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**FRESNO COUNTY RURAL TRANSIT AGENCY (FCRTA)  
MEETING AGENDA**

DATE: Thursday, April 29, 2021  
TIME: 5:30pm, **AFTER** the Fresno Council of Governments (FCOG) Meeting  
PLACE: FCOG / FCRTA Offices  
Sequoia Conference Room  
2035 Tulare Street, Suite 201  
Fresno, CA 93721  
(Corner of Tulare and Van Ness Ave. - above Club One  
Park in Underground Garage - Entrance off Tulare & Van Ness Ave.  
Exit Elevator on Tulare St., Turn Left, Enter Lobby Door,  
Up Elevator to Second Floor, Left to Sequoia Conference Room)

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accommodation**

The Fresno COG / FCRTA offices and restrooms are ADA accessible. Individuals with disabilities may call (559-233-4148) / FCRTA (559-233-6789) 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 / FCRTA are 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.

**AB 23 Requirement:** In accordance with the Brown Act and AB23 the amount of stipend paid to members of the Board of Directors for attending this meeting of the Fresno County Rural Transit Agency, is \$50.00.

**THE FRESNO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS AND FRESNO COUNTY RURAL TRANSIT AGENCY OFFICES  
WILL NOT BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

**OUT OF AN ABUNDANCE OF CAUTION REGARDING THE COVID-19 VIRUS FRESNO COG AND FCRTA  
PUBLIC MEETINGS WILL BE CONDUCTED ELECTRONICALLY AND TELEPHONICALLY ONLY. ONLY  
LIMITED BOARD MEMBERS WILL BE PHYSICALLY PRESENT IN THE FRESNO COG SEQUOIA ROOM, THE  
FRESNO COG SEQUOIA ROOM WILL NOT BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.  
FRESNO COG REMAINS CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC.**

**Joining the meeting:**

<https://zoom.us/j/91942140719?pwd=Zk91TkVtQUtwV2FLQTBQWXVjb01Xdz09>

**Join by Phone: (669) 900-6833 US**

**Passcode: 892347**

If you wish to address the Board during the public comment portion of the agenda, click on the "Reactions" at the bottom center of your PC or Mac screen. Select the Hand icon, click the icon to "RaiseHand". Your digital hand will now be raised.

When on the phone, if you wish to address Policy Board during the public comment portion of the agenda, Press \*9 to "RaiseHand" and we will select you from the meeting cue.

**\*\*If joining by phone use \*6 to unmute and mute yourself.** When joining the meeting all participants are automatically muted. Do NOT use the mute function on your LAN line phone or cell phone.

**Those addressing Policy Board must state their first and last name and agency for the record.**

**A JOINT POWERS AGENCY TO PROVIDE A COORDINATED TRANSIT SYSTEM FOR RURAL FRESNO COUNTY**

The Cities of: Coalinga, Firebaugh, Fowler, Huron, Kerman, Kingsburg, Mendota, Orange Cove, Parlier, Reedley, Sanger, San Joaquin, Selma & Fresno County



To facilitate electronic access, no person shall speak until recognized by the Chair.

## 1. ROLL CALL

Public Presentations - This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons wishing to address the FCRTA Board on items within its jurisdiction but not on this Agenda.

NOTE: The public may also comment on any Agenda item, as they are presented, prior to action by the FCRTA Board.

## 2. CONSENT ITEMS

### A. Approve Executive Minutes of March 25, 2021 [ATTACHMENT]

### B. FCRTA Fiscal Year 2021-22 Draft Budget [INITIATION]

**Summary:** The Fresno County Rural Transit Agency's draft budget has been prepared to reflect Fresno COG's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the draft Short-Range Transit Plan (SRTTP) for the rural Fresno County area, 2022-2026.

The document recommends continuing existing services and capital improvements. This year's draft budget has been developed to include continued review, comment and action during its 45-day public review period that will culminate on June 24, 2021 with the scheduled FCRTA Board meeting following a public hearing. The numbers in the draft budget are subject to refinement following service contract negotiations, an opportunity for public presentations and a public presentation before the Board of Directors. The budget, which may require periodic amendments during the 2021-2022 fiscal year, is available on Fresno COG's website [www.fresnocog.org](http://www.fresnocog.org) and FCRTA's website [www.ruraltransit.org](http://www.ruraltransit.org)

**Action:** Staff recommends initiation of the 45-day review with a proposed adoption of June 24, 2021 following a public hearing.

### C. FY 2021 Low or No Emission Bus Program Application [APPROVE]

**Summary:** The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Low-No Program provides funding to state and local governmental authorities for the purchase or lease of zero-emission and low-emission transit buses, including acquisition, construction, and leasing of required supporting facilities. FCRTA is proposing a project submittal for \$4,134,431 in total funding through the FTA Low-No Program. The proposed project includes the purchase of five (5) BYD thirty (30) foot electric buses. The electric BYD buses will be deployed on FCRTA's existing services. Match funding in the amount of \$620,165 will be with Measure C funds. The Low-No Project application is attached for your review (**ATTACHMENT**).

**Action:** Staff recommends Board approval of the FY 2021 Low or No Emission Bus Program Application in the amount of \$4,134,431.00.

### D. Low Carbon Transit Operations Program Application [APPROVE]

**Summary:** FCRTA was recently notified of our annual funding allocation from the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) through Caltrans. The allocation amount of \$215,761 will be used to purchase one (1) thirty (23) foot BYD electric bus and will be used on one of our existing routes. The balance of funds to complete the purchase will be approximately \$173,037 match with Measure C funding. Attached are Resolution No.2021-02 and No.2021-03 for your review (**ATTACHMENT**).

**Action:** Staff recommends Board approval of Resolution No.2021-02 and No. 2021-03.

### E. New Tech Application Measure C New Technology Application [INFORMATION]



**Summary:** The Board approve in July 2020, a project submittal for \$1,373,048.62 in funding through the Measure C New Technology Reserve Grant Program. The proposed project includes the purchase of four (4) 23-foot C6 BYD electric buses and ten (50) UV Germicidal Disinfectant Lights to for the existing rural transit services as well as a new shuttle service. The project adds capacity to meet additional mobility needs of rural community residents, promote electric vehicles in rural Fresno County communities while reducing toxic air contaminants. This project was approved for funding by the Fresno County Transportation Authority (FCTA) Board of Directors on April 14, 2021.

**Action:** Information only. The Board may provide additional direction at its discretion.

**F. Consolidated Transportation Service Agency (CTSA) Notification of Funding Availability (NOFA) [INFORMATION]**

**Summary:** In 2020, the FCOG re-designated the CTSA's in the following: FCRTA is now the sole designee for Rural Fresno County and administers the funding, activities, and transportation programs of all CTSA service providers in Rural Fresno County and the City of Fresno (FAX) is the sole designee for the Fresno Metropolitan Area and administers the funding, activities, and transportation programs of all CTSA service providers within the Fresno Metropolitan Area.

FCRTA and FAX release a NOFA on March 15, 2021 soliciting applications in the form of an Operation Program & Budget (OPB) from eligible applicants to provide social service transportation in two (2) service areas; Rural Fresno County and Urban- City of Fresno. FCRTA is making available up to \$413,000 and the City of Fresno (FAX) is making available up to \$1,230,666 in State Transportation funds to fund eligible services and activities that support social service transportation within Fresno County. The application submission deadline was April 15, 2021. A proposal was received by Fresno EOC on April 13th. Upon award, a Services Agreement will be issued by FCRTA and FAX for both the Rural and Urban CTSA's. FCRTA will return to the Board with a proposed recommendation and services agreement.

**Action:** Information only. The Board may provide additional direction at its discretion.

**G. National Rural Transit Assistance Program Community Rides Grant Program [APPROVE]**

**Summary:** The National Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) Community Rides Grant Program offers current recipients and subrecipients of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)'s Formula Grants for Rural Areas (Section 5311) program the opportunity to apply for grant awards of up to \$100,000 for projects that develop or strengthen transportation partnerships that improve social determinants of health in rural and tribal communities.

