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**Policy Advisory Committee
MINUTES
Friday, September 12, 2025
10:00 AM**

The meeting was held at FCOG Sequoia Conference Room.

Paul Armendariz, City of Clovis
Pio Martin, City of Firebaugh
Nicholas Mascia, City of Fresno
Virginia Penaloza, City of Huron
John Jansons, City of Kerman
Nicole Zieba, City of Reedley
Nathan Olson, City of Sanger
Elizabeth Cabrera, City of San Joaquin
David Deel, Caltrans District 6
Robert Phipps, FCOG
Moses Stites, FCRTA

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m. by Mr. Jansons (Kerman), Chair. With 8 members present, there was a quorum to conduct business.

JOINT Transportation Technical/Policy Advisory Committee

A. Caltrans Report (Caltrans) [INFORMATION]

David Deel reported on the following:

- Caltrans has released the FY 2026-27 Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Application Guide and Call for Applications. Applications are due by 5:00 PM on Friday, November 21, 2025. For further information see the Caltrans webpage at <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/transportation-planning/division-of-transportation-planning/regional-and-community-planning/sustainable-transportation-planning-grants>
- Caltrans is excited to share that as of August 22nd, the draft State Route 99 Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan (CMCP) is currently out for stakeholder review. Comments will be due by Friday, September 12th. Any questions can be directed to our System Planning Branch Chief, Alec Kimmel at 559.696.5698 or alec.kimmel@dot.ca.gov.
- The USDOT Build America Bureau has published a revised Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program (RTA). For more information about the program see: <https://www.transportation.gov/buildamerica/RuralandTribalGrants>
- The California Transportation Commission's Active Transportation Program Cycle 8 will conduct upcoming webinars on program guidelines. More information can be found on their website at <https://catc.ca.gov/programs/active-transportation-program>

I. TRANSPORTATION CONSENT ITEMS

A. Executive Minutes of July 11, 2025 [APPROVE]

B. FY 25-26 City of Coalinga Transportation Development Act Claim (Les Beshears) [ACTION]

C. FY 25-26 Fresno County Rural Transit Agency Transportation Development Act Claim (Les Beshears) [ACTION]

D. FY 23-24 Fresno County Transportation Development Act Claim (Les Beshears) [ACTION]

E. 2025-26 Overall Work Program Amendment #3 (Les Beshears) [ACTION]

F. Fourth Quarterly FY 24-25 Work Element and Financial Report (Les Beshears) [APPROVE]

G. FY 24-25 Fresno County Transportation Development Act Claim (Les Beshears) [ACTION]

H. CalVans 06/30/2024 Financial Audit (Les Beshears) [INFORMATION]

I. FY 23-24 City of Fowler Transportation Development Act Claim (Les Beshears) [ACTION]

J. FY 24-25 City of Fowler Transportation Development Act Claim (Les Beshears) [ACTION]

K. FY 25-26 City of Fowler Transportation Development Act Claim (Les Beshears) [ACTION]

L. SR 41 Excelsior Expressway (Les Beshears) [ACTION]

M. FY 2024/25 Draft Federal Transit Administration 5310 Program Application and Scoring Criteria (Matthew Shimizu) [INFORMATION]

N. Obligation Authority Quarterly Report (Blake Rincon) [INFORMATION]

O. Access for All Allocation of Funds for Fiscal Year 2025/2026 (Jake Martinez) [ACTION]

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

All in Favor, no opposed.

Motion passed.

II. TRANSPORTATION ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Addressing Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets for the 2026 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (Paul Herman/Santosh Bhattarai) [INFORMATION]

Summary: As part of the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), Fresno COG must achieve greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets set by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). The GHG reduction target for Fresno County is 13% below 2005 levels by 2035.

The last GHG target was in 2018 when Fresno County was forecast to have to a population of more than 1.25 million by 2035. In the years since this target was set, the State's Department of Finance has reduced Fresno County's population forecast from 1.25 million to 1.07 million by 2035. This reduction in population limits Fresno COG's ability to show how the county will reduce its GHG emissions because that additional population would have been more likely to reside in higher density residential developments, which is typically accompanied by lower daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and thus lower GHG emissions. This is an external, structural challenge to the RTP/SCS process that Fresno COG does not control.

Last year, Fresno COG updated its activity-based model (ABM) from a base year of 2014 to 2019. This update revised the household survey inputs along with other Census and regional datasets. 2019 was the peak pre-COVID travel demand year, and travel or VMT forecasts from this baseline is much higher compared to that from 2014 baseline.

