



Moving Forward Together: Securing Fresno County's Transportation Future

Group of Ten Summary Document
October 2023

Background and Context

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Measure C was originally approved by voters in 1986 as a half-cent sales tax to help support transportation projects across the County. It was on the ballot for renewal in 2004 and did not receive the 2/3 majority vote required---a new group of community leaders went back to the drawing board and crafted a revised Measure that was ultimately approved in 2006. Set to expire in 2027, FCTA and community members put forth a Measure C renewal on the 2022 ballot but were unsuccessful.

After the 2022 vote, representatives from “Yes on Measure C” committee and “#Transportation4All Coalition”, which led the No on Measure C 2022 effort, agreed to hold a series of meetings – facilitated by the Community Justice Center and Estolano Associates - to determine whether there was a way for the two ‘sides’ to work together to secure Fresno County’s transportation future. The purpose of the discussions was not to determine what would be in a future Measure, when that would be, or any other specifics, but rather to determine if there was a unified path forward. With ten members, the group’s intent was to bring together five representatives from each side to heal the division caused by the 2022 renewal effort and recommend a process to move Fresno County forward.

This document attempts to summarize the work of the citizens' group and present an outline to advance a Transportation Measure Fresno County residents will support.

Group of Ten: Setting a Path Forward

MEMBERSHIP

The “Group of Ten” includes these members (listed alphabetically by first name):

1. Alma Beltran, Mayor of Parlier
2. Gloria Hernandez, Community Organizer and Activist, Mothers Helping Mothers
3. Henry R. Perea, Former County Supervisor
4. Jerry Dyer, Mayor of Fresno
5. Kato Prado, Youth Leadership Institute
6. Lynne Ashbeck, Mayor of Clovis
7. Sandra Celedon, Fresno Building Healthy Communities
8. Scott Miller, Fresno Chamber of Commerce
9. Travis Alexander and David Rivas, Northern California Carpenters Union
10. Veronica Garibay, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability

The Group of Ten's goals included the following:

- **Build common understanding** by developing shared expectations for how this group would work and devising an internal decision-making process.
- **Articulate this group's collective vision** for a future sales tax measure and develop a process to arrive at a final vision that has broad support and buy-in from the community.
- **Put forward a stakeholder framework** that would enable a future transportation measure to garner broad support across diverse groups.

Early Agreements to Guide the Work

- **A local transportation measure is important to the community and should be supported broadly.** The benefit for the greater community good is worth the investment of time and resources by all.
- **A future sales tax measure should be grounded in a shared vision.** This vision should be informed by the County's diverse stakeholders and geographies and clearly articulate what residents can expect Fresno County's transportation future will look like as a result of an innovative transportation measure.
- **Decision-making protocols should be clear.** To increase the likelihood of success, it is important to establish well-articulated roles - including the roles of agencies, municipalities, technical consultants, and the larger community - and practice transparency throughout the process. This requires setting forth a clear process for gathering robust community input, considering relevant information, and resolving conflicts as they arise.
- **Spending priorities should reflect a transparent process and equitable distribution of resources.** While the resulting Transportation Measure will not fulfill every need, it should enable the opportunities and investments necessary to move Fresno County forward with robust mobility options to meet the needs of residents.

Building Common Understanding: Shared Agreements for Effective Collaboration

The Group of Ten developed a list of shared expectations for its members; it recommends that these or similar agreements be adopted to guide the future measure development process as well.

Understanding that a variety of perspectives will naturally lead to differences of opinion, the Group of Ten settled on 25 shared agreements for effective collaboration. The agreements were created with input from each group member, and all members affirmed that they would abide by the shared expectations. At the beginning of each meeting, the group discussed whether any of the agreements had been breached and provided an opportunity for parties to address potential violations.

The agreements are recast below as principles that may inform decision-making for a future ballot measure:

1. Operate from a place of honesty, openness, and good faith

- Be honest
- Assume good intent and goodwill
- Open communication
- Have sincere conversation; be open to one another

2. Show others respect

- Keep attention off devices and on people as much as possible
- Don't interrupt others
- Value others' perspectives
- Listen without gestures of disapproval (like "eye-rolling")
- If there is something from the past processes that comes up, address the issue with the parties involved
- Don't stop listening
- Respect people's time

3. Validate perspectives and experiences

- Don't make assumptions and allow individuals to share thoughts openly
- Acknowledge experiences and perspectives
- Do your best to understand what's being said
- Check if someone is being heard by confirming your understanding
- Be open to hearing other perspectives
- Accept other perspectives; we may agree to disagree but accept the other person's opinions
- Don't invalidate experiences and knowledge
- Remind yourself not to say "but" use "and"

4. Be aware of how words and actions may affect others

- Be mindful of the words that we use because they matter
- Stepping up and stepping back in conversation
- Focus on the topic, not on the person
- Behave in this setting or engagement as we do on the outside; ensure alignment, congruence, and a commitment to what happens in the space
- Be careful/mindful with tone; recognize good intent
- If you tend to be a talker, use the WAIT (“Why Am I Talking?”) test

Creating a Shared Vision for Fresno County and the Promise of a Renewed Transportation Measure

Participants in the group discussed a broad collective vision for a future sales tax measure. The statements that constitute this vision represent a starting point for the conversation and should be refined as additional stakeholders are brought into the process.

