



Fresno Council
of Governments

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we plan

Together

we grow

2020 Fresno COG Public Participation Plan

Final



Fresno Council of Governments

2020 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

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Fresno Council of Governments

2020 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

I. Overview

ABOUT FRESNO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

As a Metropolitan Planning Organization, Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG) addresses issues of mutual concern to the county and the cities in the Fresno County region and satisfies Federal and State transportation planning and programming mandates. Fresno COG provides a forum for planning, discussion, and study of areawide issues, prepares and adopts regional plans and programs, serves as the regional agency for federal and state transportation programs and funding opportunities and addresses other areawide issues based on the desires of the member jurisdictions.

Fresno COG represents its member jurisdictions as planner, programmer, and broker in developing an efficient and effective intermodal transportation system that provides for the mobility needs of people, goods, and services while protecting the environment.

Fresno COG and its member agencies are responsible for determining policy, adopting plans and programs, and awarding funds to implement these plans. This procedural document is intended to give the Fresno COG elected officials and staff guidance in providing for public involvement and interagency consultation in the regional planning process. It contains procedures and strategies Fresno COG uses to instigate, seek and foster greater public involvement regarding transportation matters within its discretion. Fresno COG's documented participation plan defines a process for providing early and continuous public participation opportunities, employing strategies to encourage an open process that removes language, physical, transportation and scheduling barriers to being involved.

Fresno COG's PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Fresno COG developed this Public Participation Plan (PPP) as a guide to meeting the Metropolitan Planning Organization requirements for early coordination, public involvement and project development. The PPP is intended to provide direction for public participation activities conducted by Fresno COG and contains the requirements, procedures, strategies and techniques used by Fresno COG to communicate with the public and consult with affected agencies. This plan defines a process that outlines roles, responsibilities and key decision points for consulting with affected public

agencies, the transportation sector, transportation providers and other interested parties, and providing reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

FRESNO COG'S COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Fresno COG's public involvement procedures are built on the following guiding principles and commitments to the community it serves:

1. Public participation is a dynamic activity that requires teamwork and commitment at all levels of the Fresno COG organization.
2. One size does not fit all — input from diverse perspectives enhances the process.
3. Effective public outreach and involvement requires relationship building with local governments, stakeholders and advisory groups.
4. Engaging interested persons in regional transportation issues is challenging, yet possible, by making it relevant, removing barriers to participation, and communicating in clear, compelling language and visuals.
5. An open and transparent public participation process empowers low-income communities and communities of color to participate in decision-making that affects them.

Commitment 1: Early Engagement

Fresno COG commits to providing adequate public notice for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to, a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) and the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) as well as other issues, policies, plans and processes.

Fresno COG will also consult with affected agencies and the public regarding environmental review and actions required, the scope, level of analysis and related requirements.

Commitment 2: Access to All

Fresno COG will employ visualization techniques to describe the RTP and FTIP, as well as other plans and projects and public information available online and on social media platforms in electronically accessible formats.

Fresno COG will seek out and consider the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services.

No individual shall be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of services, programs, or activities, or be subjected to discrimination by Fresno COG. All public meeting agendas prominently display the following notification:

The Fresno COG offices and restrooms are ADA accessible. Representatives or individuals with disabilities should contact Fresno COG at (559) 233-4148, at least 3 days in advance, to request auxiliary aids and/or translation services necessary to participate in the public meeting / public hearing. If Fresno COG is unable to accommodate an auxiliary aid or translation request for a public hearing, after receiving proper notice, the hearing will be continued on a specified date when accommodations are available.

Fresno COG shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) during the planning and development of the Regional Transportation Plan and the Federal Transportation Improvement Program, as well as Federal land management agencies.

Commitment 3: Response to Public Comment

Fresno COG has and will demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the RTP and the FTIP as well as other public plans and projects, and forward all formal public comments to the Fresno COG Policy Board or appropriate committee for consideration prior to decision making.

Commitment 4: Review

Fresno COG will periodically review the efficacy of the procedures and strategies contained in this PPP to ensure a full and open participation process that is effective in reaching the region's community members.

II. FEDERAL AND STATE REQUIREMENTS

Developing an effective public involvement/participation plan involves identifying techniques to encourage open public input. Federal statutes and regulations provide general guidelines for public involvement processes and procedures. However, while the set of techniques for any given situation may differ depending upon such factors as demographics and identified potential impacts, the general approach to developing a public involvement/participation plan contains elements that are relevant and responsive to all communities. This information is provided to help practitioners identify legal requirements for engaging the public that were created to protect and promote good practices. Phrases are provided from statute, regulation, and executive orders relating to different aspects of engaging the public. To understand the broader context of those requirements, we encourage you to refer to the complete statute, regulation, or executive order.

Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act

Federal Surface Transportation legislation known as the "Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, (H.R. 22) (2016), underscores the need for public involvement as did its predecessor. The law requires metropolitan planning agencies such as Fresno COG to "provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation agency employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, public ports and certain private providers of transportation, including intercity bus operators and employer-based commuting programs and other interested parties" with a reasonable opportunity to comment on transportation plans and programs. In addition, MPOs should consult with agencies and officials responsible for tourism and natural disaster risk reduction in developing plans and TIPs.

The FAST Act also requires Fresno COG — when developing the Regional Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) — to coordinate transportation plans with expected growth, economic development, environmental protection and other related planning activities within our region. Toward this end, this PPP outlines key decision points for consulting with affected local, regional, state and federal agencies and tribal governments.

TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (with additional amendments) provides that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age or disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Title VI was further clarified and supplemented by the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 and a series of federal statutes enacted in the 1990s.

EXECUTIVE ORDERS

An Executive Order is an order given by the President to federal agencies. As a recipient of federal revenues, Fresno COG assists federal transportation agencies in complying with these orders.

- Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations

This order requires that disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations be identified and addressed in order to achieve environmental justice. Minority populations are defined in the order as Black/African-American, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaskan Native. Low-income populations are defined in the order as persons whose household income (or in the case of a community or group, whose median household income) is at or below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines. The fundamental principles of environmental justice include:

- Avoiding, minimizing or mitigating disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations;
- Ensuring full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision making process; and
- Denying, reducing or significantly delaying benefits to minority populations and low-income communities.

- Executive Order 13166: Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency

Executive Order 13166 states that people who speak limited English should have meaningful access to federally conducted and federally funded programs and activities. It requires that all federal agencies identify any need for services to those with limited English proficiency, and to develop and implement a system providing those services so all persons can have meaningful access.

- Executive Order 13175 — Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments
Establishes regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with tribal officials in developing of federal policies that have tribal implications, to strengthen the government-to-government relationships with Indian tribes, and to reduce unfunded mandates on Indian tribes.

