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Policy Advisory Committee

Date: Friday, July 15, 2022

Time: 10:00 AM

Place: Via Zoom and at COG Sequoia Conference Room

2035 Tulare St., Ste 20

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**THE POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE WILL TAKE PLACE
IN PERSON AT THE FRESNO COG SEQUOIA ROOM AND VIA ZOOM.**

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[HTTPS://US06WEB.ZOOM.US/J/89948086255?PWD=QTBXN3JEYZNKVJZYVHVCEEFZDMRDZZ09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89948086255?pwd=QTBXN3JEYZNKVJZYVHVCEEFZDMRDZZ09)

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MEETING ID: 899 4808 6255

PASSCODE: 873950

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THOSE ADDRESSING THE COMMITTEE MUST STATE THEIR FIRST AND LAST NAME AND AGENCY FOR THE RECORD.

TO FACILITATE ELECTRONIC ACCESS, NO PERSON SHALL SPEAK UNTIL RECOGNIZED BY THE CHAIR.

POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Policy Advisory Committee will consider all items on the agenda. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m.

PAC agenda and annotated agenda in PDF format - ALL EXHIBITS ARE ATTACHED BELOW

JOINT Transportation Technical/Policy Advisory Committee

A. **Caltrans Report (Caltrans) [INFORMATION]**I. **TRANSPORTATION CONSENT ITEMS****About Consent Items:**

All items on the consent agenda are considered to be routine and non-controversial by COG staff and will be approved by one motion if no member of the Committee or public wishes to comment or ask questions. If comment or discussion is desired by anyone, the item will be removed from the consent agenda and will be considered in the listed sequence with an opportunity for any member of the public to address the Committee concerning the item before action is taken.

A. **Executive Minutes of June 10, 2022 [APPROVE]****Exhibits:**
 June 10, 2022 PAC Minutes
B. **Transportation Development Act (TDA) Claims**1. **City of Huron Fiscal Year 2022-23 Transportation Development Act Claim (Les Beshears) [ACTION]****Exhibits:**
 Huron TDA Claim 2022-23 2022-31 Huron TDA Claim Resolution

Action: Approve Resolution 2022-31 adopting the City of Huron's 2022-31 Transportation Development Act claims totaling \$377,956.

2. **City of Sanger Fiscal Year 2022-23 Transportation Development Act Claims (Les Beshears) [ACTION]****Exhibits:**
 Sanger TDA Claim 2022-23 Sanger 2022-23 TDA Claim Resolution

Action: Approve Resolution 2022-34 adopting the City of Sanger's 2022-33 Transportation Development Act claims totaling \$1,600,776.

C. **Reconnecting Communities Pilot Grant Program (Phipps) [INFORMATION]**

Summary: The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has launched the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program to award \$195 million for planning and capital construction for projects that help restore community connectivity by removing, retrofitting and/or mitigating transportation facilities that have created historic barriers to mobility, access, and economic development. DOT expects to award \$50 million in funding for RCP planning grants, ranging from \$100,000 to \$2 million each. The agency will award \$145 million in funding for RCP capital construction grants ranging from \$5 million to \$100 million each. The application deadline is Thursday, Oct. 13.

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

D. **Thriving Communities Program (Phipps) [INFORMATION]**

Summary: The U.S. departments of Transportation (DOT) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) established the Thriving Communities program to provide technical assistance and capacity-building resources to communities for infrastructure projects. DOT developed a DOT Navigator with a library of technical assistance resources available at the agency. In the fall, DOT and HUD will issue

Notices of Funding Availability (NOFAs) seeking providers of technical assistance. Eligible applicants for assistance from these “Capacity Builders” will include state, local, and tribal governments; metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs); and transit agencies, with priority for rural, tribal, and other disadvantaged communities.

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

E. Rail Crossing Elimination (RCE) Program (Phipps) [INFORMATION]

Summary: The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has issued a notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) for the new Railroad Crossing Elimination (RCE) Program. The RCE program supports highway-rail and pathway-rail grade crossing improvement projects that improve safety and mobility. FRA will award approximately \$573.3 million in program funding. The minimum award size is \$1 million with an exception for planning projects. There is no maximum award size; however, no more than 20 percent of total funding may be awarded to projects in a single state. The deadline for applications will be 90 days following the publication of the NOFO in the *Federal Register*, which will be publicly noticed when available.