Social services agencies across Fresno County have expressed the need for transportation services for their residents/clients to travel to jobs, healthcare appointments, training, and other quality of life locations from rural areas into the Fresno Clovis Metropolitan Area (FCMA) since that is where the majority of services are located. According to CalEnviroScreen, approximately 60% of census tracts are considered disadvantaged, indicating that residents have a high level of social, economic and environmental disadvantage. Many health care providers and social service agencies are not able to provide their own transportation services from rural areas to the FCMA. To meet this critical need, FCRTA, in partnership with Inspiration Transportation, is planning to provide new transit service to directly connect residents with healthcare facilities and social service centers.

**Action:** Staff recommends Board approval of Resolution No. 2020-06.

#### **H. Unmet Transit Needs- Leadership Counsel Letter [INFORMATION]**

**Summary:** Fresno COG is currently conducting the FY 2021-22 Annual Unmet Transit Needs Assessment process. Leadership Counsel for Justice Accountability has submitted comments to Fresno COG and transit agencies in the form of a letter. Fresno COG, FCRTA, FAX and Clovis Transit have prepared a response letter to the comments received. The response letter to Leadership Counsel for Justice Accountability is attached for your information (**ATTACHMENT**).

**Action:** Information only. The Board may provide additional direction at its discretion.

### **3. OTHER BUSINESS**

**A. Items from staff.**

**B. Items from members.**

### **4. ADJOURNMENT**



## Executive Minutes

Thursday, March 25, 2021 at 5:30 P.M after COG Policy Board Meeting  
COG Sequoia Conference Room  
2035 Tulare St., Suite 201, Fresno, CA

## Members Attending:

Mayor Alfred Valdez, City of Firebaugh  
Mayor David Cardenas, City of Fowler  
Mayor Rey Leon, City of Huron  
Mayor Gary Yep, City of Kerman  
Councilmember Michelle Roman, City of Kingsburg  
Mayor Rolando Castro, City of Mendota  
Mayor Victor Lopez, City of Orange Cove  
Mayor Alma Beltran, City of Parlier  
Mayor Mary Fast, City of Reedley  
Mayor Eli Ontiveros, City of Sanger  
Mayor Julia Hernandez, City of San Joaquin  
Mayor Scott Robertson, City of Selma

Moses Stites, General Manager  
Bryan Rome, County Counsel  
Janelle Del Campo, Operations Manager  
Jeaneen Cervantes, FCOG

## Absent:

Mayor Ron Ramsey, City of Coalinga  
Supervisor Sal Quintero, Fresno County

1. **ROLL CALL** — Meeting called to order 8:33 p.m.  
Public Presentations - This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons wishing to address the FCRTA Board on items within its jurisdiction but not on this Agenda.

NOTE: The public may also comment on any Agenda item, as they are presented, prior to action by the FCRTA Board.

2. **CONSENT ITEMS**

- A. **Approve Executive Minutes of February 25, 2021 [ATTACHMENT]**
- B. **FCRTA Fiscal Year 2019-20 Single Audit [ACCEPT]**
- C. **2021 Annual CHP-Motor Carrier Division Vehicle and Driver Inspection Report [INFORMATION]**
- D. **Annual Productivity Evaluation FY 2019-20 [APPROVE]**
- E. **Consolidated Transportation Service Agency (CTSA) Notification of Funding Availability (NOFA)[INFORMATION]**

A motion was made by Mayor Yep (Kerman) and second by Mayor Lopez (Orange Cove).  
A vote was called, and motion carried.

3. **OTHER Items**

A. **Items from Staff**

1. Moses informed the board that FCRTA is continuing to deliver meals and is coordinating with cities to transport individuals to and from vaccination sites.
2. Moses informed the board that the City's consultants have been contacting FCRTA and discussing the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Grant. Transportation is a big asset to these grant applications and we're available to help with these projects and include bus shelters, electric buses, electric cars, and on site charges.

B. **Items from members**

The Board thanked Moses for all that he has done for the communities.

4. **ADJOURNMENT @ 8:45 p.m**

A motion was made by Mayor Lopez (Orange Cove) and second by Mayor Yep (Kerman). A vote was called, and motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Moses Stites  
General Manager



Reset Form

Validate Form

# FY 2021 Low or No Emission Bus Program (5339(c))

## Applicant and Proposal Profile

Is this a resubmission due to an invalid/error message from FTA? ☐ Yes ☒ No

### Section I. Applicant Information

Organization Legal Name:

Fresno County Rural Transit Agency

FTA Recipient ID Number:

1622

Organization Chief Executive Officer:

(Name and Direct Phone Number)

Moses Stites, (559) 233-6789

Applicant Eligibility:

- ☐ Direct or Designated Recipient  
☒ State  
☐ Local Governmental Authority  
☐ A Federally-Recognized Indian Tribe

Project Location:

- ☐ Small Urbanized Area  
☐ Large Urbanized Area  
☒ Rural

#### Description of services provided and areas served:

According to the United States Census Bureau, Fresno County ("the County"), California is the 6th-largest county in California by area and has a population of 999,101. The County's poverty rate is 22.5 percent, which is approximately 1.7 times higher than the national poverty rate of 13.4 percent. The median household income in the County is \$53,969, compared with \$62,843 for the United States. The County is one of the most polluted counties in the nation. According to the American Lung Association, the County has an F grade for ozone and 24 hour particle pollution and a Fail for annual particle pollution.

California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen), a tool released by the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment on behalf of California Environmental Protection Agency, identifies California communities by census tract that are disproportionately burdened by, and vulnerable to, multiple sources of pollution. As shown in CalEnviroScreen 3.0, 60% of the census tracts in Fresno County are considered disadvantaged (see map of Fresno County disadvantaged census tracts in Attachment 1). Further, according to CalEnviroScreen 3.0, many of the census tracts in Fresno County are in the 90%+ percentile in terms of ozone exposure and PM-2.5 compared to the other census tracts in California, as shown in maps provided in Attachment 1.

The California Healthy Places Index (HPI) provides a snapshot of the social determinants of health across California at the census tract level. According to the HPI, 58% of census tracts in the County are at the 25th percentile level of healthy conditions compared to other California tracts. Census tracts with percentile rankings below 25 are typically used to represent disadvantaged communities (see map of HPI disadvantaged census tracts in Attachment 1).

The Fresno County Rural Transit Agency (FCRTA) provides public transit services to rural Fresno County's 13 incorporated Cities and 29 unincorporated rural communities. FCRTA provides both regular fixed route services, which follow designated routes and schedules, as well as reservation-based, demand responsive service that offers curb-to-curb transportation. FCRTA has three service types: inter-city bus service, intra-city bus service, and rural dial-a-ride service. The inter-city bus service connects cities and major towns with one another and with the Fresno metro area. Inter-city bus service includes fixed route service on a published schedule and flex-route services that allow short deviations with advanced request. The intra-city bus service provides mobility options within cities and communities for internal trips and to feed inter-city bus connection services. Intra-city bus service includes demand responsive service with real time dispatching. The rural dial-a-ride service provides mobility options to persons with disabilities in rural areas, outside inter-city and community-based (intra-city) service areas. Rural dial-a-ride service is demand responsive service with reservations allowed 24 hours in advance. In total, FCRTA covers almost 6,000 square miles across the County to serve communities that are up to 60 miles



away from the City of Fresno – the County seat and its main urban center. An FCRTA system map is included as Attachment 1.

All FCRTA vehicles are easily accessible to disabled individuals, and intercity buses are equipped with parcel and bicycle racks for riders' convenience in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The service vehicle fleet includes a mix of CNG, gasoline, and electric.

