



2035 Tulare St., Ste. 201 tel 559-233-4148
Fresno, California 93721 fax 559-233-9645
www.fresnocog.org

**Policy Advisory Committee
MINUTES
Friday, July 10, 2026
10:00 AM**

The meeting was held at FCOG Sequoia Conference Room.

Andrew Haussler, City of Clovis
Ben Gallegos, City of Firebaugh
Nicolas Mascia, City of Fresno
Virginia Penaloza, City of Huron
Sam Escobar, City of Orange Cove
Nathan Olson, City of Sanger
Elizabeth Cabrera, City of San Joaquin
Samantha Buck, County of Fresno
Braden Duran, Caltrans District 6
Robert Phipps, FCOG

Members Absent: City of Coalinga, City of Fowler, City of Kerman, City of Kingsburg, City of Mendota, City of Parlier, City of Reedley, City of Selma

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Vice Chair Elizabeth Cabrera (City of San Joaquin). With eight members present, a quorum was established to conduct business.

JOINT Transportation Technical/Policy Advisory Committee

I. TRANSPORTATION CONSENT ITEMS

- A. Executive Minutes of June 12, 2026 [APPROVE]**
- B. Fiscal Year 2026-27 Reedley Transportation Development Act Claim (Les Beshears) [ACTION]**
- C. 2026-27 Measure C Claims (Les Beshears) [ACTION]**
- D. Fiscal Year 2026-27 Sanger Transportation Development Act Claim (Les Beshears) [ACTION]**
- E. State and Federal Grant Opportunities (Erin Haagenson) [INFORMATION]**
- F. Fiscal Year 2026-27 Kingsburg Transportation Development Act Claim (Les Beshears) [ACTION]**
- G. Fiscal Year 2026-27 FCRTA Transportation Development Act Claim (Les Beshears) [ACTION]**

Mr. Gallegos (City of Firebaugh) motioned, and Mr. Olson (City of Sanger) seconded the motion to approve Consent Items A-G.

All in favor, none opposed.

Absent: Coalinga, Fowler, Kerman, Kingsburg, Mendota, Parlier, Reedley, Selma

Motion carried.

II. TRANSPORTATION ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. 2026 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) Documents and Public Hearing (Paul Herman) (INFORMATION)

Summary: Fresno COG has or will be releasing the following draft documents for the 2026 RTP/SCS for public review:

- The 2026 Draft RTP/SCS was released on June 23 for a 55-day public review period ending on Aug. 17.
- The Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was released on July 2 for a 45-day public review period ending on Aug. 17.
- The 2027 Draft Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) will be released on July 17 for a 30-day public review period ending on Aug. 17.
- The Air Quality Conformity Analysis for the 2027 FTIP and 2026 RTP/SCS will be released on July 17 for a 30-day public review period ending on Aug. 17.

The Policy Board will hold a public hearing for these documents during its regional meeting at 5:30 p.m. on July 29. Staff will host an additional virtual public workshop to receive comments at 6 p.m. Aug. 5 via Zoom. A Zoom link for the virtual public workshop will be available on FresnoCOG.org and PlanFresno.com.

Public comments are welcomed at the hearings or may be submitted in writing by 5 p.m., Aug. 17 to Paul Herman at pherman@fresnocog.org.

After public comments are incorporated, the Policy Board is scheduled to adopt all four documents on Sept. 24.

Paul Herman (FCOG) provided an update on the public review process for the 2026 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) and related planning documents. He reviewed the public comment periods, upcoming public hearings, and noted that final documents will be presented to the Policy Board for adoption in September.

This item was for information only.

B. Fresno County Safe Routes to School Safety Action Plan Consultant Selection (Rachel Hellett) [ACTION]

Summary: Fresno COG was awarded the fiscal year 2024 Safe Streets and Roads for All Planning and Demonstration Grant by the U.S. Department of Transportation to develop the Fresno County Safe Routes to School Safety Action Plan.

The plan will evaluate the most critical transportation safety issues affecting students throughout Fresno County and identify improvements to support safer travel to and from school. The plan will include targeted analysis at up to 35 selected school sites and will incorporate data analysis, walk audits, and community engagement.

In May 2026, Fresno COG released a request for proposals for consultants to develop the plan. Fresno COG received four proposals for this project by the June 16, 2026, deadline.