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

II. TRANSPORTATION ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. 2022 RTP/SCS Approval (Kristine Cai) [Action]

Exhibits: 2022-30 Final 2022 RTP PEIR Board Resolution_FCOG 070622_Exhibits 2022-29 Final 2022 RTP-SCS-FTIP-Conformity Board Resolution_FCOG_6-21-22

Summary: As a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and regional transportation planning agency (RTPA) for the Fresno region, Fresno COG is required to update the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)/Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) every four years. The RTP/SCS is an overarching planning document that provides guidance on regional transportation investments for the next 20+ years. It is also a plan that demonstrates how the region will be able to meet the state-mandated greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets through integrated land use and transportation planning.

The 2022 RTP/SCS was officially launched in June 2020. Fresno COG took a two-pronged approach that involved both the general public and the stakeholders such as: local governments, transit agencies, Caltrans, community groups, advocates and industry representatives. It was a comprehensive, interactive and robust public process that included a committee process led by the RTP Roundtable and an extensive public outreach process that reached out and solicited input and feedback from communities. Fresno COG received over 3,000 comments and suggestions from the public during the two-year process.

In October 2021, after careful consideration of public input and recommendations from the RTP Roundtable, the TTC and PAC, the Policy Board selected scenario B as the preferred scenario for the SCS. The preferred SCS scenario:

- meets the state-mandated GHG reduction targets and the air quality conformity requirements
- provides the most public health benefits
- offers the best climate protection
- preserves the most important farmland
- is the most sustainable in land use development
- is consistent with the local land use plans

Fresno COG released the draft RTP/SCS, draft EIR, draft air quality conformity analysis and draft Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) documents for public comment on April 15. Staff

received several comment letters from agencies such as: the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, Caltrans, CARB and EPA. Staff provided responses, which are included in the draft final documents, available at www.planfresno.com.

The **air quality conformity analysis** is required by section 176(c) of the Clean Air Act, as amended in 1990, in non-attainment areas to ensure that transportation plans, programs and projects will not produce new air quality violations, worsen existing violations or delay timely attainment of the national ambient air quality standards. The conformity analysis contains documentation to support findings that the 2022 RTP/SCS and the 2023 FTIP meet conformity requirements for ozone and particulate matters. Responses to comments were included in the draft final document.

The 2022 RTP/SCS' programmatic environmental impact report (**EIR**) assessed environmental effects related to the document, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The 2022 RTP/SCS identifies the region's transportation needs and issues, sets forth an action plan of projects and programs to address those needs consistent with the adopted policies, and documents the financial resources needed to implement the plan. Projects are identified at a conceptual level, and the program EIR is programmatic in nature – meaning it does not specifically analyze individual projects. The PEIR finds that implementing the 2022 RTP/SCS could result in potentially significant and unavoidable direct and cumulative environmental impacts in the following areas: aesthetics, agricultural & forestry resources, air quality, biotic resources, climate change/greenhouse gases, cultural resources & tribal cultural resources, energy and energy conservation, geology/soils/minerals, hazardous materials, hydrology & water resources, land use and planning, noise, population, housing and employment, public utilities, other utilities and services, and transportation/traffic. Included in the final PEIR are responses to comments received on the draft PEIR document, changes made/addressed within the document in response to those comments, findings of potential impacts, and a statement of overriding considerations, and a mitigation monitoring program to address such findings.

The 2023 **FTIP** is a four-year program that includes a listing of transportation projects requiring federal funding and approval. FTIP projects are consistent with Fresno COG's Regional Transportation Plan and are part of the area's overall strategy for providing mobility, congestion relief and reducing transportation-related air pollution and GHG emissions to attain federal air quality standards and to meet the State's climate change requirement. Responses to the comments are included in the draft final documents.

