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**Fresno COG Policy Board
MINUTES
Thursday, October 24, 2024
5:30 PM**

The meeting was held at the Fresno COG Sequoia Room

Members Attending:

Mayor Pro Tem Vong Mouanoutoua, City of Clovis
Mayor James Horn, City of Coalinga
Mayor Pro Tem Freddy Valdez, City of Firebaugh
Councilmember Mike Karbassi, City of Fresno
Mayor Rey Leon, City of Huron
Mayor Maria Pacheco, City of Kerman
Mayor Brandon Pursell, City of Kingsburg
Mayor Victor Martinez, City of Mendota
Mayor Gilbert Garcia, City of Orange Cove
Mayor Alma Beltran, City of Parlier
Councilmember Mary Fast, City of Reedley
Mayor Julia Hernandez, City of San Joaquin
Mayor Scott Robertson, City of Selma
Supervisor Sal Quintero, County of Fresno
David Padilla, Caltrans
Robert Phipps, Interim Executive Director
Bryan Rome, Legal Counsel

Absent:

Daniel Parra, City of Fowler
Frank Gonzalez, City of Sanger

Quorum: At the start of the meeting, there were 13 members representing 42.95% of the population. There was a quorum to conduct business.

The meeting was called to order at 5:57 p.m. by Mayor Beltran (Parlier), Chair.

I. TRANSPORTATION CONSENT ITEMS

- A. Executive Minutes of September 26, 2024 [APPROVE]**
- B. Transportation Development Act 2023-24 Surplus (Les Beshears) [INFORMATION]**
- C. Master Fund Transfer Agreement with Caltrans (Les Beshears) [ACTION]**
- D. FTA Award - FYs 2022 and 2023 5310 Vehicle Purchases and Transit Operating Service (Matthew Shimizu) [ACTION]**

- E. **FTA Award - FY23 5339(b) Selma Maintenance Facility Phase II Electric Charging Infrastructure (Matthew Shimizu) [APPROVE]**
- F. **Final Quarter Obligational Authority Update (Jennifer Rodriguez) [INFORMATION]**
- G. **FCOG 2025 Meeting Calendar (Denise Flores) [ACTION]**

- Chair Beltran asked if any member wished to pull any items.
- After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Martinez (Mendota) moved, and Mayor Pro Tem Garcia (Orange Cove) seconded to approve consent items A-G.

Vote: All in favor, no opposed.

Absent: Fowler, Sanger.

Motion passed by acclamation.

Councilmember Karbassi (Fresno City) joined the meeting at 5:58pm. Quorum: 14 @ 96.71%.

II. TRANSPORTATION ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Measure C Expenditure Plan Update – Rural Project List (Les Beshears) [ACTION]

Summary: The 2006 Measure C ordinance established separate urban and rural capital project funds for major regional street and highway infrastructure projects.

The Rural Tier I list included a project to connect Interstate 5 to State Route 180. Fresno COG studied several alignments and eventually designated a 23-mile corridor between Mendota and I-5 as the preferred alternative. The designated corridor includes an environmentally sensitive area where 14.5 miles of proposed roadway presently does not exist.

A 2006 cost estimate of \$305 million has been carried in the expenditure plan since 2009; however, anticipated revenues have never been enough to cover the estimated cost, so the project was programmed in the last year of the Measure resulting in a deficit that has averaged between \$200-\$220 million. More recently a 2023 Caltrans Project Study Report indicates the project could cost as much as \$316 million.

The current Measure expires in 2027, and while efforts are underway to extend it, the project is clearly not viable within the existing life of the Measure without a significant contribution from some yet-to-be-identified funding source. It is therefore appropriate to consider substituting \$75-\$100 million in deliverable projects against the rural residual balance.