To reflect the change in travel trends and characteristics brought by the COVID pandemic, staff is working on the new base year 2023 by referring to the 2022/23 Central California Travel Survey (CCTS). This survey will also capture the changes in work travel and increase in telecommuting since COVID. This effort is anticipated to reduce the gap coming from the model update.

In addition, auto operating costs (AOC), which includes fuel and maintenance expenses, is one of the model inputs that goes into the SCS analysis. In the 2026 SCS, the trend of AOC increase is forecast to be lower than that of 2022 SCS. This is resulting from several factors, such as lower fuel prices, higher fuel efficiency, and changing CARB regulations, all of which are external factors. The decrease in AOC for the target year 2035 (compared to the last SCS) is resulting in higher VMT and higher GHG emissions.

These issues are leading Fresno COG staff to begin to consider the potential for an Alternative Planning Strategy (APS). An APS is a type of regional land use and transportation plan that is required when a region's SCS fails to meet the GHG emission targets set for that region. These plans are mandated under Senate Bill 375 and would show how a region can achieve emission reductions through alternative development patterns, infrastructure, and transportation policies. An APS is financially unconstrained, which allows this plan to consider projects that may otherwise wouldn't have been considered due to their high capital costs.

In July and August, staff informed the RTP Roundtable and the SCS Subcommittee of these challenges and their potential impact on the overall RTP/SCS schedule. Staff is continuing to work with CARB on finding potential solutions to hit the GHG reduction target for our region within the current SCS process, but we believe there will be at least a two month delay in the current schedule, which will impact Fresno COG's RTP/SCS adoption. Originally planned for final adoption in June 2026, staff is now forecasting adoption of the RTP by August 2026, and the SCS or APS adoption will be dependent on further coordination with CARB.

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

- Paul Herman and Santosh Bhattarai (FCOG) reported on item.

Information item. No action needed.

B. Air Quality Conformity Lockdown Status and Implications (Ofelia Abundez) [INFORMATION]

Summary: California metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) are now under a "conformity lockdown," preventing the completion of required air quality analyses necessary to advance transportation projects. This jeopardizes project schedules and funding across the San Joaquin Valley and all California.

On June 12, 2025, President Trump signed three Congressional Review Act (CRA) Resolutions that rescind Federal approval of California's Clean Air Act waivers:

H.J. Res. 87 – Rescinds waiver for the Advanced Clean Trucks (ACT) Regulation (zero-emission vehicle phase-in).

H.J. Res. 88 – Revokes California's general Clean Air Act waiver to regulate mobile source emissions, also eliminating Section 177 state adoption authority.

H.J. Res. 89 – Rescinds waiver for the Low-NOx Omnibus Regulation (stringent truck/off-road NOx standards).

Due to the CRA process, these actions took immediate effect, halting MPOs' ability to complete conformity analyses required under 40 CFR Part 93. Because California is the only state permitted to use its own emissions model for conformity purposes, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) action is urgently needed to provide a remedy that allows continued delivery of transportation projects.

During a conformity lockdown, key MPO activities are stalled, including:

Processing Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP)/Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) amendments that require or rely on conformity analyses (risking loss of federal funding).

Adoption of the 2027 FTIP/2026 RTP before current plans expire in December 2026 (otherwise, only "exempt project" FTIPs can advance).

Receiving updated budgets for the 2016 Ozone SIP needed for future demonstrations.

The EPA should provide timely guidance on conformity procedures and coordinate with the California Air Resources Board (CARB) on a technical solution for California MPOs. Since federal approval may take months, a grace period or interim process may be needed. Alternatively, EPA could grant temporary regulatory relief to prevent project delivery disruptions.

Activities that can continue include exempt project amendments (e.g., transit, bike/ped, traffic signals), approved Transportation Control Measures (TCMs), advancing phases of projects already in a conforming TIP/RTP, and PM hot-spot determinations for those projects considered not of air quality concern.

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

- Ofelia Abundez (FCOG) presented on the item.

Information item. No action needed.

C. 2026 Measure C Renewal Update (Robert Phipps) [INFORMATION]

Summary: At its Aug. 14 meeting, the 2026 Measure C Steering Committee reaffirmed its Vision Statement, approved a new set of Guiding Principles and agreed on General Categories, taking three steps closer to assigning allocations to those categories.

In addition, based on feedback and negotiations with the Fresno County Transportation Authority (FCTA) and the Measure C Facilitation Team, Fresno COG has canceled its contracts with DKS for facilitating the 2026 Measure C Steering Committee

and as project manager. Mark Keppler has been selected as the new facilitator and COG staff will function as program manager in the interim.

Vision Statement

“Measure C envisions a reliable, safe, equitable and connected infrastructure and transportation system that enables all residents to travel efficiently and safely, regardless of mode.”

