

Fresno COG Policy Board
MINUTES
Thursday, February 25, 2021
5:30 PM

Meeting held via Zoom.

Members Attending:

Mayor Drew Bessinger, City of Clovis
Mayor Ramsey, City of Coalinga
Mayor Pro Tem Alfred Valdez, City of Firebaugh
Mayor David Cardenas, City of Fowler
Mayor Jerry Dyer, City of Fresno
Mayor Gary Yep, City of Kerman
Mayor Rey Leon, City of Huron
Councilmember Michelle Roman, City of Kingsburg
Mayor Rolando Castro, City of Mendota
Mayor Victor Lopez, Orange Cove
Mayor Alma Beltran, City of Parlier
Mayor Mary Fast, City of Reedley
Mayor Julia Hernandez, City of San Joaquin
Mayor Eli Ontiveros, City of Sanger
Mayor Scott Robertson, City of Selma
Michael Navarro, Caltrans
Bryan Rome, Legal Counsel
Tony Boren, Executive Director

Absent:

Supervisor Sal Quintero, County of Fresno

Quorum: At the start of the meeting, there were 15 members representing 83.11% of the population. There was a quorum to conduct business. (Clovis, Coalinga, Firebaugh, Fowler, Fresno City, Huron, Kerman, Kingsburg, Mendota, Orange Cove, Parlier, Reedley, San Joaquin, Sanger, Selma).

The meeting was called to order at 5: 53 pm by Mayor Cardenas (Fowler), Chair.

I. TRANSPORTATION CONSENT ITEMS

- A. Executive Minutes of January 28, 2021 [APPROVE]
- B. City of Clovis Transportation Development Act Claim (Les Beshears) [APPROVE]
- C. City of Coalinga Transportation Development Act Claim (Les Beshears) [APPROVE]
- D. City of Reedley Transportation Development Act Claim (Les Beshears) [APPROVE]
- E. Fiscal Year 2021-22 Local Transportation Fund (LTF) Preliminary Estimates (Les Beshears) [INFORMATION]
- F. Fiscal Year 2021-22 State Transit Assistance (STA) Preliminary Estimates (Les Beshears) [INFORMATION]
- G. Fiscal Year 2021-22 State of Good Repair (SGR) Preliminary Estimates (Les Beshears) [INFORMATION]
- H. Fresno Regional Electric Vehicle Readiness Plan (Trai Her-Cole) [ACCEPT]
- I. Fresno County Local Housing Planning Grants Program Call for Applications (Meg Prince) [INFORMATION]
- J. 2021 FTA Section 5310, Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program Application (Peggy Arnest) [INFORMATION]
- K. RTP Action Element (Jennifer Soliz) [INFORMATION]

Mayor Leon (Huron) pulled Item I-L.

After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Castro (Mendota) motioned and Mayor Leon (Huron) seconded to approve the balance of the consent agenda. 14 yes votes, members Orange Cove and Fresno County absent. The motion passed.

L. Fresno COG Unmet Transit Needs Assessment for fiscal year 2021 (Harold Sobrado) [INFORMATION]

Mr. Sobrado (FCOG/FAX) reported that Fresno COG opened another cycle of the Unmet Transit Needs Assessment for fiscal year 2021, with the Social Services Transportation Technical Committee (SSTAC) meeting held on Tuesday, Feb. 23.

Under California's Transportation Development Act, Fresno COG's Policy Board must determine that public transportation needs within Fresno County will be reasonably met in 2020-21 before approving Local Transportation Funds (LTF) claims for streets and roads. Fresno COG's SSTAC is responsible for evaluating unmet transit needs. Public outreach and feedback is an essential component of the Unmet Transit Needs Assessment. Because of the extraordinary circumstances resulting from COVID-19, public outreach will be different from years past. Outreach, this year will be primarily virtual and broken down into two main components: virtual meetings and an online survey.

Four virtual meetings are planned, with three scheduled through ZOOM and a fourth planned for Facebook. The virtual meetings scheduled are as follows: Thursday, Feb. 25, 2021, 10:30 a.m. via ZOOM and 2:30 p.m. via ZOOM; Tuesday, March 2, 2021, Noon via Facebook and 5:30 p.m. via ZOOM.

The second major form of outreach will be an online survey providing stakeholders with the ability to electronically submit comments and feedback. Both the virtual meetings and survey will be heavily marketed online and through Facebook. Notification will also take place via email to COG mailing lists and on social media.

