

**Fresno COG Policy Board
MINUTES
Thursday, July 28, 2022
5:30 PM**

Members Attending:

Mayor Jose Flores, City of Clovis
Mayor Ron Ramsey, City of Coalinga
Mayor Brady Jenkins, City of Firebaugh
Councilmember Daniel Parra, City of Fowler
Mayor Jerry Dyer, City of Fresno
Councilmember Michelle Roman, City of Kingsburg
Mayor Rey Leon, City of Huron
Mayor Gary Yep, City of Kerman
Mayor Rolando Castro, City of Mendota
Mayor Alma Beltran, City of Parlier
Mayor Mary Fast, City of Reedley
Mayor Julia Hernandez, City of San Joaquin
Mayor Scott Robertson, City of Selma
Supervisor Sal Quintero, County of Fresno
Michael Navarro, Caltrans
Bryan Rome, Legal Counsel
Tony Boren, Executive Director

Absent:

Mayor Victor Lopez, City of Orange Cove
Mayor Eli Ontiveros, City of Sanger

Quorum: At the start of the meeting, there were 14 members representing 96.39% of the population. There was a quorum to conduct business. (Clovis, Coalinga, Firebaugh, Fowler, Fresno City, Huron, Kerman, Kingsburg, Mendota, Parlier, Reedley, San Joaquin, Selma, and Fresno County). Members Orange Cove, and Sanger absent.

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by Councilmember Roman (Kingsburg), Chair.

I. TRANSPORTATION CONSENT ITEMS

- A. Executive Minutes of July 7, 2022 [APPROVE]
- B. Transportation Development Act (TDA) Claims (Les Beshears) [ACTION]
 - 1. City of Huron Fiscal Year 2022-23 TDA Claim.
 - 2. City of Sanger Fiscal year 2022-23 TDA Claim.
- C. Reconnecting Communities Pilot Grant Program (Robert Phipps) [INFORMATION]
- D. Thriving Communities Program (Robert Phipps) [INFORMATION]
- E. Rail Crossing Elimination (RCE) Program (Robert Phipps) [INFORMATION]

After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Leon (Huron) moved, and Mayor Beltran (Parlier) seconded to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Votes: 14 yes.
Absent: Orange Cove, and Sanger.
Motion passed.

II. TRANSPORTATION ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

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

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 recommended approval of the 2022 RTP/SCS.

Action: TTC/PAC and staff request that 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.

Kristine Cai (FCOG) discussed the history of the RTP Process, Plans, and Scenarios.

After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Dyer (Fresno City) moved, and Mayor Robertson (Selma) seconded to approve.

Votes: 14 yes.

Absent: Orange Cove, and Sanger

Motion passed.

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, 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.

Suzanne reported on the contract award.

Councilmember Michelle Roman called for comments from the member and the public.

After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Flores (Clovis) moved, and Mayor Leon (Huron) seconded to approve.

Votes: 14 yes.

Absent: Orange Cove, and Sanger

Motion passed.

C. Final Sixth-Cycle Regional Housing Need Allocation Methodology (Meg Prince) [ACTION]

Summary: California housing law requires each local jurisdiction to plan for its share of the state's housing need. The Regional Housing Needs Allocation, or RHNA, is the process outlined in State law for determining the number of housing units in each of four affordability tiers (very low-, low-, moderate-, and above-moderate income) assigned to each jurisdiction's housing element of its general plan. The sixth RHNA cycle covers the housing projection period from June 30, 2023, to Dec. 31, 2031. The final methodology was developed based on direction from the Fresno COG Policy Board and the guidance of the Fresno COG RHNA Subcommittee, a 20-member advisory committee comprising: representatives from each of the 16 Fresno COG member jurisdictions; three at-large members representing Fresno Building Industry Association, the Fresno Housing Authority, and Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability; and a nonvoting representative from HCD. The proposed methodology underwent a 30-day public review period, a public hearing, and consideration by the Fresno COG Transportation Technical Committee, Policy Advisory Committee, and Policy Board. This final methodology includes revisions from the proposed methodology, based on input provided during the review period. The methodology consists of two primary components: the overall jurisdictional

allocation and the distribution of units by income tier.

Action: Staff, TTC, and PAC recommend the Policy Board approve Resolution 2022-17, approving the Final RHNA Methodology for inclusion in the Draft Sixth-Cycle RHNA Plan.

Councilmember Michelle Roman called for comments from members and from the public.

Mayor Dyer (Fresno City) asked about the funds that went from the county to the cities.

After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Dyer (Fresno) moved and Mayor Yep (Kerman) seconded to approve the Methodology as Final with a revision from the Draft Methodology to cap the unincorporated county's RHNA at 2,350 units, redistributing 1,357 units to the incorporated cities in proportion to the draft allocation.

Votes: 14 yes.

Absent: Orange Cove, Sanger.

Motion passed.

D. FY 2022-2023 Unmet Transit Needs Assessment Findings Report (Todd Sobrado) [ACTION]

Summary: 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 fiscal year 2022-23 before approving Local Transportation Fund claims for streets and roads. Fresno COG's Social Service Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) is responsible for evaluating unmet transit needs.

Each year the SSTAC begins soliciting comments by sending approximately 400 letters to agencies and individuals interested in providing feedback on their public transportation needs within Fresno County. The request for comments letters, in English and Spanish, was sent in January.

Public outreach was a combination of in-person and virtual events. In-person outreach consisted of six public events and a public hearing. Four of the six in-person events were held in the Fresno-Clovis Metropolitan area, while two were held in rural Fresno County. Based on feedback received in the last cycle of the UTN, one of the meetings within the Fresno-Clovis Metropolitan area was held on a Saturday to allow participation by those who were not able to participate in outreach events held during the week.

