FINAL REPORT
JUNE 2019

Fresno Council of Governments

Triennial Performance Audit FY 2015/16 - FY 2017/18

moore & associates

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Chapter 1
Executive Summary

The Triennial Performance Audit of the Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG) covers a three-year period ending June 30, 2018. The California Public Utilities Code requires all Regional Transportation Planning Agencies conduct an independent Triennial Performance Audit in order to be eligible for Transportation Development Act (TDA) funding.

In 2018, the Fresno COG selected Moore & Associates, Inc., to prepare Triennial Performance Audits of itself as the RTPA and the four transit operators to which it allocates TDA funding. Moore & Associates is a consulting firm specializing in public transportation. Selection of the consultant followed a competitive procurement process.

This chapter summarizes key findings and recommendations developed during the Triennial Performance Audit of the Fresno COG for the period defined as:

- Fiscal Year 2015/16,
- Fiscal Year 2016/17, and
- Fiscal Year 2017/18.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our review objectives. We believe the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

The review was also conducted in accordance with the processes established by the California Department of Transportation, as outlined in the Pe*rformance Audit Guidebook for Transit Operators and Regional Transportation Planning Entities*.

The Triennial Performance Audit includes five elements:

1. Compliance requirements,
2. Follow-up of prior recommendations,
3. Analysis of internal goal setting and strategic planning efforts,
4. Review of the RTPA's functions and activities, and
5. Findings and recommendations.

Test of Compliance

The Fresno COG adheres to Transportation Development Act (TDA) regulations in an efficient and effective manner.

Status of Prior Recommendations

The prior Triennial Performance Audit – completed in March 2016 by Moore & Associates, Inc., for the three fiscal years ending June 30, 2015 – included three recommendations.

1. Include an analysis of transit-dependent populations in the annual Unmet Transit Needs report.
   Status: Implemented.

2. Evaluate opportunities to increase rural county representatives on the SSTAC.
   Status: Partially implemented.

3. Continue active promotion of technology development with regard to transit data coordination.
   Progress: Implemented.

Goal Setting and Strategic Planning

The primary regional planning document is the Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). The RTP is a long-range transportation plan providing a vision for regional transportation investments. The Plan, which was adopted in December 2018, is Fresno COG's 19th Regional Transportation Plan. The development process included input and collaboration from the 15 incorporated cities, the County of Fresno, local public agencies, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, Caltrans, state and federal agencies, and the public. The 2018 RTP includes the four required elements (Policy Element, Sustainable Communities Strategy, Action Element, and Financial Element) as well as additional chapters regarding regional context, public participation, environmental justice analysis, and transportation performance management.

Findings and Recommendations

Based on the current review, we submit the no TDA compliance findings.

We identified two functional findings. While these findings are not TDA compliance related, we believe each warrants inclusion within this review:

1. Fresno COG's SSTAC continues to be over-represented by residents of Fresno and under-represented by residents within rural areas.
2. The RTPA's website should be updated to provide easier access to regional information.

In completing this Triennial Performance Audit, we submit the following recommendations for the Fresno Council of Governments as the RTPA. They have been divided into two categories: TDA Program Compliance Recommendations and Functional Recommendations. TDA Program Compliance Recommendations are intended to assist in bringing the agency into compliance with the requirements and standards of the TDA, while Functional Recommendations address issues identified during the Triennial Performance Audit that are not specific to TDA compliance.

Exhibit 1.1 Summary of Recommendations

Functional Recommendations		Importance	Timeline
1	Continue to proactively recruit SSTAC participants residing within rural areas of Fresno County.	Medium	FY 2019/20
2	Undertake a comprehensive review and update of www.fresnocog.org to facilitate easier access to information.	Medium	FY 2019/20

Chapter 2
Audit Scope and Methodology

The Triennial Performance Audit of the Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG) covers a three-year period ending June 30, 2018. The California Public Utilities Code requires all Regional Transportation Planning Agencies conduct an independent Triennial Performance Audit in order to be eligible for Transportation Development Act (TDA) funding.

In 2018, the Fresno Council of Governments selected Moore & Associates, Inc., to prepare Triennial Performance Audits of itself as the RTPA and the four transit operators to which it allocates TDA funding. Moore & Associates is a consulting firm specializing in public transportation. Selection of the consultant followed a competitive procurement process.

The Triennial Performance Audit is designed to be an independent and objective evaluation of the Fresno COG as the designated RTPA for Fresno County. Direct benefits of a triennial performance audit include providing RTPA management with information on the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of their programs across the prior three years; helpful insight for use in future planning; and assuring legislative and governing bodies (as well as the public) that resources are being economically and efficiently utilized. Finally, the Triennial Performance Audit fulfills the requirement of PUC 99246(a) that the RTPA designate an independent entity other than itself to conduct a performance audit of its activities as well as those of each operator to whom it allocates funds.

We conducted this performance review in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our review objectives. We believe the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our review objectives.

The review was also conducted in accordance with the processes established by the California Department of Transportation, as outlined in the Pe*rformance Audit Guidebook for Transit Operators and Regional Transportation Planning Entities*.

Objectives

The Triennial Performance Audit has four primary objectives:

1. Assess compliance with TDA regulations,
2. Review actions taken by the RTPA to implement prior recommendations,
3. Evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the RTPA through a review of its functions, and
4. Provide sound, constructive recommendations for improving the efficiency and functionality of the RTPA.

Scope

The Triennial Performance Audit is intended to be a high-level review of performance evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of the RTPA. The review of Fresno COG included five related tasks:

1. Review of compliance with the TDA requirements and regulations.
2. Assess the implementation of recommendations presented in prior performance audits.
3. Analysis of Fresno COG's internal goal setting and strategic planning functions.
4. Examination of the following functions:
    - Administration and Management,
    - Transportation Planning and Regional Coordination,
    - Claimant Relationships and Oversight,
    - Marketing and Transportation Alternatives, and
    - Grant Applications and Management.
5. Recommendations to address opportunities for improvement based on analysis of the information collected and the review of the RTPA's core functions.

Methodology

The methodology for the Triennial Performance Audit of Fresno COG as the RTPA included extensive review of documents relevant to the scope of the review, as well as information contained on Fresno COG's website. The documents reviewed included the following (spanning the full three-year period):

- Triennial Performance Audit reports for the prior review period;
- Annual budgets;
- Audited financial statements;
- State Controller Reports;
- Agency organizational chart;
- Board meeting minutes and agendas; and
- TDA and transit funding allocations to operators.