Facebook campaigns will be highly targeted and limited to Fresno County. Both campaigns started on Feb. 8, 2021, with messaging for virtual events running through March 2, 2021, the final virtual event date. Messaging for the online surveys will run through the end of March 2021. Comments can be submitted via email to comments@fresnocog.org. Comments can also be submitted via conventional mail to: Brenda Veenendaal, Administrative Services Manager, Fresno Council of Governments, 2035 Tulare St., Suite 201, Fresno, CA 93721.

The public hearing satisfying the unmet transit needs requirements is scheduled for the March Fresno COG Policy Board meeting, March 25, 2021.

This item was informational only; no further action was required.

II. TRANSPORTATION ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy

1. Draft Policy Element Outline (Meg Prince) [APPROVE]

Ms. Prince (FCOG) reported that the policy element is a required component of the RTP and serves as a foundation for short and long-term regional planning and identifies areas of regional consensus. Fresno COG convened a Policy Element Subcommittee, which included approximately 20 representatives from local government, transit, public health, community-based organizations, active transportation, the building industry, Measure C, and the RTP Roundtable. The Policy Element Subcommittee met three times in November and December to help develop the Draft Policy Element Outline.

The outline has been consolidated and updated based on the 2018 policy element and is included as an attachment to this agenda item. Staff is requesting approval for the vision, overarching goals, and supporting policies in the outline to be included in the draft RTP/SCS, which will be circulated for public review and comment in spring 2022.

After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Fast (Reedley) motioned and Mayor Dyer (Fresno City) seconded to recommend the Policy Board approve the Draft Policy Element Outline. 15 yes votes, member Fresno County absent. The motion passed.

2. SCS Scenario Concepts (Seth Scott) [APPROVE]

Mr. Scott (FCOG) reported that scenario development is at the core of the SCS, which requires MPOs to test various strategies to meet GHG reduction goals and maximize co-benefits for regional sustainability. As such, the scenarios that are selected for analysis within the SCS form the backbone of the plan's demonstration of how GHG reduction targets are met.

In the context of the SCS, a scenario is a snapshot in time that represents a future result of certain land-use and transportation strategies. Different strategies, as well as different priorities among strategies, will result in diverging visions of the future; and the purpose of the SCS is to choose the preferred scenario that 1) demonstrates the region's ability to meet GHG reduction targets, and 2) represents a sustainable vision of the Fresno County region that is both ambitious and achievable.

The RTP Roundtable has submitted five scenario concepts for consideration; they were then edited by the TTC and submitted for approval by TTC and PAC. These draft concepts are built around SCS strategies that were previously discussed, where each concept is defined by the degree of prioritization given to each of the 20 SCS strategies relative to each other.

Fresno COG staff is planning an outreach effort that will present these five scenario concepts to the public and garner input on them. Staff plans to report back in May with the results, and will be asking for three scenarios to include in the SCS for analysis.

After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Leon (Huron) motioned and Mayor Ontiveros (Sanger) seconded to recommend the Policy Board approve the five scenario concepts for public input. 15 yes votes, member Fresno County absent. The motion passed.

3. Telecommute Survey Results (Trai Her-Cole) [INFORMATION]

Ms. Her-Cole (FCOG) reported that in November 2020, Fresno COG released a telecommute survey for both employees and employers to assess the rate of telecommuting in Fresno County as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The results gathered will help provide some basis for the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gases (GHG) reduction quantification of a telecommute strategy, which will be applied in Fresno COG's 2022 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS). Increased telecommuting long-term may lead to reduced VMT and GHG emissions, relieve congestion, and help the region meet air quality goals. There were 597 employee responses and 47 employer responses. Staff will provide a brief presentation of the survey results.

This item was informational only; no further action was required.

4. RTP Project Submittal (Suzanne Martinez) [INFORMATION]

Ms. Martinez (FCOG) reported that Fresno COG initiated the 2022 RTP call for projects on Nov. 2, and all projects were due by Dec. 16. Staff performed a preliminary analysis of all projects received. Below is a breakdown of that analysis:

Project Type	Total Dollars		Number of Projects	
	Dollar Amount	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Bike/Ped	\$651,294,000	7.07%	505 (+228)	17.06% (+7.7%)
S&R Capacity Increasing	\$2,311,933,000	25.12%	379	12.8%

S&R Operations & Maintenance	\$3,204,823,000	34.82%	1934	65.31%
Transit	\$3,036,287,000	32.99%	143	4.83%
TOTAL	\$9,204,337,000	100%	2961	100%

As previously reported, the 2022 RTP call for projects allowed agency staff to choose multiple modes for a single project to provide flexibility in how they are scored and funded. As such, in the analysis above, the number in parenthesis within the bicycle and pedestrian mode depicts the number of projects from other modes that also include a bike/ped component. Next steps include mapping the 2022 RTP projects received and ranking them with the project evaluation criteria established in fall 2020.

