



**Policy Advisory Committee
MINUTES
Friday, July 12, 2024
8:30 AM**

The meeting was held at FCOG Sequoia Conference Room.

Ryan Burnett, City of Clovis
Ben Gallegos, City of Firebaugh
Thomas Gaffery, City of Fowler
Nicholas Mascia, City of Fresno
John Jansons, City of Kerman
Dario Dominguez, City of Orange Cove
Nicole Zieba, City of Reedley
Nathan Olson, City of Sanger
Elizabeth Cabrera, City of San Joaquin
Fernando Santillan, City of Selma
David Padilla, Caltrans District 6
Robert Phipps, FCOG
Moses Stites, FCRTA

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. by Mr. Jansons (Kerman), Chair. With 10 members present, there was a quorum to conduct business.

JOINT Transportation Technical/Policy Advisory Committee

A. Caltrans Report (Caltrans) [INFORMATION]

David Padilla reported on the following:

- Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program: received 15 grant applications, awarded 12 of the 15.
- Reminder Cycle 12 applications due September 9th.
- Announcement: Jim Perrault promoted to new Office Chief starting Monday.

I. TRANSPORTATION CONSENT ITEMS

- A. Executive Minutes of June 14, 2024 [APPROVE]**
- B. Third Quarter Obligational Authority Update (Ofelia Abundez) [INFORMATION]**
- C. FY 24-25 Fresno County Rural Transit Agency Transportation Development Act Claim (Les Beshears) [ACTION]**
- D. FY 24-25 City of Reedley Transportation Development Act Claim (Les Beshears) [ACTION]**
- E. FY 24-25 City of Parlier Transportation Development Act Claim (Les Beshears) [ACTION]**
- F. FY 23-24 City of Parlier Transportation Development Act Claim (Les Beshears) [ACTION]**
- G. Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy Mini Grants (Brenda Thomas) [INFORMATION]**
- H. Memorandum of Agreement for U.S. EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (Simran Jhutti) [ACTION]**
- I. Fresno COG's Final 2024 Public Participation Plan (Brenda Thomas) [ACTION]**

- Mr. Jansons called for any items wishing to be pulled by members or the public.
- After an opportunity for public comment, Mr. Mascia (Fresno City) motioned, and Mr. Gallegos (Firebaugh) seconded to approve the consent agenda items A-I as presented.

All in Favor, no opposed.

Motion passed.

II. TRANSPORTATION ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. 2023/2024 Mid-Cycle Carbon Reduction Program Project Funding Recommendations (Ofelia Abundez) [ACTION]

Summary: On April 25, Fresno COG's Policy Board issued a formal call-for-projects for the 2023/2024 Mid-Cycle Carbon Reduction Program (CRP), with \$5.49 million in available funding. Staff received five applications by the June 4 deadline requesting \$5.49 million in funding. The CRP scoring committee convened on June 27 to deliberate on the recommended program of projects. The scoring committee comprised representatives from: urban city (Fresno), County of Fresno, east side city, west side city, Caltrans, Fresno COG, Fresno County Rural Transit Agency, and San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. The scoring committee project recommendations are included with recommended funding.

Action: Staff requests that TTC/PAC recommend the Policy Board approve the scoring committee's project recommendations for the 2023-24 Mid-Cycle Carbon Reduction Program (CRP). The Committee may provide additional direction at its discretion.

- Ofelia Abundez (FCOG) reported on the 2023-2024 Mid-Cycle program funding recommendation.
- After an opportunity for public comment, Ms. Cabrera (San Joaquin) motioned, and Mr. Santillan (Selma) seconded to approve the item as presented.

All in Favor, Ms. Zieba (Reedley) opposed.

Motion passed.