The methodology for this review also included interviews with three Fresno COG staff at its administrative offices (2035 Tulare Street, Suite 201, Fresno) on February 21, 2019. Staff interviewed during the site visit included Les Beshears (Finance Director), Jennifer Soliz (Associate Regional Planner), and Toni Graham (Accounting Manager).

The report is comprised of seven chapters divided into three sections:

2. Executive Summary: A summary of the key findings and recommendations developed during the Triennial Performance Audit process.
3. Scope and Methodology: Discussion of the reviewmethodology and pertinent background information.
4. Audit Results: In-depth discussion of findings surrounding each of the subsequent elements of the review:

- Compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements,
- Progress in implementing prior recommendations,
- Goal setting and strategic planning,
- Functional review, and
- Findings and recommendations.

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Chapter 3
Program Compliance

This section examines the Fresno Council of Governments' compliance with the State of California's Transportation Development Act as well as relevant sections of California's Public Utilities Commission code. An annual certified fiscal audit confirms TDA funds were apportioned in conformance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations. Although compliance verification is not a Triennial Performance Audit function, several specific requirements concern issues relevant to the performance audit. The RTPA considers full use of funds under CCR Section 6754(a) to refer to operating funds but not capital funds. The Triennial Performance Audit findings and related comments are delineated in Exhibit 3.1.

Compliance was determined through discussions with Fresno COG staff as well as a physical inspection of relevant documents, including the fiscal audits for each year of the triennium. Also reviewed were planning documents, Board actions, and other related documentation.

Fresno COG adheres to Transportation Development Act (TDA) regulations in an efficient and effective manner.

Exhibit 3.1Transportation Development Act Compliance Requirements

Compliance Element	Reference	Compliance	Comments
All transportation operators and city or county governments which have responsibility for serving a given area, in total, claim no more than those Local Transportation Fund monies apportioned to that area.	PUC 99231	In compliance	
The RTPA has adopted rules and regulations delineating procedures for the submission of claims for facilities provided for the exclusive use of pedestrians and bicycles (Article 3).	PUC 99233, 99234	In compliance	
The RTPA has established a social services transportation advisory council. The RTPA must ensure that there is a citizen participation process that includes at least an annual public hearing.	PUC 99238, 99238.5	In compliance	The SSTAC reviews transit needs received from the public throughout the county as part of Fresno COG's annual Unmet Transit Needs process. Public hearings are held as part of this process.
The RTPA has annually identified, analyzed, and recommended potential productivity improvements which could lower operating cost of those operators, which operate at least 50 percent of their vehicle service miles within the RTPA's jurisdiction. Recommendations include, but are not being limited to, those made in the performance audit. • A committee for the purpose of providing advice on productivity improvements may be formed. • The operator has made a reasonable effort to implement improvements recommended by the RTPA as determined by the RTPA, or else the operator has not received an allocation that exceeds its prior year allocation.	PUC 99244	In compliance	Fresno COG utilizes an annual comprehensive productivity review process through its annual Transit Productivity Report, which is reviewed by the Policy Board as well as committees.
The RTPA has ensured that all claimants to whom it allocated TDA funds submit to it and to the state controller an annual certified fiscal and compliance audit within 180 days after the end of the fiscal year.	PUC 99245	In compliance	

Compliance Element	Reference	Compliance	Comments
The RTPA has submitted to the state controller an annual certified fiscal audit within 12 months of the end of the fiscal year.	CCR 6662	In compliance	FY 2015/16: January 24, 2017 FY 2016/17: January 30, 2018 FY 2017/18: March 13, 2019
The RTPA has submitted within seven months after the end of the fiscal year an annual financial transactions report to the state controller.	CCR 6660	In compliance	FY 2015/16: November 16, 2016 FY 2016/17: January 18, 2018 FY 2017/18: January 30, 2019 Effective January 1, 2016, the deadline for submittal of the RTPA's financial report to the State Controller was extended to seven months following the end of the fiscal year (January 31). This change was made for transit operators beginning with FY 2017 reporting.
The RTPA has designated an independent entity to conduct a performance audit of operators and itself (for the current and previous triennia). For operators, the audit was made and calculated the required performance indicators, and the audit report was transmitted to the entity that allocates the operator's TDA money, and to the RTPA within 12 months after the end of the triennium. If an operators audit was not transmitted by the start of the second fiscal year following the last fiscal year of the triennium, TDA funds were not allocated to that operator for that or subsequent fiscal years until the audit was transmitted.	PUC 99246, 99248	In compliance	Fresno COG retained Michael Baker International to prepare its FY 2013-2015 Triennial Performance Audits. The audits were completed in January 2017. Fresno COG appropriately withheld allocations until the audits were complete. Moore & Associates was retained to prepare the FY 2016-2018 Triennial Performance Audits.
The RTPA has submitted a copy of its performance audit to the Director of the California Department of Transportation. In addition, the RTPA has certified in writing to the Director that the performance audits of operators located in the area under its jurisdiction have been completed.	PUC 99246(c)	In compliance	Fresno COG submitted its triennial performance audit to Caltrans and certified completion of the operator audits in a letter dated February 15, 2017.

Compliance Element	Reference	Compliance	Comments
For Article 8(c) claimants, the RTPA may adopt performance criteria, local match requirements, or fare recovery ratios. In such cases, the rules and regulations of the RTPA will apply.	PUC 99405	Not applicable	
The performance audit of the operator providing public transportation services shall include a verification of the operator's cost per passenger, operating cost per vehicle service hour, passenger per vehicle service mile, and vehicle service hours per employee, as defined in Section 99247. The performance audit shall include consideration of the needs and types of passengers being served and the employment of part-time drivers and the contracting with common carriers of persons operating under a franchise or license to provide services during peak hours, as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 99260.2.	PUC 99246(d)	In compliance	
The RTPA has established rules and regulations regarding revenue ratios for transportation operators providing services in both urbanized and non-urbanized and newly urbanized areas.	PUC 99270.1, 99270.2	In compliance	
The RTPA has adopted criteria, rules, and regulations for the evaluation of claims filed under Article 4.5 of the TDA and the determination of the cost effectiveness of the proposed community transit services.	PUC 99275.5	In compliance	
State Transit Assistance funds received by the RTPA are allocated only for transportation planning and mass transportation purposes.	PUC 99310.5, 99313.3, Proposition 116	In compliance	
The amount received pursuant to the Public Utilities Code, Section 99314.3, by each RTPA for state transit assistance is allocated to the operators in the area of its jurisdiction as allocated by the State Controller's Office.	PUC 99314.3	In compliance	

