

Chair
Supervisor Daron McDaniel
Merced County



Vice Chair
Supervisor Vito Chiesa
Stanislaus County

San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council Meeting

February 27, 2026
10:00 a.m.

Members of the Policy Council may participate via video teleconference at the following locations:

Fresno Council of Governments

2035 Tulare Street, Suite 201
Fresno, CA 93721

Madera County Transportation Commission

2001 Howard Road, Suite 201
Madera, CA 93637

Stanislaus Council of Governments

1111 I Street, Suite 308
Modesto, CA 95354

McFarland Veterans Community Center

103 W. Sherwood Ave.
McFarland, CA 93250

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

1990 E. Gettysburg Ave., Fresno, CA 93726

Kern Council of Governments

1401 19th Street, Suite 300
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Merced County Association of Governments

369 W. 18th Street
Merced, CA 95340

Tulare County Association of Governments

210 N. Church Street, Suite B
Visalia, CA 93291

Avenal City Hall

919 Skyline Blvd
Avenal, CA 93204

Stanislaus County Farm Bureau

1201 L Street
Modesto, CA 95354

Kings County Association of Governments

210 E. 7th Street, Ste. 202
Hanford, CA 93230

San Joaquin Council of Governments

555 E. Weber Avenue, Suite 400
Stockton, CA 95202

Kern County Administration Building

1115 Truxtun Ave # 504
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Madera County

200 W. 4th St., Ste. 4006
Madera, CA 93637

Public members may participate at any of the above locations or remotely via Zoom. Please contact Georgiena Vivian at (559) 259-9257 or gvivian@vrpatechnologies.com prior to the meeting to determine which physical locations will be utilized.

Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84819135188?pwd=Frp5BaYTUmOI3aOi7NNi5ETWxjLlyG.1>

Meeting ID: 848 1913 5188

Passcode: 568150

One tap mobile: +16694449171

Agenda Item

Speaker

Enclosure

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair



B. ROLL CALL

Georgiena Vivian



Valleywide Coordinator, Georgiena Vivian
(559) 259-9257



Fresno Council of Governments
2035 Tulare Street, Suite 201
Fresno, CA 93721



Fresno Council of
Governments
Fax (559) 233-9645

Fresno Council
of Governments

Kern Council of
Governments

Kings County
Association of
Governments

Madera County
Transportation
Commission

Merced County
Association of
Governments

San Joaquin
Council of
Governments

Stanislaus
Council of
Governments

Tulare County
Association of
Governments

San Joaquin Valley
Air Pollution
Control District

San Joaquin
Joint Powers
Authority



San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council

Roll Call

SJVPC	First Name	Last Name	Title	Agency	Present (Y/N)
Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG)					
Member	Gary	Yep	Councilmember, District 1	City of Kerman	
Member	Alma	Beltran	Mayor	City of Parlier	
Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG)					
Member	Saul	Ayon	Mayor	City of McFarland	
Member	David	Couch	Supervisor, 4 th District	County of Kern	
Kings County Association of Governments (KCAG)					
Member	Alvaro	Preciado	Mayor	City of Avenal	
Member	Doug	Verboon	Supervisor, District 3	County of Kings	
Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC)					
Member	Robert	Poythress	Supervisor, District 3	County of Madera	
Member	Jose	Rodriguez	Councilmember, District 2	City of Madera	
Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG)					
Member – Chair	Daron	McDaniel	Supervisor, District 3	County of Merced	
Member	Matthew	Serratto	Mayor	City of Modesto	
San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG)					
Member	Robert	Rickman	Supervisor, District 5	County of San Joaquin	
Member	Gary	Singh	Mayor, At-Large	City of Manteca	
Stanislaus Council of Governments (StanCOG)					
Member – Vice Chair	Vito	Chiesa	Supervisor, District 2	County of Stanislaus	
Member	Rosa	Escutia-Braaton	Councilmember, District 1	City of Modesto	
Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG)					
Member	Dennis	Townsend	Supervisor, District 5	County of Tulare	
Member	Rudy	Mendoza	Mayor	City of Woodlake	
San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD)					
Member	Samir	Sheikh	Executive Director	SJVAPCD	
San Joaquin Powers Authority (SJPA)					
Member	Ahdel	Ahmed	Public Relations Manager	SJPA	