This item was informational only; no further action was required.

B. Eastside Transportation Corridor Improvement Study (Jennifer Soliz) [ACCEPT]

Ms. Soliz (FCOG) reported that the Eastside Transportation Corridor Improvement Study is intended to determine future transportation needs within the eastern portion of Fresno County, focusing primarily on the major north-south and east-west transportation corridors, Academy and Manning avenues. The project seeks to plan a future for both corridors that is safe, connected for all modes, provides a better experience for users, and supports the local economies.

Throughout project development, a steering committee participated to identify challenges and solutions for the eastside corridors. The steering committee included representatives from FCOG, Fresno County, Caltrans, project area cities: City of Fresno, Clovis, Sanger, Parlier, Kingsburg, Fowler, Selma, Reedley, and Orange Cove, and local stakeholders including business organizations and bicycling groups. Outreach efforts also included public workshops and were intended to be inclusive and maximize diverse community and stakeholder participation. The draft Eastside Transportation Corridor Improvement Study was circulated for a 30-day public comment period on Dec. 21.

After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Yep (Kerman) motioned and Mayor Castro (Mendota) seconded to recommend the Policy Board accept the final Eastside Transportation Corridor Improvement Study. 15 yes votes, member Fresno County absent. The motion passed.

C. Multi-Jurisdictional Local Roadway Plan Consultant Selection (Trai Her-Cole) [APPROVE]

Ms. Her-Cole (FCOG) reported that the future Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding cycles will soon require all jurisdictions to have a Local Roadway Safety Plan (LRSP) or an equivalent document. To ensure the Fresno region can continue to receive its share of HSIP funds, Fresno COG is seeking to develop a Multi-Jurisdictional Local Roadway Safety Plan (MLRSP) for those agencies that do not have one. These include: Fresno County, Coalinga, Clovis, Huron, Firebaugh, San Joaquin, Orange Cove, Kerman, Mendota and Selma.

On Jan. 4, 2021, Fresno COG released a request or proposal for qualified consultants to develop the MLRSP. Proposals were due January 22nd and Fresno COG received three proposals. A scoring committee comprised of representatives from Fresno COG, County of Fresno, City of Clovis, and City of Coalinga scored each proposal and recommended Kittleson and Associates as the preferred consultant.

Kittleson and Associates has extensive experience developing local roadway safety plans for jurisdictions and has worked closely with several valley cities on public engagement. Kittleson is also the consultant developing the Regional Transportation Safety Plan which will inform the MLRSP, both documents will require close coordination and will be developed concurrently to ensure completion by March of 2022 before the next HSIP Cycle in April 2022.

The contract amount is not to exceed \$271,536.18 and is expected to kick off in March with the Policy Board's approval on February 25th.

After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Leon (Huron) motioned and Mayor Castro (Mendota) seconded to recommend that the Policy Board authorize the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with Kittelson and Associates to develop the Multi-Jurisdictional Local Roadway Safety Plan in an amount not to exceed \$271,536.18. 15 yes votes, member Fresno County absent. The motion passed.

D. 2021 Safety Performance Targets (Santosh Bhattarai) [APPROVE]

Mr. Bhattarai (FCOG) reported that the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) and the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) require metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to set annual targets for five safety performance measures as follows.

- Number of fatalities
- Rate of fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
- Number of serious injuries
- Rate of serious injuries per 100 million VMT
- Number of non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries

MPOs can choose to support the statewide target or set a separate regional target. In the previous target-setting iterations, Fresno COG set evidence-based targets for 2018 and supported the statewide targets for 2019 as well as 2020.

This year, Caltrans set the statewide safety targets using evidence-based (trend line) approach consistent with the California Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). The trend line approach extrapolates the existing changes in fatalities and serious injuries into the future and is a data-driven process that estimates the impacts of external factors and safety improvements based on collision history. The 5 year average 2021 safety targets have the annual reduction in fatalities and serious injuries as 2.9% and 1.3% respectively. The white paper for Caltrans’ PM1 2021 Safety Performance Management Target-Setting can be found here: [Caltrans’ PM1 2021 Safety Target-Setting Whitepaper](#).

