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SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Executive Minutes

Date: February 17, 2026
Time: 1:30 p.m.
Place: COG Conference Room, Second Floor
2035 Tulare Street, Suite 201
Fresno, CA 93721

Members Present:

Katherine Martindale, DSS
Yonas Paulos, Veterans Advocate
Adam Tsudama, Fresno EOC
Darlene Christiansen, FAX, Via-Phone

Rebecca Donabe, RICV, Via-Phone
Chenier Derrick, Fresno Co., Via-Phone
Matthew Gillam, Fresno Co., Via-Phone

Members Absent:

Bethany Berube, Clovis Transit

Others Attending:

Todd Sobrado, FAX/COG
Jeff Long, FAX/COG
Nick Chin, Clovis Transit
Brenda Thomas, FCOG

Janelle Del Campo, FCRTA
Emily Flores, FCRTA
Julie Saldivar, FCOG

Todd Sobrado called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

I. Public Presentations

This portion of the meeting was reserved for persons wishing to address the SSTAC on the items within its jurisdiction but not on this agenda. Note: Prior to action by SSTAC on any item on this agenda, the public may comment on that item

II. Minutes for January 20, 2026, SSTAC Meeting

A motion was made by Yonas Paulos and seconded by Janelle Del Campo to approve the January 20, 2026, meeting minutes. A vote was called for and the motion carried.

III. FY2026-27 Fresno COG Unmet Transit Needs Assessment Public Outreach

Todd Sobrado reported on this item. SSTAC is in month two of Fiscal Year 2026–2027 for the Transit Unmet Needs process, which has officially begun. The first public meeting will be held at the RTP/SCS workshop during the Reedley Planning Commission meeting. Additional outreach includes a meeting in Kerman, a virtual public meeting, two Fresno events at the Betty Rodriguez Community Library and Sunnyside Regional Library, and a final outreach meeting in Clovis, followed by a public hearing. To date, 8–10 unmet needs surveys have been received, with an update expected next month. Outreach efforts include maintaining the text 800 number, promoting the process through social media and COG newsletters, and distributing flyers to increase participation. After public outreach is completed, a report will be prepared and presented in May, then submitted to the President’s Policy Board for approval in June.

Key Dates:

- February 24 – Public meeting in Kerman
- February 28 at 11:00 a.m. – Virtual public meeting
- March 5 – Final public outreach meeting in Clovis
- April 30, 2026 – Public hearing
- May 2026 – Report presented for committee approval
- June 2026 – Report submitted to the FCOG Policy Board for approval

The committee agreed to email the corrected flyer to all participants and fix minor formatting issues. They coordinated outreach for the upcoming Reedley Planning Commission meeting, where Todd will present and promote the Transit Unmet Needs process. Members discussed boosting participation through event flyer distribution, partnerships with community organizations and resource centers, and expanded grassroots outreach. An initial email blast reached about 5,000 contacts, with additional targeted emails, social media posts, and hard-copy flyers planned to further increase awareness and survey responses.

ACTION: This is an information item. No action is needed from the SSTAC Committee.

IV. FY2025 Transit Productivity Evaluation (Jeff Long) [ACTION]

Jeff Long reported on this item. The transit productivity evaluation is an annual assessment required by the state Public Utilities Code and tied to Transportation Development Act (TDA) funding, specifically Local Transportation Funds (LTF). This year's report maintains the standard format, though future reports may adjust how FEOC is categorized due to its contract-based role rather than operator status. Countywide transit ridership in FY2025 rose 7.8% to 11.25 million trips—about 97% of pre-pandemic levels—placing the system ahead of recovery projections, with FAX slightly outperforming the county average at 98.6% and exceeding 10.4 million trips while continuing free-fare programs for eligible riders. The agency secured over \$34 million in grants supporting zero-emission vehicles, facility upgrades, ADA bus stop improvements, and service enhancements, and is introducing new hydrogen, CNG, and refurbished buses as older vehicles are retired. Service changes were minimal, and operating cost increases of roughly 6–7% were primarily driven by wages and fuel. Audit results were strong, with only minor TDA findings and a perfect FTA triennial review score. Overall, productivity metrics remained stable, paratransit ridership increased nearly 10%, and the system is approaching full recovery as operational and capital improvements continue.