A NEW TRANSPORTATION SALES TAX MEASURE WILL:

Benefit All Residents

A forthcoming sales tax measure will provide transportation benefits that are felt by everyone. It will finance improvements that enable Fresno County residents to spend less time in traffic and gain access to smart, reliable, and affordable transportation options.

Invest Equitably

The measure will invest equitably in transportation infrastructure to produce safe, well-maintained, and accessible neighborhood streets.

Use a Fair and Inclusive Process

County residents will be confident that the measure employs a fair, transparent, and inclusive process for determining where and how investments are made. The measure will support expenditures that benefit existing communities and ensure that stakeholders pay (and receive) their fair share.

Promote Health and Community Resilience

The measure will support broader community goals, including supporting investments that improve public health and advance climate resilience goals. The measure will help Fresno County improve its air quality and prioritize investments that help us adapt to a changing climate.

Provide Economic Opportunity and Shared Prosperity

The measure will provide workforce and economic development opportunities for Fresno County residents. It will support family-supporting local jobs and ensure strong labor standards for more workers.

Advance Innovation

The measure will advance innovation and support the future of transportation by making forward-looking investments in emerging technologies and new infrastructure.

Proposed Framework: Moving Forward Together

To support the successful passage of a sales tax measure, significant community infrastructure needs to be in place. For a ballot measure to be seen as credible and representative of community priorities, the process for engagement must allow for multiple avenues of engagement, must meaningfully solicit inputs from a diverse group of stakeholders, and must be genuinely responsive to community-identified needs. Likewise, the decision-making process must be transparent, while setting forth clear roles for folks participating in the process.

The group discussed how stakeholders might be engaged in the process of developing the forthcoming sales tax measure. While there are still details that will need to be worked out, the group has put forth a high-level framework that supports a vision for a transparent and inclusive process that stands the best chance of garnering broad-based community support.

The group briefly discussed possible election timelines. However, ‘when’ the next attempt should go before the voters was not the primary focus, we recommend a process first approach that focuses on successfully implementing a robust public process to develop the priorities and language of a future transportation measure the supermajority of voters will support. The group is optimistic about moving forward together and did not rule 2024 out as an option. Given that additional time has passed since that group has met, a 2024 ballot date seems unlikely. However, upon successful completion of an open, transparent, and inclusive process the resulting transportation measure can be placed on the ballot, via a special election in 2025 or a general election in 2026, with extensive support.

Given the public's interest in this effort, our collective responsibility and agreement to be as inclusive as possible, and our commitment to an equitable transportation future in Fresno County, the proposed structure and process will be iterative in nature.

This work needs to be based on a fully transparent and 'public' process, led by a professional facilitation team, with clear agreements on how decisions will be made and consensus reached before any work begins.

Administrative Team

Composed of a group of 14 individuals, including 5 members from the #Transportation4All Coalition, 5 members from the Yes on Measure C 2022 coalition, the Executive Directors of the Fresno Council of Governments and Fresno County Transportation Authority (or their designee), and the chairs of the Fresno Council of Governments Technical Transportation Committee and Policy Advisory Committee. This allows continuity from the five meetings of the initial Group of Ten and utilizes the expertise of staff leading transportation policy and implementation efforts in Fresno County. This group does not have decision-making authority over the final expenditure plan and is solely responsible for moving the process forward in a timely and effective manner. Responsibilities include securing and managing the project facilitation team, drafting team, and consultants that will support this entire effort and establishing a clear and concise timeline for the process described below.

Community Forum

Open convenings of residents and stakeholders representing the population and geographic diversity of Fresno County to engage, learn, and contribute to the measure's development over a series of meetings held throughout the County. The project facilitation team will facilitate these convenings. The Community Forum will collectively set goals, priorities, and outcomes for the measure and will make a final recommendation to the Fresno Council of Governments Policy Board and Fresno County Transportation Authority for approval.