## Section II. Project Information

### About the Project

Project Title:  
(Descriptive title of this project)

Fresno County Rural Transit Agency Bus Replacement Project

#### Project Executive Summary:

FCRTA is partnering with BYD Coach and Bus (BYD), a battery-electric vehicle manufacturer, to replace five (5) existing CNG 22-seat cutaway buses with 30' battery electric buses. The electric buses would be used for existing bus service, including both inter-city and intra-city routes. FCRTA's Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan (excerpt included as Attachment 2) designates the useful life of CNG cutaway buses as ten years of service and 27 of FCRTA's CNG cutaway buses have exceeded their useful life threshold. The five buses that would be replaced with electric buses through the Low or No Emission Program (see Attachment 3) require critical engine maintenance and given the age of the buses, parts are not easily attainable. As demonstrated in FCRTA's TAM Plan (Attachment 2), FCRTA states that all new buses acquired since 2018 and going forward will be electric buses. FCRTA has a goal of transitioning their fleet to all-electric by 2025 and acquiring these buses would be an important step in reaching this goal. Integrating electric vehicles and charging infrastructure into FCRTA's fleet, will help improve the reliability of the transit service in rural communities that rely on transit, as well as reduce harmful emissions and improve air quality in disadvantaged communities that suffer from poor air quality. Further, the State of California is requiring transit agencies to upgrade their vehicle fleet to electric. In 2019, the Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) regulation, which is implemented by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), states that starting in 2029, public agencies will be limited to the purchase of zero emission buses, with a goal of complete transition to zero emissions buses by 2040 (regulation provided in Attachment 4). FCRTA is requesting \$3,578,636 in federal funds with a local match of \$627,317 for a project total of \$4,205,953 for the purchase of five (5) electric buses and associated chargers (project budget provided in Attachment 5).

#### Project Statement of Work (one sentence summarizing request):

Purchase five (5) 30' BYD battery electric buses with accompanying chargers, which would replace five of FCRTA's CNG cutaway buses that have exceeded their useful life threshold, to help FCRTA continue to transition to a fully electric vehicle fleet.

- Propulsion Type:
- ☒ Battery electric
  - ☐ Diesel-electric
  - ☐ hybrid
  - ☐ CNG
  - ☐ Fuel cell
  - ☐ Other

If Other, specify:



Project Type: ☒ Vehicle  
☐ Facility  
☒ Equipment  
☐ Other

If Other, specify:

### Nonattainment Area

Is your project located in or will impact a maintenance or nonattainment area? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Please list the maintenance or nonattainment area that the project will be located in or will impact and the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) pollutants addressed by the project:

According to the US EPA, as of February 28, 2021, Fresno County is designated as Extreme – Nonattainment for 8-Hour Ozone (2015), Moderate – Nonattainment for PM-2.5 (2012), Serious – Maintenance for PM-10 (1987), and Maintenance for Carbon Monoxide (1971). The replacement of five existing CNG buses with electric buses would result in a reduction of the following NAAQS pollutants: ozone, PM-2.5, PM-10, and carbon monoxide.

### Environmental Justice Populations

Is there an environmental justice population located within the service area? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Describe the environmental justice population(s) and the anticipated benefits resulting from the project for those population(s):

According to the 2019 ACS, 22.5% of Fresno County's population is living below the federal poverty line; 53% of the population is Hispanic or Latino, 4.8% Black or African American, 1.2% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 10.3% Asian, and 0.2% are Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. The project will reduce emissions, promoting better air quality in EJ communities. New buses will increase service reliability, providing EJ communities with access to jobs, healthcare, and education.

### Project Budget

| Description                               | QTY | 5339(c)<br>Amount | 5339(c)<br>Local Match | Other Federal<br>Funds | Other | Total Cost |   |
|---|-----|-------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------|------------|---|
| Purchase five (5) BYD 30' buses K7M-ER Mc | 1   | 3514266.00        | 620165.00              | 0.00                   | 0.00  | 4134431.00 | X |



| Description                                | QTY | 5339(c)<br>Amount | 5339(c)<br>Local Match | Other Federal<br>Funds | Other | Total Cost |                                     |
|--|-----|-------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------|------------|-------------------------------------|
| Purchase five (5) BYD 30' buses K7M-ER Mc  | 1   | 64370.00          | 7152.00                | 0.00                   | 0.00  | 71522.00   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="button" value="Insert Item"/> |     | Total:            | 3578636.00             | 627317.00              | 0.00  | 0.00       | 4205953.00                          |

## Matching Funds Information

5339(c) Matching Funds Amount:

### Source of Matching Funds:

Fresno County voters passed an extension to the Measure C program in November 2006, continuing a half cent sales tax for transportation purposes. FCRTA will be using Measure C funds to cover the local match.

### Supporting Documentation of Local Match:

Per FCRTA's Capital Reserve Budget (relevant page of the budget included as Attachment 6), there are \$2,230,859 in Measure C funds that FCRTA has the discretion to allocate. We have also included a letter (Attachment 6), signed by the General Manager of FCRTA (Moses Stites), confirming the matching fund source and amount.

## Project Scalability

Is project scope scalable? ☒ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, specify minimum Federal Funds necessary:

Provide explanation of scalability with specific references to the budget line items above:

The purchase of these five (5) buses and associated charging infrastructure will provide scalability for future battery electric bus purchases, to promote GHG emission reductions and improve air quality in the region.

Although FCRTA requires new vehicles to meet ridership demands, improve performance and decrease preventative maintenance costs, the FCRTA understands that the Low-No Program funding is shared amongst many different jurisdictions around the country. However, it is important that FCRTA replace as many buses as possible and as soon as possible, given that 43 percent of the existing cutaway buses have exceeded their useful life threshold. FCRTA believes that acquiring at least two (2) electric buses, with associated chargers, will help keep service running. Replacing buses will also be important to help FCRTA meet their fleet electrification goals and



the requirements of the State of California. The federal request for the scaled down project (two buses and associated chargers) would

## Project Timeline

| Timeline Description  | Timeline Item Date |                                     |
|---|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| FCRTA Board Authorization   | 09/30/2021         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| FCRTA to submit NEPA Categorical Exclusion Request to FTA             | 10/07/2021         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| STIP Amendment (no later than)  | 12/31/2021         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Issue Purchase Order/Contract for New Vehicles and Charging Equipment | 01/03/2022         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Pre-Production Meeting  | 01/17/2022         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Installation of Charging Stations                                     | 05/30/2022         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Pre-Delivery Inspection   | 03/31/2023         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Post-Delivery Inspection/Close-Out                                    | 04/14/2023         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Vehicle Deployment  | 06/14/2023         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Insert Item

## Congressional Districts (Project Location)

Congressional District

|        |                                     |
|--------|-------------------------------------|
| CA-004 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| CA-016 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| CA-021 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| CA-022 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Insert Item

Is this application a partnership between an eligible applicant and one or more private sector partners? ☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please list the partner(s) and describe their qualifications:

BYD Coach and Bus LLC (BYD) has over 20 years of experience optimizing safe, nontoxic battery technologies and is the world's largest producer of electric buses. It has delivered 60,000 dependable, all-electric buses and related charging systems to public operators, universities, airports, and corporate campuses, with over 400 buses delivered to United States customers. Furthermore,



BYD is a proud American manufacturer, with operations in California and has the experience and expertise to complete the proposed project, specifically in emission reduction development and implementation. This includes being a certified TVM, compliant with DBE, Buy America and experience in completing FTA bus testing for production transit buses pursuant 49 U.S.C. 5318. A full

## Section III. Evaluation Criteria

**\*\*\*Address each of the evaluation criteria as described in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.\*\*\***

### Demonstration of Need

FCRTA's current vehicle fleet is aging. As stated in FCRTA's Transit Asset Management Program (relevant pages provided as Attachment 2), as of 2021, 36% of the agency's revenue fleet are at or past their useful life benchmark (ULB), and 43% of the cutaway buses are at or past their ULB. The five buses that FCRTA proposes to replace as part of this project (five CNG cutaway buses, as listed in Attachment 3) have all already exceeded their ULB. These vehicles require critical engine maintenance and given the age of the buses, parts are not easily attainable. Replacing these buses will be critical to ensuring the reliability of FCRTA service.