Nick Chin reported on this item. In fiscal year 2024–25, relatively little occurred compared to the current year, as the agency largely maintained its existing operations while planning for future growth. It secured funding for a new transit center and began purchasing land to house vehicles and develop zero-emissions infrastructure. The agency also started accessing FTA funding, submitted its first vehicle application in November, continued using LCTOP funds to redesign and expand routes, including installing 53 new stops and shelters, and received CMAC funding for additional vehicles and support. Ridership slightly increased on fixed routes, while paratransit use grew significantly, aided by a same-day dispatch system that improved efficiency and flexibility for riders. Although reported operating costs declined due to prior-year capital bus purchases, actual service levels and ridership increased. The most significant changes are occurring in the current fiscal year, including an expansion from two to eight routes and broader service coverage to all Clovis Unified schools.

Brenda Thomas reported on this item. It was noted that the newly printed transportation guides contain outdated route information, so an updated version is now being prepared with staff support. The team will collect all remaining guide booklets, replace the outdated maps, and reassemble them, with updated route maps expected within the next month. Staff are asked to submit any route changes immediately, especially substantive updates such as major route expansions, so printed materials reflect the most current information before distribution. Because the guides include website links and QR codes, riders are encouraged to double-check times and details online before traveling. Any significant changes must be communicated right away to ensure all materials are accurate before release.

Janelle Del Campo reported on this item. FCRTA reported a 4% decline in total passenger trips last fiscal year—about 7,000 fewer rides—with decreases across senior, disabled, and general public categories. The agency discontinued the Viola microtransit service due to low ridership and high operating costs, maintained existing fares, and continued providing no-fare demand-

response service for seniors, disabled riders, and veterans supported by Measure C. MV was awarded a new three-year transit operations contract (with four option years), and the City of Selma continued serving as the maintenance contractor. SCRTA managed 121 vehicles, including 32 battery-electric units, and began retiring aging vehicles while ordering three new WAVE-grant-funded vehicles. Major capital efforts included initiating the Kingsburg Resiliency Hub with solar, charging units, and battery storage, and completing the new maintenance facility—with dispatch, maintenance bays, solar infrastructure, bus wash, and a Level 3 inductive charger—pending PG&E interconnection. The agency also advanced planning initiatives, including an RTAP-funded review of scheduling and dispatch software, an EV charging infrastructure study funded by a Caltrans sustainable planning grant, and a newly awarded Caltrans Phase 2 microgrid planning grant focusing on potential school district partnerships.

Adam Tsudama reported on this item. Ridership declined by about 5% from 2024 to 2025, primarily due to the loss of the Votera County Connection contract. The agency has launched a new Medically Tailored Meals program in partnership with CalAIM, transit staff, and the food service department, and recently hired a safety and training manager to expand driver training, with plans to offer morning and afternoon sessions in collaboration with the Metro Black Chamber of Commerce. Staff continue monitoring low ridership on the Calvet route and are coordinating with the city and housing communities to review survey feedback and assess possible stop adjustments. Demand for the Kerman shuttle to Fresno City College has surged, with trips regularly reaching or exceeding the 20-passenger capacity, prompting outreach to the college to discuss adding more runs or switching to a larger vehicle. To manage cost and make better use of limited spare vehicles, FEOC plans to switch two ambulatory-only routes from cutaways to passenger vans, while also purchasing a few new cutaway buses to help stabilize their aging fleet.

Mr. Tsudama also reported that the agency continues to provide Senior Script rides; however, Sunday service has been temporarily suspended due to dispatcher staffing shortages, which left insufficient coverage for the day with the highest demand. Sunday service is expected to resume once staff return, potentially within the next month. He also noted ongoing challenges with driver availability. A community member expressed concern about gaps in accessible, door-to-door transportation for wheelchair users, particularly for short medical trips, and emphasized the importance of clear communication about service availability so seniors know when rides resume.

A motion was made by Yonas Paulos and seconded by Adam Tsudama to recommend that TTC/PAC accept the FY2025 Transit Productivity Evaluation Report and forward it to the COG Policy Board for approval. A vote was called for and the motion carried.

V. Membership

Longstanding participant of SSTAC meetings, Rebecca Donabed has agreed to join the SSTAC as a sitting board member. Representing a local social services provider to the disabled, Resources for Independence – Central Valley, with an office in Visalia and Merced, the main office is in the City of Fresno. Rebecca joins the SSTAC to serve a two-year term.

A motion was made by Janelle Del Campo and seconded by Yonas Paulos to recommend that TTC/PAC and FCOG accept and approve Rebecca Donabed to serve a 2-year term. A vote was called for and the motion carried.

VI. Items from Members

VII. Items from Staff

A. Upcoming 2026 SSTAC meeting dates.

- **March 17**
- **April 21**
- **May 19**
- **June 16**
- **July 21**
- **August – No meeting**
- **September 15 – Tentative**
- **October 20**
- **November 17 – Tentative**
- **December – No meeting**

Adjourned

Meeting adjourned at 2:39 p.m.