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Agenda Item	Speaker	Enclosure
C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 12, 2026, Meeting	Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
D. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS		
1. Discussion: Budget, Policy, and Legislative Updates		
a. State Budget, Policy, and Legislative Update		
1). State Legislative Update	Gus Khouri	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Valley Voice Sacramento – March 3-4, 2026		
1). Event Status	Gus Khouri & Georgiena Vivian Stacie Guzman	<input type="checkbox"/>
2). Legislative Platform – High Speed Rail	Stacie Guzman	<input type="checkbox"/>
3). Preliminary Itinerary, Recommended Speaker Assignments, Draft Talking Points (Approved Platform is attached for reference) – Itinerary and Talking Points will be sent on Monday, Feb. 23, 2026	Gus Khouri	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Federal Budget, Policy, and Legislative Update		
1). Federal Legislative Update	Jen Covino	<input type="checkbox"/>
2). Washington D.C Valley Voice – Recommended Travel/Session Dates	Georgiena Vivian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Discussion - RTP/SCS Updates and Air Quality Issues		
a. SB 375 – 2026 GHG Reduction Targets Update	Ted Smalley Ryan Niblock	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Clean Air Act Waiver Rescission Update	Alex Marcucci	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. State Implementation Plan Update	Samir Sheikh	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. San Joaquin Valley Air Quality Update	Samir Sheikh	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Discussion - 2026 Policy Council and Directors' Committee Retreat	Georgiena Vivian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Discussion - Draft 2026/27 San Joaquin Valley Regional Agencies Overall Work Program (OWP), Budget, and Meeting Schedule	Georgiena Vivian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Discussion: 2027 San Joaquin Valley Policy Conference – Madera County/MCTC Host – Review Alternative Conference Dates		
a. Wednesday, April 7 – Friday, April 9, 2027 (Preferred)		
Aligns closely with the timing of the 2025 conference (April 9–11 in Merced)		
b. Wednesday, April 14 – Friday, April 16, 2027	Patricia Taylor	<input type="checkbox"/>
May be close to the CSAC and League of California Cities conferences		
c. Wednesday, March 24 – Friday, March 26, 2027		
Potential conflict with Valley Voice Sacramento trips		

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E. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Chair

The following items are for informational purposes only and require no action. Individuals noted will be present to provide a verbal update.

1. Future Meetings/Agenda Items:
 - a. *Policy Council – February 27, 2026*
 - b. *Directors’ Committee – March 5, 2026*
 - c. *Executive Committee – March 27, 2026*
 - d. *Directors’ Committee – April 2, 2026*
 - e. *Policy Council – April 24, 2026*
 - f. *Directors’ Committee – May 7, 2026 – Approve OWP*
 - g. *Executive Committee – May 22, 2026 – Approve OWP*
 - h. *Directors’ Committee – June 4, 2026*
 - i. *Policy Council – June 26, 2026 – Approve OWP*

Georgiena Vivian

F. WORKSHOP

Road User Charge/Transportation Funding Conversion Discussion

Potential Outcomes:

1. Provide Direction to the Executive Committee, Directors’ Committee, and/or Staff.
2. Add to Future Meeting Agenda.

Member Robert Poythress
Gus Khouri

G. OTHER ITEMS

1. Executive Committee Report
2. Executive Directors’ Committee Report
3. Policy Council Member Comments

Chair
Stacie Guzman
Members

H. PUBLIC COMMENT

This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons wishing to address the Council on items within its jurisdiction but NOT on this agenda. Public comment will be allowed during the Discussion Items above.