Measure C's enabling legislation allows Fresno COG to amend the expenditure plan to include new projects with an affirmative vote by both the Fresno COG and Fresno County Transportation Authority boards; however, it stipulates priority should be given to the intent of the projects promised to the voters in 2007. Therefore the projects should:

- Be on or related to projects on the voter-approved Tier I and Tier II list approved by the voters in 2006
- Facilitate regional connectivity to Interstate 5

Staff has conferred with Caltrans to identify four projects meeting these criteria.

- Passing Lane on State Route 33 between Mendota and Firebaugh -\$16 million
- Passing Lane on State Route 180 between Kerman and Mendota – \$16 million
- Passing Lane on State Route 198 between Kings County Line and Interstate 5 – \$9 million
- Widen State Route 145 North of Whitesbridge connecting to State Route 180 – \$5 million

Fresno COG staff met with FCTA staff, Caltrans, and the rural westside mayors to discuss swapping these projects with the SR 180/I-5 project. Various alternatives were discussed including:

1. Improvements to Manning Avenue and State Route 145 between San Joaquin and Kerman.
2. A roundabout to address a safety issue at State Route 33 and Manning Avenue
3. A safety Issue on State Route 33 near Mendota High School
4. A bike/pedestrian trail proposal to connect westside cities

There has been no preliminary engineering or cost estimates for any of these additional projects. Caltrans agreed to explore the safety issues related to SR 33/Manning Avenue and SR 33 in Mendota, and if appropriate, to initiate projects that may be eligible for State funding.

The current estimated cost of the four recommended projects is \$46 million, which does not fully program the rural residual balance; however, these cost estimates could increase, and FCTA presently has three major priority projects totaling \$218 million in various phases of project development and approaching construction in the next two years that could also experience cost increases. Those priority projects are: Golden State Boulevard Corridor, the State Route 99/American Avenue Interchange, and State Route 41 Elkhorn-Excelsior gap closure. In light of recent inflationary pressures, staff recommend leaving a prudent reserve to cover unexpected cost increases until these projects are bid for construction and substantially complete.

During the meeting with the westside mayors, they requested a list of additional priority projects be discussed in the future that could also be appropriate for the proposed extension of Measure C; however, there was unanimous support for moving forward with the four recommended regional projects listed above.

Action: Staff recommends the Policy Board adopt Resolution 2024-36 authorizing an amendment to the Measure C Regional Transportation Program Expenditure Plan and recommend the FCTA add the following projects to the Rural Tier I list.

- Passing Lane on SR 33 between Mendota and Firebaugh – \$16 million
 - Passing Lane on SR 180 between Kerman and Mendota – \$16 million
 - Passing Lane on SR 198 between Kings County Line and I-5 – \$9 million
 - Widen SR 145 North of Whitesbridge connecting to SR 180 – \$5 million
- Les Beshears (FCOG) gave an update on the Measure C Expenditure Plan.
 - After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Pro Tem Valdez (Firebaugh) moved, and Mayor Leon (Huron) seconded to accept 24-36 Measure C Expenditure plan update with the amendment of any overages be brought back to this committee to see where they will be allocated.
 - In explaining his motion, Mayor Pro Tem Valdez insisted any recommendations to program unallocated balances be brought back to the board and respect priority consistent with the criteria spelled out in the resolution i.e. priority be given to projects on or related to the Tier I and Tier II list and demonstrate connectivity to I-5.

Vote: All in favor, no opposed.

Absent: Fowler, Sanger.

Motion passed by acclamation.

B. Cooperative Agreement with Fresno County Transportation Authority for the 2026 Measure C Expenditure Plan (Robert Phipps) [ACTION]

Summary: Fresno COG and the Fresno County Transportation Authority have a long history of working cooperatively in all things related to Measure C, whose enabling legislation provides that the regional transportation planning agency (Fresno COG) shall develop the expenditure plan for the ballot measure.

To that end, FCTA has requested that Fresno COG hire a project manager, a survey firm, public outreach firm and a facilitator to convene the executive committee overseeing the expenditure plan.