The FTA spare ratio policy (as defined in FTA Circular 5010.1E) requires fleets with more than 50 fixed-route revenue vehicles to have no more than 20% of fixed-route vehicles as spare (regardless of vehicle type). However, FTA permits agencies to include vehicles that have met their minimum useful life in their contingency fleet if the agency is introducing zero-emission vehicles to its fleet. Contingency fleet vehicles are not included in the calculation of the spare ratio. FCRTA calculates that with purchasing the five new buses, 10% of the fixed-route vehicle fleet will be spare, which satisfies the FTA requirements (FTA spare ratio calculation shown in Attachment 9).

Further, the State of California is requiring transit agencies to upgrade their vehicle fleet to electric. In 2019, the Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) regulation, which is implemented by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), states that starting in 2029, public agencies will be limited to the purchase of zero emission buses only, with a goal of complete transition to zero emissions buses by 2040. FCRTA has an even more aggressive goal of converting 100 percent of their fleet to electric by 2025 (as stated in the Fresno County Regional Long-Range Transit Plan 2019-2050, relevant page included as Attachment 10). Obtaining Low or No Emission funding to replace five CNG buses to electric will be an important step toward meeting these goals.

Fresno County has some of the worst air quality in the nation. As mentioned in the "Description of Services Provided and Areas Served" section, according to the American Lung Association, the County has an F grade for ozone and 24 hour particle pollution and a Fail for annual particle pollution. 60% of the census tracts in Fresno County are considered disadvantaged by CalEPA for the purpose of SB 535 (see map of disadvantaged communities in Attachment 1). Disadvantaged communities are also likely to be disproportionately impacted by the future impacts of climate change. To improve air quality and mitigate climate change, the State and region have aggressive GHG emission reduction goals. The State has a GHG reduction target of 40% and 80% below 1990 levels by 2030 and 2050, respectively. The per capita GHG reduction target for the Fresno region in the 2018 SCS is 10% by 2025 and 12% by 2042. Continuing to upgrade FCRTA's vehicle fleet to zero emission electric buses is an important step toward lowering GHG emissions.

### Demonstration of Benefits

The proposed project will remove five CNG buses and deploy five battery-electric buses in their place and supporting charging infrastructure for the proposed vehicles. By deploying the proposed buses, FCRTA will reduce the energy consumption, emission of harmful pollutants, and direct carbon emissions associated with its fleet.



The proposed electric buses consume less energy per mile driven than buses that use other common propulsion technologies, such as gas, diesel, and CNG engines. As provided by BYD, citing their Altoona report, the average fuel economy of the proposed BYD is 23.48 miles per gallon (MPG) of diesel gallon equivalent (DGE) compared to FCRTA's CNG buses, which have a fuel economy of 3 MPG of DGE (per San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District emissions and cost-effectiveness study prepared for FCRTA).

The project will also reduce harmful emissions and carbon emissions. According to the Argonne National Laboratory Heavy Duty Vehicle Emissions calculator, replacing five standard diesel transit buses with electric buses would avoid 1,524 lbs of nitrogen oxide, 27 lbs of PM-2.5, and 1,089 short tons of GHG over the vehicle lifetime. By comparison, replacing five standard diesel transit buses with CNG buses (the type of buses that would be replaced as part of this project) would only avoid 726 lbs of nitrous oxide, 0 lbs of PM-2.5, and 199 short tons of GHG. Attachment 11 has the output from the Argonne analysis.

BYD's patented Iron-Phosphate batteries are considered "Life" batteries and BYD provides a 12-year warranty with no required mid-life battery replacement. Also, once BYD batteries degrade below 70% of their original capacity, the batteries may be removed from transit.

## Planning and Local/Regional Prioritization

Following the passage of the Federal Clean Air Act in 1990, the FCRTA has instituted alternative fuel programs as an example to other the public governmental entities and the private and non-profit sectors. The FCRTA Board of Directors, comprising the mayors of each of the 13 cities and the County Board of Supervisors chairman, understands that the San Joaquin Valley has, potentially, the worst air quality in the nation. FCRTA has consistently used proven technology and readily available fuels. FCRTA has over ten years of experience operating zero emission battery powered vehicles in Fresno County, and has the proven ability to operate such equipment.

FCRTA's fleet conversion efforts are consistent with regional policies. One of the policies identified in the 2018 Fresno Council of Governments Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) is to encourage companies that maintain large fleets of vehicles to convert to zero emission vehicles (see applicable page from the RTP/SCS in Attachment 12).

To improve air quality and mitigate climate change, the State of California and Fresno region have aggressive GHG emission reduction goals. The State has a GHG reduction target of 40% and 80% below 1990 levels by 2030 and 2050, respectively. The per capita GHG reduction target for the Fresno region is 10% by 2025 and 12% by 2042. Wide-spread transit fleet electrification is an integral component of meeting the State's and Fresno region's aggressive GHG emission reduction targets. In 2019, the Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) regulation, which is implemented by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), states that starting in 2029, public agencies will be limited to the purchase of zero emission buses only, with a goal of complete transition to zero emissions buses by 2040 (see regulation language in Attachment 4). FCRTA has an even more aggressive goal of converting 100 percent of their fleet to electric by 2025 and has already purchased 31 electric vehicles to date.

The proposed project is also consistent with other planning efforts that the region is undergoing. FCRTA is conducting an electrical grid analysis study funded by the FY 2019-20 Caltrans sustainable Communities Grant to analyze the electrical grid infrastructure and prepare for charging infrastructure installation. The Fresno County of Governments completed an Electric Vehicle Readiness Plan in January 2021. Also, in 2021, FCRTA applied for the Caltrans Sustainable Communities grant for a Distributed Energy Resource/Microgrid Feasibility Study to evaluate the physical and financial feasibility of developing a microgrid system, a self-sufficient energy system powered by a renewable energy source, such as solar. FCRTA is also testing electric carsharing and ridesharing to provide first-mile/last-mile transit service.

FCRTA has received letters of support for this grant from agencies including: City of Clovis, City of San Joaquin, City of Orange Cove, City of Selma, City of Reedley, City of Firebaugh, Kings County Area Public Transit Agency, and MV Transportation (letters of support included as Attachment 13).

## Local Financial Commitment

Fresno County voters passed an extension to the Measure C program in November 2006, continuing a half cent sales tax for transportation purposes. FCRTA will be using Measure C funds to cover the local match. Per FCRTA's Capital Reserve Budget, there are \$2,230,859 in Measure C funds that FCRTA has the discretion to allocate (see section of FCRTA budget in Attachment 6). The local match amount for this project is \$627,165. The federal local match ratio is 85/15 for the procurement of vehicles and 90/10 for the purchase and installation of the necessary charging equipment.



**RESOLUTION # 2021-02****AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTION OF THE  
CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES AND AUTHORIZED AGENT FORMS  
FOR THE LOW CARBON TRANSIT OPERATIONS PROGRAM (LCTOP)**

**WHEREAS**, the FCRTA is an eligible project sponsor and may receive state funding from the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) for transit projects; and

**WHEREAS**, the statutes related to state-funded transit projects require a local or regional implementing agency to abide by various regulations; and

**WHEREAS**, Senate Bill 862 (2014) named the Department of Transportation (Department) as the administrative agency for the LCTOP; and

**WHEREAS**, the Department has developed guidelines for the purpose of administering and distributing LCTOP funds to eligible project sponsors (local agencies); and

**WHEREAS**, the FCRTA wishes to delegate authorization to execute these documents and any amendments thereto to Moses Stites, General Manager.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Directors of the FCRTA that the fund recipient agrees to comply with all conditions and requirements set forth in the Certification and Assurances and the Authorized Agent documents and applicable statutes, regulations and guidelines for all LCTOP funded transit projects.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that *Moses Stites, General Manager*, be authorized to execute all required documents of the LCTOP program and any Amendments thereto with the California Department of Transportation.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Directors of the (Agency) that it hereby authorizes the submittal of the following project nomination(s) and allocation request(s) to the Department in FY 2020-21 LCTOP funds:

*Project Name: Acquisition of One 23-FT BYD Electric BUS*

*Amount of LCTOP funds requested: \$215,761.00*

*Short description of project: Acquisition of One 23-FT BYD Electric BUS for operation in FCRTA service areas.*

*Benefit to a Priority Populations: New vehicle will improve transit service and air quality in all Disadvantaged Communities of Fresno County.*

*Contributing Sponsors (if applicable): None*

**AGENCY BOARD DESIGNEE: MOSES STITES, GENERAL MANAGER**

**BY:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**David Cardenas, FCRTA Board Chair**

**Date:** April 29, 2021



**RESOLUTION # 2021-03**

**AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTION OF THE  
THE LOW CARBON TRANSIT OPERATIONS PROGRAM (LCTOP) PROJECT:**

**ACQUISITION OF ONE 23-FT BYD ELECTRIC BUS --\$215,761**

**WHEREAS**, the FCRTA is an eligible project sponsor and may receive state funding from the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) now or sometime in the future for transit projects; and

**WHEREAS**, the statutes related to state-funded transit projects require a local or regional implementing agency to abide by various regulations; and

**WHEREAS**, Senate Bill 862 (2014) named the Department of Transportation (Department) as the administrative agency for the LCTOP; and

**WHEREAS**, the Department has developed guidelines for the purpose of administering and distributing LCTOP funds to eligible project sponsors (local agencies); and

**WHEREAS**, the FCRTA wishes to implement the LCTOP project(s) listed above,

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Directors of the FCRTA that the fund recipient agrees to comply with all conditions and requirements set forth in the applicable statutes, regulations and guidelines for all LCTOP funded transit projects.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Directors of the FCRTA that it hereby authorizes the submittal of the following project nomination(s) and allocation request(s) to the Department in FY 2020-21 LCTOP funds:

*Project Name; Acquisition of One 23-FT BYD Electric BUS*

*Amount of LCTOP funds requested: \$215,761.00*

*Short description of project: Acquisition of One 23-FT BYD Electric BUS for operation in FCRTA service areas.*

*Benefit to a Priority Populations: New vehicle will improve transit service and air quality in all Disadvantaged Communities of Fresno County.*

*Contributing Sponsors (if applicable): None*

**AGENCY BOARD DESIGNEE: MOSES STITES, GENERAL MANAGER**

**BY:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**David Cardenas, FCRTA Board Chair**

**Date:** April 29, 2021



**RESOLUTION # 2021-06****AUTHORIZATION FOR THE FCRTA GRANT APPLICATION TO THE  
NATIONAL RURAL TRANSIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
COMMUNITY RIDES GRANT PROGRAM**

**WHEREAS**, the FCRTA is an eligible project applicant and may receive funding from the US Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administrations' (FTA) National Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) Community Rides Grant Program; and

**WHEREAS**, the FCRTA wishes to apply for RTAP Community Rides Grant Program funding to implement new transit service that provides Fresno County residents with better access to healthcare and social services facilities in Fresno County; and

**WHEREAS**, the FCRTA is preparing an Application for RTAP Community Rides Grant Program funding, in partnership with local transportation service provider Inspiration Transportation, in the amount of \$100,000 for the new transit service; and

**WHEREAS**, local funding, in addition to the \$100,000 RTAP grant, would be needed to sustain the transit service, and Measure C Funds have been identified as the local funding source.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Directors of the FCRTA that the fund recipient agrees to comply with all conditions and requirements set forth in the RTAP Community Rides Grant Program document and any applicable statutes, regulations and guidelines for all RTAP Community Ride Grant Program funded projects.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the General Manager, be authorized to make financial decisions, authorize the submittal of the application to the FTA, and implement the expanded transit service to provide better access to healthcare and social services.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Measure C funds will be used to sustain the transit service once the RTAP Community Rides Grant Program funds are expended.

**AGENCY BOARD DESIGNEE: MOSES STITES, GENERAL MANAGER**

Passed and approved this 29th day of April, 2021.

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
David Cardenas, Chairman

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of a resolution of the Fresno County Rural Transit Agency Duly adopted at a meeting thereof held on the 29th day of April, 2021.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Moses Stites, General Manager





March 15th, 2021  
Attn: Brenda Veenendaal  
Fresno COG  
2035 Tulare Street, Ste. 201  
Fresno, CA 93721

*Submitted via Email*

**RE: Fresno County Unmet Transit Needs Assessment 2021**

To the Fresno Council of Governments (COG):

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments for the 2021 Unmet Transit Needs Assessment (UTN). Leadership Counsel works alongside the most impacted communities advocating for sound policy to eradicate injustice and secure equal access to opportunity regardless of wealth, race, income, and place. We work beside community leaders throughout the San Joaquin Valley on various issues including essential transportation services and equitable investments in transportation.

The UTN Assessment is a key opportunity to help communities close the gap towards access and inequities in the County of Fresno. Many residents lack access to a vehicle which makes public transportation their only source of moving around the city. Since public transit policies and access have a long history of discrimination and segregation, we must actively work against the implicit racist and prejudicial patterns embedded in the current structure. Achieving a just and equitable transit system cannot be done without the very same groups who are discriminated against being active partners, driving the solutions for their communities.

As such, we have provided the following project list resulting from discussions with BIPOC residents throughout the county for the 2021 Unmet Transportation Needs to improve their communities and quality of life:

**→ Expanding and Institutionalizing Electric Rideshare Programs for Rural and Isolated Communities:**

- ◆ Fresno County Rural Transportation Agency (FCRTA) has put forth community-driven rideshare programs to address the specific transportation needs of the region's rural and isolated communities. There are few smaller cities and communities, like Cantua Creek, that already have an electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, and FCRTA is working diligently to ensure a reliable grid for all-electric fleets. We urge FCOG to fund innovative, resilient, and sustainable projects, like those created by FCRTA, to continue to adequately address rural



transportation infrastructure issues. A rideshare program in communities such as Lanare and Cantua is a project which could address these issues. Biola and Westpark have successfully implemented this project through the Unmet Transit Needs funding and should be expanded to more rural communities.

→ **Better Transit Access In the City of Fresno West of Highway 99:**

- ◆ Extending the Bus Rapid Transit along California Avenue into West Fresno. In the short-term, Route #28 needs to pass by with more frequency along California Ave.
- ◆ Reliable and efficient transit stops/access on Route #35 towards Addams Elementary. Currently, the bus passes by every 30 to 40 minutes making it difficult for children and parents to get to school on time. This should be reduced to a 15-minute frequency. This should also include safe routes to the bus stop on both sides of Floradora and Hughes Avenues.
- ◆ Reliable and efficient transit stops and access near the Three Palms Mobile Home Park. This could be done by expanding Route #20. We also ask there be a commitment from FAX to implement the mobility option that results out of the Clean Mobility Options Grant for the 2022-2023 budget.
- ◆ Efficient transit connections from Addams Elementary to Gaston Middle School by extending service on Church Avenue and Hughes Avenue.

→ **Better Connectivity From Southeast and Southwest Fresno to Northeast Fresno**

- ◆ Extending the Bus Rapid Transit along McKinley Avenue.
- ◆ Adding stops/access along Church Avenue.

→ **Prioritization of Active Transportation Projects in DUCs/DACs**

- ◆ Ensure that sidewalks, bike lanes, curb, and gutter projects are funded in areas that do not have the existing pedestrian infrastructure. In addition, FCOG should work in conjunction with Fresno County to ensure that communities who reported flooding in the SB 244 analysis are prioritized.

Furthermore, once the unmet needs that are “reasonable to meet” are prioritized and funded, then Fresno COG can move forward to funding non-transit needs such as streets and roads. The following is a list of projects for those priorities:

- Repave East Central Avenue between Cherry Avenue and Chestnut Avenue.
- Protected bike lanes and complete sidewalks along Cedar Avenue from Jensen Avenue near Calwa Elementary towards Tulare Avenue at Roosevelt High.





