

Fresno COG Policy Board  
MINUTES  
Thursday, February 24, 2022  
5:30 PM

**Members Attending:**

Mayor Jose Flores, City of Clovis  
Mayor Ron Ramsey, City of Coalinga  
Mayor Brady Jenkins, City of Firebaugh  
Mayor David Cardenas, City of Fowler  
Mayor Jerry Dyer, City of Fresno  
Mayor Rey Leon, City of Huron  
Mayor Gary Yep, City of Kerman  
Councilmember Michelle Roman, City of Kingsburg  
Mayor Rolando Castro, City of Mendota  
Mayor Victor Lopez, City of Orange Cove  
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  
Supervisor Steve Brandau, County of Fresno  
David Padilla, Caltrans  
Alison Samarin, Legal Counsel  
Tony Boren, Executive Director

**Absent:**

Mayor Alma Beltran, City of Parlier

**Quorum:** At the start of the meeting, there were 12 members representing 44% of the population. There was a quorum to conduct business. (Clovis, Coalinga, Firebaugh, Fowler, Kerman, Kingsburg, Mendota, Orange Cove, Reedley, Sanger, Selma and Fresno County).

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m. by Mayor Cardenas (Fowler), Chair.

**I. TRANSPORTATION CONSENT ITEMS**

- A. Executive Minutes of January 27, 2021 [APPROVE]
- B. Second Quarterly Financial and Work Element Report (Les Beshears) [INFORMATION]
- C. Fiscal Year 2022-23 Local Transportation Fund (LTF) Preliminary Estimates (Les Beshears) [INFORMATION]
- D. Fiscal Year 2022-23 State Transit Assistance (STA) Preliminary Estimates (Les Beshears) [INFORMATION]
- E. Fiscal Year 2022-23 State of Good Repair (SGR) Preliminary Estimates (Les Beshears) [INFORMATION]
- F. Fiscal Year 2021 Transit Productivity Evaluation Report (Jeff Long) [ACTION]
- G. Circuit Planner and Engineer Program Update (Meg Prince) [INFORMATION]
- H. Fresno COG Unmet Transit Needs Assessment for Fiscal Year 2022 (Todd Sobrado) [INFORMATION]
- I. New Member Appointment and Re-Appointments for the Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee (Todd Sobrado) [APPROVE]
- J. 2022 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Notice of Funding Availability (Robert Phipps) [INFORMATION]

**Quorum:** San Joaquin entered. There were 13 members representing 44.4% of the population.

After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Lopez (Orange Cove) motioned and Mayor Robertson (Selma) seconded to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion passed. 13 yes, members Fresno City, Huron and Parlier absent. The motion passed.

**Quorum:** Huron and Fresno City entered. There were 15 members representing 98.45% of the population.

## **II. TRANSPORTATION ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **A. Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) Proposed Methodology (Meg Prince) [PUBLIC HEARING]**

Ms. Prince (FCOG) reported that Fresno COG, as the council of governments for the Fresno County region, is responsible for developing a methodology to allocate the overall housing need by income tier, as determined by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), to each jurisdiction in the region, in accordance with Government Code Section 65580.

HCD issued Fresno COG its final Regional Determination in December 2021. The Fresno County region's housing need for the planning period of June 2023 to December 2031 totals 58,298 housing units. The final determination was reduced by 7,911 units compared to Fresno COG's draft housing need determination of 66,209 units.

The public comment period for the proposed methodology opened on Feb. 1 and will close March 2. Written comments should be submitted to Meg Prince at [mprince@fresnocog.org](mailto:mprince@fresnocog.org). This meeting served as a formal public hearing to receive comments.

Fresno COG will solicit input from its committees, which -- along with any public comments received -- will inform any revisions before the draft methodology is submitted to HCD for a comprehensive, 60-day review. The final methodology will return to the TTC, PAC, and Policy Board for approval in spring 2022.

David Early (Placeworks) presented the proposed allocation methodology. The proposed methodology document was provided.

Public hearing was opened to receive comments, there was no public comment. Public hearing closed.

After Policy Board discussion the direction to move forward with the factor adjusted allocation of the Sixth-Cycle Proposed RHNA Methodology, including the draft housing unit allocation, for submittal to HCD for a 60-day review.

### **B. 2022 Safety Performance Targets - PM1 (Santosh Bhattarai) [ACTION]**

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: 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 and Number of non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries

MPOs can either choose to support the statewide target or set a separate regional target. In the previous target-setting iterations, Fresno COG set its own targets for 2018 while supporting the statewide targets for 2019 through 2021. This year also, Caltrans set the statewide safety targets using an evidence-based (trendline) approach consistent with the California Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). There is a 3.61% annual reduction in fatalities and a 1.66% annual increase in serious injuries. The white paper for Caltrans' PM1 2022 Safety Performance Management Target-Setting is attached.