- Executive Order 12372: Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs
Executive Order 12372 calls for intergovernmental review to ensure that federally funded or assisted projects do not inadvertently interfere with state and local plans and priorities. The Executive Order does not replace public participation, comment, or review requirements of other federal laws, such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) but gives the states an additional mechanism to ensure federal agency responsiveness to state and local concerns.

THE BROWN ACT (STATE OF CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT CODE SECTIONS 54950-54962)

The Ralph M. Brown Act governs the meeting and actions of governing boards of local public agencies and their created bodies. Brown Act requirements also apply to any committee or other subsidiary body of a local agency, whether permanent or temporary, decision-making or advisory, which is created by such a governing board. The Brown Act sets minimum standards for open meetings relative to public access, location, notice posting, agenda distribution, and public input. The public agency may adopt reasonable regulations ensuring the public's right to address the agency, including regulations to limit the total amount of time allocated for public testimony. The Fresno COG Board and its standing committees all adhere to these requirements involving proper noticing, access and the ability to address the Board and committees.

Due to time constraints, unscheduled public comments may be limited to three minutes in length; however, the agency encourages interested citizens to provide written copies to the Board/Committees, particularly if the statement is too long to be presented in its entirety. Citizens unable to attend the meetings may submit their concerns and ideas in writing to staff, who will then present the comments to respective Boards/Committees orally or in writing.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires involving the community, particularly those with disabilities, in service developments and improvements. All events held for programs or projects with Federal aid and open to the general public must be made accessible to everyone, including the disabled. Fresno COG is in compliance with the ADA by providing accessible and usable formats, notifications and locations for workshops; meetings and public hearings; consulting with individuals from

the disabled community; conducting outreach by maintaining an extensive mailing and email lists; developing contacts; and by other means of notification and accommodation to participate in the planning process.

CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS

The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) is an annual codification of the general and permanent rules published in the Federal Register by the executive departments and agencies of the Federal government. The CFR is divided into 50 titles representing broad areas subject to Federal regulation. Each title is divided into chapters that are assigned to agencies issuing regulations pertaining to that broad subject area. It presents the official and complete text of agency regulations in one organized publication and provides a comprehensive and convenient reference for those who may need to know the text of general and permanent Federal regulations. The MPO public participation requirements outlined in the CFR (23 CFR 45.316) are carefully considered and addressed throughout this entire PPP.

2008 CALIFORNIA LEGISLATION

State law (SB 375, Steinberg, Chapter 728, 2008 Statutes) calls on agencies such as Fresno COG to develop a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) — an element of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)— to integrate planning for growth and housing with long-range transportation investments aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions for cars and light trucks. The law also calls for a separate PPP for development of the RTP and the SCS. Appendix A contains the PPP for the Fresno region's long-range transportation plan and SCS as required.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Several other federal and state laws call on Fresno COG to involve, consult with and notify the public in its decisions. Fresno COG complies with all other public notification requirements of the California Public Records Act, the California Environmental Quality Act and Assembly Bill 52, as well as other applicable state and federal laws.

III. PROJECT OR PLAN-SPECIFIC PUBLIC PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

There are two key transportation initiatives specially called out in Federal law as needing early and continuing opportunities for public participation. The RTP and the FTIP which are linked together. The long-range RTP and SCS prioritizes and guides all Fresno County transportation development over 25 years, while the FTIP is the short-term programming document that identifies funding for those programs and projects in the RTP/SCS.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN (RTP)

The RTP is a comprehensive blueprint for transportation investment (transit, highway, local roads, bicycle and pedestrian projects) that establishes the financial foundation for how the region pays for its surface transportation system, setting the policy on how projected revenues are to be spent. The RTP is generally updated every four years, with a limited number of amendments as needed. Because of its comprehensive, long-term vision, the RTP provides the earliest and the best opportunity for interested residents and public agencies to influence Fresno COG's policy and investment priorities for Fresno County transportation. It is at this early RTP development stage where investment priorities and major planning-level project design concepts are established, and broad, regional impacts of transportation on the environment are addressed.

Under California Senate Bill (SB) 375 (Steinberg, Chapter 728, 2008 Statutes), the RTP must include a SCS to integrate planning for growth and housing with long-range transportation investments, including goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions for cars and light trucks. SB 375 mandates that MPOs must meet certain GHG reduction standards set by the Air Resources Board. Fresno COG, along with other San Joaquin Valley MPOs, have worked diligently on meeting those targets through the use an integrated land use, transportation, and housing plan. The goal is to have greenhouse gas emissions reduced to 2012 levels by 2040. Air quality conformity findings are distributed for a 30-day public comment period, and a public hearing is held by the Fresno COG Policy Board to elicit public input. All applicable posting requirements are followed.

Opportunities for public participation for the RTP are different for RTP updates versus RTP amendments. RTP updates include significant revisions to the RTP document, while RTP amendments are generally specific to project scopes, schedules, or costs. Fresno COG's commitment to public outreach is highlighted in blue, following descriptions of the amendment types.

- **RTP Update**

This is a complete update of the most current long-range RTP, which is prepared pursuant to state and federal requirements. The RTP update reflects reaffirmed or new planning priorities and changing projections of growth and travel demand based on a reasonable

forecast of future revenues. As necessary, Fresno COG prepares two technical companion documents for RTP updates: a program-level Environmental Impact Report per California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines, and transportation air quality conformity analyses (to ensure clean air mandates are met) per Federal Clean Air Act requirements. Certain revisions to the RTP may warrant a revision or update to these technical documents.

Both RTP and SB 375 updates call for separate public participation plans that specifically address outreach for the RTP and the SCS. Appendix A includes Fresno COG's RTP/SCS Public Outreach Strategy that details the extensive public consultation and participation strategies Fresno COG will use to communicate with Fresno County region residents, public agency officials and stakeholder groups over many months, including them in the transportation planning process from beginning to end. This program will help ensure that environmental justice issues are addressed and that interested members of the public have ample opportunity to understand and provide meaningful input while the RTP is in its early stages and throughout the planning process.

- **RTP Amendment**

An amendment is a major revision to a long-range RTP, including adding or deleting a project, major changes in project costs, and/or design concept and scope (e.g., changing project locations, open to traffic dates, or the number of through traffic lanes). *An amendment requires public review and comment, demonstration that the project can be completed based on expected funding, and/or a finding that the change is consistent with Federal transportation conformity mandates. Amendments that require an update to the air quality conformity analysis will be subject to conformity and interagency consultation procedures. Changes to projects that are included in the financially unconstrained portion of the RTP (as information only) do not require an amendment.*

- **RTP Administrative Modification**

This is a revision to the RTP for minor changes to project/project phase costs, or funding sources. An administrative modification does *not* require public review and comment, demonstration that the project can be completed based on expected funding, nor a finding that the change is consistent with federal transportation conformity requirements. As such, the public participation process for RTP amendments follows the requirements as outlined for the FTIP, as applicable.

FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (FTIP)

The Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) implements the policy and investment priorities expressed by the public and adopted by Fresno COG in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). In this way, public comments made as part of the RTP are reflected in the FTIP as well. The FTIP covers a four-year timeframe, and all projects included in the FTIP must be consistent with the RTP. The FTIP is a comprehensive listing of Fresno County Area surface transportation projects — including transit, highway, local roadways, bicycle and pedestrian investments that:

- Receive Federal funds, or are
- Subject to a Federally required action, or are
- Regionally significant, for Federal air quality conformity purposes.

The FTIP includes a financial plan that demonstrates there are enough revenues to ensure that the funds committed (or “programmed”) to the projects are available to implement the projects or project phases. FTIP adoption also requires a finding of conformity with Federal transportation-air quality conformity mandates.

The FTIP is updated every two years, with amendments occurring as needed. FTIP updates or adoptions generally follow a similar public participation process as a Type 5 amendment (see below). For FTIP amendments, FHWA identifies six types, each with specific participation requirements, as indicated below.

Expedited Project Selection Procedures (EPSP) allows eligible projects to be moved between FTIP fiscal years if the project cost and scope do not change. Fresno COG staff is Federally authorized to use EPSP without additional State or Federal approval. Fresno COG does not require a formal public participation process for EPSP actions. A more detailed description of the EPSP Policy is available from Fresno COG staff upon request and is incorporated into the FTIP document.

Federal rules allow Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to group or combine projects that are not considered to be of appropriate scale for individual listing. Such grouped projects are often referred to as such, also previously referred to as “Lump Sums”. Fresno COG uses this ability to program grouped projects within the FTIP. Such projects may be grouped by function (e.g., bike lanes), work type (e.g., maintenance), or geographical area. Once grouped, the MPO is required to maintain, outside of the FTIP, a detail list of the projects contained in each group called a “Grouped Project Detailed Listing”.

Modifications to the projects or costs within the Grouped Project Detailed Listings are conducted on an as needed basis and do not require a formal public participation process. However, any changes to

the overall grouped project costs or scope are done in accordance with the amendment types below. Grouped Project Detailed Listings are made available through the Fresno COG website and distributed to Caltrans and FHWA.

FTIP Technical Correction

Technical corrections may be made by Fresno COG staff as necessary. Technical corrections are not subject to an administrative modification or an amendment, and may include revisions such as: changes to information and projects that are included only for illustrative purposes; changes to information outside of the FTIP period; changes to information not required to be included in the FTIP per federal regulations; or changes to correct simple errors or omissions, including data entry errors. These technical corrections cannot significantly impact the cost, scope, or schedule within the FTIP period, nor will they be subject to a public review and comment process, re- demonstration of fiscal constraint, or a conformity determination.

FTIP Amendment Type 1 – Administrative Modifications

Administrative modifications include minor changes to project cost, schedule, or funding sources. Administrative modifications do not require published public notices, public review and comment or a public hearing, except for certain types of Federal Transit Administration projects, which must go through a formal amendment process. Administrative modifications only require approval by Fresno COG (**see below). State and Federal agencies are notified, but do not take approval action on Administrative modifications. Administrative modifications do not require re-demonstration of fiscal constraint or conformity determination. *These modifications are posted on Fresno COG's website at the time of action and are later posted on Caltrans website.*

****Consistent with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) letter dated June 7, 2011, Fresno COG has the discretion to delegate authority to the Executive Director to approve FTIP Administrative Modifications to the Federal State Transportation Improvement Program (FSTIP) consistent with approved FSTIP/FTIP Administrative Modification and Amendment Procedures. Such delegation of authority was granted as part of Fresno COG's Resolution No. 2011-25 which was reaffirmed on April 26, 2012 and approved by Caltrans on May 11, 2012. The following procedures apply to this delegation of authority: Fresno COG will send copies of the approved administrative modification to Caltrans, FHWA, and FTA. Once the administrative modification is approved by Fresno COG, the administrative modification will be deemed part of the Federal State Transportation Improvement Program (FSTIP). Fresno COG will demonstrate in a subsequent amendment that the net financial change from each administrative modification has been*

accounted for. Caltrans will conduct periodic reviews of Fresno COG's administrative modification process to confirm adherence to the procedures. Noncompliance with the procedures will result in revocation of the MPO's delegation.

FTIP Formal Amendment Type 2 – Funding Changes

Type 2 amendments primarily include project cost changes that are greater than minor changes identified under administrative modification procedures. The projects in a Type 2 amendment do not change in design concept or scope, and the conformity analysis years as assumed for the regional analysis of the conforming RTP/SCS and the FTIP remain unchanged. Type 2 amendments do not require published public notices or a public hearing, except for certain types of Federal Transit Administration projects. Type 2 formal amendments require approval by Fresno COG, Caltrans, and FHWA/FTA. Publicly accessible notification of a Type 2 formal amendment is posted on Fresno COG's website at least seven days prior to action and distributed to local agency partners through Fresno COG's standing committees. *Fresno COG will consider public comments on the amendment prior to approval action.*

FTIP Formal Amendment Type 3 – Exempt Projects

Type 3 amendments significantly revise, add or delete exempt or non-regionally significant projects or project phases to/from the FTIP. Type 3 amendments require approval by Fresno COG, Caltrans, and FHWA/FTA. Public notification of a Type 3 formal amendment is posted on Fresno COG's website at least seven days prior to action and distributed to local agency partners through Fresno COG's standing committees. Type 3 amendments do not require published public notices, or a public hearing, except for certain types of Federal Transit Administration Projects. *Fresno COG will consider public comments on the amendment prior to approval action.*

FTIP Formal Amendment Type 4– Conformity Determination that Relies on a Previous Regional Emissions Analysis

Type 4 amendments primarily include adding or deleting non-exempt projects that have already been appropriately modeled for air quality purposes as part of the adopted RTP/SCS. In this case, the federal approving agencies can use a previous analysis of the project's impact on air quality for approval purposes. Type 4 amendments may be accompanied by an RTP/SCS amendment to maintain consistency. The FTIP amendment and RTP/SCS Amendment (if applicable) follow the same public process. Type 4 amendments require approval by Fresno COG, Caltrans, and FHWA/FTA.