Each year, Fresno COG compares the statewide targets with its regional evidence-based targets. Since Caltrans is already using the evidence-based approach this year, Fresno COG does not see the need to carry out its regional analysis separately. Please see below for the 2021 statewide safety targets:

Caltrans’ Statewide Safety Target for 2021

Performance Measure	Data Source	5-Yr. Rolling Average	Annual Reduction 2018 to 2021
Number of Fatalities	FARS	3,624.8	2.9%
Rate of Fatalities (per 100M VMT)	FARS & HPMS	1.044	2.9%
Number of Serious Injuries	SWITRS	15,419.4	1.3%
Rate of Serious Injuries (per 100M VMT)	SWITRS & HPMS	4.423	1.3%
Number of Non-Motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries	FARS & SWITRS	4,340.8	2.9% for Fatalities and 1.3% for Serious Injuries

After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Ramsey (Coalinga) motioned and Mayor Ontiveros (Sanger) seconded to recommend the Policy Board to adopt the statewide targets for all five safety performance measures for 2021. The motion passed.

E. Valleywide Household Travel Survey (Kristine Cai) [INFORMATION]

Ms. Cai (FCOG) reported that the traffic model has been a key tool in many planning activities such as SB 743 implementation, developing the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), air quality conformity, environmental impact report (EIR) development, corridor studies, etc.

The model's integrity relies on the data it receives. San Joaquin Valley transportation agencies' models, including Fresno COG's ABM, were based on the household travel survey that Caltrans conducted in 2010/11. Valley residents' travel behavior has changed in that time. In addition, federal air quality conformity regulations require that models applied in the conformity process cannot be more than 10 years old. Most of the models in the Valley are close to that age limit. Fresno COG's AMB, which has a base year of 2014, will expire in 2024.

Caltrans conducted two statewide household travel surveys in the past two decades but will no longer be leading them. Instead, regional agencies are taking on the responsibility. The eight Valley MPOs have collectively decided to pursue funding to conduct a Valleywide household travel survey. The project is estimated to cost around \$1.5 million, and if all funding falls in place, the project will kick-off later this year and will be wrapped up in 2022. The survey will reach approximately 6,700 households, with targeted outreach for low-income and minority communities to ensure a high and unbiased response rate from all counties. About a third of the cost may potentially come from Regional Early Action Plan (REAP) funding to address housing-related issues and hopefully inform housing element development over the next few years.

Survey data will be used to update all the Valley COGs' travel models. The model update would take place in 2023 for Fresno COG and later for other COGs. The updated models will be applied in the 2026 RTP/SCS, and SB 743 baseline information will be updated with the new model.

Fresno COG is leading the project, working closely with the other seven Valley COGs to pursue Caltrans' Sustainable Transportation Planning grant and REAP funding. Other funding sources for this project include left-over federal planning dollars from Kings County Association of Governments and SB 1 formula planning dollars from all the COGs.

This item was informational only; no further action was required.

F. Caltrans Report (Caltrans) [INFORMATION]

Mr. Navarro (Caltrans) reported:

- Kingsburg to Selma State Route 99 Rehabilitation - Roadway rehab on SR 99 in and near the City of Kingsburg from SR 99/SR 201 separation to 0.3 mile south of Second Street under-crossing. Estimated 240 working days. Construction continues and the estimated completion is May 2021.
- Selma to Fowler Rehabilitation - Roadway rehab on SR 99 from Second Street in Selma to just north of Merced Ave in Fowler. Bids were open on February 10th and the contract will be awarded at the end of the month. Begin construction is scheduled for June 2021.
- Coalinga/Avenal Rest Area Water/West- water upgrades - Construction began in November 2019 and rest areas will be closed for a substantial amount of time during the work. The contractor is working on building work and watermain. The estimated completion date is March 2021.
- Zero Emission Vehicles DC Fast Charging Stations - Chargers are active. Fast charging conveniently located at SR 99/Olive. Multiple locations along SR 99 corridor. Free charging till Caltrans contracts the maintenance and charging of all proposed stations throughout the state.
- South Fresno 99 Corridor Project (SR 99/North/Cedar Avenues & SR99/American Avenue Interchanges) - Project is in the environmental clearance phase. Draft environmental document is scheduled for circulation in Early 2021 with the public hearing to take place in July. Construction is targeted for late 2024.
- Veterans Interchange: Target to advertise the project in May 2021. Contractor would begin work in September. Project has Federal BUILD grant funding.
- Kings Canyon Expressway Seg. 3: SR 180 from Smith Rd. to Alta Main Canal near the community of Centerville - Contractor would begin work in September. Project has Federal BUILD grant funding.
- Coalinga Rehab - Pavement Rehab: Rehab project through town. We jointly were able to secure an additional \$2.4m in SHOPP Reservations funds for Complete Street elements. This project is in the early stages of PAED. Thank you to City for allowing us to present to your City Council.

