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**Fresno COG Policy Board
MINUTES
Thursday, November 21, 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 Elsa Lopez, City of Firebaugh
Daniel Parra, City of Fowler
Councilmember Mike Karbassi, City of Fresno
Councilmember Ismael Herrera, City of Kerman
Mayor Brandon Pursell, City of Kingsburg
Mayor Pro Tem Libertad Lopez, City of Mendota
Mayor Pro Tem Gilbert Garcia, City of Orange Cove
Mayor Alma Beltran, City of Parlier
Councilmember Mary Fast, City of Reedley
Mayor Scott Robertson, City of Selma
Michael Navarro, Caltrans
Robert Phipps, Interim Executive Director
Bryan Rome, Legal Counsel

Absent:

Mayor Rey Leon, City of Huron
Mayor Julia Hernandez, City of San Joaquin
Frank Gonzalez, City of Sanger
Supervisor Sal Quintero, County of Fresno

Quorum: At the start of the meeting, there were 12 members representing 80.60% of the population. There was a quorum to conduct business.

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Mayor Beltran (Parlier), Chair.

I. TRANSPORTATION CONSENT ITEMS

- A. Executive Minutes of October 24, 2024 [APPROVE]**
- B. First Quarter Work Element Report 2024-25 (Les Beshears) [INFORMATION]**
- C. FY 24-25 City of Fresno TDA Claim (Les Beshears) [ACTION]**
- D. Overall Work Program Agreements with member agencies (Les Beshears) [ACTION]**
- E. Demographic Forecast Update (Shichen Fan) [ACTION]**

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

Vote: All in favor, no opposed.

Absent: Huron, Sanger, San Joaquin, Fresno County.

Motion passed by acclamation.

II. TRANSPORTATION ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. **Fresno County Regional Transit On-Board Survey Final Report (Santosh Bhattarai) [ACTION]**

Summary: Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG) in partnership with Fresno Area Express (FAX), Clovis Transit, and Fresno County Rural Transit Agency (FCRTA) conducted a comprehensive transit on-board survey in Fresno County in spring 2024. The survey represented all fixed-transit routes operated by the three transit providers within the county. The survey provided a detailed overview of rider travel patterns and collected important information regarding transit customers, including: (a) socio-demographics, (b) fare payment, (c) travel purpose, (d) means of access and egress to/from the system, (e) time of travel, and (f) ultimate origins and destinations.

The survey's main purpose is to update the transit components of Fresno COG's activity-based model (ABM) and improve its transit ridership forecasting capability. The survey will also be used to assist transit agencies in planning future service improvements, and to reveal changes in transit riders' travel behaviors after the COVID pandemic.

Accurate and reliable transit usage data are required as inputs to develop, calibrate, and validate the regional activity-based travel demand model. To support this, the transit on-board survey was designed and conducted in accordance with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidelines, ensuring the data can be used in federal grant applications and decision-making processes, and to ensure the overall accuracy and utility in the regional model. The on-board surveys also offer detailed insights into hard-to-measure transit markets, such as students, eventgoers, and downtown business circulation.

The sample targets within each of the transit agencies were proportional to actual ridership by route/line, time, and direction. Approximately 3,000 completed and valid survey records were collected, exceeding the targeted sample plan by 10%.

TABLE 1: TRANSIT RIDERSHIP AND SURVEY STATISTICS

SERVICE	AVERAGE WEEKDAY RIDERSHIP*	SAMPLING GOAL	UNWEIGHTED SURVEYS	% OF TARGET	VALID SURVEYS
FAX	31,439	2,672	2,918	109%	2,904
Clovis Transit	561	56	69	123%	69
FCRTA	154	15	26	167%	25
Total	32,154	2,743	3,013	110%	2,998

FAX and Clovis Transit July 2022 -June 2023; FCRTA October 2023 to February 2024

This project prepared the following:

1. Final origin-destination data file for the activity-based model that can be used by Fresno COG to update the model.
2. Individualized reports, including executive summaries, for each of the three transit agencies and for the region with four reports in total (all attached).

Action: Staff and TTC/PAC recommend the Policy Board receive and file the final reports for the Fresno County Regional Transit On-Board Survey.

- Santosh Bhattari (FCOG) introduced Tristan Cherry who gave a presentation.
- After an opportunity for public comment, Councilmember (Herrera) moved, and Councilmember Fast (Reedley) seconded to approve the action.

Vote: All in favor, no opposed.

Absent: Huron, Sanger, San Joaquin, County of Fresno.

Motion passed by acclamation.

