

2011 Regional Transportation Plan

for the

Fresno County Region

~ Public Outreach Plan ~

DRAFT

October 2009

Fresno Forward



**2011 Regional Transportation Plan
Draft Public Outreach Plan**

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I. Introduction

Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs) are planning documents developed by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs) in cooperation with Caltrans and other stakeholders. They are required to be developed by MPOs and RTPAs per State legislation, (Government Code Section 65080 et seq.) and Federal regulation (Title 23 USC Section 134).

The purpose of the RTP is to establish regional goals, identify present and future needs, deficiencies, and constraints, analyze potential solutions, estimate available funding and propose investments.

A comprehensive public involvement program is an important component for developing a RTP. As Fresno COG undertakes the update of the 2011 RTP a major goal of the public involvement effort is to reach out to nontraditional as well as traditional audiences to include them in the transportation planning process. 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.

II. Summary of RTP Public Outreach Plan Requirements

A. Public Participation Requirements:

The RTP Planning Process must foster involvement through a proactive public participation process with the all interested parties. Title 23 CFR Part 450.316(a) states the following concerning participation and consultation:

"The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens,

- *affected public agencies*
- *representatives of public transportation 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*
- *other interested parties*

with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.”

- When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft RTP and as a result of the participation process or the interagency consultation process a summary, analysis and report of the proposed comments shall be made as part of the final RTP
- The public participation plan should be prepared prior to the development of the RTP. The public participation plan should have public input during its preparation and have a 45-day comment period before the MPOs/RTPAs board adopts it. This enhanced public participation plan is a new requirement as a result of SAFETEA-LU.
- Title 23 CFR part 450.316(a)(1)(iii) now requires the participation plan to use visualization techniques to describe the RTP and FTIP. Visualization techniques range from a simple line drawing or hand written chart to technologically complex web cast public meetings and GIS modeling and computer generated maps. The specific type of visualization technique is determined by the MPO/RTPA.
- The public participation plan and both the draft and adopted RTP shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable and for the life of the RTP.
- It is also recommended MPOs/RTPAs place hard copies of the draft and adopted copies of RTPs in local libraries and other locations where the public would have access to these documents.
- The MPO shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other

governments and agencies. Non-MPO public participation efforts shall at minimum develop a documented process that outlines roles, responsibilities and provides outreach efforts to all sectors of the local community.

B. Consultation & Coordination Requirements:

Cooperative development of plans, programs and schedules with the following:

- All transportation providers
- Facility operators such as airports
- Appropriate federal, state and local agencies
- Native American Tribal Governments (shall involve federally recognized tribes, and should seek input from those not federally recognized)
- Environmental resource agencies
- Air District
- Pedestrian and bicycle representatives
- Adjoining MPOs/RTPAs
- Federal Land Management Agencies

In developing RTPs, the MPO/RTPA should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within their region that are affected by transportation or at least coordinate the planning process to incorporate input. These areas include, but are not limited to, the listed examples:

1. State and local growth;
2. Economic development;
3. Environmental protection;
4. Airport operations; and,
5. Goods Movement.

To reflect consultation with resource and permit agencies to ensure early coordination with environmental resource protection and management plans.

C. Private Sector Involvement

Formally invite to participate and strive to include any long-range plans of these organizations that have an impact on the regional transportation system:

- Goods movement industry
- Trucking firms
- Freight train lines
- Taxi services
- Limousine services
- Transportation Management Associations
- Private Transit Operators
- Developers
- Chambers of Commerce
- Large Employers
- Business organizations

D. Consultation with Interested Parties

The MPO/RTPA shall provide the following interested parties with reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed RTP:

1. Citizens
2. Affected public agencies
3. Representatives of public transportation employees
4. Freight shippers
5. Private providers of transportation
6. Representatives of users of public transportation
7. Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities
8. Representatives of people with disabilities
9. Providers of freight transportation services
10. Other interested parties.

E. Native American Tribal Government Consultation and Coordination

- The MPO or RTPA should include a discussion of consultation, coordination and communication with federally recognized Tribal Governments when the tribes are located within the boundary of an MPO/RTPA.
- MPO/RTPA should establish a government-to-government relationship with each Tribe in the region. This refers to the protocol for communicating between the MPOs/RTPAs and the Tribal Governments as a sovereign nation.
- This consultation process should be documented in the RTP.