Fresno COG follows requirements for public notification of a Type 4 formal amendment as follows:

- *Legal notice for 30-day public comment period*
- *Legal notice and hosting of a public hearing*
- *Posts amendment information on Fresno COG's website during the public comment period*
- *Publishes amendment information as part of the following publicly available Fresno COG agendas: Transportation Technical Committee, Policy Advisory Committee and Fresno COG Policy Board*
- *Considers and responds to public comments received during comment period*

FTIP Formal Amendment Type 5 – Conformity Determination and New Regional Emissions Analysis

Type 5 amendments are the highest-level amendment and primarily involve adding or deleting new non-exempt projects that must be modeled for air quality purposes as part of the RTP/SCS. Type 5 amendments require an air quality conformity document that demonstrates conformity with applicable air quality requirements and a new regional emissions analysis. This type of amendment is also used when a non-exempt, regionally significant project makes a change to either the design concept or scope or conformity analysis completion year that is not consistent with the existing regional emissions analysis. The FTIP amendment, air quality conformity document, and RTP amendment (if applicable) follow the same public process. Type 5 amendments require approval action by Fresno COG, Caltrans, and FHWA.

Fresno COG follows requirements for public notification of a Type 5 formal amendment as follows:

- *Legal notice for 30-day public comment period*
- *Legal notice and hosting of a public hearing*
- *Posts amendment information on Fresno COG's website during public comment period*
- *Publishes amendment information as part of the following publicly available Fresno COG agendas: Transportation Technical Committee, Policy Advisory Committee and Fresno COG Policy Board*
- *Considers and responds to public comments received during comment period*

FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM OF PROJECTS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

As required by Federal law and guidance, a Program of Projects (POP) for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) projects must be developed by the designated recipient of FTA funds. The POP is a list of proposed FTA-funded projects that must undergo a public review process. Guidance allows the FTIP to function as the POP if the public is notified through public notice that the FTIP public review process satisfies the public participation requirements of the POP. Once the FTIP is approved, the document will function as the POP for recipients of FTA funds in the Fresno COG region. Fresno COG's public participation process for the FTIP is intended to satisfy the funding recipients' public participation process for their POP.

This Public Participation Plan follows the procedures for public involvement associated with the FTIP development, and therefore satisfies public participation requirements for the POP. All public notices of public involvement activities and times established for public review and comment on the FTIP will state that they satisfy the POP requirements of FTA programs such as Section 5307, Section 5337 and Section 5339 Programs.

ANNUAL LISTING OF OBLIGATED PROJECTS

By federal requirement, at the end of each calendar year Fresno COG publishes an annual listing of obligated projects, which is a record of project delivery for the previous year. The listing is also intended to increase awareness of government spending on transportation projects to the public. *Copies of this annual listing may be obtained from Fresno COG's web site at www.fresnocog.org. Hard copies are also available upon request by contacting the Fresno COG office at (559) 233-4148.*

CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Under the Federal FAST Act legislation, Fresno COG is required to prepare a congestion management process (CMP) document for Fresno County. The CMP is a systematic process for managing congestion. It provides information on transportation system performance and on alternative strategies for alleviating congestion and improving mobility for persons and goods to levels that meet State and local needs. In its most recent CMP updates, *Fresno COG has made substantial improvements by focusing on major commute corridors and monitoring traffic conditions through newly available data sources.*

AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY PUBLIC AND INTERAGENCY CONSULTATION

Fresno COG provides opportunities for early coordination with appropriate agencies and the public in determining the type of environmental review documents an action requires, the scope of the document, the level of analysis, and related environmental requirements. This involves exchanging information from a proposal for action to preparation of the environmental review documents.

A dialogue between agencies regarding air quality transportation conformity considerations takes place in certain instances prior to Fresno COG adopting its RTP/SCS or FTIP. These consultations are conducted through the San Joaquin Valley Interagency Consultation Group, which includes representatives of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, FHWA, FTA, the California Air Resources Board (CARB), the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, the eight San Joaquin Valley MPOs, and Caltrans Headquarters and District 6 office. These agencies review updates and, in certain instances, amendments to the RTP/SCS and FTIP to ensure they comply to federal transportation conformity regulations via air quality transportation conformity analysis.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW VIA REGIONAL AND STATE INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSES

The intent of intergovernmental review, per Executive Order 12372, is to ensure that the Fresno region's federally funded or assisted projects do not inadvertently interfere with state and local plans and priorities. *Applicants in Fresno County with programs/projects for intergovernmental review should submit documentation to Fresno COG and/or the State Clearinghouse in Sacramento (as required by Executive Order 12372), which are responsible for coordinating state and local review of applications for federal grants or loans.*

OVERALL WORK PROGRAM (OWP)

The OWP is a critical document that details Fresno COG's scheduling and distribution of work, especially the allocation of resources needed to address each task required of Fresno COG. In effect, the OWP constitutes a set of instructions for planning and programming work to be carried out by staff or consultants each year. *Fresno COG staff works with local agencies, Caltrans, other transportation planning agencies, other public and private associations and the general public independently and through committees to develop the program. A draft of the OWP is taken through the Fresno COG committee process with a final adoption by the Policy Board. Staff and the Board usually begin to gather public input on the OWP in December of each year.*

UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS (UTN) ASSESSMENT

Each year, pursuant to the Transportation Development Act (TDA) requirements, Fresno COG, as the RTPA and MPO for Fresno County, is required to identify any unmet transit needs that may exist in the Fresno County region. Should any unmet transit needs be identified, a further determination must be made to establish whether those needs are reasonable to meet. In accordance with state law, TDA funds must be allocated first to unmet transit needs that are found to be reasonable to meet before any remaining funds can be distributed to local jurisdictions for non-transit purposes. At the conclusion of each UTN process, the Fresno COG Policy Board must adopt a resolution making one of the following three findings: there are no unmet transit needs; there are no unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet; or there are unmet transit needs, including transit needs that are reasonable to

meet. Under TDA regulations, the UTN assessment must include the following elements:

1. An annual assessment of the size and location of identifiable groups likely to be transit dependent or transit disadvantaged, including, but not limited to, the elderly, the handicapped, including individuals eligible for paratransit and other special transportation services, and persons of limited means, including, but not limited to, recipients under the CalWORKs program;
2. An analysis of the adequacy of existing public transportation services and specialized transportation services, including privately and publicly owned services; and
3. An analysis of the potential alternative public transportation services and specialized transportation services, including privately and publicly owned services.

To further implement the UTN assessment process, the Fresno COG Policy Board has adopted definitions for both “unmet transit need” and “reasonable to meet” that are reviewed every five years in compliance with the TDA requirements. All unmet transit needs received during the annual UTN Assessment process are reviewed by the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC).