B. 2025-26 Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program and Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program Guidelines, Application Packets and Call-for-Projects (Ofelia Abundez and Matthew Shimizu) [ACTION]

Summary: The Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement programs (23 U.S.C. 149) are authorized in the Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). STBG promotes flexibility in State and local transportation decisions and provides flexible funding to best address State and local transportation needs. CMAQ provides funding directed to transportation projects and programs that contribute to attaining or maintaining National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) in nonattainment or air quality maintenance areas for ozone, carbon monoxide, or particulate matter (PM) under provisions in the Clean Air Act (Title 42, United States Code).

Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG), in its role as a metropolitan planning organization (MPO), is responsible for programming future federal transportation revenues for the Fresno region in the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP). STBG and CMAQ funds are reimbursable Federal-aid funds, subject to the requirements of Title 23, United States Code.

Program guidelines describe the policies, standards, criteria, and procedures for developing, managing, and adopting Fresno COG's STBG and CMAQ program. The 2025/2026 STBG and CMAQ program will cover four years of programming, 2026/27 through 2029/30. All funds are distributed through a competitive, regional bid program based on scoring criteria and evaluated by a scoring committee.

The Fresno COG Programming Subcommittee met two times in September and October to update and finalize the guidelines, application packets, and scoring criteria for the upcoming 2025/26 STBG and CMAQ calls-for-projects. New updates for the STBG guidelines include the scoring system and minor changes to the application and changes to CMAQ guidelines, include funding distribution policies, changes to the scoring system, rotation of representation to the scoring committee, and minor changes to the language in the application.

The STBG and CMAQ program guidelines and application packets can be found on Fresno COG's website and are attached to this agenda item. Upon Board approval of the guidelines and application packets, the call-for-projects will be initiated.

Action: Staff, the Programming Subcommittee and the TTC/PAC recommend the Policy Board approve both the STBG and CMAQ guidelines and application packets and initiate the call-for-projects.

- Ofelia Abundez (FCOG) reported on the item.
- After an opportunity for public comment, Councilmember Karbassi (City of Fresno) moved, and Mayor Parra (Fowler) seconded to approve the action.

Vote: All in favor, no opposed.

Absent: Huron, Sanger, San Joaquin, County of Fresno.

Motion passed by acclamation.

C. 2025-2026 Final Fresno COG Project Delivery Policy and Procedures (Ofelia Abundez) [ACTION]

Summary: The Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement, Carbon Reduction (CRP) and Active Transportation (ATP) programs, as well as other State and Federal funds, are subject to regional project delivery policies. These policies and procedures are critical to ensure that the region can use its State and Federally apportioned transportation funding in a timely manner. By meeting delivery targets, the region can maximize its use of all funding on transportation projects. If the region is successful in meeting state mandated delivery deadlines, it may be rewarded with supplemental transportation dollars through the “August redistribution” process. Projects in each Federal-aid program are awarded based on individual program guidelines and scoring criteria including project merit, eligibility, and deliverability, within the established deadlines.

The Fresno COG Programming Subcommittee met in September to update and finalize the Project Delivery Policy and Procedures. Updates include minor changes to procedures and dates. The Project Delivery Policy and Procedures can be found on Fresno COG’s website and is attached to this agenda item.

Action: Staff, the Programming Subcommittee and the TTC/PAC recommend the Board approve the final draft of the 2025-26 Project Delivery Policy and Procedures.

- Ofelia Abundez (FCOG) reported on the final project delivery policy and procedures.
- After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Pro Tem Garcia (Orange Cove) moved, and Mayor Horn (Coalinga) seconded to approve the action.

Vote: All in favor, no opposed.

Absent: Huron, Sanger, San Joaquin, County of Fresno.

Motion passed by acclamation.

D. Measure C Safe Routes to Schools (Paul Herman) [ACTION]

Summary: In July 2023, Fresno COG staff began holding a series of meetings with school district and local jurisdictional staff across the county to discuss safety concerns of school children getting to their school sites safely.

In these discussions COG staff received specific project suggestions that would address particular safety concerns. This dialog helped staff produce a new list of projects that could be incorporated into future grant applications and potentially into a future Measure C renewal expenditure plan, to be approved by voters in 2026. This project list was also incorporated into Fresno COG’s Regional Active Transportation Plan Update as an appendix, which was adopted by the Policy Board at its May 2024 meeting.

COG staff first briefed the Policy Board of these Safe Routes to Schools activities at the November 2023 Board Meeting. In January 2024, the Policy Board formed a Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) Subcommittee, comprising several Policy Board members.

On Sept. 26, the Fresno COG SRTS Subcommittee convened to discuss goals for SRTS funding and safety improvements. Following the Subcommittee’s direction, staff has explored the feasibility of amending the Measure C Expenditure Plan to potentially reallocate funding for SRTS projects.