B. TradePort California Site Feasibility Study (Paul Herman) [ACTION]

Summary: In late May 2023, Fresno COG submitted a grant application to the U.S. Build America Bureau's Regional Infrastructure Accelerator program for \$4.3 million. In November 2023, Fresno COG was awarded \$1.75 million, which resulted in scaling down the scope of work. This plan will serve as the fifth phase in developing the inland port concept. The scaled project scope for the TradePort California Site Feasibility Study will include the following:

- Refinement of site suitability criteria and business plan
- Site selection and identification of sites
- Community engagement to assure project meets environmental justice and social equity objectives
- Begin environmental and traffic analysis process
- Begin site planning, design and engineering for pilot, or model site
- Identification of mitigation projects to catalyze TradePort development
- Advance plans to develop specifications for key infrastructure projects and corresponding project finance/public-private partnership structures
- Continued railroad and private industry coordination and acquiring commitments
- Begin site planning, design and engineering for pilot, or model, site
- Further discussions and approach for developing JPA or entity to deliver first phases of project

In May 2024, Fresno COG released a request for proposal for consultants to develop the plan for Fresno County with preliminary planning-level design for up to two sites dependent on the site selection metrics. Fresno COG received one proposal for this project by the June 20 deadline. The scoring committee, with representation from Fresno COG, Caltrans, and the California Inland Port Executive Advisory Committee conducted interviews and selected Mark Thomas due to their experience in engineering, detailed task execution, expertise in the region, and thorough emphasis on environmental clearance, public outreach and design. The project is expected to be completed in January 2026.

Action: Staff recommends TTC and PAC recommend the Policy Board authorize the interim executive director to enter into a contract with Mark Thomas the TradePort California Site Feasibility Study for an amount not to exceed \$1,650,000.

- Simran Jhutti (FCOG) reported on the TradePort Study.
- After an opportunity for public comment, Mr. Gallegos (Firebaugh) motioned, and Ms. Zieba (Reedley) seconded to approve the item as presented.

**All in Favor, no opposed.
Motion passed.**

C. Final Draft 2025 Federal Transportation Improvement Program, Final 2022 Regional Transportation Plan Amendment No. 4 and corresponding Final Conformity Analysis [Ofelia Abundez] [ACTION]

Summary: Fresno COG is federally mandated to prepare and maintain the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP). This four-year program of projects includes a listing of all transportation-related projects requiring federal funding or other approval by the federal transportation agencies. The FTIP also lists non-federal, regionally significant projects for information and air quality modeling purposes. Projects included in the FTIP are consistent with Fresno COG's Regional Transportation Plan and are part of the area's overall strategy for providing mobility, congestion relief, and reduction of transportation-related air pollution in support of efforts to attain federal air quality standards for the region.

Fresno COG is required to update the FTIP every 2 years. The most recent update was the 2023 FTIP, which was adopted by the Fresno COG Policy Board on July 28, 2022. As such, Fresno COG is due to update the FTIP again this year and is proposing approval of the Final Draft 2025 FTIP, 2022 RTP Amendment No. 4 and the corresponding Final Draft Conformity Analysis. A resolution is enclosed and the most recent FTIP documents are available for review on the Fresno COG website at: <https://www.fresnocog.org/project/federal-transportation-improvement-program-ftip/>

Fresno COG held a 30-day public review and comment period for the Draft 2025 FTIP, Draft 2022 Regional Transportation Plan Amendment No. 4 and the Draft Corresponding Conformity Analysis commencing on Friday, May 31, 2024, and concluding on Sunday, June 30, 2024. A public hearing was also held to receive comments on the Draft 2025 FTIP documents on Wednesday, June 12, 2024, at the Fresno COG office. Verbal comments received at the public hearing and other comments received during the 30-day public review period are summarized and responded to in Appendix J (Formal Comments and Responses) of the Final Draft 2025 FTIP. Any changes made to the Draft 2025 FTIP based on comments received are noted within the responses to such comments. Four (4) comments were received on the Draft Conformity Analysis and no comments were received on the 2022 RTP Amendment No. 4.

The Final 2025 FTIP, Final 2022 RTP Amendment No. 4, and Final corresponding Conformity Analysis meet all applicable transportation planning requirements per 23 CFR Part 450, 40 CFR Part 93, and conform to the applicable State Implementation Plans.

Action: Staff requests that TTC/PAC recommend the Policy Board approve the Final Draft 2025 Federal Transportation Improvement Program, 2022 Regional Transportation Plan Amendment No. 4 and the corresponding Final Draft Conformity Analysis via Resolution No. 2024-12.

- Ofelia Abundez (FCOG) reported on the Federal Transportation Improvement.
- After an opportunity for public comment, Ms. Cabrera (San Joaquin) motioned, and Mr. Mascia (Fresno City) seconded to approve the item as presented.