Virtual events consisted of three Zoom meetings, one of which was broadcast on the Fresno COG Facebook page, and an online survey. The three Zoom meetings took place throughout the day on Thurs., Feb. 17.

The second component of public outreach was an online survey available in both English and Spanish throughout February and March 2022. Staff received 12 comments, all through the online survey. A summary of the comments includes:

- Requests for transit service to Clovis Community College.
- Comments about service between outlying rural communities and the Fresno metropolitan area.

Public outreach for the current Unmet Transit Needs Assessment concluded with the public hearing that took place at the Fresno COG Policy Board on April 28. No comments were received.

After a thorough review of all comments and issues, the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC), at its April 14, meeting, found that of the 12 comments received, four were found to be unmet needs, none of which were deemed “reasonable to meet.”

Action: Staff, the SSTAC, TTC and PAC recommend the Policy Board adopt Resolution 2022-26, approving Fresno COG's 2022-23 Unmet Need Assessment and find that there are four unmet transit needs, none of which are “reasonable to meet.”

Councilmember Michelle Roman (Chair) called for questions from members and the public.

After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Flores (Clovis) moved and Mayor Fast (Reedley) seconded to approve as presented.

Quorum: Firebaugh left the meeting. There were 13 members present representing 95.63% of the population.

Votes: 13 yes.

Absent: Orange Cove, Sanger, Firebaugh.

Motion passed.

G. Caltrans Report (Caltrans) [INFORMATION]

Mr. Navarro (Caltrans) reported:

- US DOT grant application funding opportunities:
 - “Reconnecting Community Pilot Program”, deadline is October 13th with a billion dollars over five years.
 - “Save Streets Program”, deadline September 15th with 5 billion dollars over 5 years.
- Master Projects:
 - State Route 99 Selma to Fowler Rehabilitation Project - work continues between Selma and Fowler on SR 99 between McCall just north of Merced Ave; traffic should be done this week. Northbound traffic will shift to NB lanes and SB direction will shift to the median. All NB ramps are reopened, SB ramps have been closed at Merced Street and at Manning Ave.
 - South Fresno State Route 99 Corridor Project - interchange at Cedar, North and American. In environmental clearance phase. Documents to be complete in October.
 - State Route 33 and SR 180 rehab project- completed the chips, seal, and most of pavements this past week. Pending some electrical items. Expected to have project wrapped up in the next six weeks.
 - State Route Ashland to Shaw Auxiliary Lane – advertisement to go out in the next couple of weeks. Adding two lanes to the NB offramp as well as an auxiliary lane on Ashlan/Shaw.
 - State Route 99 Rehabilitation from El Dorado Street to Clinton Ave Project – addressing interchanges at McKinley/Belmont, and Clinton/Olive interchange, widening some undercrossing and improving pavement.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE CONSENT ITEMS

A. Regional Clearinghouses (Robert Phipps) [ACTION]

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.

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

Action: Staff recommends three actions:

- 1) That the Policy Board issue the following findings: (a) The Board has reconsidered the circumstances of the state of emergency; and (b) As a result of the emergency, meeting in person would present imminent risks to the health or safety of attendees.
- 2) Reaffirm Resolution 2022-01 from Jan. 6, authorize the Board and subordinate legislative bodies to conduct their meetings in accordance with remote participation by teleconference in the manner provided by Government Code section 54953, subd. (e) through July 28, and direct staff to continue providing video/teleconferencing provisions for all Fresno COG committee and Board meetings through Aug. 25.
- 3) Establish Aug. 25 and Sept. 8 as special meeting dates to extend AB 361 provisions through the regular Sept. 29 meeting

Councilmember Michelle Roman asked if any member wished to pull any items or comment.

Councilmember Michelle Roman would like to pull item III.B.

After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Beltran (Parlier) moved, and Mayor Flores (Clovis) seconded to approve Consent item A.

Votes: 13 yes.

Absent: Orange Cove, Sanger, Firebaugh.

Motion Passed.

Councilmember Michelle Roman stated that item III.B was pulled due to the number of members who would be absent on September 8, 2022, to attend the League of California Cities Conference.

The Policy Board discussed moving the September 8th meeting to September 1st.

After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Leon (Huron) moved, and Mayor Beltran (Parlier) Motioned to approve the special meeting dates for August 25, and September 1, 2022.

Votes: 13 Yes.

Absent: Orange Cove, Sanger, Firebaugh.

Motion passed.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

There are no administrative action/discussion items.

V. OTHER ITEMS

A. Items from Staff

Tony Boren reminded Policy Board members that there will not be any regular board meetings in August, however there will be a special Policy Board Meeting on August 25th.

B. Items from Members

None.

VI. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

A. Public Presentations

Yonas Paulos, Advocate for unhoused Veterans. Extended his gratitude to the Board members for giving veterans free bus rides. He also thanked FCRTA and stated they are deserving of the grant they received.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tony Boren". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tony Boren

Public:

Alison Samarin
Harold Sobrado
Andrea Howard
Augustine Ramirez
Bernard Jimenez
Georgiena Vivian
Kelli Furtado
Thomas Dulin
Yonas Paulos
Yvette Quiroga

Staff:

Kai Han; Braden Duran; Kristine Cai; Robert Phipps; Meg Prince; Moses Stites; Janelle Del Campo; Ofelia Abundez; Brenda Veenendaal; Simran Jhutti; Denise Flores; Suzanne Martinez; Pankaj Joshi.