Public participation is an important component in the UTN assessment process. The TDA requires Fresno COG to hold at least one public hearing to receive public input regarding potential unmet transit needs in the region. *Although the TDA only requires Fresno COG to hold one public hearing, staff goes beyond the minimum requirements to provide public hearings throughout the region, as well as to make presentations about the unmet transit needs process to seniors at meal sites, community groups, and the legislative bodies of local jurisdictions. Public hearings are typically held during a regularly scheduled meeting of the Policy Board. Public notice of the hearing, including the date, time, location, and specific purpose is provided at least 30-days in advance of the meeting through publication in one or more newspapers of general circulation, including a Spanish language publication. Written notification is also provided to those persons and organizations (over 400) that have indicated an interest in the unmet transit needs process, including the private social service agencies and public transit operators that are represented on the SSTAC.*

Public hearings are held to give the public opportunity to identify potential unmet transit needs in the region. After the conclusion of a hearing(s), a report is prepared that addresses the three required UTN assessment elements listed above, analyzes any identified unmet transit need for the “reasonable to meet” threshold, and provides a recommended finding for the Policy Board. Any comments received after the public hearing, or during the Policy Board’s hearing to adopt the UTN finding, are assessed during the subsequent year’s UTN assessment process.

IV. ADDITIONAL FRESNO COG PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICIES

The following requirements will apply as deemed appropriate by Fresno COG's management staff and Policy Board Chair:

1. As required, a public notice will be placed in the legal advertising sections of at least one newspaper of general circulation within the affected community, including a Spanish-language publication when possible.
2. Fresno COG shall provide appropriate assistance, auxiliary aids, a translator/interpreter for non-English speaking and hearing-impaired individuals and/or services when necessary if requested three working days in advance of a meeting. If Fresno COG is unable to accommodate a request for a public hearing, then the hearing will be continued on a specified date when accommodations are available. Fresno COG staff is available to speak with members of the public in English and Spanish and may be available in additional languages. After calling Fresno COG's main line phone number, 559-233-4148, an English or Spanish option is given to each caller. Select your preference. Then, when prompted, dial 0 for the operator who will connect you to a bilingual staff member.
3. Fresno COG's website maintains a link to a translation service for information contained on the site.
4. Meeting agendas and minutes are made available on written request via regular mail, and they are added regularly to Fresno COG's website. Agendas are also posted at meeting locations are posted at least 72 hours before regular meetings of advisory or standing committees, or 24 hours before special meetings. Fresno COG circulates an annotated agenda with supporting documents to all committee members and support staff, and annotated agenda packets are sent to the main branch of the Fresno County library. The Brown Act (CA Government Code 54954.1) also states that any person may request a copy of the agenda or a copy of all the documents constituting the agenda packet, of any meeting of a legislative body be mailed to that person. That request is valid for the calendar year in which it is filed and must be renewed following January 1 of each year. The legislative body may establish a fee for mailing the agenda or agenda packet, which shall not exceed the cost of providing the service.
5. Public hearings will be held prior to a decision point as a formal means to gather citizen comments and positions from all interested parties. Fresno COG hearings are required for the adoption of major plans, programming of money and for the annual Unmet Transit Needs analysis. Notices for public hearings will be published in a general circulation newspaper. Fresno

COG will accept prepared comments from the public during the period between the notice and hearing date. These comments will be considered part of the public record. Also, during this period, Fresno COG staff will accept questions and provide clarification on issues raised by the public.

Fresno COG's media list includes the following media types:

- newspaper
- radio
- magazine
- online
- television
- appropriate community, business or government publications and contacts serving Fresno County

6. If major amendments are made to any plans or programs during the review and comment period, the plan(s) will be made available for an additional 30-45-day public review and comment period prior to final adoption. Such changes shall also be advertised via news release to all media outlets, on community flyers and on the Fresno COG website as deemed necessary in the specific project area prior to final adoption.
7. For high-profile projects/plans, Fresno COG may form an ad-hoc advisory committee specific to that plan or project, or determine what, if any, existing committees would appropriately review the plan or project.

V. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Fresno County region, Fresno COG needs to consult with groups and agencies responsible for other types of planning activities that are affected by transportation, and other agencies such as Indian tribal governments. Title 23 CFR part 450 requires that MPOs shall consult, as appropriate, with state and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation. Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments (November 6, 2000), establishes regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with tribal officials in developing federal policies with tribal implications to strengthen government-to-government relationships with Indian tribes and to reduce unfunded mandates upon local tribes.

BOTTOM-UP PLANNING AND INTERAGENCY CONSULTATION

Fresno COG's monthly standing committees (Transportation Technical Committee, Policy Advisory Committee and Policy Board include members appointed to represent the 15 local governments in the Fresno County region. Further, the numerous subcommittees, technical advisory committees and working groups facilitate Fresno COG's ability to provide a framework for ground-up planning and more frequent and ongoing participation by interested parties at all stages of the process.

RTP AND FTIP CONSULTATION

Crucial decisions, whether to support or fund a transportation program or project in the region, are made in developing the RTP/SCS. In contrast, the FTIP defines project budgets, schedules and phasing for those programs and projects that are already part of the RTP/SCS. The FTIP does not provide any additional information regarding environmental impacts beyond those found in the program-level environmental analysis prepared for the RTP/SCS. Further environmental review occurs at the project delivery agency or jurisdiction with a project-specific environmental impacts report.

Starting at the RTP/SCS development stage, Fresno COG staff concurrently consults with appropriate agencies regarding the FTIP. Fresno COG consults extensively with many agencies in preparing the RTP/SCS. For the FTIP, this consultation includes:

- *Communication of the schedule of upcoming amendments and FTIP adoption;*
- *Special workshops;*
- *Agency coordination reviewing preliminary draft documents before releasing them for public review;*
- *Presentations on the draft formal amendments to standing committees and the Policy Board.*

NATIVE-AMERICAN TRIBAL GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION

State and Federal regulations require Fresno COG to conduct government-to-government consultation regarding its planning and programming activities with tribal governments of Federally-recognized Native-American tribes. Additionally, Assembly Bill 52 (Gatto, Statutes of 2014) requires that state and local agencies are to analyze the impacts to Native-American cultural resources under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Lead agencies under CEQA must work with tribal governments to avoid or mitigate impacts to cultural resources.

Federal and State law require local agencies to consult with Federally recognized tribal governments prior to making transportation decisions, taking actions, or implementing programs that may impact their communities. This activity is separate from and precedes the public participation process. Therefore, Fresno COG adopted a Tribal Consultation Plan to guide these consultation efforts. The plan is included in this document as Appendix B.

Fresno COG consults with tribal governments on an ongoing basis, not only on individual projects. FCOG strives to keep open communication with tribes to facilitate better relationships and better reflect tribes' viewpoints and needs in regional planning documents and projects. The Native American tribes in Fresno County receive the following information by telephone, mail, email, or in-person visits: the Fresno County Transportation Guide, the Regional Directory, newsletters, workshop invitations, grant notices, requests to participate in program guidelines development, working groups and scoring committees.