These contracts will be funded pursuant to a cooperative agreement for \$1.75 million between the FCTA and Fresno COG. FCTA will propose approving the same cooperative agreement in December; however, to avoid losing additional time, staff will begin issuing requests for proposals for these activities.

Specifically, staff is proposing the \$1.75 million be allocated as follows over a roughly 18-month timeframe:

- Project manager, to organize and manage statutory requirements and information/input from the public, MC3 renewal committee(s), stakeholders and elected representatives, develop and craft the final draft expenditure plan, as directed: \$650,000
- Public outreach firm, to coordinate and hold a minimum, anticipated 40 public workshops/meetings throughout the region, create and manage social media and radio advertising, billboards, focus groups, and multiple other strategies designed to maximize transparent, thorough and meaningful public input from community residents on specific project ideas, program areas and other components that make up the next Measure C initiative: \$750,000, with a minimum \$150,000 reserved for community-based organizations to host public workshops/meetings
- Meeting/Community Facilitator to bring together disparate interests, stakeholders, jurisdictional representatives and the public as part of one or more committees to receive, address and consider public input as well as professional, technical and policy analysis in making recommendations to the Fresno COG and FCTA boards of directors: \$200,000
- Survey firm to provide statistically valid survey results to determine public familiarity with Measure C and its performance to date, test voter sentiment regarding the viability of a renewal initiative and recommend communications/messaging suitable for a renewal effort: \$150,000

The intent is to release all four requests for proposals simultaneously at the beginning of November, anticipating contracts by the end of January; however, not all contracts would necessarily have to be activated at once

Two actions are required:

Action: Staff, TTC and PAC recommend the Board authorize the interim executive director sign a cooperative agreement for \$1.75 million with FCTA.

Action: Staff, TTC and PAC recommend the Board authorize an amendment to the 2024-25 Overall Work Program and budget to increase Work Element 210 – Measure C Planning by \$1.75 million.

- Robert Phipps (FCOG) reported on the Cooperative Agreement with FCTA for the 2026 Measure C Expenditure Plan.
- After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Martinez (Mendota) moved, and Mayor Pro Tem Mouanoutoua (Clovis) seconded to approve the action.

Vote: All in favor, no opposed.

Absent: Fowler, Sanger.

Motion passed by acclamation.

C. 2026 Regional Transportation Plan Call-for-Projects (Ofelia Abundez) [INFORMATION]

Summary: The 2026 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) call-for-projects started on Oct. 1 and will end on Dec. 1. Fresno COG staff held a workshop on Sept. 25, to guide member agencies on submitting new projects and modifying existing, carried-over projects through FresnoTrak. Members also received instructions on the scoring process. Instructions and the workshop recording were emailed to all member agencies. Fresno COG staff will send friendly reminders about the deadline and encourage member agencies to reach out with any questions.

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

- Paul Herman (FCOG) reported on the RTP call for projects.

Information item only. No action needed.

D. Caltrans Report (Caltrans) [INFORMATION]

- David Padilla (Caltrans) reported the following:
 - Rehab project
 - SR 41 Excelsior Express Way.

This item is informational. No action is required.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE CONSENT ITEMS

A. Regional Clearinghouse Calendar (Ofelia Abundez) [Information]

Summary: This month’s Regional Clearinghouse Calendar containing “project notification and review reports” for grant proposals.

1. USDA Rural Development

Project Subject to Review:

PROJECT NOTIFICATION AND REVIEW REPORT

Regional Clearinghouse Number:	#10-2024-288
Project Title:	USDA Rural Development
Applicant Agency:	City of San Joaquin
Contact Person:	Nancy Banda
Address:	P.O. Box 758 San Joaquin, CA 93660
Phone:	559-693-4311
Federal Catalog#:	10.766
Status:	New
Area of Impact:	San Joaquin, CA
Federal Funding Agency:	USDA Rural Development

Applicant	Federal Funds	State	Total Funds
City of San Joaquin	\$692,389.69	\$230,796.56	\$923,186.25

The Regional Clearinghouse is a process of informing local agencies of Federal grant requests, providing an opportunity to comment, and potentially avoid duplication of effort. Clearinghouse items are brought before the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) and, if appropriate, the Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) for review and comment. Any resulting TTC/PAC comments, and any comments received from other agencies as a result of

the Clearinghouse notification process, are noted on a monthly report brought forward to the Fresno COG Policy Board.