Staff met with the Fresno County Transportation Authority (FCTA) to discuss potential funding opportunities in the existing expenditure plan. FCTA and Fresno COG identified four potential programs in the expenditure plan that are forecast to not be fully expended by the 2027 sunset of the current Measure. These programs are 1) Senior Scrip, 2) Ag/Farmworker Vanpools, 3) Car/Vanpools, and 4) New Technology Reserve carryover funds from the recently completed FY 24-25 cycle.

MEASURE "C" SOURCE	SENIOR SCRIP	FARMWORKER VAN POOLS	CAR/VAN POOLS	NEW TECH	TOTAL
				FY 24-25 CYCLE CARRYOVER	
PROPOSED REALLOCATION	2,500,000	2,500,000	1,000,000	2,500,000	8,500,000

Based on historical trends of expenditures and demand for these programs, FCTA and Fresno COG anticipate a sufficient remaining balance to support both existing and future demand for each until the 2027 sunset and the one-time \$8.5 million infusion of funding for a SRTS program.

At this stage, this proposal to potentially reallocate \$8.5 million in funding across the four programs outlined above into SRTS is simply a concept. Should the Board advise Fresno COG to proceed with an amendment to the Measure C Expenditure plan, this would entail further discussion with FCTA and the SRTS Subcommittee regarding logistics of the program as well as amendment approval by the FCTA Board. Additionally, Fresno COG has suggested a similar item be presented to the FCTA Board in December as a conceptual item. If approved, this item would return to the Board in the first quarter of 2025 and include program guidelines and a formal amendment.

During the Nov. 8 Fresno COG Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) and Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings, the two committees unanimously voted to table the item and refer the issues back to the SRTS Subcommittee to explore additional options. TTC and PAC expressed several concerns, including that shifting funding at this time could impact the Measure C renewal effort just getting underway, as well as a desire by some agencies to keep the New Tech Program funding whole. As such, Fresno COG staff is presenting several options for the Policy Board to consider for this item, as outlined below.

1. The original proposal: Shift up to a total of \$8.5 million from the Senior Scrip, car/vanpools, AG vanpools and New Technology programs to a new Safe Routes to Schools program. This would require an amendment to the Measure C expenditure plan and would have to be ratified by the Fresno County Transportation Authority Board. It would also require new guidelines governing the program to be developed and approved. Yet to be determined is whether the new program would be formula or competitive; however, in either case, the guidelines would have to be fully vetted and approved as part of the amendment process.
2. Augment existing Measure C programs: A second option is to add up to \$8.5 million to the existing Measure C Local Transportation Program, which already allows for SRTS project eligibility. Under this option, additional funding could be distributed on a formula basis that the jurisdictions would then choose to prioritize for SRTS projects. This approach also requires the full amendment process but does not silo the funding in the same fashion as option No. 1. Jurisdictions would have the ability to spend the funding on maintenance or other, non-school related projects.
3. Include a Measure C/SRTS commitment but require matching funds: A third approach involves committing a lesser amount of Measure C funding to a siloed SRTS program and require matching funds from school districts to fund projects. Like option No. 1, this would still require a full amendment to Measure C, including new program guidelines; however, the funding commitment could be reduced.
4. Establish a staff-led SRTS subcommittee to prioritize SRTS projects received from school districts. Under this scenario, a subcommittee of Fresno COG and jurisdiction staff could integrate and prioritize the list of SRTS projects that Fresno COG has already received from all but six of the school districts in Fresno County. The project list would serve as a guide for future grant opportunities at the State and Federal levels, including such programs as Congestion Mitigation Air Quality, Active Transportation and Safe Streets 4 All. This option would not require any adjustment to Measure C funds.

Action: To be determined. TTC and PAC recommend the Policy Board table this item and refer it back to the SRTS Subcommittee for further deliberation.

- Paul Herman (FCOG) reported on Measure C Safe Routes to Schools.
- After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Parra (Fowler) motioned to approve option #3 with a formula base and the removal of the requirement of matching funds. Along with reducing the amount to 6 million and placing the 2 million back in New Tech. Mayor Robertson (Selma) seconded to approve the action.

Vote: All in favor, Reedley opposed.

Absent: Huron, Sanger, San Joaquin, County of Fresno.

Motion passed by acclamation.

E. Measure C Renewal Committee Membership (Robert Phipps) [INFORMATION]

Summary: Following Board direction to begin developing the expenditure plan for the 2026 Measure C renewal effort, Fresno COG and Fresno County Transportation Authority (FCTA) staff have produced a list of stakeholder categories recommended to solicit for seats on the Measure C Renewal Committee.

The MC3 Renewal Committee, as it is being called generically at this point, is a work in progress that is envisioned to potentially subdivide to form one or more subcommittees based on particular categories of expenditures. While its membership has not yet been identified, Fresno COG and FCTA staff have homed in on broad groupings of stakeholders that have a particular interest in helping shape the revised expenditure plan and the broader renewal effort generally.