Compliance Element	Reference	Compliance	Comments
If TDA funds are allocated to purposes not directly related to public or specialized transportation services, or facilities for exclusive use of pedestrians and bicycles, the transit planning agency has annually: • Consulted with the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) established pursuant to PUC Section 99238; • Identified transit needs, including: ▪ Groups that are transit-dependent or transit-disadvantaged; ▪ Adequacy of existing transit services to meet the needs of groups identified; and ▪ Analysis of potential alternatives to provide transportation alternatives; • Adopted or reaffirmed definitions of "unmet transit needs" and "reasonable to meet"; • Identified the unmet transit needs and those needs that are reasonable to meet; and • Adopted a finding that there are no unmet transit needs, that there are no unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet, or that there are unmet transit needs including needs that are reasonable to meet. If a finding is adopted that there are unmet transit needs, these needs must have been funded before an allocation was made for streets and roads.	PUC 99401.5	In compliance	

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Chapter 4
Prior Recommendations

This section reviews and evaluates the implementation of the prior Triennial Performance Audit recommendations and determines degree of implementation. This objective assessment is to provide assurance the Fresno Council of Governments has made quantifiable progress toward improving both the efficiency and effectiveness of its functions.

The prior Triennial Performance Audit – completed in April 2016 by Michael Baker International for the three fiscal years ending June 30, 2015 – included three recommendations for Fresno COG.

1. Include an analysis of transit-dependent populations in the annual Unmet Transit Needs report.

   Discussion: Working in conjunction with the SSTAC, Fresno COG developed a fairly thorough unmet transit needs process. Staff prepares a report and discussion of the unmet needs process and a resolution approving the annual unmet transit needs findings. Recommended findings by the SSTAC are included in the staff report. Each year, the Fresno COG reaffirms the adopted definition of unmet transit needs and reasonable to meet. However, an analysis of the transit-dependent population is not included in the findings.

   Pursuant to PUC Section 99401.5, groups that are transit-dependent or transit-disadvantaged are to be identified as part of the annual unmet needs process. The prior auditor noted such analysis could draw from data compiled in the Gap Analysis and Title VI plans developed during the audit period. The Fresno COG includes transit-dependent and transit-disadvantaged groups in its Title VI plans and should include a similar detailed analysis in the unmet needs process and findings.

   Progress: Beginning in FY 2016/17, the Fresno COG began including a demographic section in its annual unmet transit needs report.

   Status: Implemented.

2. Evaluate opportunities to increase rural county representatives on the SSTAC.

   Discussion: The SSTAC plays an important role in decisions surrounding the provision of public transportation. While the SSTAC membership meets the requirements of state law, the majority of current members (10 of 13) are residents of the city of Fresno. Remaining members (one each) are from Clovis, Sanger, and Firebaugh. Because the SSTAC is charged with making recommendations on countywide transit services during the unmet transit needs process, a wider representation of residents from throughout the county should be evaluated for the SSTAC.

   The Fresno COG has initiated discussions with the SSTAC to see if expanded membership is warranted. Under consideration is expanding membership to include interested rural cities

and citizen stakeholder advocates. The SSTAC convenes six to eight times a year with SSTAC meetings generally held at COG offices in downtown Fresno. Discussions are underway to evaluate the feasibility of conducting SSTAC meetings at rural locations as a mean to further promote interest and involvement from other communities. These meetings would be in addition to those rotated by SSTAC throughout the rural areas during the unmet needs process. A complimentary transit pass can be offered to members as an incentive to travel to meetings. As member terms expire or through an expansion of membership, Fresno COG could also partake in active recruitment by advertising openings to different communities, reaching out to specific agencies, and placing an application on the COG website for easy and convenient electronic access.

Progress: As of January 2019, nine SSTAC members were residents of the City of Fresno, while one represented Clovis and two represented Sanger. Overall, this represents little change to the makeup of the SSTAC, even though individuals may have changed. Fresno COG noted it is difficult to get more rural representation to the SSTAC. To that end, it has provided call-in options to mitigate the need to travel to meetings. However, the SSTAC application was not available on the Fresno COG website.

Status: Partially implemented.

3. Continue active promotion of technology development with regard to transit data coordination.

Discussion: The Fresno COG has demonstrated its competency with regard to transit data coordination. Its efforts to foster interagency and intermodal transportation within the county have been through the Fresno County Transportation Guide. The printed, folded pocket guide was published in a bilingual (English/Spanish) format and included basic information about transit services, contact phone numbers, and website links. This information is now available on the website with a recommendation to continue the active promotion of transit information through technology channels in partnership with the transit operators.

The Fresno COG encourages the transit operators to make operating schedules as accessible to the public as feasible while acknowledging certain barriers for developing single integration of regional transit data on platforms such as a mobile app. A third party entity, such as Google Transit, is an avenue to make transit information from all agencies accessible by the public. FAX and FCRTA are currently registered with Google Transit and Clovis Transit is planning to join later this year. As the transit agencies update their technological capabilities, bus information will be more easily attainable, including real-time passenger information and service alerts. For example, FAX has partnered with ScholarDev to develop such an application, but at this time, it is limited to scheduled information only. The COG should continue promoting this expansion of technology among the transit operators and lend assistance such as identifying grant funds to digitize information that enhances the visibility and customer experience from using transit.

Progress: Clovis Transit is now available on Google Transit. FAX offers a real-time "Track Your Bus" feature on its website. FAX also conducted a fare equity analysis in preparation for the introduction of smart card and/or stored value passes. It also began utilizing ticket vending machines in conjunction with the Q Line BRT service. In addition, the Fresno Transit app is available on Google Play and the Apple Store. The Fresno COG website includes web links to the individual transit operators. However, the FCRTA website does not appear to include links to Google Transit, even though some fixed-route services are listed on Google Transit. The Regional Transportation Guide was last updated in 2015; any future updates may wish to be made available electronically rather than as a printed version. A digital version of the 2015 Guide is available on the Fresno COG website.

Status: Implemented.