- Complete sidewalks and bike lanes leading to Addams Elementary. This includes sidewalks along Marks Avenue from Olive to Clinton Avenues, especially on the east side of Marks.
- Complete streets project on East Central Avenue between Cherry Avenue and Chestnut Avenue so they are safer for pedestrians and bicycle riders.
- Protected bike lanes or separated trails on rural corridors for safe travel for cyclists, specifically in Lanare, Three Rock, Riverdale, and Cantua Creek.
- The intersection of North Avenue and Elm Avenue need completed sidewalks on all four corners to connect all directions of travel for pedestrians and bicyclists, including southbound Elm Avenue where the sidewalks abruptly end.
- Leveling and paving Britten Avenue along Cherry Avenue.
- Safe routes to school leading to Cantua Creek Elementary.

### **Conclusion:**

The Transportation Development Act in Article 3 Section 99238.5 of the California Public Utilities Code requires that the transportation planning agency “solicit the input of transit dependent and transit disadvantaged persons”. Cal. Pub. Util. Code § 99238.5. Thus, clearly identifying the needs of the elderly, disabled, and residents of limited means for the UTN Assessments is mandated by law and must be complied with. Furthermore, as Article 8 Section 99401.5 of the California Public Utilities Code states “the fact that an identified transit need cannot be fully met based on available resources shall not be the sole reason for finding that a transit need is not reasonable to meet.” Hence, the projects listed above should not be classified unreasonable to meet merely due to lack of resources.

We thank you once again for the opportunity to submit public comments. We hope our recommendations are considered and look forward to a better connected County of Fresno. If any questions arise, do not hesitate to contact me at [kmartinez@leadershipcounsel.org](mailto:kmartinez@leadershipcounsel.org).

Sincerely,

Karla Martinez

*Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability*



April 15, 2021

Karla Martinez, Policy Advocate  
Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability  
2210 San Joaquin Street  
Fresno, CA 93721

**Sent via U.S. Mail and Email to <[kmartinez@leadershipcounsel.org](mailto:kmartinez@leadershipcounsel.org)>**

Ms. Martinez,

Thank you for your letter dated March 15, 2021 ("your Letter"), in which you engage the Fresno Council of Governments ("FCOG") in discussions relating to the 2021 unmet transit needs assessment process. We have reviewed your Letter along with our partners in the Fresno County Rural Transit Agency ("FCRTA"), the Fresno Area Express ("FAX"), and Clovis Transit. By this letter FCOG staff responds to the transit projects suggested in your Letter.

As a threshold matter, you are correct that section 99238.5 of the Public Utilities Code ("PUC") requires the FCOG to "solicit the input of transit dependent and transit disadvantaged persons." To that end, the FCOG (1) placed a notice on its website on February 17, 2021 soliciting public input, (2) sent written notices during the months of January, February, and March. The extensive outreach efforts consisted of website posts, social media posts, mail outs to FCOG's database of more than 5,000. In addition, the FCOG will conduct noticed public meetings on April 29, 2021. FCOG staff sees your Letter itself is reflective of FCOG's efforts to involve the community in the unmet transit needs process, and we appreciate and value your participation in this process.

City of Clovis As you know, the FCOG, as the transportation planning agency for the County of Fresno, annually  
City of Coalinga conducts the unmet transit needs assessment process under section 99401.5 of the PUC. Through  
City of Firebaugh this process, the FCOG identifies "unmet transit needs" that are "reasonable to meet," as those  
City of Fowler terms are defined in FCOG Resolution No. 90-15. A copy of FCOG Resolution No. 90-15 is attached to  
this letter as **Attachment A** for your reference.

City of Fresno  
City of Huron  
City of Kerman  
City of Kingsburg On pages 1 and 2 of your Letter, you identified eight specific transit projects, which you assert meet  
the definitions in FCOG Resolution No. 90-15 and section 99401.5, subdivision (c) of the PUC as  
unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet. Those eight transit projects are presented under  
the following headings:

- City of Mendota
- City of Orange Cove
- Expanding and Institutionalizing Electric Rideshare Programs for Rural and Isolated Communities
- City of Parlier
- Better Transit Access In the City of Fresno West of Highway 99
- City of Reedley
- Better Connectivity From Southeast and Southwest Fresno to Northeast Fresno
- City of San Joaquin
- Prioritization of Active Transportation Projects in DUCs/DACs

City of Sanger

City of Selma

County of Fresno



By this letter, FCOG staff and FCOG's transportation partners respond to whether the eight specific transit projects listed in your Letter qualify as unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet, which we do below.

We do not, however, respond to the eight "non-transit" projects listed on pages 2 and 3 of your Letter. Those non-transit projects are neither within the scope of the unmet transit needs assessment process nor are they within the scope of FCOG's authority as the transportation planning agency. It will be up to individual local governments, , to determine which projects will be implemented.

### **1. Are the Eight Proposed Transit Projects Unmet Transit Needs?**

In order to determine whether the eight transit projects identified in your Letter qualify as unmet transit needs, FCOG staff relies on the definition from Resolution No. 90-15, which defines "unmet transit needs" as follows:

"Those public transportation or specialized transportation services that are identified in the Regional Transportation Plan and/or documented through the [FCOG]'s annual unmet transit needs public hearing process that have not been implemented or funded." (Attachment A, p. 4.)

This is a broad definition. For the most part, FCOG staff does not dispute that, of the eight projects identified in your Letter, seven proposed transportation projects include at least one proposal that qualifies as unmet transit needs within the definition above.

However, the final item identified by your Letter as a transit project includes numerous proposals which do not meet the definition provided by Resolution No. 90-15. This item reads as follows:

"Ensure that sidewalks, bike lanes, curb, and gutter projects are funded in areas that do not have the existing pedestrian infrastructure. In addition, FCOG should work in conjunction with Fresno County to ensure that communities who reported flooding in the SB 244 analysis are prioritized." (Your Letter, p. 2.)

The above request consists entirely of infrastructure projects which do not qualify as "public transportation or specialized transportation services," and are therefore not to be addressed through the unmet transit needs process. The listed projects can only be undertaken by the local governments having jurisdiction to perform those public infrastructure improvements.

### **2. Are the Unmet Transit Needs Reasonable to Meet?**

The FCOG is required by section 99401.5 of the PUC to determine whether an unmet transit need is reasonable to meet. Pursuant to the authorization under section 99401.5, subdivision (c), FCOG has provided a definition for "reasonable to meet" in Resolution No. 90-15.

The definition provided by Resolution No. 90-15 is complicated, and we encourage you to review the definition yourself. It is important to note that, in making the assessment whether an unmet transit need is reasonable to meet, FCOG staff, on consultation with FCOG's transit partners, conduct a feasibility analysis, which can include the following non-exhaustive determinations:



- (a) Forecast of anticipated ridership if service is provided.
- (b) Estimate of capital and operating costs for the provision of such services.
- (c) Estimate of fares and local support in relation to estimates operating costs for providing such services.
- (d) An estimated fare which the [FCOG] Board would determine to be sufficient to meet farebox recovery requirements, but would not be so high that it would provide a financial burden on transit patrons.

Moreover, FCOG must determine whether the proposed service complies with numerous legal requirements. Among those legal requirements expressly listed in Resolution No. 90-15, FCOG must also consider whether a proposed service “would result in the responsible operator or service claimant meeting the farebox recovery and local support requirements as set forth by PUC Section 99268 et. seq.” (Attachment A, pp. 4-5.) State law provides that urban operators must recover one-fifth of their operating revenues from fares where rural operators must recover one-tenth. (PUC, § 99268.2.) Failure of our transportation partners to maintain the requisite levels of farebox recovery would also result in their forfeiture of significant State subsidies.<sup>1</sup>

You are correct that “the fact that an identified transit need cannot be fully met based on available resources shall not be the sole reason for finding that a transit need is not reasonable to meet.” (PUC, § 99401.5, subd. (c); see also Attachment A, p. 4.) FCOG follows this rule in making its determinations. However, to the extent that you appear to suggest financial needs should not be a part of the determination whether an unmet transit need is reasonable to meet (see, your Letter, p. 3), that is a significant oversimplification. While many of the considerations are financial in nature, those considerations can extend beyond a mere lack of resources.

