

# COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP | MEETING #1 NOTES

## FRESNO COUNTY REGIONAL TRAILS PLAN

Fresno Council of Governments and County of Fresno

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April 30, 2020 | 10:00-11:30AM | Virtual meeting via Zoom

### Advisory Group Action Items:

- Once live, visit the online map and share at least three comments
- Share the online map link with three friends, colleagues, or neighbors

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

Kristen Lohse, Consultant Project Manager, welcomed attendees and thanked them for attending the first Community Advisory Group meeting for the Fresno County Regional Trails Plan (Plan). Kristen Lohse then provided a brief overview of the meeting agenda and asked that the Project Team and Community Advisory Group members introduce themselves. A complete listing of meeting attendees can be found below.

Name	Agency/Organization
Peggy Arnest	Fresno Council of Governments
Brian Spaunhurst	County of Fresno
Gloria Hensley	County of Fresno
Mona Cummings	Tree Fresno
Kermit Johansson	San Joaquin River Trail Organization
Mark Keppler	Coalition for Community Trails
John Shelton	San Joaquin River Conservancy
Robert Snow	Fresno Audubon Society
Tina Sumner	Fresno Cycling Club
Sarah Parks	San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust, Inc.
Kristen Lohse	Toole Design
Megan Wooley-Ousdahl	Toole Design
Hector Guerra	VRPA Technologies, Inc.

### 2. Regional Trails Plan Overview

Kristen Lohse explained that the Plan will focus on unpaved trails, paved shared-use paths (Class I) and County-owned land (areas outside cities/towns) and county “islands.” The Plan will emphasize making connections to recreational facilities, allowing more opportunities for the community to be active outside.

To guide the development of the Plan, draft goals were developed and shared with the Community Advisory Group. These draft goals include:

- **Livability:** Enhance livability by integrating trails systems into community activity.
- **Connectivity:** Develop an accessible and well-connected network of trail routes in urban, rural, and open spaces.
- **Mobility:** Create active transportation options for recreation and utilitarian trips.
- **Collaboration:** Collaborate with local jurisdictions, organizations, and communities to plan, coordinate, implement, maintain a countywide trail system.
- **Economic Development:** Leverage economic development opportunities for local business and tourism by increasing the use of trails.

Community Advisory Group members were asked to provide their thoughts on the draft Plan goals, and provide additional goals that they felt were important for the Plan's development, via Mentimeter, an online polling platform. Additional goals provided by the Community Advisory Group included:

- Equity
- Sustainability
- Maintenance
- Safety and Security
- Wayfinding
- Bike Commuting
- Amenities which can be sponsored

### 3. Community Engagement

Megan Wooley-Ousdahl explained that Community Engagement for the Plan will be broken up into the following three (3) phases:

- **Phase 1 - Existing Conditions:** Input and data gathering from the Community Advisory Group and community members to learn more about existing trails usage and identify future trails connections.
- **Phase 2 - Proposed Network and Priorities:** Development of the proposed trails network, which will incorporate feedback received during Phase 1. During this Phase, the Community Advisory Group and community members will have the opportunity to review and provide input on the proposed trials network.
- **Phase 3 - Draft Plan:** The Project Team will be soliciting input from the Community Advisory Group and community members on the Draft Plan.

Three (3) methods are being used to collect input for the Plan. These methods include:

- **Advisory Group meetings:** The Community Advisory Group will be asked to provide input and guidance through the Plan development process.
- **Online, interactive map:** An online mapping tool has been developed for the Plan that will allow users to take a brief survey, drop a point, draw a route, and leave comments.
- **Pop-up events:** The Project Team will be utilizing attendance at pop-up events during the planning process, which allows the team to engage stakeholders in locations where they already planned on being. The first pop-up event at the Big Fresno Fair last fall was highly successful in soliciting the community's feedback on recreation trails. The Project Team is planning to attend additional pop-up events in the summer, pending developments of the COVID-19 situation.

The Project Team concluded the Community Engagement discussion by making two (2) request of Community Advisory Group members. The first request was that members review

and leave comments on the online map. The second request was to ask members to forward the online map link to three (3) other individuals and ask for their participation as well.

#### 4. Discussion Question #1 - What are you hoping the Plan will achieve? What is your goal for this Plan?

Kristen Lohse asked attendees to list what they are hoping this Plan will achieve and what their organization's goals are for this Plan. Responses to this discussion question were shared via Mentimeter and included the following:

- Identify opportunities to increase recreational options.
- Be a tool for developing, implementation and maintenance funding.
- Serve as a go to, easy to find resource for hikers.
- Connectivity, access, knowledge of.
- An integrated trail system with secured maintenance funding
- Get more people excited about being outdoors.
- Connectivity, variety, challenges in various trails, funding for implementation.
- Increase tree canopy coverage.
- Alternatives for people to do outside during hotter months
- Variety in terrain and challenges, longer distance trails
- Connectivity to surrounding national parks
- A map that identifies type of use and difficulty.
- Engage diverse communities in the great outdoors.
- Reduce instances of unsanctioned trail building.
- Maps are very important for information and information of relatively obscure areas.

#### 5. Discussion Question #2 - At your agency/organization, what projects or programs are underway that dovetail with this Plan or that should be included?

Kristen Lohse explained that the Project Team has reviewed the Fresno County Regional ATP and other local plans and policies as part of the existing conditions assessment. The Project Team also asked Community Advisory Group members to discuss their own projects or programs that dovetail with this Plan. Responses to this discussion question included the following:

- **John Shelton:** Looking to develop a 23 mile trail from State Route (SR) 99 to Friant Road. Currently working on a segment that is going to go from Burkhead to Lost Lake Park. Also working on a segment from SR 99 up to Milburn Avenue, as well as several bridge projects that will tie Fresno County into Madera County. One bridge project will be located in the Friant community and another project will go from Ball Ranch to Ledger Island. Additionally, the City of Fresno is getting ready to put in a grant proposal for a bicycle/pedestrian bridge at SR 41. Also have some concepts for another bridge in the Palm and Nees area.
- **Sarah Parks:** Would recommend that the group review the San Joaquin River Parkway Master Plan.
- **Mona Cummings:** Tree Fresno is particularly interested in urban components of trails. Tree Fresno has a partnership with CAL FIRE to increase the number of trees in historically disadvantaged communities. Tree Fresno is also working with the California

Air Resources Board to build vegetative barriers along busy roadways. Tree Fresno would be very interested in working in urban areas of trails.

- **Kermit Johansson:** Believe that connectivity points should be the biggest focus of the Plan.
- **Robert Snow:** The Fresno Audubon Society is not currently undertaking any trail creations. However, the Fresno Audubon Society has a large volunteer group and a database of over 950 people that can provide input on the Plan. We also do monthly bird surveys at Riverbottom.
- **Tina Sumner:** The Fresno Cycling Club are the users of the cycling trails and has a group of volunteers if an opportunity presents itself. Club members are looking forward to providing input on trail usage, access and other important issues for trail users.

## 6. Next Steps

- The online map will be provided to Community Advisory Group members in the days to come, with members encouraged to visit the map, provide input, and share the map link with others.
- The online map will be open through late May.
- Development of the proposed network will occur through the summer.
- The second Community Advisory Group meeting will take place in the summer and the third meeting will occur in the fall.
- The Project Team will continue to monitor pop-up event opportunities.
- The Draft Plan will be coming together in the fall, and will be shared with the Community Advisory Group and the public before it is finalized.