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Chapter 5
Goal Setting and Strategic Planning

This chapter analyzes the Fresno Council of Governments' goal setting and strategic planning process.

In addition to serving as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for Fresno County, the Fresno COG is also the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The Fresno COG's role in the community and region is diverse, providing leadership and/or support for the following activities:

- Measure C Program Implementation,
- Transportation Fund (Regional Surface Transportation Program and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program) Administration,
- Areawide Transportation Policy Committee for Fresno County,
- Airport Land Use Commission,
- Travel Demand Modeling,
- Affiliate State Census Data Center for Fresno County,
- Traffic Monitoring Program,
- ValleyRides.com Ridesharing Program,
- Freeway Service Patrol,
- Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Program for Fresno County, and
- Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan.

The primary regional planning document is the Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). The RTP is a long-range transportation plan providing a vision for regional transportation investments. The Plan, which was adopted in December 2018, is the Fresno COG's 19th Regional Transportation Plan. The development process included input and collaboration from the 15 incorporated cities, the County of Fresno, local public agencies, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, Caltrans, state and federal agencies, and the public.

The 2018 RTP includes the four required elements (Policy Element, Sustainable Communities Strategy, Action Element, and Financial Element) as well as additional chapters regarding regional context, public participation, environmental justice analysis, and transportation performance management. While the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was outsourced, the rest of the RTP was developed in house.

The Fresno COG's mission is to "foster a region of diverse partners building a progressive future as one voice." This shapes Fresno COG's Vision for 2042: "A region of diverse transportation options that foster sustainable growth and a vibrant economy, and contribute to improved air quality and healthy communities."

The 2018 RTP includes individual goals for each of six transportation modes. Each goal is supported by one or more objectives and policies.

Transportation Mode	Goal	Objective
General Transportation	An efficient, safe, integrated, multimodal transportation system	Develop an integrated multimodal transportation network that supports and enhances the region's economy and serves the needs of a growing and diverse population for transportation access to jobs, housing, non-emergency medical, recreation, commercial, and community services as well as goods movement.
		Maintain and improve existing facilities as the basic system which will address existing and future travel demands.
		Manage the financial resources which are available from government, the private sector, and users of the transportation system in a cost-effective manner to meet regional needs.
	Improved mobility and accessibility for all, including the protected populations in accordance with federal and state statutes	To incorporate principles for environmental justice into transportation planning and implementation decisions.
	Coordinate planning that is consistent with planning efforts that affect the region	Ensure consistency with emerging planning efforts.
	A multimodal regional transportation network compatible with adopted land use plans and consistent with the intent of SB375	Development of a regional transportation network which is environmentally sensitive, fosters sustainable regional growth, and helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions wherever possible.
	Support cooperative efforts between local, state, federal agencies and the public to plan, develop and manage our transportation system	Strengthen intergovernmental organizational relationships and lines of communication which foster an understanding and awareness of the overall impacts of transportation/land use/air quality decision making.
	Attainment and maintenance of California and National Ambient Air Quality Standards as set by the Environmental Protection Agency and the California Air Resources Board	Participate in and support the coordinated transportation and air quality planning efforts between the eight Valley Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Caltrans, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, the California Air Resources Board, and local agencies charged with land use planning.
		Implement all appropriate Transportation System Management, Transportation Demand Management, and Transportation Control Measure strategies as technologically and economically feasible.
		Integrate land use planning, transportation planning, and air quality planning to make the most efficient use of public resources and to create a more healthy and livable environment.
	Achieve a safe transportation system for all motorized and non-motorized users on all public roads in Fresno County	Reduce the number of roadway fatalities and serious injuries, including pedestrian and bicycle fatalities and serious injuries.

Transportation Mode	Goal	Objective
Highways, Streets, and Roads	An integrated and efficient highways, streets and roads network	Develop and implement an integrated highways, streets and roads network that meets mobility needs for both urban and rural residents and the movement of goods.
		Maintain an efficient highway, street and road network that will allow for effective movement of people and goods.
	Utilize a partnership of federal, state, regional, local, community, and industry stakeholders to move freight on a safe, integrated, modern, efficient, and resilient system that contributes to the Fresno Region's economy, jobs, and healthy, livable communities	A safe, efficient, and reliable goods movement system that supports economic efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness.
	Efficient use of available transportation funding	Pursue all possible federal, state and local transportation funding related to development, maintenance and rehabilitation of the highways and streets network.
	Maintain highways, roads, and bridges in a state of good repair for all users	Encourage education in best practices and development of pavement management systems and pursuit of all available funding for maintenance.
Mass Transportation	An efficient and fiscally responsible public transportation mobility system	Pursue federal, state and local funding for both public and social service transportation, to provide mobility opportunities to the maximum number of people in the region.
	A quality, convenient, safe and reliable public transportation service	Encourage and prioritize safety, appropriate frequency of bus service, reasonable fares and the provision of adequate service to satisfy the transit needs which are reasonable to meet.
	An efficient and effective public transportation system	Consider/evaluate advantages and disadvantages of projects, including economic, environmental and social factors.
	Public transit services with a positive public image in communities served	Provide complete and accurate information that makes public transportation "user friendly."
	An integrated multimodal transportation system which facilitates the movement of people and goods	Develop a seamless multimodal transportation network.
	A coordinated policy for public transportation that complements land use and air quality/climate change policies	Support transportation investments that work toward accomplishing air quality and climate change goals, optimizing the utilization of land and encourage a stable economic base.
	Achieve or maintain transit networks in a state of good repair	Maintain assets more effectively, using condition-based approaches and using predictive and preventive maintenance strategies to reduce costs while improving service delivery.

Transportation Mode	Goal	Objective
Aviation	A fully functional and integrated air service and airport system that is complementary to the regional transportation system	Maintain and improve the airport system in Fresno County.
Active Transportation	Maximize bicycling and walking through their recognition and integration as valid and healthy transportation modes in transportation planning activities	Increase bicycling and pedestrian trips as a percentage of all trips.
	Safe, convenient, and continuous routes for bicyclists and pedestrians of all types which interface with and complement a multimodal transportation system	Increase connections between bicycling and pedestrian facilities and other modes of transportation.
	Improved bicycle and pedestrian safety through education, engineering and enforcement	Reduce the number of bicycling and pedestrian injuries and deaths.
	Increased development of the regional bikeways system, related facilities, and pedestrian facilities by maximizing funding opportunities	Maintain and expand bicycling and pedestrian facilities.
Rail	A safe, efficient and convenient rail system, which serves the passenger and freight needs of the region and which is integrated with and complementary to the total transportation system.	Promote the growth of rail passenger and freight usage.
	A transportation system that efficiently and effectively transports goods throughout Fresno County	Increase the use of air and rail transportation and the efficiency of the truck transportation system.

