along State Route 269**

### **REQUEST SUMMARY**

Request: State Route (SR) 269 passes through the Rural Community of Huron, CA and connects to Interstate 5 (I-5). The 30-year history of flooding has caused a magnitude of closures of this route, severely impacting interregional travel, economic resiliency, connectivity to I-5 and on the movement of goods from the San Joaquin Valley to the ports, manufacturing plants, and distribution centers in both Northern California and Southern California. Funding in the amount of \$18 million is needed to construct a new bridge along SR 269.

**Total Project Cost:** \$28,000,000

**Funding Need** \$18,000,000

### **REQUEST BACKGROUND AND EXPLAIN THE REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE:**

The State Route 269 Bridge passes through the Rural Community of Huron, CA and connects to Interstate 5 (I-5). The building of the California Aqueduct resulted in an underestimated volume of water coming down Arroyo Pasajero Creek causing major flooding on State Route 269. This is the same creek that washed out Interstate 5 in 1997. The 30-year history of flooding has caused a magnitude of closures of this route, severely impacting the residents of Huron and Southwest Fresno County. As recent as January 2017, severe flooding has already triggered several closures and has had a significant impact on the business resiliency of this farming community, the connectivity to I-5 and on the movement of goods from the San Joaquin Valley to the ports, manufacturing plants, and distribution centers in both Northern California and Southern California. Since State Route 269 came into the state highway system in 1976, the road has been closed over 551 days and does not include the severe storms most recently registered. Because this highway is the only access to the community from the north, the residents of Huron must travel a 28-mile detour for services and shopping, including medical emergencies. Cost to the community of Huron, its residents and businesses, has an averaged \$454,044 per year for 40 years. Addressing the constant closure of this route meets the public safety "emergency" criteria because it takes an additional 28 miles of travel time to go around the route for medical emergencies which may sometimes involve a life or death situation. The project is shovel ready meaning that it is beyond the minimum 30 percent design and engineering requirement. The 10,000 people living in the region are mostly employed by the agriculture related industry that the state, nation and world depend on so heavily. State Route 269 is the most accessible route to access the place of employment for the agriculture industry and for the movement of goods. Blocking access in the area's agriculturally significant transportation network is not safe and does nothing to create jobs, increase economic vitality and move the commodities that feed the world. It must be constructed immediately

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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.<sup>1</sup>

### **ARE THERE ANY ATTACHMENTS?**

No.

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<sup>1</sup> The Hamilton Project; Washington, DC

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***2017 One Voice Regional Priorities, Washington, DC***

## ***Workforce Development***

United States Department of Transportation  
High Speed Rail Training Facility

Health and Human Services, Office of Community Services  
Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)

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## **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

### **BACKGROUND:**

Fresno County will, in the next 20 years, experience massive, unprecedented public works projects. While this is welcome to a region characterized by unabated poverty, these opportunities require the preparation of a local workforce able to meet the workforce demands of such economic expansion. Among the projects primed to deliver exceptional employment and career opportunities are:

- Significant expansion of Community Medical Centers
- Fresno's downtown Intermodal Transit Hub
- City of Fresno's Water Infrastructure Bond
- State Center Community College District infrastructure projects
- Fresno Unified School District bond projects
- Major CalTrans projects
- High Speed Rail and the High Speed Rail Training Facility

**As the focus of the Council of Governments (COG) is on transportation projects, we highlight the High Speed Rail Training Facility as a priority for COG during this year's One Voice trip.**

### **High Speed Rail Training Facility and Preparatory, Support Services for trainees provided through the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)**

### **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.

Support the continued funding of Community Services Block grant program, to assist with job readiness, human service interventions, and economic development.

### **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.

Making funding available for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) in the amount of \$750 million in the FY'18 budget critical for job readiness programs, and other services that lead to self-sufficiency.

### **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 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 create a high-speed rail educational center, 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 our region has an unacceptably high unemployment rate and a 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%) compared to a 15.3% rate in California. 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 proposed 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 together have developed a strategic plan to implement our vision. Fresno County's eighteen public and private universities, community colleges, and technical institutes stand fully prepared to implement a cutting edge curriculum to train the workforce high speed rail will require. 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. CSBG funds will provide the job readiness, work ethic, soft skills, and character-building skills and support our population needs. The prospect of employment on the high speed rail project and other major construction projects welcomes a bright future for the workforce prepared to take the many skilled jobs this initiative will introduce. 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.

**\*Other critical CSBG benefits:** 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 WATER POLICY CONNECTIONS?**

There are no water policy connections.

**ARE THERE ANY ATTACHMENTS?**

To follow.

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*San Joaquin Valley Manufacturers Alliance*  
*Mazzei Flying Service*  
*City of Mendota*  
*City of Reedley*

2017 One Voice Regional Priorities Washington, DC

*SUSTAINABLE AVIATION PROJECT*

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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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**Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission  
Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board**

**2017 One Voice Regional Priorities Washington, DC**

***Establishment of a Central Valley Forestry Corps***

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## **Establishment of a Central Valley Forestry Corps**

### **SHORT INTRODUCTION OF REGIONAL PRIORITY AND ISSUE:**

Half a decade of severe drought combined with unusually high temperatures have put California's trees under considerable stress. The result is 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 risks, damage to homes and businesses, and several transportation impediments as many of the dead and dying trees are located near the state highway system. 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. As this crisis requires substantial human capital and investments from all levels of government, we are prepared to work with all interested entities (Caltrans, county agencies, etc.) in an effort to be responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars.

### **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?**

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