Chair

I. ADJOURN

Chair

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Other Meeting Participants

Yes	No	Director Agency	Yes	No	Director Agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jay Schlosser Kern COG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gus Khouri Khouri Consulting
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stephan Sanchez Kern COG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mitch Weiss Khouri Consulting
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rob Ball Kern COG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jen Covino Covino, Smith & Simon
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ted Smalley TCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	David Gellman Covino, Smith & Simon
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ben Kimball TCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Aly Hernandez Covino, Smith & Simon
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Steven Ingoldsby TCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Georgiena Vivian SJV Coordinator VRPA Technologies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Roberto Brady TCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carolina Ilic VRPA Technologies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Terri King KCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dena Graham VRPA Technologies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Robert Phipps Fresno COG Vice Chair, Directors' Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ryan Vivian VRPA Technologies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paul Herman Fresno COG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Samer Shaath CHSRA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ofelia Abundez Fresno COG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Augie Blancas CHSRA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Simran Jhutti Fresno COG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Peter Whippy CHSRA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Brenda Thomas Fresno COG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Michael Navarro Caltrans D6
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Patricia Taylor MCTC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nabeelah Abi-Rached Caltrans D6
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dylan Stone MCTC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Braden Duran Caltrans D6
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jeff Findley MCTC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grace Magsayo Caltrans D10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stacie Guzman Chair, Directors' Committee MCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eric Mather Caltrans D10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Elizabeth Forte MCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tom Dumas Caltrans D10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meg Prince MCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Duper Tong Caltrans, D10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kate Miller StanCOG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gurwinder Sekhon Caltrans D10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jose Luis Caceres StanCOG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caleb Brock Caltrans D10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Monica Streeter StanCOG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bill Higgins CALCOG
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nick St. Cook StanCOG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sabrina Bradbury CALCOG
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diane Nguyen SJCOG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gregory McAteer CALCOG
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ryan Niblock SJCOG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vincenzo Caporale CALCOG
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kim Anderson SJCOG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Linda Launer City of Dinuba TCAG
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Samir Sheikh SJVAPCD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Patricia Matthews City of Lemoore KCAG
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mark Montelongo SJVAPCD			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Morgan Lambert SJVAPCD			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tim Franquist SJVAPCD			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dan Leavitt SJJPA			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ahdel Ahmed SJJPA			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Michael Hanebutt SJJPA			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

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AGENDA ITEM C

January 12, 2026, Regional Policy Council

Meeting Minutes



San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council

Meeting Minutes

January 12, 2026

10:00 a.m.

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Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82818682533?pwd=W36nYbb7xLZajjh2Hvr790onv4pBVQ.1>

Meeting ID: 828 1868 2533

Passcode: 546678

One tap mobile: +16694449171

Agenda Item	Speaker	Enclosure
A. CALL TO ORDER	Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. ROLL CALL	Georgiena Vivian	<input type="checkbox"/>

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San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council

Roll Call

SJVPC	First Name	Last Name	Title	Agency	Present (Y/N)
Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG)					
Member	Gary	Yep	Councilmember, District 1	City of Kerman	Y
Member	Alma	Beltran	Mayor	City of Parlier	Y
Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG)					
Member	Saul	Ayon	Mayor	City of McFarland	N
Member	David	Couch	Supervisor, 4 th District	County of Kern	N
Kings County Association of Governments (KCAG)					
Member	Alvaro	Preciado	Mayor	City of Avenal	Y
Member	Doug	Verboon	Supervisor, District 3	County of Kings	Y
Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC)					
Member	Robert	Poythress	Supervisor, District 3	County of Madera	Y
Member	Jose	Rodriguez	Councilmember, District 2	City of Madera	Y
Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG)					
Member – Chair	Daron	McDaniel	Supervisor, District 3	County of Merced	N
San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG)					
Member	Robert	Rickman	Supervisor, District 5	County of San Joaquin	N
Member	Gary	Singh	Mayor, At-Large	City of Manteca	Y
Stanislaus Council of Governments (StanCOG)					
Member – Vice Chair	Vito	Chiesa	Supervisor, District 2	County of Stanislaus	Y
Member	Rosa	Escutia-Braaton	Councilmember, District 1	City of Modesto	Y
Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG)					
Member	Dennis	Townsend	Supervisor, District 5	County of Tulare	N
Member	Rudy	Mendoza	Mayor	City of Woodlake	Y
San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD)					
Member	Samir	Sheikh	Executive Director	SJVAPCD	Y
San Joaquin Powers Authority (SJPA)					
Member	Ahdel	Ahmed	Public Relations Manager	SJPA	Y



Agenda Item	Speaker	Enclosure
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C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 22, 2025, Meeting

Chair

Member Poythress made a motion to approve the minutes, which Member Rodriguez seconded. The minutes were approved by roll call vote.

D. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

1. State Budget, Policy, and Legislative Update

a. State Budget, Policy, and Legislative Update

Gus Khouri

Gus Khouri, State Advocate, Khouri Consulting, provided the following update:

- ✓ The Legislature reconvened on January 5, with Senator Monique Limón sworn in as the first Latina Senate President Pro Tem, marking a historic milestone
- ✓ The Governor’s State of the State address was underway, and the proposed budget would be released the following day.
- ✓ The Legislative Analyst’s Office projected an approximately \$18 billion deficit, though Gus suggested the Governor may present a slightly lower figure ahead of the May Revise.
- ✓ Noted that while revenues are reportedly \$11 billion above projections, rising education funding obligations and up to \$6 billion in federal cuts are creating pressure on the General Fund.
- ✓ Expressed concern about declining cap-and-trade auction revenues and the increased allocation to CAL FIRE, noting that the new cap-and-invest program does not take effect until July 1.
- ✓ Identified potential risks to SB 125 commitments and future funding for TIRCP Competitive and LCTOP programs.
- ✓ Is monitoring two-year bills still in their house of origin, specifically SB 667, which would impose new unfunded safety mandates on railroads; he anticipated it may stall in committee
- ✓ Provided an update on preparations for the March 4 Valley Voice trip, including finalizing the state platform and developing talking points and speaker coordination.

b. ACTION: Approve the 2026 San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council State Legislative Platform

Gus Khouri

Gus Khouri, State Advocate, Khori Consulting, reviewed the Platform with the Policy Council. Gus highlighted several priority areas, beginning with expediting adoption of the State Implementation Plan to ensure continued federal transportation funding in the Valley’s non-attainment air district.

A major focus is addressing declining gas tax revenues due to vehicle electrification, with discussions underway regarding potential alternatives such as a road user charge (AB 1421) or adjustments to the vehicle registration fee. While multiple options are being studied, affordability concerns and political hesitancy remain key obstacles.

Additional priorities include seeking modifications to SB 375 greenhouse gas reduction targets to ensure the Valley remains competitive for funding; restoring funding for the FARMER program amid structural constraints

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in Cap-and-Invest revenues; fully allocating SB 125 transit funding; extending fair box relief for transit operators; and maintaining long-term funding commitments for high-speed rail and passenger rail improvements.

Members emphasized the importance of preparing clear, tangible talking points, particularly demonstrating the value of the FARMER program, before the upcoming March advocacy meetings in Sacramento.

The Policy Council considered and discussed adopting the 2026 State Legislative Platform, which serves as the Valley's advocacy guide for the year.

Following discussion and a public comment opportunity, Member Poythress, MCTC, moved to approve the Platform. The motion was seconded by Member Escutia-Braaton, StanCOG, and passed unanimously.

c. State Implementation Plan (SIP) Update

Samir Sheikh



Member Samir Sheikh, SJVAPCD, provided the following update on ongoing discussions with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the California Air Resources Board (CARB) regarding critical State Implementation Plan (SIP) submissions affecting the San Joaquin Valley:

- ✓ That the most urgent issue is a pending five-year extension request for the PM2.5 standard that the District and CARB previously submitted to EPA. Approval of this request is essential to avoid triggering transportation sanctions and potential federal implementation plan requirements.
- ✓ Emphasized that EPA has the necessary documentation to act on the request, and noted that active discussions are underway, but timing is tight.
- ✓ Noted that if the extension is not approved, the Valley could face a domino effect that would lead to consequences for transportation funding. Samir indicated that a more detailed update and potential recommendations would be provided at the February meeting. He also noted ongoing work on ozone plan updates that require future EPA action, though those timelines are less immediate.