Each year, Fresno COG analyzes the historical datasets and recommends with different target setting options to discuss with the safety committee, which comprises technical staff and safety planners from multiple jurisdictions in Fresno County. The committee convened on Jan. 26 to discuss the appropriate methodology/option, and there was a consensus for supporting the statewide targets for this year.

After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Robertson (Selma) motioned and Mayor Ontiveros (Sanger) seconded to recommend the Policy Board support the statewide targets for all five safety performance measures for 2022. The motion passed. 14 yes, members Mendota and Parlier absent. The motion passed.

**C. Regional VMT Mitigation Program Study Consultant Selection Recommendation (Kristine Cai/Braden Duran) [APPROVE]**

Ms. Cai (FCOG) reported that SB 743 requires that level-of-service (LOS), used in measuring transportation impacts in CEQA, be replaced with another metric that will “promote reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the development of multi-modal transportation system and a diversity of land use development.” The Office of Planning and Research (OPR) recommended VMT as the new metric. Fresno COG developed SB 743 Implementation Regional Guidelines in 2020, which provides tools for local governments to implement SB 743 should they decide to endorse the recommendations in the guidelines. The SB 743 Implementation Regional Guidelines document is available at: <https://www.fresnocog.org/project/sb743-regional-guidelines-development/>. Since July 1, 2020, when SB 743 took effect, many jurisdictions in Fresno County have taken action to approve policies regarding SB 743 implementation.

Owing to a lack of clear guidance, VMT mitigation remains an outstanding issue within SB 743 implementation. Projects with significant VMT impacts can’t move forward due to a lack of defined, quantifiable and feasible mitigation measures. A regional-level VMT mitigation program may be the most effective means of providing pathways for VMT mitigation. This study will review literatures and best practices regarding VMT mitigation, and explore options such as a VMT mitigation bank, VMT mitigation exchange, regional VMT impact fees, etc. The study will identify pros and cons for the various techniques, and establish a framework for a potential regional VMT mitigation program in the Fresno region.

Fresno COG released an RFP for the study in December 2021 and received three proposals. An interview panel that comprised Fresno COG, City of Clovis, City of Fresno, Fresno County, and representatives from the eastside cities (Reedley) and the westside cities (Kerman) conducted interviews for the consultant teams on Jan. 31. The interview panel unanimously recommended that Kimley-Horn be selected. Kimley-Horn has extensive experience and knowledge in SB 743. The firm has prepared SB 743 policies, guidelines and VMT mitigation solutions for over 20 jurisdictions in the state and have a history of successfully implementing complex fee programs.

The study scope was provide. The project is expected to kick off in early March, and be completed in early 2023.

After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Yep (Kerman) motioned and Mayor Robertson (Selma) seconded to recommend the Policy Board authorize the Executive Director to enter into a contract with Kimley-Horn for an amount not to exceed \$219,905.61 to conduct the Regional VMT Mitigation Program Study. The motion passed. 13 yes, Fresno County voted no, members Fresno City, Huron and Parlier absent. The motion passed.

**D. Golden State Boulevard Project Contract and Cooperative Agreement Amendment (Jennifer Soliz) [APPROVE]**

Ms. Soliz (FCOG) reported that in April 2016, Fresno COG contracted with Mark Thomas for design engineering services on the Golden State Boulevard (GSB) project as approved in the Measure C expenditure plan. The GSB project has progressed to the 100% design phase.

After design reviews with Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) and California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), additional work not included in the original scope was required. This included: new irrigation controllers, new lighting to address safety, signal warrant memos for multiple intersections, traffic signal designs, adding sidewalks and acceleration lanes, geometric designs and revisions for various intersections, separate plans for the Class 1 bicycle trail, and additional coordination with UPRR.

This additional work will result in a \$240,132 increase to the Mark Thomas contract for a total contract cost of \$4.6 million. Fresno COG will also need to increase its funding cooperative agreement with Fresno County Transportation Authority (FCTA) by the same amount to a new total of \$5.9 million.

After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Dyer (Fresno City) motioned and Mayor Leon (Huron) seconded to recommend the following actions: 1) The Policy Board approve a \$240,132 increase to the Mark Thomas contract for design engineering of tasks that were not included in the original scope of the Golden State Boulevard contract. 2) The Policy Board approve the \$240,132 increase to the cooperative funding agreement with FCTA. The motion passed. 13 yes, members Mendota, Orange Cove and Parlier absent. The motion passed.