The **2022 RTP/SCS** identifies the region's transportation needs and issues, sets forth an action plan of projects and programs to address the needs consistent with the adopted policies, and documents the financial resources needed to implement the plan. Fresno COG has included all the required elements in the plan, has engaged in extensive public outreach, prepared the required Program Environmental Impact Report and completed the associated Federal Transportation Improvement Program and Air Quality Conformity documents. Responses to the comments about the Draft RTP/SCS are included in the document. The RTP Roundtable has recommended approval of the 2022 RTP/SCS.

Action: Staff requests that the TTC/PAC recommend the Policy Board take the following actions:

1. Approve the Air Quality Conformity Analysis for the 2022 RTP/SCS and the 2023 FTIP
2. Certify the Program Environmental Impact Report for the 2022 RTP/SCS by adoption of Resolution 2022-30 as attached
3. Approve the 2023 Federal Transportation Improvement Program
4. Approve the 2022 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy by adoption of Resolution 2022-29 as attached, which also includes the aforementioned FTIP and Air Quality Conformity Analysis.

B. Access For All Program - Contract Award (Suzanne Martinez) [ACTION]

Summary: The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) created the transportation network company (TNC) Access for All (AFA) Program following Senate Bill (SB) 1376 (Hill: 2018), which directed CPUC to address TNC accessibility services for people with disabilities, including wheelchair users who need a wheelchair-accessible vehicle (WAV). A \$.10 fee collected from every TNC trip is redistributed to each MPO region to develop programs that incentivize on-demand transportation services for people with disabilities, including wheelchair accessible vehicles/rides.

In June 2021, Fresno COG became a local access fund administrator for the Fresno County AFA program, and subsequently received the FY 2021-2022 LAFA allocation totaling \$222,436.80.

Staff released a call for projects on April 21 and received two proposals by the May, 23 deadline:

- Fresno County Rural Transit Agency (FCRTA)
- Inspiration Transportation (IT)

A three-person panel comprising staff from Fresno COG, FAX and Clovis Transit scored both proposals. All three panelists ranked the Fresno County Rural Transit Agency's proposal (FCRTA) as the highest scoring, and unanimously recommended award of the contract to FCRTA. In its proposal, FCRTA seeks to expand its Rural Transit Dial-a-Ride WAV service to allow for a rural WAV transportation option beyond a "lifeline services only" model (medical appointments, etc.) by allowing *all* quality-of-life trips in unincorporated communities.

FCRTA proposes to use \$189,072 in AFA funds to purchase three, ramp-equipped WAVs to support the Rural Transit Dial-a-Ride expansion. One of the three vehicles would be used as a substitute to the other two vehicles operating in the unincorporated areas in Fresno County -- one on the west side and the other on the east side -- with SR-99 as the dividing line.

The proposed contract is for FY2022-23 for an amount not to exceed \$189,072. There is an option to extend the contract annually until June 30, 2028.

Action: Staff recommends that TTC and PAC recommend the Policy Board authorize Fresno COG's executive director to enter into a one-year extendable contract with Fresno County Rural Transit Agency (FCRTA) to provide Access for All WAV services as outlined for an amount not to exceed \$189,072.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE CONSENT ITEMS

About Consent Items:

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A. Regional Clearinghouse (Robert Phipps) [ACTION]

Summary: The Regional Clearinghouse calendar contains "project notification and review reports" for grant proposals.

I. USDA, Rural Housing Services for Housing Preservation Grant (HPG) program funds.

	Project	Application
1.	Owner-occupant housing rehabilitation project in rural unincorporated Fresno County.	County of Fresno

Action: Per Board procedure, unless an item is pulled from the Consent Calendar, tacit authorization is given for staff to forward any comment(s) received, or any Committee/Board comment(s) generated as a result of this informational item, to the appropriate agency.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

V. **OTHER ITEMS**

A. **Items from Staff**

B. **Items from Members**

VI. **PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS**

A. **Public Presentations**

This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons wishing to address the Committee on items within its jurisdiction but not on this agenda. **Note: Prior to action by the Committee on any item on this agenda, the public may comment on that item. Unscheduled comments may be limited to three minutes.**