By way of example, one of our transit partners, FCRTA, has repeatedly attempted to provide transit services to the unincorporated community of Westpark, as identified by a local advocacy group in prior unmet transit needs assessments. Despite a mere 10% farebox recovery requirement for that rural operator, FCRTA was forced to discontinue the Westpark service, as required by State law, when it determined that it was subsidizing more than 90% of the operating costs of that service. Such service may have constituted an unmet need, but in retrospect that need was not reasonable to meet because of that route’s inability to meet State farebox requirements.

We note that you have provided no evidence and very little discussion about whether the eight identified transit projects proposed in your Letter are indeed reasonable to meet, instead relying on generalizations in your “Conclusion” section. On careful review of available information, including your Letter, and on consultation with FCOG’s transit partners, FCOG staff has made the following determinations regarding whether your proposed transit projects are reasonable to meet. FCOG staff intends to present these determinations to the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council on April 20, 2021.

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<sup>1</sup> While this requirement has been temporarily suspended by the legislature by Assembly Bill 90 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, FCOG and its transit partners must consider the applicable farebox recovery ratio when planning for transit projects that will extend past the temporary suspension.



#### **A. Electric Rideshare**

“Fresno County Rural Transportation Agency (FCRTA) has put forth community-driven rideshare programs to address the specific transportation needs of the region's rural and isolated communities. There are few smaller cities and communities, like Cantua Creek, that already have an electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, and FCRTA is working diligently to ensure a reliable grid for all-electric fleets. We urge FCOG to fund innovative, resilient, and sustainable projects, like those created by FCRTA, to continue to adequately address rural transportation infrastructure issues. A rideshare program in communities such as Lanare and Cantua is a project which could address these issues. Biola and Westpark have successfully implemented this project through the Unmet Transit Needs funding and should be expanded to more rural communities.” (Your Letter, pp. 1-2.)

The operator responsible for this proposed service expansion is FCRTA. With assistance from FCRTA, FCOG staff has determined that the proposed transit need is **reasonable to meet**.

We would like to convey that FCRTA staff thanks you for your recognition of the significant efforts FCRTA has made to provide safe and reliable electric rideshare services to unincorporated communities within Fresno County.

In October 2020, FCRTA deployed a demonstration rideshare program utilizing electric vehicles in the communities of West Park and Biola following the completion of an EV Rideshare Study funded by the FCOG Infrastructure Planning Grant. This service is still active and is operated by Inspiration Transportation. FCRTA intends to expand this service into other communities such as Lanare and Cantua Creek once ridership increases and normal operations resume as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic recovery.

#### **B. Bus Rapid Transit – California Avenue**

“Extending the Bus Rapid Transit along California Avenue into West Fresno. In the short-term, Route #28 needs to pass by with more frequency along California Ave.” (Your Letter, p. 2.)

The operator responsible for this proposed route extension would be FAX. With assistance from FAX, FCOG staff has determined that the proposed transit need is **not reasonable to meet**, because the existing and projected ridership do not justify the cost of extension of bus rapid transit (“BRT”) service or more frequent service along Route #28.

In 2008, FAX prepared a study assessing four potential high demand routes for BRT. Although California Avenue was not included in this study, as ridership along California Avenue was too low for inclusion, only the Blackstone and Ventura/Kings Canyon alignments were justified due to their high projected ridership.

Street infrastructure, including sidewalk, curb, and gutter, does not exist in continuity along California Avenue to support your proposed BRT route. The cost of improvements required to construct a BRT route along this route would be approximately \$3.5 million per mile,



based on FAX's experience with its existing BRT routes. The costs of implementing a traditional BRT project would include dedicated transit lanes, off-board fare collection, Transit Signal Priority, enhanced station amenities, and service at 10 minutes during peak periods, resulting in the need for the purchase of two additional electric vehicle buses at approximately \$1.3 million each. Even if FAX could obtain funding for the street infrastructure improvements, the two additional electric buses, and the BRT-related costs, a new BRT corridor would add significant costs to FAX's overall operating costs per hour which have increased by almost 10% between FY 19 and FY 20 due to COVID, and would aggravate FAX's current systemwide farebox recovery ratio which has declined to 10% due to COVID, thus preventing FAX from justifying the proposed service.

Similarly, projected ridership does not justify an increase of frequency along Route 28. The current service interval of 20 minutes meets the needs of the existing pre-COVID ridership of 3,118 daily passengers. Increasing the frequency to every 15 minutes would result in a cost increase of \$660,000, requiring an additional 110,000 annual passenger trips above and beyond the pre-COVID ridership numbers based on average fare collection rates to achieve a farebox recovery ratio of 15%.<sup>2</sup>

FCOG staff and FAX do recognize that the ridership needs of Southwest Fresno are changing along with growth. Accordingly, FAX has included a proposed project in the Regional Transportation Plan ("RTP") to evaluate a variety of high frequency services and service expansions in the Southwest Fresno Specific Plan Area, including analysis along California, Elm Ave, and additional connections between the southwest area and areas west of State Route 99 further north.

### ***C. Route #35 Improvements***

"Reliable and efficient transit stops/access on Route #35 towards Addams Elementary. Currently, the bus passes by every 30 to 40 minutes making it difficult for children and parents to get to school on time. This should be reduced to a 15-minute frequency. This should also include safe routes to the bus stop on both sides of Floradora and Hughes Avenues." (Your Letter, p. 2.)

The operator responsible for Route #35 is FAX. With assistance from FAX, FCOG staff has determined that the proposed transit need is **not reasonable to meet**, because the existing and projected ridership do not justify the cost of more frequent service along Route #35.

The existing service interval of 30 minutes of Route 35, along with Fresno Unified School District's daily school bus service from 1839 Golden State Boulevard to Addams Elementary School via Route 0901AB, meets the needs of the pre-COVID ridership of 1,191 daily passengers, with pre-COVID average daily boardings of 12 and alightings of 7 at Bus Stop #1329 at SW Hughes and McKinley in front of Jane Addams Elementary School. Increasing the frequency of Route 35 to every 15 minutes would result in an operating cost increase of \$1.2 million, requiring an additional 136,000 trips to achieve a 15% farebox recovery ratio.

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<sup>2</sup> FAX staff uses 15% because it is the mid-point between the minimum 20% farebox recovery ratio requirement under the Transit Development Act and the current systemwide farebox recovery ratio of 10% due to COVID.



In addition, increasing service from 30 minutes to 15 minutes would require the purchase of six new electric buses at a cost of \$1.3 million for each new bus.

However, as ridership increases on this route, it will be evaluated for increased frequencies as identified in the 2015 Strategic Services Evaluation.

To the extent this proposal includes proposed improvements to roadway infrastructure which do not meet the definition of “unmet transit need,” FCOG staff does not address whether it is reasonable to meet. The City of Fresno Public Works Department addresses the infrastructure needed to create safe routes to bus stops.

#### ***D. Three Palms Mobile Home Transit***

“Reliable and efficient transit stops and access near the Three Palms Mobile Home Park. This could be done by expanding Route #20. We also ask there be a commitment from FAX to implement the mobility option that results out of the Clean Mobility Options Grant for the 2022-2023 budget.” (Your Letter, p. 2.)

The operator responsible for this proposed expansion of service would be FAX. With assistance from FAX, FCOG staff has determined that the proposed transit need is **not reasonable to meet**, due to the existing infrastructure limitations of the site. The Three Palms Mobile Home Park is solely accessible from Golden State Boulevard, which does not permit the safe operation of transit at this time. Golden State Boulevard serves as the onramp for State Route 99 and has a posted speed limit of 50 miles per hour. There is no safe path of travel, and there is no existing infrastructure for safe bus stop placement. Therefore, bus service to Three Palms Mobile Home Park cannot be provided.