- Excelsior Express II on SR 41 from Excelsior to north of Elkhorn – Caltrans is working on the design of a temporary median barrier that will be placed between the northbound and southbound lanes. The median barrier will be installed by the end of the summer.

This item was informational only; no further action was required.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE CONSENT ITEMS

- A. Consultant Selection for 2022 RTP/SCS Environmental Impact Report (Meg Prince) [APPROVE]
- B. Regional Clearinghouse (Jennifer Soliz) [APPROVE]
- C. 2021 Legislative Platform (Trai Her-Cole) [APPROVE]

After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Lopez (Orange Cove) motioned and Mayor Leon (Huron) seconded to approve the consent agenda as presented. 15 yes votes, member Fresno County absent. The motion passed.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Draft 2021-22 Overall Work Program (Robert Phipps) [ACTION]

Mr. Phipps (FCOG) reported that The fiscal year (FY) 2021-22 Overall Work Program (OWP), totaling just over \$35 million, is submitted for Board and public review. The proposed budget increased \$7.22 million from last year. Operational revenues remain intact, reserves are adequate, and the agency continues to operate within the bounds of prudent management.

The largest part of the increase is attributed to a \$5 million FTA 5339 grant awarded to FCRTA for its maintenance facility. Another significant factor affecting this increase is that the budget contains fully funded multi-year projects, and as these “one-time” funds are spent they are not reflected in subsequent years’ budgets. Generally, operating expenses are not affected this way.

Federal revenues increased 19 percent (\$2 million), mostly associated with the previously mentioned FTA 5339 grant. However, an additional \$1.1 million in FTA 5310 apportionments will also be distributed to transit operators for bus procurement. Kings County Association of Governments, (KCAG) agreed to transfer \$325,000 in FHWA planning funds to perform a Valleywide household travel survey.

State revenues decreased 257 percent (\$4,588,834). The largest portion of this decrease centers around the State Regional Early Action Planning grant (REAP), which this year provided \$10 million to Fresno and Central Valley MPOs to assist local governments with housing plans and produce Valleywide activities for housing as well. Staff anticipates spending approximately \$3 million of that and carrying over the balance into next year’s budget. Specific budget and activity highlights follow.

Staffing & Benefits - There are no new Fresno COG planning positions included in this year’s proposed budget. Contingencies are carried for merit-based salary increases as well as for anticipated health insurance increases. The overall proposed budget for salaries increased by 4 percent and benefits by 3 percent.

Consulting -The overall consulting budget is \$10.7 million, which is a decrease of \$107,450, corresponding to projects associated with revenue reductions discussed above regarding multi-year projects. New consulting projects are discussed below under the work element discussion.

Measure C Commuter Vanpool Subsidy - The budget decreased \$228,000 reflecting reduced activity from COVID restrictions.

Measure C Farm Worker Vanpool Subsidy - The budget decreased \$175,000, reflecting reduced activity from COVID restrictions.

FTA Section 5339 - This is a new \$10.2 million budget for FCRTA’s maintenance facility infrastructure. FCRTA will match the federal funds with \$5.1 million.

Agency Pass Through - This account decreased by \$3.2 million related to the State REAP funds paid to Valley COGs.

After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Fast (Reedley) motioned and Mayor Ontiveros (Sanger) seconded to recommend the Board release Fresno COG's 2021-22 Overall Work Program and budget for its 30-day public review. 15 yes votes, member Fresno County absent. The motion passed.

V. OTHER ITEMS

A. Items from Staff

There were no items from staff.

B. Items from Members

- Mayor Yep (Kerman) asked Mr. Boren about having in person Policy Board meeting.

VI. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

A. Public Presentations –

There were no public presentations.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:33pm

Respectfully submitted,



Tony Boren

Public:

Laura Martina, Chaffee Zoo
Matthew Gillian, Inspiration Transportation
Matthew Woodward
Kevin Hall

Staff:

Kai Han, Braden Duran, Trai Her-Cole, Kristine Cai, Les Beshears, Robert Phipps, Seth Scott, Brenda Veenendaal, Meg Prince, Suzanne Martinez, Santosh Bhattarai, Jen Soliz, Moses Stites, Janelle Del Campo, Todd Sobrado, Jeaneen Cervantes