Chapter 6
Functional Review

The Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG) is the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for Fresno County. The Fresno COG is a voluntary association of city and county governments created through a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) in 1969 to address regional transportation and planning issues. Member agencies include the County of Fresno as well as the cities of Clovis, Coalinga, Firebaugh, Fowler, Fresno, Huron, Kerman, Kingsburg, Mendota, Orange Cove, Parlier, Reedley, San Joaquin, Sanger, and Selma.

In addition to serving as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for Fresno County, the Fresno COG is also the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Fresno COG's role in the community and region is diverse, providing leadership and/or support for the following activities:

- Measure C Program Implementation,
- Transportation Fund (Regional Surface Transportation Program and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program) Administration,
- Areawide Transportation Policy Committee for Fresno County,
- Areawide Clearinghouse for Fresno County,
- Airport Land Use Commission,
- Travel Demand Modeling,
- Affiliate State Census Data Center for Fresno County,
- Traffic Monitoring Program,
- ValleyRides.com Ridesharing Program,
- Freeway Service Patrol,
- Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Program for Fresno County, and
- Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan.

A functional review of the Fresno Council of Governments determines the extent and efficiency of the following functional activities:

- Administration and Management,
- Transportation Planning and Regional Coordination,
- Claimant Relationships and Oversight,
- Marketing and Transportation Alternatives, and
- Grant Applications and Management.

Administration and Management

The Fresno COG is governed by Policy Board comprised of the mayors of each incorporated city and the Chairman of the County Board of Supervisors (or their designated representatives). The Policy Board meets on the fourth Thursday of each month (except for August and December) at 7:30 p.m. Regular meetings are held in the Sequoia Conference Room at the Fresno COG's administrative offices, located at 2035 Tulare Street, Suite 201, in Fresno. All meetings are open to the public. The Fresno COG offices

are accessible via several Fresno Area Express (FAX) routes at the Downtown Transit Mall (including Routes 20, 22, 26, 28, 32, 34, 38, and the Q).

Policy Board members generally attend all meetings. They have never had a meeting canceled for lack of a quorum. The Fresno COG and the Fresno County Rural Transit Agency (FCRTA) Boards meet on the same day to make things easier for members; the urban representatives simply bow out for the FCRTA Board meeting. Staff provide a quarterly progress report to the Policy Board. Planners may also take any issues regarding their reports to the Board as well. An annual Overall Work Plan is developed by staff and adopted by the Board.

The Fresno COG Board has three subcommittees:

- Policy Advisory Committee (PAC),
- Transportation Technical Committee (TTC), and
- Budget Committee.

The Fresno COG has seven additional citizen committees that advise the Fresno COG Board.

- The Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) consists of representatives from the City Selection Committee, a Selection Committee of Airport Managers, and the Fresno County Board of Supervisors. The ALUC typically meets every other month on the first Monday at 2:00 p.m. at the Fresno COG offices, though it will meet monthly as warranted.
- The Association for the Beautification of 99 is charged with improving Highway 99 in Fresno County to enhance air quality, encourage investment, attract tourism, and improve the quality of life. The Association is comprised of representatives from the cities of Fowler, Kingsburg, Selma, and Fresno; Chamber of Commerce, Caltrans, and Tree Fresno, including both elected officials and members of the public.
- The Fresno County Regional Transportation Mitigation Fee (RTMF) Agency manages funds generated by the RTMF, a part of the Measure C extension which ensures future development contributes its fair share toward the cost of infrastructure to mitigate the regional transportation impacts of new growth. The Fresno COG Policy Board meets as the RTMF Agency on an as-needed basis on the fourth Thursday of the month following the Fresno COG Policy Board meeting.
- The Measure C Citizens Oversight Committee (COC) is a 13-member committee intended to ensure Measure C revenues are spent as promised. Committee members are selected by the Fresno County Mayors' Selection Committee and the Chair of the Fresno County Board of Supervisors. The Committee meets at the Fresno COG offices on the second Thursday of the month at 5:00 p.m.
- The Regional Transportation Plan Roundtable supports Fresno COG staff and standing committees in the preparation of the Regional Transit Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). Members review RTP components and provide input and support. This group is comprised of 12 representatives of member agency staff, 15 representatives of a variety of stakeholder groups, and three "at-large" representatives. The group meets monthly during the active development of the RTP/SCS, which is updated every four years.
- The Environmental Justice Advisory Committee is a subcommittee of the Transportation Technical Committee (TTC). It meets when Fresno COG staff, the TTC, the PAC, or the Policy

Board requests recommendations on issues involving Environmental Justice populations (such as during the development of the RTP/SCS). The committee is composed of three Fresno COG member agency representatives (local agency urban, east side local agency rural, and west side local agency rural), four representatives of the highest minority populations in Fresno County (Hispanic, African American, Asian, and American Indian), two low-income representatives, one senior representative, and one representative of persons with disabilities.

- The Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) was formed in 1988 to aid in the review of transit issues and the identification of unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet. It is comprised of individuals representing public transportation providers, social service providers, seniors, persons with disabilities, and persons of limited means. The SSTAC meets the third Tuesday of the month, January through June, or as needed. All meetings are open to the public.

Fresno COG also participates in three regional intergovernmental collaboratives: San Joaquin Valley Transportation Planning Agencies, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, and Fresno-Madera Area Agency on Aging.