Guiding Principles

- **Fix what matters most**
(repair and maintain existing local streets & roads)
- **Keep people safe**
(enhance lighting, road safety & safe routes to school)
- **Get people where they need to go efficiently**
(improve connectivity, accessibility, and affordability to essential services & amenities)
- **Improve transportation alternatives**
(invest in building & maintaining bike ways, pedestrian facilities, and public transit options)
- **Build strong, vibrant communities**
(add shade, trees and other features to combat heat & beautify transportation corridors)
- **Leave no neighborhood behind**
(invest across our county to strengthen all communities)
- **Foster innovation**
(make smart investments that keep our county competitive and connected—now & in the future)
- **Ensure a fair and transparent use of tax dollars**

Under General Categories, the Committee agreed to frame future discussions under the following general headings:

- Existing Neighborhood Roads
- Public Transportation
- Active Transportation
- Regional Connectivity
- Other
- Administration

During the Aug. 27 Steering Committee meeting, members finalized their choices for subcategories before moving on toward approving allocations by general category. Members proposed and voted on an additional 18 subcategories for inclusion beyond those generally accepted at the Aug. 14 meeting. The items in **bold** were added during the Aug. 27 meeting.

Existing Neighborhood Roads

- Streets near homes, schools, and parks
- **Major roads and arterials**
- Alleys, bikeways, and pedestrian facilities (repair & new)
- Streetlights, signals, and other safety features
- **Traffic calming measures to reduce speed**
- **Sidewalk and pedestrian safety**
- **Basic road maintenance and infrastructure such as beautification, landscaping, shade, pothole repairs, and curb maintenance**

Public Transportation

- Transit systems – urban/rural
- Senior/veteran/youth/disability transportation
- Carshare/Vanpools/Microtransit
- Mobility Hubs
- Future transportation alternatives
- Programs and Services
- Public Transit Supportive Infrastructure
- **Coordinating transportation bodies**
- **Light Rail**

Active Transportation

- Bike and pedestrian trail maintenance & construction
- Accessibility improvements
- Safe Routes to Schools
- **Safe routes to school – lighting & traffic signals to promote safety**

Regional Connectivity

- Major road projects for safety improvements and congestion reduction
- Airports
- Grade separations
- **Prioritize the “worst first”**
- **Regional Transit**

Other

- Future alternative transportation
- Transit Oriented Development
- New technologies
- **Climate mitigation, flood, heat, air quality, and subsidence**
- **Mobility hubs and microgrids**
- **Community Planning**

Administration

- Administration/Planning
- Technical Assistance
- Community Engagement
- Public Database by Category
- **Support for grant writing staff**
- **Annual and public reports**
- **Annual Audits**

For the next Steering Committee meeting on Sept. 11, Fresno COG staff will work with the Technical Advisory Committee to further define the subcategories as the members begin debating allocations by general category. In addition, the Steering Committee will be asked to consider options for either a 20-year or 30-year measure.

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

- Rogert Phipps (FCOG) provided an update on the item.

Information item. No action needed.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE CONSENT ITEMS

- A. Regional Clearinghouse Calendar (Ofelia Abundez) [INFORMATION]
- B. Senate Bill (SB) 743 Regional Guidelines Update (Amendment #2) (Santosh Bhattarai) [ACTION]
- C. Fresno COG ABM On-Call Contract with RSG (Amendment No. 1) (Santosh Bhattarai) [ACTION]
- D. Regional Pavement Management System Update - Contract Extension with NCE (Pankaj Joshi) [ACTION]
- E. Regional Early Action Planning Program (REAP) Contract with California Association of Councils of Government (Robert Phipps) [ACTION]
- F. VRPA Valleywide Coordinator's Contract (Robert Phipps) [ACTION]

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

All in Favor, no opposed.

Motion passed.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

- NONE

V. OTHER ITEMS

A. Items from Staff

- Ofelia Abundez (FCOG) – Safe Streets for All update on the duplicated application response.

B. Items from Members

- Virginia Penalosa (Huron) announced that the City of Huron has move to its new City Hall.
- John Jansons (Kerman) announced the Kerman Harvest Festival this weekend.

VI. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

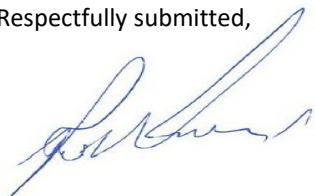
A. Public Presentations

- None.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert Phipps, Executive Director

Public:

Staff:

Denise Flores, Robert Phipps, Paul Herman, Moses Stites, Matthew Shimizu, Ofelia Abundez.