Fresno COG will continue the outreach activities for Native American tribes as well as seek new ways to enhance the government-to-government relationship between Fresno COG and the Native American tribal governments. In particular, Fresno COG will make every effort to consult and involve the Native American tribes in developing future plans and programs, including, but not limited to the short and long-range transit plans and the Federal Transportation Improvement Program. Fresno COG will consult with federal land management agencies and federally recognized Native American tribal governments when preparing planning studies and programs affecting the agency and tribe by:

- Initiating consultation from the Executive Director or his/her designee to the agency and tribal chairperson.*
- Offering to meet to discuss federal agency and tribal needs and concerns regarding impacts within their jurisdictions prior to beginning the planning process. If the agency, tribal chairperson and/or their representatives elect not to meet, Fresno COG will send a copy of the draft report for their review.*

- *Consulting with agency and tribal governments while developing the RTP, addressing agency and tribal concerns regarding impacts within their jurisdiction and again prior to adoption of the RTP.*
- *Inviting agency and tribal representatives to public meetings.*

INTERESTED PARTIES

Fresno COG encourages involvement of a broad range of people and organizations in the RTP/SCS planning process by reaching out to a wide variety of potential participants. Per state law, Fresno COG has expanded its list of interested parties which includes the public, stakeholders and tribal governments, to whom we conduct outreach.

The following list of Interested Parties are target audiences Fresno COG aims to reach in the region:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ▪ affordable housing advocates | ▪ neighborhood and community groups |
| ▪ business organizations | ▪ neighborhood councils |
| ▪ city managers | ▪ organizations serving rural area residents |
| ▪ community development representatives | ▪ planners |
| ▪ commercial property interests | ▪ private providers of transportation |
| ▪ community-based organizations | ▪ private sector |
| ▪ educational community and institutions | ▪ providers of freight transportation services |
| ▪ elderly and retired persons | ▪ public agencies |
| ▪ elected officials | ▪ public health and wellness representatives |
| ▪ environmental advocates | ▪ public sector |
| ▪ federal land management agencies | ▪ representatives of the disabled |
| ▪ freight shippers | ▪ representatives of transportation agency employees |
| ▪ general public | ▪ representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities |
| ▪ non-emergency transportation service providers | ▪ representatives of users of public transit |
| ▪ health and wellness representatives | ▪ special interest non-profit agencies |
| ▪ home builder representatives | ▪ subregional organizations such as Councils of Governments |
| ▪ homeowner associations | ▪ transit operators |
| ▪ landowners | ▪ transportation advocates |
| ▪ Limited English Proficiency populations | ▪ Tribal governments |
| ▪ minority and low-income populations | ▪ women's organizations |
| | ▪ schools and school-based groups |

VI. OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

GET INVOLVED: SIGN UP FOR FRESNO COG'S DATABASE

Want to keep up with what is happening at Fresno COG? Sign up to receive Fresno COG's monthly e-newsletter entitled "Coming Up at Fresno COG". Contact Fresno COG's Public Information Office online at comment@fresnocog.org, or call 559-233-4148, and ask to be included on one of Fresno COG's notification contact databases.

GET INVOLVED: SOCIAL MEDIA

Another way to keep up with hot topics, events and comment opportunities is to follow Fresno COG on social media, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram. All of Fresno COG's social media platforms are accessible via the footer (bottom section) of Fresno COG's website: www.fresnocog.org.

GET INVOLVED: ACCESSIBLE MEETINGS

All Fresno COG public meetings or events are held in locations accessible to persons with disabilities. Monthly meetings of the Policy Board and its standing committees takes place at Fresno COG offices.

Assistive listening devices or other auxiliary aids are available upon request. Sign-language interpreters, readers for persons with visual impairments, or language translators will be provided if requested through Fresno COG's Public Information (559-233-4148) at least three working days (72 hours) prior to the meeting (five or more days' notice is preferred). A statement notifying the public of this policy is placed on each Fresno COG formal meeting agendas:

"The Fresno COG offices and restrooms are ADA accessible. Representatives or individuals with disabilities should contact Fresno COG at (559) 233-4148, at least three days in advance, to request auxiliary aids and/or translation services necessary to participate in the public meeting / public hearing. If Fresno COG is unable to accommodate an auxiliary aid or translation request for a public hearing, after receiving proper notice, the hearing will be continued on a specified date when accommodations are available."

FRESNO COG BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

Fresno COG provides the public with many opportunities for continuing involvement in the agency's work. Below are descriptions of each of Fresno COG's standing or advisory boards, committees and commissions. They offer the organization an excellent opportunity for expanding public participation opportunities during the transportation planning process. This is accomplished not only by active membership but by presentations made before them and attendance at their open meetings. To find out

more about each group, who staffs them and how to get involved with the work they are doing, contact the Fresno COG at 559-233-4148, email COG staff at brendav@fresnocog.org or read up on the committees on Fresno COG's website at www.fresnocog.org.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM MULTIDISCIPLINARY ADVISORY GROUP

The Active Transportation Program (ATP) Multidisciplinary Advisory Group (MAG) assists in developing and updating of the program guidelines and scoring criteria and participates in the evaluation of project applications. Participants have expertise in bicycling and pedestrian transportation, including Safe Routes to Schools projects, and in projects benefiting disadvantaged communities. The representatives are geographically balanced, representing tribal agencies, state agencies, Fresno COG, local jurisdictions in Fresno County, and non-governmental organizations. The MAG prioritizes and ranks the applications and ensures that 25% of available funds are dedicated to projects and programs benefiting disadvantaged communities as identified in the state guidelines and in the Fresno COG Regional Competitive ATP Guidelines. *The Committee meets on an as needed basis.*

AIRPORT LAND USE COMMISSION OF FRESNO COUNTY

The Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) protects public health, safety and welfare by ensuring that orderly development and prevention of excessive noise and safety hazards around public use airports is followed in accordance to state and local laws. ALUCs establish the policies on land uses around the airport, ensuring they are compatible with airport operations. This is done on an advisory basis. ALUCs also evaluate proposed local agency land use policy actions with relevant provisions outlined within the Fresno County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP), reviewing land use plans and individual development projects to ensure they are within the noise and safety standards outlined in the adopted ALUCP. *The ALUC meets the first Monday of every other month at 2:00 pm.*

ASSOCIATION FOR THE BEAUTIFICATION OF HIGHWAY 99

The Association for the Beautification of Highway 99 was formed in 1998. Its members include business representatives, community activists, government agency staff and elected officials. The group's role is to advise Caltrans, Fresno County, and the cities of Fresno, Fowler, Selma, and Kingsburg on matters relating to the aesthetics of Highway 99. Fresno COG provides staff support to the Association, and funded the *Highway 99 Beautification Master Plan* of 2000, and its update, completed in late 2016. *The Committee meets on an as needed basis.*

CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROCESS (CMP) STEERING COMMITTEE