Fresno COG Policy Board members during the audit period included the following:

- Mayor Nathan Magsig, City of Clovis,
- Councilmember Lynne Ashbeck, City of Clovis,
- Mayor Bob Whalen, City of Clovis,
- Mayor Ron Ramsey, City of Coalinga,
- Mayor Nathan Vosburg, City of Coalinga,
- Mayor Craig Knight, City of Firebaugh,
- Mayor Pro Tem Freddy Valdez, City of Firebaugh,
- Mayor Brady Jenkins, City of Firebaugh,
- Mayor Felipe Perez, City of Firebaugh,
- Mayor David Cardenas, City of Fowler,
- Councilmember Clint Olivier, City of Fresno,
- Mayor Lee Brand, City of Fresno,
- Mayor Sylvia Chavez, City of Huron,
- Mayor Rey Leon, City of Huron,
- Mayor Stephen Hill, City of Kerman,
- Mayor Pro Tem Gary Yep, City of Kerman,
- Mayor Rhonda Armstrong, City of Kerman,
- Mayor Chet Reilly, City of Kingsburg,
- Mayor Michelle Roman, City of Kingsburg,
- Mayor Robert Silva, City of Mendota,
- Mayor Rolando Castro, City of Mendota,
- Mayor Victor Lopez, City of Orange Cove,
- Mayor Pro Tem Raul Villanueva, City of Parlier,
- Mayor Alma Beltran, City of Parlier,
- Councilmember Robert Beck, City of Reedley,

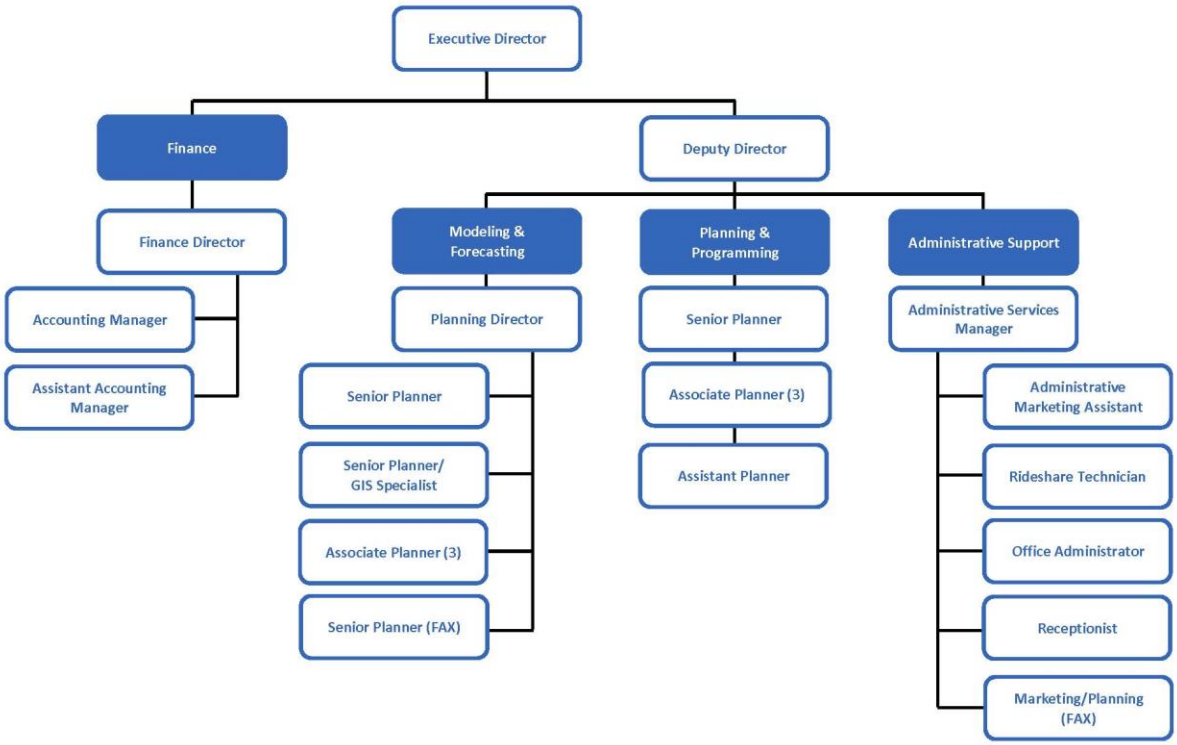
- Mayor Anita Betancourt, City of Reedley,
- Mayor Pro Tem Raul Cantu, City of Sanger,
- Mayor Frank Gonzalez, City of Sanger,
- Mayor Pro Tem Amarpreet Dhaliwal, City of San Joaquin,
- Mayor Michael Derr, City of Selma,
- Mayor Pro Tem Scott Robertson, City of Selma,
- Supervisor Henry Perea, County of Fresno,
- Supervisor Sal Quintero, County of Fresno, and
- Caltrans representative.

Reporting directly to the Fresno COG board is the Executive Director, who oversees a staff of 22. This staffing level is adequate to meet all responsibilities. Staff is effectively organized. Within the last five years a number of senior planners have retired and new planners have been hired. The new hires are enthusiastic and have caught on quickly. The Finance Director believes the RTPA has gotten past the rough spot.

All staff receive an annual evaluation. Employees receive a standard benefits package inclusive of health insurance, retirement contributions, disability benefits, and accrued leave. Staff also receives appropriate training for individual positions.

An organizational chart is presented as Exhibit 6.1.

Exhibit 6.1 Organizational Chart (FY 2018/19)



Source: Fresno Council of Governments.

As the RTPA, Fresno COG processes TDA claims in an accurate and timely manner. Operator claims are placed on the Policy Board agenda as soon as they are received. Operators are generally satisfied with Fresno COG's efficiency and effectiveness. Fresno COG has a particularly close relationship with the FCRTA, with which it shares an office and administrative duties, and the City of Fresno, with which it shares staff.

Transportation Planning and Regional Controls

The primary regional planning document is the Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). The RTP is a long-range transportation plan providing a vision for regional transportation investments. The Plan, which was adopted in December 2018, is the Fresno COG's 19th Regional Transportation Plan. The development process included input and collaboration from the 15 incorporated cities, the County of Fresno, local public agencies, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, Caltrans, state and federal agencies, and the public.

Senate Bill 375 requires that each MPO include with its RTP a Sustainable Communities Strategy that provides an integrated land-use and transportation plan for meeting the California Air Resources Board's greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. This is the second Fresno County RTP to include the SCS.

The 2018 RTP includes the four required elements (Policy Element, Sustainable Communities Strategy, Action Element, and Financial Element) as well as additional chapters regarding regional context, public participation, environmental justice analysis, and transportation performance management. While the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was outsourced, the rest of the RTP was developed in-house.

Fresno COG's mission is to "foster a region of diverse partners building a progressive future as one voice." This shapes Fresno COG's Vision for 2042: "A region of diverse transportation options that foster sustainable growth and a vibrant economy, and contribute to improved air quality and healthy communities."