**All in Favor, no opposed.
Motion passed.**

D. Fresno COG Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) 2.0 Program Project Awards (Robert Phipps) [ACTION]

Summary: The Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) 2.0 grant program was included in the 2021 State budget and seeks to accelerate infill development, reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and increase housing supplies at all affordability levels.

Fresno COG was originally awarded \$13.5 million in REAP 2.0 funds; however, the most recent budget agreement expressed in Assembly Bill 108 on June 22, trims the program by approximately 6 percent, which leaves the region with an anticipated \$12.8 million, minus program management expenses of about \$100,000 to date.

REAP 2.0 is primarily administered through the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), working in conjunction with the California Air Resources Board (CARB), the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) and the Strategic Growth Council (SGC).

On Dec. 1, 2023, Fresno COG received eight project applications from member jurisdictions seeking a collective \$21 million. On Jan. 17, 2024 a scoring committee comprising 11 representatives from various agencies, including three of the State agencies administering REAP 2.0, met to discuss and rank the projects.

Committee members scored the projects based on Fresno COG's guidelines as approved by the State's administering agencies. Of the eight applications, the City of Firebaugh's Downtown Infill Initiative, the City of Fresno's Blackstone Betterment project and the City of San Joaquin's park and trail project were the top three scoring projects, in that order. A summary of the full program outreach, application and scoring process is attached.

Based on anticipated cuts in Gov. Newsom's January budget, the scoring committee, staff and the TTC recommended in February that the City of Firebaugh receive its full \$1.5 million request, while Blackstone Betterment receive the remaining \$5 million against a \$10.6 million request. In contrast, the Policy Advisory Committee voted to award the City of Firebaugh \$1.5 million, the City of San Joaquin \$1 million and the City of Fresno \$4 million.

Now that the governor and Legislature have agreed on a budget deal, and Fresno COG has received the first full 25 percent of its revised REAP 2.0 funds (\$2.8 million) staff is prepared to offer a revised project award recommendation.

If Fresno COG restores \$400,000 of the original \$600,000 advanced for program management to projects, it can boost the total funding available to regional projects to approximately \$12.6 million. Apportionment would then follow the scoring committee's priority recommendations:

1. City of Firebaugh -- \$1.5 million
2. City of Fresno -- \$10.6 million
3. City of San Joaquin \$500,000

To be clear, while Fresno COG is proposing to contract with project awardees at this time, reimbursement will necessarily be limited to REAP cash on hand and reimbursements as they become available from HCD.

ACTION: Staff and the REAP 2.0 scoring committee request the TTC/PAC recommend three actions to the Policy Board:

1. Approve the scoring committee recommendation, awarding the City of Firebaugh (Downtown Infill Initiative, \$1.5 million), City of Fresno (Blackstone Betterment project, \$10.6 million), and City of San Joaquin (park and trail project, \$500,000) REAP 2.0 funds in priority order.

2. Authorize the interim executive director to sign contracts with each jurisdiction

- Robert Phipps (FCOG) reported on the REAP Program Project Awards.
- After an opportunity for public comment, Ms. Cabrera (San Joaquin) motioned, and Mr. Mascia (Fresno City) seconded to approve the item as presented.

All in Favor, no opposed.

Motion passed.

E. Regional Pavement Management System Update Consultant Selection (Pankaj Joshi) [ACTION]

Summary: A well-maintained roadway system ensures efficient transportation for people and reliable delivery of goods and services, and it reduces serious injuries and fatalities on the transportation system. A pavement management system (PMS) helps monitor pavement condition, track rehabilitation history, and prioritize maintenance projects while maximizing funding allocations. Currently, the status of PMS throughout regional jurisdictions varies from inactive software licenses to very old data.

Fresno COG released a request for proposals (RFP) in May 2024 seeking qualified consultants to update the regional PMS. The consultant will be responsible for bringing each PMS of participating agencies to active status, updating the database with the current pavement condition index, and producing a systemwide report for each participating agency, including budgetary analysis.