The selection process was highly competitive. The scoring committee, with representation from Fresno COG, Fresno County, Caltrans, a community-based organization, Fresno Unified School District, and FCRTA, conducted interviews and selected Alta Planning + Design due to its Safe Routes to School experience, detailed work plan, understanding of the region, and emphasis on public outreach, walk audits, data analysis, and implementation.

Work is anticipated to begin in August 2026, with completion expected in February 2028. Alta's proposed project schedule is attached.

Action: Staff recommends the TTC and PAC recommend the Policy Board authorize the Executive Director to enter into a contract with Alta Planning + Design for the Fresno County Safe Routes to School Safety Action Plan for an amount not to exceed \$478,917.

Rachel Hellett (FCOG) presented the consultant selection for the Fresno County Safe Routes to School Safety Action Plan. Following a competitive procurement process, staff recommended Alta Planning + Design to complete the project for an amount not to exceed \$478,917.

Ms. Haussler (City of Clovis) motioned, and Mr. Escobar (City of Orange Cove) seconded the motion.

All in favor, none opposed.

Absent: Coalinga, Fowler, Kerman, Kingsburg, Mendota, Parlier, Reedley, Selma

Motion carried.

C. Return of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program (Erin Haagenson) [INFORMATION]

Summary: Caltrans is close to completing its recertification of Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) firms, which now only considers economic disadvantage rather than race or sex.

Under Caltrans' revised methodology, goals will be returning to Federal-aid projects, Future goal setting will place greater emphasis on bidder lists, rather than just the list of certified firms. To set accurate goals, Caltrans is developing a format that will allow local agencies to report all bidder lists, including those that bid on other types of projects (non-Federal aid and non-transportation).

Caltrans' staff expect that once the recertification process is complete, only about 1,200 firms will remain certified statewide, from a previous level of 3,600. Caltrans plans to give local agencies at least two months' advance notice before DBE contract goals become mandatory again.

Erin Haagenson (FCOG) provided an update on the return of the DBE Program, including revised eligibility criteria and upcoming bidder reporting requirements. Caltrans will provide advance notice before the new requirements take effect.

This item was for information only.

D. Updates to the Uniform Federal Guidance for Grants (Erin Haagenson) [INFORMATION]

Summary: The federal government is proposing major changes to the rules that govern federal grants. Comments on the proposal are due July 13, 2026, and the changes could affect how local agencies administer federally funded transportation projects.

Key provisions include:

- Greater federal authority to suspend or terminate discretionary grant awards
- Additional requirements for procurement, contracting, and grant administration
- New documentation and reporting requirements that could increase staff workload and slow reimbursement processing
- E-Verify requirements for agencies, contractors, and consultants performing federally funded work
- Restrictions on using federal funds for conference attendance, training, memberships, and subscriptions without prior approval.

Some provisions are intended to simplify competitive grant applications, including streamlined application processes and expanded use of multi-year grant awards.

The proposed changes could increase administrative costs and compliance responsibilities for local agencies receiving federal transportation funding. Member agencies are encouraged to identify specific concerns or examples of potential impacts to project delivery before the July 13, 2026, comment deadline.

The proposed rule, along with a method for submitting comments is here:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/05/29/2026-10817/regulation-for-federal-financial-assistance>

Erin Higginson (FCOG) provided an update on proposed changes to the Uniform Federal Guidance affecting all federal grants. She highlighted potential changes to discretionary grant awards, indirect costs, grant administration, and new E-Verify requirements for federal contracts. Agencies were encouraged to review the proposed changes and submit comments.

This item was for information only.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE CONSENT ITEMS

A. San Joaquin Valley State Advocacy Contract - Gus Khouri/Actum (Robert Phipps) [ACTION]

Mr. Olson (City of Sanger) motioned, and Ms. Penaloza (City of Huron) seconded the motion.

All in favor, none opposed.