The 2018 update included a significant expansion in community engagement efforts, which expanded outreach to more areas and more groups. Public outreach in support of the RTP included the following:

- Fresno COG Regional Transportation Plan Roundtable meetings;
- Environmental Justice Advisory Subcommittee meetings;
- Mini-grants for community-based organization partnerships to solicit ongoing public input, awarded to the following organizations:
    - Public Health Institute – Cultiva La Salud,
    - Fresno State Office of Community and Economic Development (East County),
    - Fresno State OCED (North Fresno and Clovis),
    - Central California Environmental Justice Network (CCEJN),
    - Central California Asthma Collaborative,
    - Tides Center/Leadership Council for Justice and Accountability, and
    - Fresno Building Healthy Communities;
- Sustainable Communities Strategy Scenario Development Public Workshop (88 attendees);
- Online scenario presentation and survey using MetroQuest software (412 online participants);

- Promotion of workshop and online activities via mini-grant recipients, email, television advertisements, social media, media interviews, neighborhood canvassing, and partner websites;
- RTP Project Suggestions Public Workshops (15 workshops with 516 attendees);
- Workshop and online surveys;
- Dedicated website for access to RTP/SCS information with videos, links to meeting agendas, and fact sheet flyers; and
- Scenario selection survey.

In addition, Fresno COG reached out to and/or consulted with 14 federal agencies, 10 state agencies, 20 tribal governments, 14 regional agencies, four rail providers, 13 aviation partners, 11 schools and school districts, five transportation agencies, 24 other agencies and organizations, and representatives of persons with disabilities, developers, the building industries, and users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities.

Fresno COG maintains its own modeling and forecasting department. The RTPA The in-house staff do project implementation for the Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program. Fresno COG has an internet-based project system (FresnoTrack) where all members can upload projects, which makes behind-the-scenes work much easier.

Fresno COG maintains a regional travel demand model (developed through the San Joaquin Valley Model Improvement Program in 2010) that covers Fresno County. This model is used to inform general and specific plans, the Regional Transportation Plan, the Congestion Management Process update, and other planning processes. The model is continuously refined and is now in an updated iteration (VMIP2) that was calibrated in 2017.

Claimant Relationships and Oversight

TDA claims are processed consistently and in a timely manner. The Fresno COG conducts a productivity evaluation of the transit operators every year. This process takes the place of a productivity committee. This annual report is reviewed by the Transportation Technical Committee and the Policy Advisory Committee, then taken to the Policy Board. The productivity report includes key performance indicators for each operators, as well as the status of recommendations from recent triennial performance audits, TDA fiscal audits, and FTA triennial reviews (as appropriate). If transit operators do not reasonably respond to recommended productivity improvements, their LTF appropriation cannot exceed that of the prior year. The annual report includes productivity recommendations specific to each individual operator.

The Fresno COG helps to fund planning studies for Fresno County transit operators. During the audit period, this included the Short Range Transit Plan for the Rural Fresno County Area, 2018-2022, which was adopted on April 27, 2017, and the Short Range Transit Plan for Fresno Urbanized Area, 2018-2022, which was adopted on June 29, 2017.

Marketing and Transportation Alternatives

Fresno COG does not provide marketing on behalf of the transit operators. The Fresno COG did prepare a regional transportation guide, which was last updated in 2015. All the information is on the operator websites, and the Fresno COG is not sure if it will be updated further, but an update has been budgeted.

In 2018, the Fresno COG published the Fresno-Clovis Bikeways Map, which provides a map of Class I, II, and III bikeways in the Fresno-Clovis Metropolitan Area. It is also available electronically on the Fresno COG's website.

The Fresno COG's rideshare program is marketed under the name ValleyRides. The program includes a ridematching service, commuter and agricultural worker vanpools, a robust carpool incentive program, Emergency Ride Home program, and employer outreach. The ValleyRides carpool incentive program is funded through Measure C. The RTPA is working with a consultant to update the ValleyRides.com website.

The Fresno COG also uses Measure C to fund its Senior Taxi Scrip program, which allows eligible seniors to purchase up to five $20 booklets of taxi scrip for only five dollars.

The Fresno COG maintains an online presence at www.fresnocog.org. While the website is attractive and contains a large amount of information, it could be better organized and maintained. For example, the Public Transit Planning page under the Planning tab includes the FY 2012/13 – FY 2014/15 Triennial Performance Audits. The Transportation Development Act (TDA) page under the Resources tab, however, only includes the FY 2009/10 – FY 2011/12 Triennial Performance Audits, and there is no LTF/STA data more recent than FY 2014/15 or Unmet Transit Needs findings more recent than FY 2015/16. Some of these items can be found elsewhere on the website (such as within meeting agendas), but with significant effort. Other links are broken (such as the link to the Proposed 2018-2022 Short Range Transit Plan on the Publications Page under the Resources tab).

Grant Applications and Management

The Finance Director and Accounting Manager handle grant accounting, while the planners prepare the applications. Finance is responsible for figuring out all the behind-the-scenes details, such as what is eligible, what is the local match, how to structure payments, etc. This includes SB-1 planning grants.

The Fresno COG only reviews grant applications required to go through the regional clearinghouse. As a general rule, unless the grant is through Caltrans, the Fresno COG does not generally review. If a review is requested, it falls to the circuit planner. The circuit planner and circuit engineer program is used to provide technical and engineering assistance for Fresno COG member agencies through a third-party contract.

The City of Fresno is applying for large infrastructure grants. The Fresno COG participates in projects involving regional funds to help leverage participation.

Unless it is something that involves the RTPA, transit operators are responsible for their own grant monitoring and reporting. If the Fresno COG is the programming and custodial entity, there is more monitoring my Fresno COG planners. The Fresno COG also prepares the regional Active Transportation Plan and handles the award of funds for these projects.

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Chapter 7
Findings and Recommendations

Conclusions

We find the Fresno Council of Governments, functioning as the RTPA, to be in compliance with the requirements of the Transportation Development Act. In addition, the entity generally functions in an efficient, effective, and economical manner.

Findings and Recommendations

Based on the current review, we submit no TDA compliance findings.

We identified two functional findings. While these findings are not TDA compliance related, we believe each warrants inclusion within this review:

1. The Fresno COG's SSTAC continues to be over-represented by residents of Fresno and under-represented by residents within rural areas.
2. The RTPA's website should be updated to provide easier access to regional information.