FAX is, however, partnering with the Three Palms Mobile Home Park, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability, and Inspiration Transportation on developing a Clean Transportation Needs Assessment funded through a Clean Mobility Options (“CMO”) grant via California Climate Investment dollars. FAX is committed to partnering with the community to apply for the next round of CMO grant funding, pending the outcomes and planning efforts resulting from the needs assessment, expected to be finalized this summer.

#### ***E. Addams Elementary to Gaston Middle School***

“Efficient transit connections from Addams Elementary to Gaston Middle School by extending service on Church Avenue and Hughes Avenue.” (Your Letter, p. 2.)

The operator responsible for this proposed route would be FAX. With assistance from FAX, FCOG staff has determined that the proposed transit need is **not reasonable to meet**, because the existing and projected ridership do not justify the cost of creation of the new route described.

Existing service between Addams Elementary School and Gaston Middle School is accomplished by Routes #35 and #32, with a transfer at Fresno Street. In addition, Fresno Unified School District provides daily school bus service from 1839 Golden State Boulevard to Gaston Middle School via Route 0908AA.



FAX cannot justify the creation of the proposed route along Church Avenue and Hughes Avenue, as the existing land uses along that route are not dense enough to support public transit. An 11-mile route, connecting Routes 38 and 35 with service through Church and Hughes would cost approximately \$700,000, plus the cost of purchasing two new electric buses at approximately \$1.3 million per bus. To achieve a 15% farebox recovery, it would need approximately 105,000 passenger trips per year. This is in an area with less than 2,000 residents within ¼ mile of the route. This ridership is the equivalent of FAX Route 33, which has a population of more than 21,000 residents within ¼ mile of the route.

Additionally, FAX is currently exploring future service along Church Avenue from southwest Fresno to Armstrong. Funding has not, however, been identified for this service.

#### ***F. Bus Rapid Transit – McKinley Avenue***

“Extending the Bus Rapid Transit along McKinley Avenue.” (Your Letter, p. 2.)

The operator responsible for this proposed route would be FAX. With assistance from FAX, FCOG staff has determined that the proposed transit need is **not reasonable to meet**, because the existing and projected ridership do not justify the cost of extension of BRT along McKinley Avenue.

Although McKinley Avenue was not included in FAX’s 2008 BRT study, as ridership along McKinley Avenue was too low for inclusion, only the Blackstone and Ventura/Kings Canyon alignments were justified due to their high projected ridership.

Currently, street infrastructure along the existing canal does not exist along the eastern portion of McKinley to support BRT service, or even ADA-accessible local bus service. The cost of improvements required to construct a BRT line along this route would be approximately \$3.5 million per mile, based on FAX’s experience with its existing BRT routes. In addition, as explained above, BRT service costs considerably more to operate than the existing bus route service. Even if FAX could obtain funding for the street infrastructure improvements, new electric buses, and BRT-related costs, a new BRT corridor would add significant costs to FAX’s overall operating costs per hour which have increased by almost 10% between FY 19 and FY 20, and would aggravate FAX’s existing farebox recovery of 10%, thus preventing FAX from justifying the proposed service.

FCOG staff and FAX do recognize that the ridership needs of Southwest Fresno are changing along with growth. Accordingly, FAX has included a proposed project in the RTP to evaluate a variety of high frequency services and service expansions in the Southwest Fresno Specific Plan Area, including analysis along California, Elm Ave, and additional connections between the southwest area and areas west of State Route 99 further north.

#### ***G. Church Avenue Stops***

“Adding stops/access along Church Avenue.” (Your Letter, p. 2.)



The operator responsible for routes which currently serve Church Avenue in your area of interest is FAX. With assistance from FAX, FCOG staff has determined that the proposed transit need is **not reasonable to meet**, because, as explained under section 2.E above, the existing and projected ridership do not justify the cost of increasing the density of stops along the route described.

To the extent that the proposed additional "access" includes anything other than "public transportation or specialized transportation services," thus not meeting the definition of "unmet transit need," FCOG staff does not address whether that proposed access is reasonable to meet.


***H. Prioritization of Active Transportation Projects in DUCs/DACs***

"Ensure that sidewalks, bike lanes, curb, and gutter projects are funded in areas that do not have the existing pedestrian infrastructure. In addition, FCOG should work in conjunction with Fresno County to ensure that communities who reported flooding in the SB 244 analysis are prioritized." (Your Letter, p. 2.)

As we note above, this proposed project is not an "unmet transit need" within the meaning provided by Resolution No. 90-15. Accordingly, FCOG staff does not address whether it is reasonable for our transit partners to meet.

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FCOG staff again thanks you for your participation in the unmet transit needs process.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Tony Boren, Executive Director  
Fresno Council of Governments



BEFORE THE  
COUNCIL OF FRESNO COUNTY GOVERNMENTS  
RESOLUTION 90-18

|                         |   |                       |
|-------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| In the Matter of        | ) | RESOLUTION DEFINING   |
|                         | ) | "UNMET TRANSIT NEEDS" |
| TRANSPORTATION DEVELOP- | ) | AND "REASONABLE TO    |
| MENT ACT OF 1971        | ) | MEET"                 |
|                         | ) |                       |

WHEREAS, California Public Utilities Code, Section 99401.5 requires that the Council of Fresno County Governments, as the regional transportation planning agency, determine definitions of "unmet transit needs" and "reasonable to meet" as the basis for consideration of Unmet Transit Needs Findings;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of Fresno County Governments hereby determines the following definitions:

**Unmet Transit Needs**

"Those public transportation or specialized transportation services that are identified in the Regional Transportation Plan and/or documented through the COFCG's annual unmet transit needs public hearing process that have not been implemented or funded."

**Reasonable to Meet**

"Those public transportation services identified in the Regional Transportation Plan, or proposed amendment thereto, which meet the following criteria:

- (1) Services which, if implemented or funded, would not cause the responsible operator or service claimant to exceed its appropriations limitation as set forth by Proposition 4 (Gann Limit).
- (2) Services which, if implemented or funded, would not cause the responsible operator to incur expenditures in excess of the maximum amount of:
  - (a) Local Transportation Funds and State Transit Assistance Funds which may be available for such operator to claim;
  - (b) Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) funds or other support for public transportation services which are committed by Federal and/or State agencies by formula or tentative approval of specific grant requests; and
  - (c) Farebox and local funding in compliance with PUC Section 99268 et.seq.

The fact that an identified need cannot fully be met based on available resources, however, shall not be the sole reason for finding that a transit need is not reasonable to meet.



- (3) Services which, if implemented or funded, would result in the responsible operator or service claimant meeting the farebox recovery and local support requirements as set forth by PUC Section 99268 et. seq. Evaluation of existing operators shall be based on records provided to COFCG by operators pursuant to the Transit Productivity Evaluation Process (PUC Section 99244).

Evaluation of proposed new service shall be based upon a feasibility analysis which includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) Forecast of anticipated ridership if service is provided.
- (b) Estimate of capital and operating costs for the provision of such services.
- (c) Estimate of fares and local support in relation to estimated operating costs for providing such services.
- (d) An estimated fare which the COFCG Board would determine to be sufficient to meet farebox recovery requirements, but would not be so high that it would pose a financial burden on transit dependent patrons.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that these definitions remain in effect until such time a change is warranted.

THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION was passed and adopted by the Council of Fresno County Governments this 28th day of June, 1990.

AYES: Clovis, Fowler, Fresno, Fresno County, Huron, Kerman, Mendota, Orange Cove, Parlier, Reedley, San Joaquin, Sanger & Selma

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Coalinga, Firebaugh and Kingsburg

Signed: 

Lawrence R. Wilder, President

ATTEST:

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of a resolution of the Council of Fresno County Governments duly adopted at a regular meeting thereof held on the 28th day of June, 1990.

Signed: 

William Brian, Executive Director