The CMP was developed to provide guidance to the congestion management process, which is required by the federal planning regulations. The CMP Steering Committee consists of representatives from the local cities/the County, Caltrans, transit operators, and the general public. The CMP Steering Committee

has extensive technical expertise in traffic engineering, and provides advice on subjects such as traffic monitoring, traffic congestion, system performance, etc. The Committee works with Fresno COG on the CMP update, and reviews and approves important metrics such as performance measures, CMP network, etc. *The committee meets on an as needed basis.*

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SUBCOMMITTEE

The Environmental Justice Advisory Group, structured to serve as a subcommittee of Fresno COG's Transportation Technical Committee (TTC), assists Fresno COG staff in setting thresholds for environmental justice populations during the development of Fresno COG's Environmental Justice Plan. The subcommittee reports all advisory recommendations to the TTC through an environmental justice representative. Then the TTC's recommendations would be referred to the Policy Advisory Committee and Fresno COG Policy Board as needed. *They convene when Fresno COG staff, the TTC, the Policy Advisory Committee or the Fresno COG Policy Board request recommendations on items involving environmental justice populations.*

FRESNO COG POLICY BOARD

Policy decisions are made by the Fresno COG Policy Board. The board comprises the mayors of each incorporated city and the chairman of the County Board of Supervisors, or their designated elected representative. *The Policy Board meets on the last Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at Fresno COG.*

MEASURE C CITIZEN OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

The Measure C Citizen Oversight Committee was developed as an advisory body to the Fresno COG Board and the Fresno County Transportation Authority (FCTA), to inform the public and ensure that Measure C funding program revenues and expenditures are spent as promised to the public. Fresno COG and FCTA staff the Committee and provide technical and administrative assistance. *The Committee meets as deemed necessary on the second Thursday of each month at Fresno COG.*

MEASURE C TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Measure C TOD Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was formed to provide guidance to the development of the Measure C TOD program. The TOD program was established to encourage transit supportive land use and boost transit ridership. The TOD TAC developed the TOD program guidelines and policies, which provides guidance for the annual award under the TOD program. The TOD TAC also makes recommendations for any revision or update related to the TOD program Guidelines and Policies. *The Committee meets annually.*

MEASURE C TOD SCORING COMMITTEE

The Measure C TOD Scoring Committee was created to provide funding recommendation for the Measure C TOD program. The Committee reviews the TOD grant applications, scores the projects, and makes funding recommendation to Fresno COG's TTC/PAC, and Policy Board. The TOD Scoring Committee consists of COG's member jurisdictions, Fresno County Transportation Authority (FCTA), transit operator, and public members. *The TOD Scoring Committee meets annually.*

POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) comprises the chief administrative officer or city manager of each member agency or their designated representative. Except for urgency matters, all items must first be considered by the PAC before submission to the Policy Board. *The PAC meets on the second Friday of each month at 10 a.m. at Fresno COG.*

REGIONAL SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Regional Safety Committee was formed to provide guidance on the annual safety performance targets and the regional approach to address safety challenges in Fresno County. The Committee consists of representatives from the cities/County, Caltrans, bike/ped groups as well as transit agencies. *The Committee meets annually.*

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN ROUNDTABLE

This committee guides Fresno COG's Regional Transportation Plan while it is undergoing an update. RTPs must be updated every four years; however, it takes over two years to implement and complete the update process. The 39-member Roundtable is comprised of 16 representatives from each of Fresno COG's member agencies, 20 positions for public agencies and stakeholder groups, and three positions for those who represent the public-at-large. *The RTP Roundtable meets monthly, at 2:00 pm on the fourth Wednesday.*

RHNA SUBCOMMITTEE

The RHNA subcommittee comprises representatives from local governments and housing stakeholders in the region. The subcommittee will provide guidance and recommendation on the methodology of RHNA housing allocation as well as the development of RHNA plan. The subcommittee is an advisory body and makes recommendation to TTC/PAC and Policy Board. *The committee meets on an as needed basis.*

SB 743 TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The SB 743 Technical Committee provides input to the Fresno County SB 743 regional guideline development process. The committee consists of representatives from local governments, Caltrans, transit agencies, development communities, traffic engineering consultants, and CEQA law firms. The local government representatives on the committee report back to their agencies on the regional

recommendation and advise the local guidelines development process. *The committee meets on an as needed basis.*

SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Fresno COG Policy Board established its Social Service Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) in 1988 to review transit issues with emphasis on annually identifying transit needs within Fresno County. Transit needs include those of transit-dependent and transit-disadvantaged persons, including the elderly, disabled and persons of limited means. This Advisory Council is consistent with State law (SB 498, Chapter 673, 1987), which mandates both the purpose and minimum membership of this body. All SSTAC meetings are open to the public. Citizens can request to be placed on the mailing list to receive committee agendas. *SSTAC meets the third Tuesday of the month, January through June or as needed.*

TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) serves as a standing committee that reviews materials and issues monthly before forwarding them to the Policy Advisory Committee. Membership includes member agency staff and representatives from a wide variety of transportation and community interest groups. *The TTC meets on the second Friday of each month at 8:30 a.m. at Fresno COG.*

VALLEYWIDE COMMITTEES

Fresno COG staff is also actively involved on Valleywide committees that include staff members from all eight San Joaquin Valley MPOs. These groups meet regularly on issues of mutual interest. In addition to the committees or groups listed below, the San Joaquin Valley MPOs are also active in the State's high-speed rail efforts, promotion of State Route 99, goods movement through the Valley, RTP/SCS development and other areas of mutual concern. Together they have developed a San Joaquin Valley Council of Government's website: www.sjvcogs.org

PROGRAMMING COORDINATION GROUP

The Valley Programming Coordination Group provides a coordinated approach to Valley air quality, conformity and transportation modeling issues. The committee's goal is to ensure Valleywide coordination, communication and compliance with Federal and State Clean Air Act requirements. Each of the eight Valley MPOs and the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) are represented. In addition, the FHWA, the EPA, CARB and Caltrans are all represented.

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCIES – REGIONAL POLICY COUNCIL

This 16-member Council was established to discuss and build regional consensus on issues of Valleywide importance. The Council comprises two elected officials and one alternate from each of the regional planning agencies' policy boards. The Policy Council provides guidance on common interregional policy issues and represents the San Joaquin Valley at public forums such as the California Transportation Commission, the Governor and his administration, as well as State and Federal legislative bodies that require a common voice from the San Joaquin Valley. *Meeting agendas, minutes and information about the SJV Directors meetings are available online at www.sjvcogs.org.*

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCIES – DIRECTORS' COMMITTEE

The Valley Executive Directors meet regularly to discuss issues of mutual importance to all the Valley Metropolitan Planning Organizations. *Meeting agendas, minutes and information about the SJV Directors meetings are available online at www.sjvcogs.org.*

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGIES

Fresno COG Staff uses several strategies to provide interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the planning process. Staff understands that prior to involvement in Fresno COG's planning activities, members of the public must understand what Fresno COG's mission is, and what issues are under consideration.