In completing this Triennial Performance Audit, we submit the following findings and recommendations for the Fresno Council of Governments. They have been divided into two categories: TDA Program Compliance Findings and Recommendations and Functional Findings and Recommendations. TDA Program Compliance Findings and Recommendations are intended to assist in bringing the agency into compliance with the requirements and standards of the TDA, while Functional Findings and Recommendations address issues identified during the TPA that are not specific to TDA compliance. Each finding is presented with the elements identified within the 2011 *Government Auditing Standards* as well as one or more recommendations.

Functional Finding 1: The Fresno COG's SSTAC continues to be over-represented by residents of Fresno and under-represented by residents within rural areas.

Criteria: The prior audit noted that 10 of the 13 SSTAC members were residents of Fresno. Given the SSTAC is charged with making recommendations on countywide transit services during the unmet transit needs process, the prior auditor recommended a wider representation of residents from throughout the county be evaluated for the SSTAC.

Condition: As of January 2019, nine SSTAC members were residents of the City of Fresno, while one represented Clovis and two represented Sanger. Overall, this represents little change to the makeup of the SSTAC, even though individuals may have changed. Fresno COG noted it is difficult to get more rural representation to the SSTAC. To that end, it has provided call-in options to mitigate the need to travel to meetings. However, the SSTAC application was not available on the Fresno COG website.

Cause: The difficulty in recruiting SSTAC members from outside Fresno may be due to a number of things, including distance, time commitment, or lack of knowledge about vacancies.

Effect: This can result in the loss of potential members due to a lack of awareness.

Recommendation: Continue to proactively recruit SSTAC participants residing within rural areas of Fresno County.

Recommended Action(s): We recommend the Fresno COG continue to proactively recruit SSTAC participants from rural areas in an effort to increase the number of rural representatives. Many of the member categories include a minimum number of representatives but no maximum number, allowing some leeway in the makeup of the committee. The Fresno COG should maintain a dedicated page on its website for the SSTAC, which should include a clearly posted ongoing recruitment for organizational and citizen participants. In addition, the application for participation in the SSTAC should be made available for download from the SSTAC web page. The Fresno COG should continue to make available participation by phone for rural members. In addition, the RTPA should actively recruit for new rural members by notifying social services organizations serving rural communities, as well as transit users in the rural portions of the county, aware of any vacancies. All efforts toward this recruitment should be documented prior to the next triennial performance audit, even if those efforts do not result in significant changes to the composition of the SSTAC throughout the three-year period.

Timeline: FY 2019/20.

Anticipated Cost: Modest.

Management Response: Fresno COG will continue to actively recruit membership on the SSTAC from Rural cities. A dedicated page on the Fresno COG website will be created and maintained with recruitment information and a downloadable application, SSTAC documents, membership and meeting updates. Ample steps to recruit rural members were undertaken following the last review. However, Fresno COG staff will continue to actively search for interested representatives, clearly communicating that the phone-in participation option is acceptable. All efforts will be documented.

Functional Finding 2: The RTPA's website should be updated to provide easier access to regional information.

Criteria: During the functional review, we visited the Fresno COG's website at www.fresnocog.org. The RTPA's website falls under several of the functional areas listed in Caltrans' *Performance Audit Guidebook*, including General Administration, Transportation Planning and Regional Coordination, Claimant Relationships and Oversight, and Marketing and Transportation Alternatives.

Condition: As noted in the Chapter 6, while the website is attractive and contains a large amount of information, it could be better organized and maintained. For example, the Public Transit Planning page under the Planning tab includes the FY 2012/13 – FY 2014/15 Triennial Performance Audits. The Transportation Development Act (TDA) page under the Resources tab, however, only includes the FY 2009/10 – FY 2011/12 Triennial Performance Audits, and there is no LTF/STA data more recent than FY 2014/15 or Unmet Transit Needs findings more recent than FY 2015/16. Some of these items can be found elsewhere on the website (such as within meeting agendas), but with significant effort. Other links are broken (such as the link to the Proposed 2018-2022 Short Range Transit Plan on the Publications Page under the Resources tab).

Cause: Ad hoc updating of a website (including adding new information and files) can often result in changes being made in one place and not in others.

Effect: Information contained on the website may be scattered, out of date, feature broken links, or be incomplete.

Recommendation: Undertake a comprehensive review and update of www.fresnocog.org to facilitate easier access to information.

Recommended Action(s): The Fresno COG should undertake a comprehensive review of the content, organization, and links within its website. The design of the website is attractive and the overall organization (using the menu tabs) is effective, so it may not need complete redevelopment. However, it is difficult to find information. For example, during the development of this audit we searched the website to get information about the Fresno COG's SSTAC. Selecting COG Committees under the Agenda/Info tab brought us to a link for the SSTAC. However, that link only went to links for the most recent agendas (as noted in the header) and provided no information about the SSTAC's composition or function. Clicking on the Fresno COG Committee Listing on that page brought us to a brief paragraph about the SSTAC with a link labeled "webpage," but that link took us to the "Unmet Transit Needs" section of the Public Transit Planning page under the "Planning" tab. Ultimately, we had to search Policy Board and SSTAC agendas to get the current composition of the SSTAC as well as information about its meetings. Ideally, clicking on SSTAC under "COG Committees" would have taken us to a separate SSTAC page, which would contain information about the composition of the Council, any open vacancies, a downloadable application, meeting information, and links to recent meeting agendas. This would also address the recommended actions under Functional Finding #1.

Timeline: FY 2019/20.

Anticipated Cost: Variable.

Management Response: Fresno COG staff will thoroughly review and update the Fresno COG website as suggested. The current website was created and released less than two years ago at considerable expense. Therefore, we agree that redevelopment is not needed. However, a dedicated SSTAC page will be created as suggested, the Public Transit Planning page under the Planning tab will be thoroughly reviewed and updated with Triennial Performance Audits, LTF/STA data, and Unmet Transit Needs findings, and easy access to SSTAC pages and listings will be developed.

Exhibit 7.1 Summary of Recommendations

Functional Recommendations		Importance	Timeline
1	Continue to proactively recruit SSTAC participants residing within rural areas of Fresno County.	Medium	FY 2019/20
2	Undertake a comprehensive review and update of www.fresnocog.org to facilitate easier access to information.	Medium	FY 2019/20

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