- The initial point of contact for Tribal Governments should be the Chairperson for the tribe.
- The MPO/RTPA should develop protocol and communication methods for outreach and consultation with the Tribal Governments. (In this plan)

F. Consultation with Resource Agencies

Current federal regulations require MPOs to consult with resource agencies, State and local agencies responsible for land use management, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation concerning the development of the RTP.

The consultation efforts shall involve:

1. Comparing transportation plans with State conservation plans, maps and other data, if available; and,
2. Comparing transportation plans with inventories of natural and historic resources, if available.

New federal requirements seek to receive input/comments from resource agencies early in the planning process. The following is a preliminary list of resource agencies that should be consulted in the development of the RTP:

1. Federal agencies (including FWHA, EPA and FTA)
2. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
3. NOAA Fisheries Services
4. U.S. National Park Service
5. U.S. National Marine and Fishery Service
6. California Environmental, energy, resource and permit agencies
7. California Coastal Commission
8. California Energy Commission
9. California Office of Planning and Research
10. California Environmental Protection Agency
11. California Resources Agency
12. California Water Resources Control Board
13. California Regional Water Quality Control Board
14. California Department of Fish and Game
15. California Integrated Waste Management Board
16. California Air Resources Board

17. Bay Conservation and Development Commission (Bay Area)
18. Regional Air Quality Management Districts
19. Private sector carpools / rideshare coordinators
20. California Department of Parks and Recreation
21. Caltrans list of federal and state resource agencies

III. Public Outreach Program Objectives for the RTP

Fresno COG's Public Participation Plan calls for setting and measuring progress on involving the public in Fresno COG's 2011 Regional Transportation Plan

A. Objectives:

- Solicit participation from a broad range of groups and individuals in the 2011 RTP decision-making process
- Raise awareness and offer opportunities for public input about the 2011 RTP
- Provide information to Fresno County region residents and other stakeholders
- Stimulate dialogue about the transportation challenges facing the Fresno County region
- Develop and incorporate into the 2011 RTP update realistic solutions that address the diverse mobility needs of the region's residents, visitors and business people
- Build public support for, and understanding of, the transportation improvements outlined in the 2011 RTP

B. Performance Measures:

Diversity: Participants must represent a range of socioeconomic, ethnic and cultural, geographic and user (mode) groups. They must also include a range of people with varying interests: social service, business, environment, social justice/equity, etc.

- Targeted groups include all those listed under "Summary of Outreach Requirements" including additional Fresno COG contacts
- Participating citizens represent a cross-section of people of various interests, places of residence and primary modes of travel, as reported on surveys and comments or other communications received throughout the update process

Reach: The program should make every effort to include the greatest number of people possible. Different levels of participation will make it more inviting for people with a range of involvement preferences to join the discussion. The success of the program will be measure by the following:

- Number of comments received

- Number of individuals who actively participated in the Fresno COG RTP 2011 Public Outreach Program, as measured by survey responses, focus group attendance and community outreach involvement. (excluding repeat attendance)
- Number visits or “views” to the Fresno COG RTP 2011 section website and/or requests for information during active periods of the public outreach and involvement program

Accessibility: Every effort should be made to ensure that anyone who wants to participate can do so. This goal can be met by taking the participation activities to where people already are located, whenever possible. It can also be met by providing ways to participate, regardless of individuals’ language or ability to attend a meeting, access to the Web, etc.

- Meetings are held in communities and during existing meeting dates/times whenever possible
- 100 percent of meeting locations are accessible by transit
- Meetings are linguistically accessible to 100 percent of participants, with 3 working days’ advance request for translation. (Meeting announcements will offer translation services with advance notice to participants speaking any language with available professional translation services.)
- All meetings are accessible under the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Impact: The feedback received through this Outreach and Involvement Program should be analyzed and provided to the Fresno COG Policy Board wherever appropriate. Interested participants should be informed of Board’s actions. Decisions to not incorporate recommendations should be noted, with a rationale provided and ready to be discussed.

- 100 percent of written comments received are logged, analyzed, summarized and communicated in time for consideration by staff and the Fresno COG Policy Board
- 100 percent of the written comments are acknowledged so that the person making them knows whether his or her comment is reflected in the outcome of a Policy Board action or, conversely, why the Policy Board acted differently

“High-quality” Input and Participation: Focus on receiving comments that generate discussion, add value to the process and help to build consensus.