A list of participation strategies follows that include tried-and-true approaches as well as new suggestions received during the Public Participation Plan development process. Fresno COG staff will define appropriate outreach strategies for each plan/program on a case-by-case basis and select appropriate options from the following lists.

Public Meeting/Workshop/Event Participation

- Encourage participation in Fresno COG standing or other committee and boards meetings (See committee listings section VI. of this PPP)
- Participate in or speak at meetings of existing agencies/community groups
- Co-host workshops with community groups, business associations, etc.
- Partner with community-based organizations in low-income and minority communities for targeted outreach

Techniques for Public Meetings/Workshops

- Open Houses
- Facilitated discussions
- Break-out sessions for smaller group discussions on multiple topics
- Interactive exercises
- Customized presentations
- Vary time of day for workshops (day/evening)
- Conduct meeting entirely in alternative language
- Provide videoconferencing or virtual meeting options
- Demonstration events to showcase project components

Visualization

- Maps
- Charts, graphs, illustrations, photographs, simulations
- Table-top displays and models
- Renderings and drawings
- Web content and interactive games
- Electronic voting
- PowerPoint slide shows and videos

Polls/Surveys

- Statistically valid telephone polls
- Electronic surveys via Web application, website or social media
- Intercept interviews where people congregate, such as at transit hubs, fairs, events
- Printed surveys distributed at meetings, transit hubs, on-board transit vehicles, etc.

Focus Groups

- Participants recruited and focus groups hosted by professional consultant
- Participants recruited by area of expertise or region they represent

Printed Materials

- User-friendly documents, including use of executive summaries and simplified or translated language
- Post cards
- Maps, charts, photographs, and other visual means of displaying information
- Work with community-based organizations to hand deliver flyers to community members, businesses and schools
- Mail to targeted database lists—either COG's an outside agency's or purchased
- Distribute "Take-One" flyers to key community organizations
- Place notices on board transit vehicles and transit hubs

Utilize Media

- Press Releases
- Submit human interest stories that center around COG projects
- Invite reporters to news briefings
- Meet with editorial staff
- Opinion pieces/commentaries
- Purchase display ads/social media, online, radio or TV advertising
- Negotiate inserts into local printed media
- Book speakers on radio/TV talk shows
- Public Service Announcements on radio and TV
- Develop content for public access/cable television programming
- Civic journalism partnerships
- Purchase public notices
- Use of community and minority media outlets

Electronic Access to Information

- Dynamic websites with updated content and translation readily available – www.fresnocog.org, www.valleyrides.com
- Videos explaining plans, programs, concepts
- Maintain regular presence on social media outlets
- Electronic duplication of open house/workshop materials
- Interactive online surveys, visuals and opportunities to comment
- Access to planning data such as forecasts, census data, research, reports, maps, charts, plans
- Provide information in advance of public meetings
- Post event/meeting information on online news sites, calendars, community & discussion websites
- Fresno COG is actively analyzing all website content for accessibility and has installed an automated web accessibility technology that complies with the WCAG 2.1 with the goal of having our website fully accessible at all times

Targeted Notifications

- Blast e-mails
- E-newsletters - "Fresno COG's Coming Up At Fresno COG"
- Notices widely disseminated through partnerships with community-based organizations and public agencies or chambers of commerce
- Social Media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Nextdoor and Twitter
- Printed materials
- Electronic access to information
- Local Media
- Notices placed on board transit vehicles and at transit hubs
- Public utility bill inserts
- Distributions through local school districts, churches
- Submit articles for publication in community/professional/corporate newsletters

Involving Low Income Communities and Communities of Color

- Submit reports to Fresno COG's ongoing committees such as the ADA Advisory Council, SSTAC, etc.
- Grants to community-based organizations to organize & tailor meetings, customize presentation materials, provide incentives and remove barriers to participation
- Provide access to and use of information and data that is comparable to the access to and use of the information and data by such members of the public who are not individuals with disabilities
- Robust use of "visualization" techniques, including maps and graphics to illustrate trends, choices being debated, etc.
- When conducting public outreach on regional plans/projects, develop explanations of the impacts to each city or local area involved

- “Take One” flyers on transit vehicles and transit hubs
- Outreach in the community (flea markets, churches, health centers, employer sponsored events, fair and festivals, etc.)
- Partnerships with other agencies to participate in scheduled meetings/events
- Convert materials going out to the general public to an appropriate reading level

Involving Limited-English Proficient Populations

- Translate materials
- Have interpreters and interpretive equipment available at meetings as needed with 72-hour advance notice
- Conduct meeting entirely in alternative language (Other than English)
- Meeting and group facilitators to obtain oral comments in languages other than English
- Translated documents and web content on key initiatives or opportunities to comment
- Use of community and minority media outlets to announce participation opportunities
- Include information on meeting notices for how to request translation assistance

Receiving/Submitting Comments

- Polls/surveys (electronic or paper)
- Paper comment cards
- Online comment cards
- Post it notes or stickers
- Marking up maps or document text
- Phone calls or voicemails directly to staff or to a dedicated hotline
- Email sent to SCAG staff or [via our online contact form](#)
- Physically mailed letters
- Public comments can be given anonymously

Communicating The Impact of Public Comments

- Summarize key themes of public comments in written or graphic form for placement in staff reports to Fresno COG standing committees and Fresno COG's Policy Board, attaching list of comments and responses as appropriate
- Direct mail and email to participants from meetings, surveys, etc. to report final outcomes
- E-newsletter articles
- Updated and interactive Web content
- Respond to written questions via email or

Engaging Tribal Governments

- Fresno COG has developed a formal plan for how we engage with tribal governments - See Appendix B of this PPP

VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN EVALUATION AND UPDATES

Fresno COG's Public Participation Plan is not a static document, but an ongoing strategy that will be periodically reviewed and updated based on our experiences and the changing circumstances of the agency and the transportation community it serves.

As part of every public outreach and involvement program developed for the RTP, Fresno COG will set desired outcomes for the efficacy of the participation program and report on the results. These performance reports will serve to inform and improve future outreach and involvement programs, including future updates to this Public Participation Plan. Additionally, Fresno COG will periodically evaluate various components of the items identified under the RTP Public Outreach Strategy Section IV "Public Participation Strategies," which form the core of Fresno COG's public involvement activities.

This Public Participation Plan may be subject to minor changes from time to time. Any major updates will include a review by Fresno COG's Transportation Technical Committee, Policy Advisory Committee and Policy Board, a 45-day public comment period with wide release and notification of the public about the proposed changes and approval by the Fresno COG Policy Board. We will extend the public comment period by an additional 45 days in instances where major revisions are proposed in response to comments heard.

Fresno COG's contact information:

Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG)

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Fresno, CA 93721

559.233.4148 Phone

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Fresno Council
of Governments