The Committee would be loosely structured in the beginning, guided closely by a strong facilitator, with the expectation that additional parameters and guidelines for discussion, along with specific actions, products or deliverables, would become a regular outcome of each meeting.

Furthermore, to maximize flexibility in meeting arrangements and allow for hybrid in-person and telecommute options, staff recommends that the Committee not be formally approved by this Board or FCTA to avoid Brown Act requirements that would constrain assemblies to only in-person arrangements.

Staff recommends the Committee membership include the following stakeholder categories: all 16 local jurisdictions within Fresno County; active transportation interests; Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)/seniors; agriculture; aviation; building and development; business; Caltrans; community-based organizations; construction; education; emergency services/public safety; environmental organizations/interests; trucking industry; health and welfare interests; organized labor; political advocates; transit; and the public.

Fresno COG and FCTA staff would attend each meeting in a technical capacity to answer questions and clarify information, but not play a role in deliberations.

Action: Information and discussion

- Robert Phipps (FCOG) reported on the item.

This item is informational. No action is required.

F. Caltrans Report (Caltrans) [INFORMATION]

- Machael Navarro (Caltrans) reported the following:
 - Construction in Mendota and Firebaugh.

- Fresno two projects in construction.
- Bus shelter projects.
- Call for planning grants released in October
- Website is up with surveys and videos.
- SR 99 rehab.

This item is informational. No action is required.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE CONSENT ITEMS

A. **City of Fresno Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) Program Contract Amendment (Robert Phipps) [ACTION]**

Summary: In the interest of closing out the statewide Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) Program grant, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has requested that regional transportation planning agencies provide additional eligible expenses retroactive to Sept. 30, 2020. All work must be completed by Dec. 31, 2024.

The City of Fresno has requested that Fresno COG approve a new agreement to repurpose REAP funding originally awarded in 2021 for a utilities study at the Manchester Mall shopping center. The original \$250,000 grant award was extended through June 2024; however, the City’s Utilities Department funded that project through other means. The Planning and Development Department is instead requesting \$146,230 to fund additional eligible housing planning-related expenses, most of which are either already in progress or completed. They include the following:

	Project	Description	Vendor	Status	Amount to be covered by REAP funds
1.	Parkway Neighborhood Master Plan	Collaboration between the City of Fresno and Fresno Housing to create a plan and set a vision for this new neighborhood center and describe the steps needed to transform the motel row into an attractive place where families can live, shop, work and play. Framework for new development and guide for improvements to existing services and infrastructure.	Placeworks was the consultant; City of Fresno	Plan complete; City owes Fresno Housing \$50,000	\$50,000
2.	Development Code Audit-Part 1	Focused analysis of the City’s zoning ordinance considering state housing law (through 2023) and opportunities for streamlining housing production	Lisa Wise Consulting	Total contract: \$49,174; 73% complete; \$13,393 balance remaining, including \$4,470 contingency	\$13,393
3.	Development Code Audit-Part 2	Additional focused analysis of the City’s zoning ordinance considering new state housing law (2024); broaden/expand code audit; include objective design standards analysis and recommendations memo	Lisa Wise Consulting	Total amendment: \$51,526, less contingency = \$47,056	\$47,056
TOTAL					\$110,449*

Including total contract amount for item No. 2 plus contingency raises total requested to **\$146,230*

Action: Staff requests that the PAC recommend the Policy Board approve a new grant funding agreement with the City of Fresno totaling \$146,230 in Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) funds and authorize the executive director to sign.

B. Fresno COG 2023-24 Financial and Compliance Audit (Les Beshears) [ACTION]

Summary: The CPA firm Price Paige & Company has completed Fresno COG's 2023-24 financial and compliance audit. The report details that COG managed its operations according to funding covenants, within budget, and reported no findings of non-compliance. The report satisfies federal and state funding agencies' requirements. For the 2023-24 fiscal year, total revenues were \$26,358,633 and total expenses were \$25,596,477, resulting in an increase in fund balance of \$762,156. Total fund balance at year end is \$4,515,980.

Action: Receive and file Fresno COG's 2023-24 financial and compliance audit.

- Chair Beltran asked if any member wished to pull any items.
- After an opportunity for public comment, Mayor Robertson (Selma) moved, and Councilmember Herrera (Kerman) seconded to approve the action.

Vote: All in favor, no opposed.

Absent: Huron, Sanger, San Joaquin, Fresno County.

Motion passed by acclamation.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

- NONE

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 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert Phipps

Public:

Terry Ogle

Staff:

Denise Flores; Robert Phipps; Moses Stites; Janelle Del Campo; Brenda Thomas; Les Beshears; Paul Herman, Ofelia Abundez, Santosh Bhattarai.