Project Facilitation Team

A team of neutral and skilled facilitators and transportation and legal experts will be necessary to ensure the success of this effort. We envision a team composed of strong individuals that can effectively facilitate and synthesize Community Forum convenings to share with the plan Drafting Team, support drafting the expenditure plan and present it back to the Community Forum

for accuracy, and coordinate community-wide learning to support the development of a strong measure. This team does not have decision-making authority.

Drafting Team

Composed of a subset of individuals of the Project Facilitation Team and consultants with technical expertise, selected and managed by the Administrative Team, tasked with drafting the expenditure plan and implementing guidelines. These individuals must have the necessary transportation and legal expertise to complete this task. This team does not have decision-making authority.

Fresno County Council of Governments Policy Board and Fresno County Transportation Authority

Regular updates will be provided through existing meeting structures so elected officials may receive updates on the process, provide feedback, and ask questions. These boards will be charged with approving the final plan recommendation from the Community Forum.

We may consider joint meetings of these two Boards to review the Measure's progress together at key points in the development process.

15 City Councils and Fresno County Board of Supervisors

The final recommendation will be presented to each governing body for their approval before approval by the FCOG and FCTA boards.

PROCESS FLOW

1. **Facilitation Team** - The Facilitation Team prepares meeting materials, including facilitation guides, presentations, learning summaries, and schedules, and facilitates Community Forum convenings. The Facilitation Team prepares documents summarizing the outcomes of each convening and provides them to the Drafting Team.
2. **Community Forum** - Through an established process of agreement, develop measure priorities and reviews and confirms the accuracy of technical drafts provided by the Drafting Team.

The Administrative Team and Facilitation Team will establish a timeline and structure for the series of Community Forum convenings. An initial framework anticipates a series of 6-10 Community Forum convenings throughout the County. Initial meetings focused on reviewing the history of the measure, and those focused on identifying goals/outcomes/priorities and confirming near-final versions of the plan will happen simultaneously in at least three locations throughout the County.
3. **Drafting Team** - Synthesizes Community Forum convening summaries, drafts, priorities, and plan components. Prepares drafts for the Facilitation Team to present at the next Community Forum convening for confirmation of accuracy, revisions, etc. This process repeats until the Community Forum approves the final language recommendation.
4. **Administrative Team** - Provides regular updates on the process to the Fresno Council of Governments and Fresno Transportation Authority, gathers feedback, and provides summary documents to the Drafting Team for incorporation in draft language (as appropriate).
5. **Fresno COG Policy Board and FCTA Board** - Receives regular updates and provides feedback. Final recommendation presented for approval.