Two proposals were received in response to the RFP. A scoring committee of three, comprising staff from member jurisdictions, selected NCE. NCE has extensive experience in implementing and updating pavement management plans, database management and pavement rehabilitation and sustainability. NCE has also worked with Fresno COG in similar project in 2019 that implemented PMS for the first time in nine rural cities.

This project is expected to be completed within a year.

With updates to the existing PMSs in the region, it is also deemed necessary to maintain a regional license of PMS software and carry out regional analyses for roadway maintenance. This will help Fresno COG to do regional budgetary and rehabilitation analyses for informed and data driven regional decisions. To accommodate this task, an additional \$55,000 is needed to the current allocated budget to Work Element 141.

ACTION: Staff requests two actions:

1. That TTC/PAC recommend the Policy Board amend Fresno COG's 2024-25 Overall Work Program and Budget to add \$55,000 to Work Element 141 for a Pavement Management System regional license and analysis.
2. That the TTC/PAC recommend the Policy Board authorize the executive director to enter a contract with NCE for the Regional Pavement Management System Update for an amount not to exceed \$1,245,334.90.

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

- Pankaj Joshi (FCOG) reported on the Regional Pavement Management System Update.
- After an opportunity for public comment, Mr. Burnett (Clovis) motioned, and Mr. Santillan (Selma) seconded to approve the item as presented.

All in favor, no opposed.

Motion passed.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE CONSENT ITEMS

- A. San Joaquin Valley Regional Transportation Planning Agencies -- Valleywide Coordinator Contract (Robert Phipps) [ACTION]
- B. Multijurisdictional Housing Element Contract Amendment - City of Fresno (Robert Phipps) [ACTION]
- C. Senate Bill (SB) 743 Regional Guidelines Update (Santosh Bhattarai) [ACTION]

- Mr. Jansons called for any items wishing to be pulled by members or the public.
- Item B was pulled by Amanda Torez for comment.
- After an opportunity for public comment, Ms. Cabrera (San Joaquin) motioned, and Mr. Mascia (Fresno City) seconded to approve the consent agenda items A-C as presented.

All in Favor, no opposed.

Motion passed.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Gigawatts for Good Jobs Initiative Presentation (Robert Phipps) [ACTION]

Summary: Fresno County is envisioned as a massive host of clean energy development in the state because of the nearly 200,000 acres of farmland to be retired and repurposed in western Fresno County. The Westlands Water district has proposed significant farmland acreage to be retired and repurposed for clean energy generation (primarily utility-scale solar) because of long-term irrigation water availability constraints under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

Westlands is partnering with a clean energy development master planner, Golden State Clean Energy. These two entities are at the epicenter of clean energy planning and development in western Fresno County and the state.

The clean energy transition is ushering in opportunities as well as risks of unpredictable supplies and costs of all types of energy.

Regenerate California Innovation (RCI) Director Keith Berchtold, working with the Fresno, Madera, Tulare and Kings Counties Central Labor Council, propose that Fresno County develop a joint powers authority organization with the authority and savvy to buy and manage power locally for the benefit of all County residents, businesses and institutions.

Local ownership and management of power will also be critical for aligning the water, land, transportation, utilities and skilled workforce infrastructure investments necessary for attracting and growing industries fueled by clean energy with sustainably good jobs and export markets.

Together, the organizations are requesting to work with Fresno COG leadership to form a Reliable, Accessible Renewable Energy (RARE) Planning Committee that includes local governments, labor, businesses, non-profit and community-based organizations. Mr. Berchtold will offer a presentation on the subject matter.

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

- Mr. Jansons called for any items wishing to be pulled by members or the public.
- After an opportunity for public comment, Ms. Cabrera (San Joaquin) motioned, and Mr. Mascia (Fresno City) seconded to approve the consent agenda item A as presented.

**All in Favor, no opposed.
Motion passed.**

V. OTHER ITEMS

A. Items from Staff

- None.

B. Items from Members

- None.

VI. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

A. Public Presentations

- None.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert Phipps, Interim Executive Director

Public:

Terry Ogle

Staff:

Stephanie Maxwell, Robert Phipps, Jennifer Rodriguez, Brenda Thomas, Janelle Del Campo, Ofelia Abundez, Les Beshears, Matthew Shimizu, Jake Martinez, Moses Stites, Harold Sobrado, Jeff Long, Kai Han.