Education: This outreach program is an opportunity for Fresno COG to inform a wide range of people about transportation issues in the Fresno County region, as well as the link to climate change and sustainable growth, among other issues. Each step of the process should include an educational element, whether it is about Fresno County area transportation in general, specific projects being considered for inclusion in the long-range plan or background on the outreach results to date.

Participant Satisfaction: People who take the time and energy to participate should feel it was worth their while to join in the discussion and debate. The following targeted performance measures are associated with each of the goal topics.

- Majority of participants rate the Fresno COG RTP Outreach Program as *Excellent or good* on each of the following performance dimensions (or other specific features to be determined):
- Accessibility (meeting locations, materials presented in appropriate languages for targeted audiences, etc.)
- Adequate notice
- Sufficient opportunity to comment
- Clear understanding of items that are established policy versus those that are open to public influence
- Clear information at an appropriate level of detail
- Educational value of presentations and materials
- Responsiveness to comments received
- Understanding of other perspectives and differing priorities
- Quality of the discussion

IV. Implementation of RTP Public Outreach Plan

Initiating Plan Development – Participation Strategies

Fresno COG is planning to implement the following public outreach strategies throughout the development of the 2011 RTP.

1. Regional Transportation Plan Community Forum

Form a Regional Transportation Plan Community Forum of interested stakeholders to engage and obtain feedback on RTP development through the entire update process.

2. Fresno COG's Stakeholder Focus Groups

To consult and coordinate the development of the RTP with stakeholders specifically interested or involved with plans or projects identified in individual work elements, these focus groups will be organized topically and could include the following:

- Non-Motorized Transportation – Users and providers of bicycle, pedestrian and multi-use trails, Fresno COG's bike/trails committee
- Goods Movement - – would include providers and users of public and private aviation, rail service, freight shipping, trucking firms and others in the goods movement industry
- Air quality and Environmental – Air District, Environmental Resource Agencies, Community groups with environmental focus
- Transit – Providers and users of public and private transit services (urban and rural) and public transportation employees
- Business and Industry Representatives – Large employers, Chambers of Commerce, business organizations, developers
- Private transportation providers – Limousine and taxi company representatives, bus companies, vanpool leasing companies, etc.
- Disabled and Elderly – Representatives of the disabled and elderly population including Fresno COG's Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee
- Native American Tribal Governments – Representatives from Federal recognized and non-federally recognized tribal governments

3. Surveys: Online and hard copy

Solicit response through email, Roadshows, hard copy mailout, Fresno COG newsletter, public meetings—possibly using clicker technology, focus groups, Fresno COG homepage, Facebook and Twitter websites.

4. Social Networks:

Fresno COG's Facebook and Twitter pages, media websites, local social networking sites/blogs, and online calendars.

5. Fresno COG's website:

Dedicate a new section of Fresno COG's website to provide information and timely updates on the RTP development process, promote upcoming meetings and events, post documents for download and print and provide options for feedback.

6. Distribute/present information at regularly-scheduled public meetings:

Present RTP updates and solicit input at Fresno COG Committee meetings, jurisdiction council/board meetings, local/regional agency meetings, city and county community planning groups, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Organizations, community and business group meetings, public service organizations, and other stakeholder groups.

7. Fresno COG Newsletter or other written communications:

Fresno COG's mailing list goes out to over 4,000 people and businesses around the region .

8. Email:

Email updates, announcements and information will go out in Fresno COG's weekly email alert, "This Week at Fresno COG", to 2200+ people on Fresno COG's current email database. Separate emails will go out as needed.

9. Community-Based Outreach Program:

To help ensure diverse and direct input from environmental justice populations, Fresno COG will award grant funding to three community-based organizations to conduct public meetings/workshops for individuals not typically involved in the regional transportation planning process. The selected organizations will conduct outreach activities to secure public involvement from stakeholders in their communities and populations served, engaging them in the development of the Regional Transportation Plan and generating feedback on the 2011 RTP. The three grants will each total \$2,500.

IV. Get Involved in the RTP Process

How to guide

Below you will find a list of how you may participate in the Fresno COG Regional Transportation Plan Update process via the participation strategies listed in the previous chapter.

1. Regional Transportation Plan Community Forum

If you are interested in joining the Regional Transportation Plan Community Forum as an interested stakeholder, please contact Fresno COG staff member Clark Thompson by phone at 559.233-4148 ext. 203, or via email at clarkt@fresnocog.org.