COG Policy Board action authorizes staff to forward any comments received to the State Clearinghouse and other appropriate agencies. The applicants have been notified of this meeting. While participation by the agency is optional, they have been personally requested to attend the Policy Board meeting in case there should be any questions. Project notification and review reports describing these projects are attached.

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. San Joaquin Valley Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) Program -- Objective Design Standards Study Contract Award (Robert Phipps) [ACTION]

Summary: Fresno COG serves as the fiscal agent for the San Joaquin Valley Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) Committee, which is responsible for distributing nearly \$19 million in state housing planning funds. Those funds are intended to assist member jurisdictions and regional planning agencies prepare for the sixth-cycle Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) and housing element update process.

To date, approximately \$5.5 million has been reserved for tasks, activities and deliverables intended of a Valleywide scope and benefit among all eight counties.

Phase two of Valleywide activities, tasks and deliverables involves technical assistance work with several consultant firms to assist San Joaquin Valley jurisdictions with different components of their housing element updates. Fresno COG is proposing a San Joaquin Valley Objective Design Standards Study and Guidebook as the last major deliverable in the Valleywide program.

Fresno COG and REAP program manager Sigala, Inc. issued a request for proposals for the study from the remaining consultants already contracted to offer technical assistance under the program. Staff and consultant Michael Sigala selected Raimi Associates from the three proposals received, which also included Mintier-Harnish and Precision Engineering. Raimi's \$89,270 proposal demonstrated the architectural elements and understanding that Fresno COG was seeking, as well as the tight timeline restrictions.

Action: Staff and PAC recommend that the Policy Board authorize the interim executive director to sign a contract with Raimi Associates for the San Joaquin Valley Objective Design Standards Study for an amount not to exceed \$89,270 through Dec. 31, 2024.

C. San Joaquin Valley Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) Program -- Multijurisdictional Housing Element Budget Augmentation and Amendment (Robert Phipps) [ACTION]

Summary: Fresno COG serves as the fiscal agent for the San Joaquin Valley Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) Committee, which is responsible for distributing nearly \$19 million in state housing planning funds. Those funds are intended to assist member jurisdictions and regional planning agencies prepare for the sixth-cycle Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) and housing element update process.

The Valleywide Objective Design Standards Study contract proposed in the agenda item above represents the final deliverable in the scope of Valleywide products under the SJV REAP program. REAP funding has a Dec. 31, 2024 deadline for expenditure.

With nearly \$2.9 million remaining available to SJV jurisdictions, Fresno COG is proposing to use the remainder of Valleywide REAP funding to offset local jurisdictions' expenses to date for costs related to housing element updates throughout the Valley. Fresno COG estimates its share of those funds at approximately \$900,000.

Following its memorandum of understanding with Fresno COG for the regional multi-jurisdictional housing element (MJHE), the City of Fresno used Local Early Action Planning (LEAP) funds at the outset to cover early MJHE-related expenses until Fresno COG began covering MJHE invoices fully in July 2023.

Because LEAP funds are ineligible for reimbursement, the City of Fresno is requesting an amendment to PlaceWorks' contract totaling \$49,554 to prepare the errata document, address additional rounds of review from the Department of Housing and Community Development, and to include a small contingency.

This approach will ensure — to the extent possible — that all housing element-related costs for all jurisdictions are 100% covered by State funds.