Absent: Coalinga, Fowler, Kerman, Kingsburg, Mendota, Parlier, Reedley, Selma

Motion carried.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Fresno COG's 2027 One Voice D.C. Advocacy Trip - Seeking Direction (Brenda Thomas) [INFORMATION]

Summary: Fresno COG staff are seeking the committee's input on the future of the agency's One Voice D.C. advocacy effort. For the last 21+ years, One Voice annually brought together multiple local agencies, jurisdictions, and transportation stakeholders to rally around an approved list of policy issues and/or funding requests. One Voice D.C.'s public-private delegation visits Congressional and Federal agency representatives in Washington, D.C. to pursue funding, grant opportunities, and policy changes. The 2026 trip focused on an approved list of submitted projects seeking funding, and on advocating for continued Federal partnership and investment along a range of funding programs.

With the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) expiring in September 2026, and no firm replacement on the horizon, late 2026 outcomes could include:

A new 5-year bill (BUILD America 250 Act) if Congress reaches agreement. The main bill currently being developed is the BUILD America 250 Act (BA250) that would provide about \$580 billion in transportation funding for 5 years (FY2027–2031)

A short-term extension of the IIJA

A funding drop-off if no action is taken

Each option ensures the need for considerable Federal advocacy.

Additional items regarding which staff seek direction relating to a 2027 One Voice effort:

Earmark requests: Most congressional offices receive earmark requests. As previously mentioned, In 2026 the key time to advocate for earmark requests is mid-February through early March.

Future priority focus: Historically, local partnering agencies, including the Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission, Workforce Development Board, The Fresno Chamber of Commerce, and Westlands Water District, have also expressed an interest in participating in the One Voice effort. However, the Board's current direction since to staff since 2016 is to focus on carrying projects with a transportation nexus. Prior to that time, the Fresno COG One Voice delegation formed a platform representing a variety of regional interests, with participation from wide list public and private partners.

Limitation on the number of priorities: Priority numbers have ranged from 14 (2016) to seven (2017).

Trip Date: Based upon the 2026 earmark timeline, the key time to advocate for earmark requests is mid-February through early March. Several conferences and events are typically scheduled during this time, as well as Congress' spring recess. This affects the availability of COG's advocacy consultant, Policy Board members and D.C. hotel room numbers and rates. All must be considered and a date selected by fall 2026.

Delegation numbers have ranged from 37 (2011) to 11 (2026) over the years.

The 2026 One Voice D.C. trip materials are available for review here: Fresno COG's One Voice Webpage.

Robert Phipps (FCOG) led a discussion on planning the 2027 One Voice Washington, D.C. Advocacy Trip, seeking input on how to strengthen the program while balancing regional priorities, transportation interests, and congressional funding requests. Committee members discussed expanding the program to include broader regional policy issues, such as housing, water, land management, and workforce development, while continuing to support transportation priorities and earmark requests. Staff will use the Committee's feedback to develop recommendations for the Policy Board regarding the future direction of the One Voice program.

This item was for information only.

V. OTHER ITEMS

A. Items from Staff

Robert Phipps announced there will be no TTC/PAC meetings in August. He noted the July Policy Board meeting has been rescheduled to Wednesday, July 29, and that adoption of the RTP/SCS and related planning documents has been delayed until September due to statewide air quality conformity issues.

He also provided an update on the Measure C Successor Initiative, noting that the Fresno County Board of Supervisors will consider certifying the measure for the ballot or requesting a fiscal analysis, which could delay the timeline. Staff noted that a delay could significantly impact future transportation funding. Committee members asked clarifying questions regarding the election timeline and Measure C funding.

B. Items from Members

Caltrans Report: Braden Duran provided updates on upcoming Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant, Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), and Active Transportation Program (ATP) funding opportunities, and announced the tentative August 14 groundbreaking for the State Route 41 Excelsior Expressway Project. Staff noted that approximately \$70 million in ATP applications were submitted from the Fresno County region.

Samantha Buck (County of Fresno) shared information on proposed updates to the Uniform Federal Guidance for Grants, noting the changes could significantly affect the administration and oversight of federal grant funding.

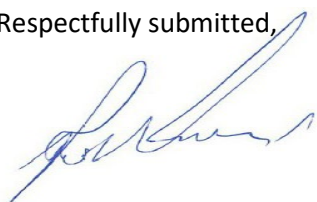
VI. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

None.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:03 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robert Phipps', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Robert Phipps, Executive Director

Public: None.

Staff:

Robert Phipps, Paul Herman, Rachel Hellett, Erin Haagenon, and Mykia Byrd.