2. Fresno COG's Stakeholder Focus Groups

Fresno COG staff will be coordinating and hosting focus groups organized topically as listed below. If you are interested in attending one of the focus groups please contact Fresno COG Public Information officer Brenda Lauchner by phone at 559-233-4148, ext. 219 or via email at brendal@fresnocog.org.

- Non-Motorized Transportation – Users and providers of bicycle, pedestrian and multi-use trails, Fresno COG's bike/trails committee
- Goods Movement - – would include providers and users of public and private aviation, rail service, freight shipping, trucking firms and others in the goods movement industry
- Air quality and Environmental – Air District, Environmental Resource Agencies, Community groups with environmental focus
- Transit – Providers and users of public and private transit services (urban and rural) and public transportation employees
- Business and Industry Representatives – Large employers, Chambers of Commerce, business organizations, developers
- Private transportation providers – Limousine and taxi company representatives, bus companies, vanpool leasing companies, etc.
- Disabled and Elderly – Representatives of the disabled and elderly population including Fresno COG's Social Services Transportation Advisory Committee

- Native American Tribal Governments – Representatives from Federal recognized and non-federally recognized tribal governments

3. Surveys: Online and hard copy

Surveys may be dispersed and submitted via email, community events, hard copy mailout, Fresno COG newsletter, public meetings, focus groups, Fresno COG homepage, Facebook and Twitter websites. Please contact Fresno COG Public Information officer Brenda Lauchner by phone at 559-233-4148, ext. 219 or via email at brendal@fresnocog.org to ensure you receive a copy of the 2011 RTP Update survey.

4. Social Networks:

Fresno COG currently has Facebook and Twitter homepages listed under Fresno Council of Governments.

5. Fresno COG's website:

Fresno COG's website address is www.fresnocog.org. Each time an RTP item is added or updated on the Fresno COG website it will be listed on the homepage under "What's New Online", and oftentimes under "Announcements." Meetings are listed under "Meetings listing" on the homepage with agendas accessible through the calendar listings. At the bottom of each page of the website there is an email link to the COG staff member that is in charge of updating the content on that page. If you would like to submit a question or comment about something on the website to staff but are unsure of who to contact, it is effective to begin with the person listed on that website page. Simply click on the email link and a new email box will appear addressed to the listed email contact.

6. Distribute/present information at regularly-scheduled public meetings:

All of Fresno COG's regularly-scheduled meetings are open to the public and you are welcome to attend any of them. The meetings are listed on Fresno COG's website homepage under the "Meetings" tab. If you are interested in having a Fresno COG staff member attend your agency's or businesses' meeting to present or participate in discussion, please contact Fresno COG Public Information officer Brenda Lauchner

by phone at 559-233-4148, ext. 219 or via email at brendal@fresnocog.org to coordinate that for you with the appropriate staff member.

7. Fresno COG Newsletter or other written communications:

Fresno COG's mailing list goes out to over 4,000 people and businesses around the region. If you would like your name to be added to the mailing list please call Fresno COG at 559.233.4148, ext. 201 and ask to be added to that list. Or email brendal@fresnocog.org with your request. All written communications will also be available for viewing and printing on Fresno COG's website under the "Get Involved" and RTP tabs.

8. Email:

If you would like to receive email updates, announcements and information regarding recent RTP developments, meetings and plan development please submit your request and email address to Fresno COG Public Information officer Brenda Lauchner by phone at 559-233-4148, ext. 219 or via email at brendal@fresnocog.org.

9. Community-Based Outreach Program:

To help ensure diverse and direct input from environmental justice populations, Fresno COG will award three \$2,500 grants to three community-based organizations to conduct public meetings/workshops for individuals not typically involved in the regional transportation planning process. The selected organizations will conduct outreach activities to secure public involvement from stakeholders in their communities and populations served, engaging them in the development of the Regional Transportation Plan and generating feedback on the 2011 RTP. If you are interested in applying for one of these three Community-Based Outreach Program grants please submit your request and email address to Fresno COG Public Information officer Brenda Lauchner by phone at 559-233-4148, ext. 219 or via email at brendal@fresnocog.org. Grant deadlines, criteria and all related materials will be posted to the Fresno COG website, and made available via website download, email, phone or written request.

Fresno COG contact information:

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