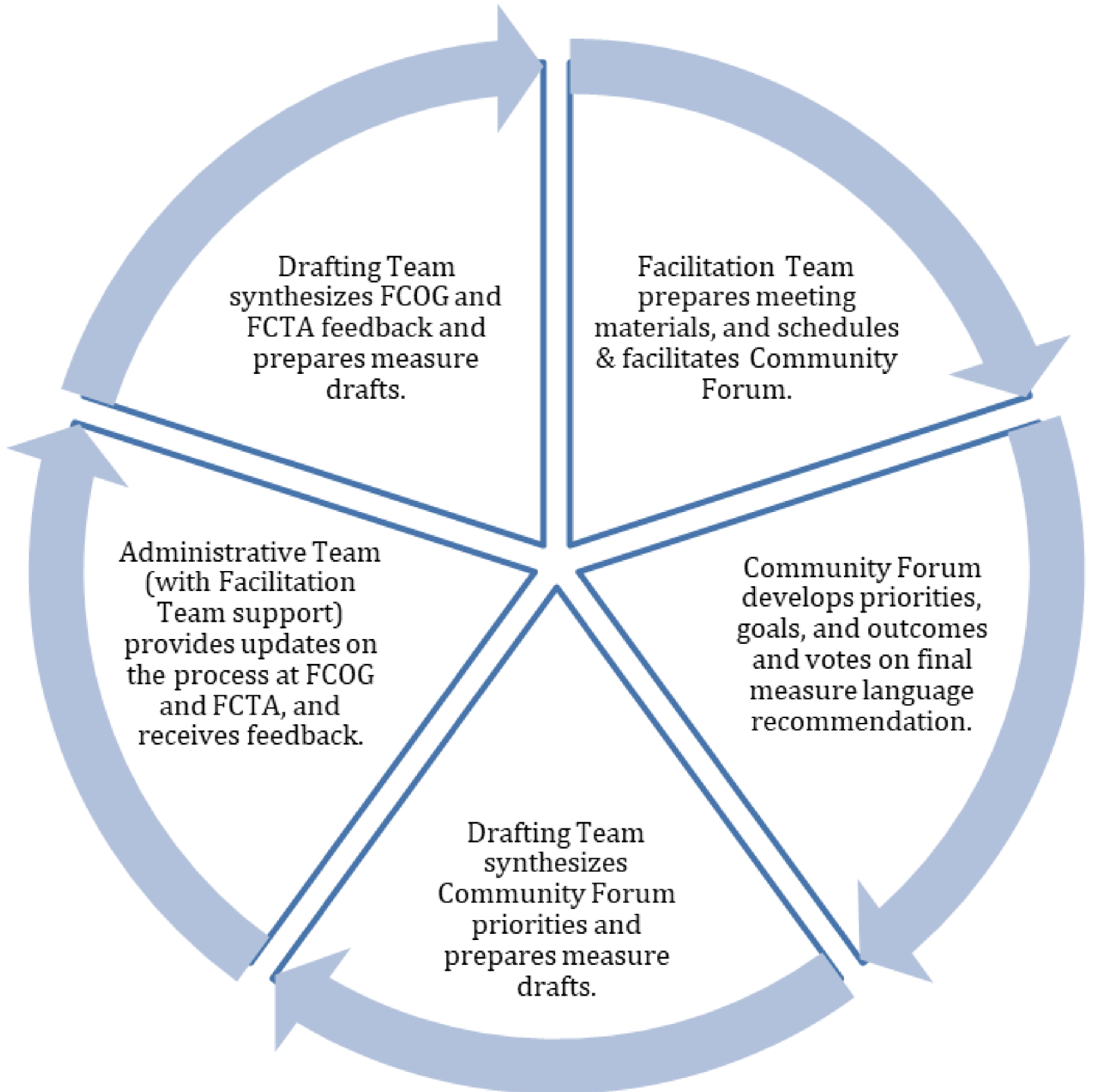


Figure 1. Process Flow

Next topic is discussed, and the process repeats itself until a final plan is produced. Community Forum convenings will be sufficiently spaced apart to allow for drafts to be completed and to provide updates and request feedback from the FCOG and FCTA through their existing meeting structures (e.g., TTC/PAC, Policy Board, Authority Board).

Final Adoption of Measure Language Process Flow - Placed on the Ballot by the Board of Supervisors

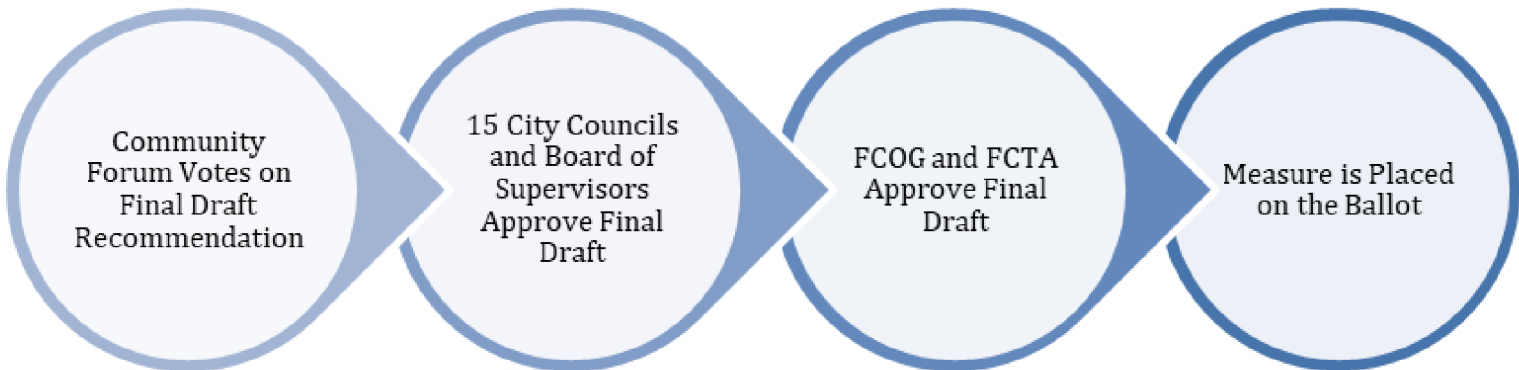


Figure 2. Adoption Flow

Recomendation

The Group of Ten recommends that the Fresno Council of Governments and Fresno County Transportation Authority adopt the Moving Forward Together Framework, as presented in this summary document.

Upon adoption of the Moving Forward Together Framework, the Administrative Team will convene to begin discussing the budget/funding mechanisms to carry out the process, identify and secure the project facilitation team, drafting team, and other consultants to support this process, prepare the process timeline, and kick off the Community Forum convenings by the first quarter in 2024.