Action: Staff and PAC recommend the Policy Board authorize the interim executive director to amend PlaceWorks' MJHE contract, increasing the total by \$49,554 to \$2,218,892.

- Chair Beltran asked if any member wished to pull any items.
- After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Leon (Huron) moved, and Mayor Hernandez (San Joaquin) seconded to approve the action.

Vote: All in favor, no opposed.

Absent: Fowler, Sanger.

Motion passed by acclamation.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. **2025 Fresno COG One Voice Advocacy Trip to Washington D.C. (Brenda Thomas) [ACTION]**

Summary: Fresno COG's One Voice effort brings together multiple agencies, jurisdictions and transportation stakeholders to rally around an approved list of policy issues and/or funding requests. After a five-year hiatus, the One Voice effort was revived earlier this year with a public-private delegation visiting Congressional and Federal agency representatives in Washington, D.C. to pursue funding, grant opportunities and policy changes. One Voice delegates agreed that the advocacy trip was successful and should be scheduled annually.

Some of Fresno COG's partnering agencies, including the Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission, Workforce Development Board and Westlands Water District, have expressed an interest in participating in a 2025 One Voice effort. However, the staff seeks the Policy Board's assistance in identifying regional transportation-related issues or projects that could be carried to D.C. next spring.

With anticipation, staff is developing a Regional Priority Submittal Form, which could be released to the public this month. Any public or private entity is welcome to submit a priority for consideration by the One Voice Steering Committee and the Fresno COG Policy Board. Submitting entities must commit to sending or assigning a representative to Washington D.C. with the delegation to speak on the priorities' behalf. Staff proposes the trip be tentatively set for late spring 2025.

The 2024 Priorities Summary and additional trip information is available here: [Fresno COG's One Voice Webpage](#).

Action: Staff and PAC recommend the Policy Board approve moving forward with One Voice 2025 advocacy trip planning.

- Brenda Thomas (FCOG) reported on the One Voice Advocacy Trip to Washington D.C.
- After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Leon (Huron) moved, and Mayor Martinez (Mendota) seconded to approve the action.

Vote: All in favor, no opposed.
Absent: Fowler, Sanger.
Motion passed by acclamation.

B. CLOSED SESSION - Conference with Labor Negotiators (Gov. Code section 54957.6)

Summary: Labor Negotiations Committee will discuss contract negotiations with the Policy Board for Executive Director, which will be considered in closed session.

Unrepresented employee: Executive Director

Action: The Board may provide additional direction at its discretion.

- Mayor Beltran, Chair, resumed to regular session.
- No Action to report.

C. Approval of Executive Director Employment Contract [ACTION]

Action: The Labor Negotiation team, consisting of Mayors Beltran, Fast, and Pursell, recommend that the Policy Board approve and authorize the chair to execute an employment agreement with Robert Phipps to serve as the Executive Director of FCOG, in exchange for an annual salary of \$197,735.00, subject to the terms and conditions carried forth from prior Executive Director agreements, except that the proposed agreement include eight days of administrative leave as opposed to seven.

- Mayor Beltran (Chair) called for any questions.
- After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Martinez (Mendota) moved, and Mayor Pro Tem Garcia (Orange Cove) seconded to approve the action.

Vote: All in favor, no opposed.
Absent: Fowler, Sanger.
Motion passed by acclamation.

V. OTHER ITEMS

A. Items from Staff

None.

B. Items from Members

- None.

VI. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

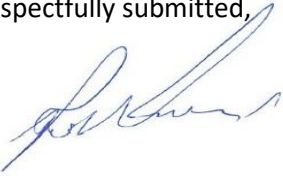
A. Public Presentations

- There was no public present at this time.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Phipps', written in a cursive style.

Robert Phipps

Public:

Terry Ogle

Staff:

Denise Flores; Robert Phipps; Moses Stites; Janelle Del Campo; Brenda Thomas; Les Beshears; Paul Herman, Jennifer Rodriguez.