**E. 2022-23 Draft Overall Work Program and Budget (Robert Phipps) [ACTION]**

Mr. Phipps (FCOG) reported that the fiscal year (FY) 2022-23 Overall Work Program (OWP), totaling \$46.1 million, is submitted for public review.

The proposed budget increased \$10.4 million from last year, primarily from \$7.8 million in anticipated funding from the Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) Program. In addition, Fresno COG member agencies agreed to contribute \$2 million to fund a multijurisdictional housing element. The budget contains fully funded, multi-year projects, and as these “one-time” funds are spent they are not reflected in subsequent years’ budgets.

Federal revenues decreased less than 1 percent (\$55,000). The budget also includes a new \$1 million federal Accelerator Grant to provide for phase three of the California Inland Port. Meanwhile, FTA 5310 apportionments decreased \$771,000, reflecting buses that were procured and distributed to transit operators last year.

State revenues increased 80 percent, primarily due to the REAP grant.

Local revenues increased 17 percent (\$2.4 million), largely due to financial commitments for the multijurisdictional housing element.

**Staffing & Benefits** – There are no new Fresno COG planning positions included in this year’s proposed budget however, a number of positions turned over last year reflecting younger employees at lower salary and benefit rates. Contingencies are carried for merit-based salary increases as well as for anticipated health insurance increases. The overall proposed budget for salaries increased by 3 percent and benefits by 1 percent.

**Consulting** – The overall consulting budget is \$14.5 million, an increase of \$3.4 million. New consulting projects are discussed in detail in the full summary attached to the agenda.

Staff will accept comments on the OWP and budget in March/April and return for approval of the final document in May.

After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Ramsey (Coalinga) motioned and Mayor Lopez (Orange Cove) seconded to recommend the Policy Board release the draft 2022-23 Overall Work Program and budget for public review. The motion passed. 13 yes, members Fresno City, Mendota and Parlier absent. The motion passed.

**F. Measure C Renewal Update (Tony Boren) [INFORMATION]**

Mr. Boren (FCOG) reported that as the process moves forward there is a concern that only five of sixteen member agencies attended the last meeting. The measure directly impacts the member agencies, and they should be participating and voting on the process as things move forward.

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

**G. Caltrans Report (Caltrans) [INFORMATION]**

Mr. Navarro (Caltrans) reported:

- **Selma to Fowler Rehab** - Construction is in progress between Floral Avenue and Merced Street. NB traffic has been shifted to the median in this section. Currently working on NB lanes and outside shoulder, as well as northbound on/off ramps at Manning. Northbound on/off ramps at Manning Avenue are closed. Motorists are encouraged to use Floral Avenue, south of Manning Avenue or Merced Street, north of Manning Avenue to access businesses in the area. According to the contractor, the plan is to open Manning Avenue ramps by mid-April 2022 and close Merced Street northbound off-ramp once Manning Avenue ramps are opened. Northbound Merced Street off ramp will be closed for about 2 to 3 months. When NB Merced Street off-ramp is closed, motorists traveling on the highway will be encouraged to use Manning Avenue off-ramp and use Golden State Blvd. to access Merced Street in Fowler. Caltrans plans to update City of Fowler City Council on March 1, 2022, about the project.
- **South Fresno 99 Corridor Project** - (SR 99/North/Cedar Avenues & SR99/American Avenue Interchanges). Project is in the environmental clearance phase. Draft environmental document was released for circulation on October 14th. There will be public hearing on November 4<sup>th</sup> (Virtual). Construction is targeted for late 2024. The project development team selected the preferred alternatives to recommend for inclusion into the final

environmental document (subject to approval by the District Director). North will be a partial cloverleaf interchange and American will be a diamond interchange. The diverging diamond interchange is no longer being considered at North.

- **Veterans Interchange** - Fresno City Council awarded the project on Nov 4<sup>th</sup>. Contractor started work in February and a ground breaking event was held.
- **Excelsior Expressway** - The Draft 2022 ITIP has \$23M in new funding. FCOG and FCTA put up a \$23M match. The final STIP will be adopted at the March CTC meeting. The design would be completed by June 2024 and a contractor would be on board by the end of 2024 with work starting after the rainy season (i.e. spring 2025).
- **Mendota Roundabout** - This is an oversight project with the City of Mendota being the implementing agency for the project. Looking at placing a roundabout at the intersection of SR 33/SR 180. We have participated and presented at the City's month safety meeting and have been coordinating with Fire and Police as well. Project will include CMAQ funding and Caltrans will make a Minor A contribution for construction.
- **State Route 41 Aux Lane for Ashlan to Shaw** - This project constructs an auxiliary lane in Fresno County on Route 41 from the NB Ashlan Ave. on-ramp (PM R27.6) to the NB Shaw Ave. off-ramp (PM R28.3) and widen the Shaw Ave. NB off-ramp to two lanes. As part of the construction of the auxiliary lane a retaining wall (soil nail wall) will be built to accommodate the widened roadbed. It is also proposed to construct a sound wall along the Shaw Ave. off-ramp on NB Route 41 at the north end of the project. No additional right of way is anticipated for this project. Project will be in construction this summer.

