



January 12, 2022

Sent via email

Honorable Lynne Ashbeck and Mayor David Cardenas
Co-Chairs, Measure C Renewal Executive Committee

Scott Mozier
Chair, Measure C Technical Working Group

Nicole Zieba
Vice-Chair, Measure C Technical Working Group

2220 Tulare Street, Suite 2101
Fresno, CA 93721

Re: Measure C Renewal Goals and Objectives

Dear Chairpersons Ashbeck and Cardenas, Chair Mozier and Vice-Chair Zieba,

We offer the following comments in response to the Measure C Renewal Plan Goals and Objectives and Draft Potential Funding Program Renewal Plan documents shared by staff and consultants in late December and the most recent discussion during the Technical Working Group meeting on January 5th. Our comments and recommendations below are intended to guide upcoming discussions at executive committee and technical working group meetings. We look forward to fruitful and constructive dialogue to ensure the Measure C renewal plan is community-driven, invests equitably, and achieves racial and environmental justice while addressing the daily and escalating threats and impacts of climate change.

Timeline and Process

As a foundational matter, we urge a joint meeting of both committees to discuss the renewal plan process and timeline. First, neither committee has meaningfully discussed or received public input regarding the timing of the placement of the renewal of Measure C on the ballot. Second, both committees are now tasked with developing the renewal plan and implementing

guidelines in less than three months to place the measure before voters this November. It remains unclear how coordination and communication between the two committees will function. As currently proposed, the committees would work independently to make expenditure plan recommendations for consideration by the Fresno County Transportation Authority, Fresno Council of Governments, and Fresno County Board of Supervisors without benefiting from a robust and equitable public participation process. Without a meaningful public and committee participation process, moving forward would undermine stated equity goals included in the draft goals and objectives document.

As we have commented in the past and most recent meetings, we remain concerned with the proposed timeline. We respectfully request full consideration and vote of the executive committee as to the timing of placing the measure on the ballot.

Goals and Objectives

Billions of dollars are at stake and Fresno County residents deserve a transportation sales tax measure that invests in people, supports healthy and thriving neighborhoods, and connects households, especially low-income households across urban and rural communities, to opportunity.

The goals and objectives of the renewal effort must explicitly seek to address and prioritize environmental, racial, economic, and climate justice. Measure C, leveraged with state and federal once-in-a-lifetime transportation investments, can and should facilitate transformative transportation investments that support the health and well-being of Fresno County's most vulnerable communities. It must also do the difficult but necessary work of undoing a legacy of discrimination and historic disinvestment in lower-income communities and communities of color.

We urge both committees to direct staff and consultants to develop and include goals and objectives that intentionally and explicitly advance environmental, racial, economic, and climate justice in Fresno County. As currently drafted, the goals and objectives are broad in nature. They do not explicitly address priorities as identified by members of both committees and members of the public to date. We look forward to reviewing and providing input as staff and consultants update the current document.

Draft Potential Funding Programs

While we will provide additional input through the renewal process, we offer preliminary recommendations in response to the draft funding program presented by the consulting team. As an initial matter, several of the proposed funding programs and eligible projects listed in the initial draft document require robust discussions after members of both committees and members of the public have had adequate time to review.

Our initial recommendations are as follows:

While we recognize that implementing guidelines for each funding program will be developed, all funding programs must only invest in climate-resilient projects.

The renewal must include a climate resiliency program focused on investing in zero-emission transportation infrastructure and systems in response to the growing and escalating climate crisis. This funding program must be exclusively for truly clean energy projects and prohibit investment in polluting sources of energy that continue our reliance on fossil fuels. Establishing this funding program will allow Fresno County to become climate resilient and leverage state and federal funding resources dedicated to confronting the impacts of climate change.

The community and neighborhood streets and roads program must only fund complete streets projects in existing communities and neighborhoods and prioritize resources for projects in disadvantaged neighborhoods in each city and disadvantaged unincorporated communities.

The public mobility program must be focused on electrifying all public transit fleets; funding community driven all-electric ride share programs; eliminating transit fare for low income residents, students, seniors, persons with a disability, and unhoused individuals; improving and increasing transit services, making transit affordable, frequent and reliable; reducing wait times to increase ridership on intra and inter city and county services; and supporting operations and maintenance of transit systems to ensure long term sustainability and that assets remain in a state of good repair.

The transit-oriented development funding program must be a stand-alone initiative focused on supporting infill development on underutilized land in existing cities and disadvantaged unincorporated communities as well as increasing access to alternative modes of travel.

Creation of a stand-alone active transportation program that prioritizes investment in bike paths, pedestrian safety, and trails in existing underserved communities including in disadvantaged unincorporated communities.

Separate stand-alone funding programs for education innovation and workforce development must be established. The workforce development fund must be focused on creating new local high-quality operating and construction jobs that provide a living wage, competitive benefits, upward financial mobility, and good working conditions. The education funding program must be focused on innovation.

Development of a comprehensive accessibility program throughout the county to develop and maintain accessible infrastructure and transit services including curb cuts, broad sidewalks, and other infrastructure such as public restrooms, and services that comply with ADA standards.

Creation of a new program designed to address the deleterious impact that highway construction has had on neighborhoods including dividing communities and contributing pollution in overburdened areas. Governor Newsom recently proposed a multi-million highway

to boulevard program and members of the state Legislature are considering policy changes to address these very issues.

We also recommend elimination of programs that would perpetuate or exacerbate inequality and health disparities including programs that support highway expansions, highway interchange expansions or road expansions that facilitate increased truck traffic and pollution in already burdened communities.

Finally, we look forward to discussions regarding the Regional Transportation Mitigation Impact Fee and how to make sure it is equitable and responds to today's needs.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. We look forward to our work together in the coming months.

Sincerely,

Grecia Elenes
Mary Savala
Kevin Hamilton
Measure C Renewal Technical Working Group members

Nayamin Martinez
Veronica Garibay
Sandra Celedon
Leticia Valencia
Measure C Renewal Executive Committee members

League of Women Voters of Fresno County