

## What is the Council of Fresno County Governments?

The Fresno COG is a voluntary association of local governments, one of 25 in California and 522 nationwide. In 1967 elected officials of Fresno County and its incorporated cities informally created the Council to provide "a cooperative body" for the discussion and resolution of issues which go beyond their individual boundaries. Subsequent federal and state laws encouraged such efforts, and the agency was formalized in 1969.

Fresno COG fosters intergovernmental communication and coordination, undertakes comprehensive regional planning with an emphasis on transportation, provides for citizen involvement in the planning process and supplies technical services to its member governments.

In all these areas the Fresno COG serves as a consensus builder to develop an acceptable approach on how to handle problems that do not respect political boundaries.

## Who are the members, their representatives, and how do they vote?

### Fresno COG's Member Agencies:

- ◆ City of Clovis
- ◆ City of Coalinga
- ◆ City of Firebaugh
- ◆ City of Fowler
- ◆ City of Fresno
- ◆ City of Huron
- ◆ City of Kerman
- ◆ City of Kingsburg
- ◆ City of Mendota
- ◆ City of Orange Cove
- ◆ City of Parlier
- ◆ City of Reedley
- ◆ City of San Joaquin
- ◆ City of Sanger
- ◆ City of Selma
- ◆ County of Fresno

Fresno COG's member agencies are represented on the Policy Board by the Mayors of each incorporated

City, and the Chairman of the County Board of Supervisors, or designated representatives.

The Policy Board is a governing body that establishes policy and guides work activities. They are assisted in making decisions by the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC), composed of the Chief Administrative Officer of each member agency, or their designated representatives. With the exception of urgency matters, all items must first be considered by the PAC before submission to the Policy Board.

The Board and PAC are assisted in the decision-making process by staff from their agencies, citizen and interest groups, and various technical advisory committees who comprise the Transportation Technical Committee, or TTC as it is commonly called.

The Fresno COG has a 'double-weighted' voting system. Each member has a percentage vote based upon population. To approve any action the vote must pass two tests:

- 1) Agencies representing **over 40%** of the population must be in favor of an action, **and**
- 2) **A majority** of all the members must support the action; that is, nine of the sixteen members.

## How is the Council funded?

The Fresno COG is partially supported by contributed dues from its 16 members, however, the major revenue sources include federal and state grants. The Agency has no taxing or legislative authority.

### **Fresno COG's Contact Information:**

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**Metropolitan  
Planning Organization  
and  
Regional Transportation  
Planning Agency  
for  
Fresno County**

*A voluntary association of local governments, handling transportation-related issues which do not recognize man-made boundaries.*

### **Fresno COG's primary functions are transportation planning and programming:**

These tasks are conducted in compliance with both federal and state requirements, generated by COG's designation as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency and Metropolitan Planning Organization for Fresno County.

The COG prepares a required **Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)**, a document that looks 25 years into the future and sets policies for a wide variety of transportation options and facilities. As support to the RTP, a variety of planning studies and technical reports are prepared.

In 1986 Fresno County voters approved Measure "C", a 1/2 cent sales tax for transportation purposes. The COG is required by statute to prepare a **Measure "C" Expenditure Plan** and, of late, the **2006 Measure "C" Extension Expenditure Plan**. The plan is prepared in close consultation and coordination with the cities, the County, Caltrans and the Fresno County Transportation Authority (administrators of the 1/2 cent tax) and various other community stakeholder groups.

**Air quality planning:** Fresno County does not currently meet the federally required standards for clean air. Therefore, strategies for transportation management are important. We are working with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to respond to the recognized need for cleaner air through air quality related transportation planning. Our planning activities are focused on reducing pollution generated through current and future transportation practices.

**Housing Planning:** Fresno COG is involved in housing planning, aiding members with required State Housing Element compliance.

**Computerized transportation simulation models:** These tools aid in providing base information relevant to general plans, circulation elements, and air quality analysis. Travel demand and congestion on existing and planned streets and freeways is predicted through this tool.

**COG's traffic monitoring program:** This program provides current and consistent data on county-wide traffic. Selected sites are monitored through traffic counts, and the traffic volume results are used by member agencies in their operations and by the COG to support the transportation model.

**Rideshare Program:** Fresno COG's Ridesharing agency hosts a website at [www.valleyrides.com](http://www.valleyrides.com) in partnership with California State University, Fresno. The site provides free computer matching for those interested in carpooling or vanpooling in/from Fresno County. The program assists employers in setting up commute alternative programs for their employees, and they support and promote transportation options such as transit, bicycling and telecommuting.

**Areawide Clearinghouse Review of Grant Applications:** Fresno COG serves as a clearinghouse for federal grant applications that are reviewed to determine if proposals would duplicate activities of other agencies and assure there is no conflict with local adopted plans and policies. The COG does not have the authority to approve or disapprove grants, but does forward its recommendations through the State Clearinghouse and on to the federal funding agency.

**Member Agency Assistance:** COG provides specialized technical assistance to member agencies, particularly those with limited staff and financial resources. These services include fiscal management and computer applications support, traffic engineering studies, and special planning studies.

**Freeway Service Patrol:** Fresno COG, Caltrans and the California Highway Patrol implement a Freeway Service Patrol along Freeways 41, 99, 168 and 180 through Fresno. A private tow truck company is contracted to provide patrol service Monday through Friday during morning and evening commute hours. It will provide either free on-the-spot quick-fixes or towing services to stranded motorists.

**Fund Administration:** As a result of the **Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)**, the Fresno COG has direct responsibility for determining how two federal program funds are spent in the Fresno County area. They are the **Regional Surface Transportation Program (STP)** and the **Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Program (CMAQ)**. In addition, the State of California has vested responsibility in the Fresno COG for a portion of the **Transportation Enhancement Program (TE)**. The federal programs have strict project eligibility criteria. Project nominations are solicited by the Fresno COG from eligible agencies, and then nominations proceed through a selection process which results in a listing of projects eventually adopted by the Policy Board. This listing enables agencies to pursue federal funding from the Department of Transportation to implement the projects. In addition, TE projects may pursue funding from the California Transportation Commission.

**Transportation Development Act** fund administration concerns two types of funds. The **Local Transportation Fund (LTF)**, derived from a portion of state sales tax that comes back to local government for funding of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, public transportation, or streets and roads, and the **State Transit Assistance Fund (STA)** that is derived from a portion of the motor vehicle fuel sales tax that supports public transportation services. Both funds are apportioned to member agencies on a population basis, though some of the STA funds are apportioned directly to transit operators based on their farebox revenues.