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

### III. ADMINISTRATIVE CONSENT ITEMS

#### A. AB 361 - COVID Contingency Board/Committee Meeting Format (Robert Phipps) [ACTION]

After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Lopez (Orange Cove) motioned and Mayor Fast (Reedley) seconded to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion passed. 13 yes, members Fresno City, Mendota and Parlier absent.

### IV. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

#### A. San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Conference (Robert Phipps) [INFORMATION]

**Action:** Information and discussion. The Committee may provide additional direction at its discretion.

Mr. Phipps (FCOG) reported that Fresno COG will host the 15th annual San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Conference Wednesday through Friday, May 11-13, at the Clovis Veterans Memorial District in downtown Clovis.

The conference will offer multiple opportunities for attendees to explore the charms of Old Town Clovis, beginning with a reception hosted by QK at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 11 in Centennial Plaza. Thursday will include a full day of plenary sessions, breakout workshops and tours of Clovis' trail system, "tiny homes" examples, and other highlights via trolley. The annual Blueprint awards, honoring outstanding individuals, developments and planning projects, will be celebrated with a gala luncheon.

Elected officials are especially welcomed for the two-day event to hear topics including the future of State Route 99, state and federal funding opportunities, Valleywide housing issues and other critical issues in the planning realm. Registration is available through [sjvcogs.org/events](http://sjvcogs.org/events). While sponsorships are still being solicited, the sponsor list includes: Mark Thomas, AECOM, Mintier Harnish, Michael Baker, QK Inc., the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley and the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission.

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

#### B. Return to In-Person Meetings (Robert Phipps) [DISCUSSION/ACTION]

Mr. Phipps (FCOG) reported that owing to falling COVID case rates of the omicron variant, the State of California on Feb. 15 rescinded mask mandates that had been instituted for most indoor locations and activities since December 2021. In Fresno County, case rates, which were peaking around Jan. 22, began a precipitous decline on Jan. 29.

In the meantime, seven city councils in the Fresno County region have resumed in-person or "hybrid" meetings that allow for in-person attendance: Clovis, Coalinga, Kingsburg, Parlier, Reedley, Sanger and Selma. Of those seven, Coalinga, Kingsburg and Parlier are holding meetings entirely in person.

As the COVID pandemic has alternately spiked and receded, Fresno COG Board members have inquired about the timeline for returning to in-person meetings. While AB 361 provides a mechanism for continuing remote, video, or teleconferencing meetings, the law's language is permissive and not mandatory. Administrative consent calendar item A, approved earlier, is a standing, contingency item available as long as Board members continue to issue findings that current conditions warrant avoiding public meetings for the sake of protecting public health and safety; however, the Board is free to resume in-person meetings at its discretion.

On Feb. 10, Assemblymember Alex Lee (San Jose) introduced AB 1944, which, if approved, would allow legislative bodies to teleconference meetings from remote locations (within specified limits) and the public could access those meetings to address the body via a videostream.

Board discussion and consensus to continue in the hybrid fashion for the next three months.

## V. OTHER ITEMS

### A. Items from Staff

- Mr. Boren (FCOG) reported that some Measure C projects held ground breakings the last weeks: Mid Town Trail, Veterans Boulevard and Blackstone/McKinley grade separation. These projects account for about \$235 million in Measure C funds.
- Ms. Cervantes (FCOG) informed the Policy Board that Conflict of Interests Statements (Form 700) are due April 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Ms. Cervantes (FCOG) informed the Policy Board that the March meeting would be one week earlier, scheduled for March 24, 2022.

### B. Items from Members

- Supervisor Brandau (Fresno County) reported that the County of Fresno Public Health Department's focus has shifted away from COVID-19 to the fentanyl epidemic.

## VI. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

### A. Public Presentations

There were no public presentations.

The meeting was adjourned to FCRTA at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Tony Boren

#### Public:

David Early, Placeworks  
Jennifer Clark, City of Fresno  
Amy Hance, City of Clovis  
Cynthia Baruch, NASL

#### Staff:

Kai Han, Braden Duran, Les Beshears, Kristine Cai, Robert Phipps, Brenda Veenendaal, Jennifer Soliz, Meg Prince, Santosh Bhattarai, Moses Stites, Janelle Del Campo, Todd Sobrado, Jeaneen Cervantes