2. Federal Budget, Policy, and Legislative Update

Jen Covino



Jen Covino, Federal Advocate, Covino, Smith, and Simon, reported on the following:

- ✓ That Congress has resumed legislative activity and is advancing the FY 2026 appropriations process, including a recently introduced "minibus" package covering Interior–Environment, Energy & Water, and Commerce–Justice–Science.
- ✓ The Transportation–Housing and Urban Development (THUD) bill, where many transportation earmarks are located, has not yet been finalized, but recent bills have included earmarks—an encouraging sign for pending requests. She noted that the current continuing resolution expires on January 30 and that nine remaining spending bills must be resolved. Homeland Security funding may become contentious and could complicate other bills if attached.
- ✓ Advised members to begin preparing FY 2027 earmark requests, particularly being mindful of potential congressional district boundary changes that could affect future representation and political alignment.

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- ✓ Provided an update on surface transportation reauthorization, noting internal Republican disagreements over funding mechanisms for the Highway Trust Fund. While House leadership appears resistant to vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as a funding model, debate continues, and a federal vehicle registration fee could reemerge. Meanwhile, Senate dynamics and unrelated political disputes may delay reauthorization, potentially requiring a short-term extension of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which expires at the end of September.
- ✓ Warned that the U.S. DOT has announced a 4% reduction in certain federal highway funds to California (approximately \$160 million) due to compliance issues regarding non-domiciled commercial driver’s licenses. While implementation would begin in FY 2027, there remains time to resolve the issue.
- ✓ Noted that the congressional calendar will not support a traditional Valley Voice visit immediately after Labor Day, so alternative September dates should be considered.

- 3. RTP/SCS Updates and Air Quality Issues *Ted Smalley*
 - a. SB 375 – 2026 GHG Reduction Targets Update* *Ryan Niblock*
 - b. Clean Air Act Waiver Rescission Update* *Alex Marcucci*

Ryan Niblock, SJCOG, provided the following update:

- ✓ The impact of California’s revoked emissions waiver, which triggered a statewide conformity freeze affecting MPO air quality determinations.
- ✓ That CARB and EPA subsequently released updated modeling software in late November/early December to allow regions to resume conformity analysis. Valley staff have since been testing the updated tools to determine whether upcoming Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs) will meet federal air quality conformity requirements.
- ✓ That preliminary modeling results are mixed. While some initial tests appear promising, others raise concerns due to declining population growth projections across the Valley compared to prior RTP assumptions
- ✓ Noted that lower growth reduces the projected greenhouse gas reduction benefits that can be achieved under SB 375 Sustainable Communities Strategies, making it more challenging to meet CARB’s established GHG reduction targets. Staff is developing high-level talking points for directors and policy board members to help communicate the Valley’s challenges with current SCS targets and the review process when engaging with state officials.

- 4. 2026 Policy Council and Directors’ Committee Retreat Georgiena Vivian

Georgiena Vivian, SJV Coordinator, VRPA Technologies, provided the following update on planning for the upcoming one-and-a-half-day retreat, which is proposed for April, May, or June of 2026:

- ✓ That the first day would begin at 1:00 p.m. with a group exercise or team-building activity, followed by dinner or a reception. The second day would consist of a full day of working sessions.
- ✓ That a preliminary draft program is being developed and will first be reviewed by the Directors Committee chair before being circulated to directors for input, likely ahead of the February meeting

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- ✓ Requested that members respond to her January 6 email indicating their availability so that a final date and venue can be secured. Early feedback suggests late April, or early May may be the most favorable time frames.

Members discussed whether staff should simply select a date and location to streamline scheduling, but Georgiena emphasized the goal of maximizing attendance given the retreat's importance.

- 5. Draft 2026/27 San Joaquin Valley Regional Agencies Overall Work Program (OWP), Budget, and Meeting Schedule Georgiena Vivian

Georgiena Vivian, SJV Coordinator, VRPA Technologies, presented a preliminary draft of the upcoming Overall Work Program (OWP) based on the current year's framework, noting that updates and revisions have been incorporated but were not detailed during the presentation. Highlights included:

- ✓ A draft annual calendar outlining meeting dates for the Directors Committee, Executive Committee, and Policy Council. One key adjustment involves the Valley Voice Washington, D.C., trip, which will no longer take place during the first full week of September. Alternative timing options were outlined, with a preference for maintaining a similar timeframe to prior years, potentially mid-September or late September/early October.
- ✓ A proposed budget for next year reflecting contractual cost increases and cost-of-living adjustments. A notable addition is a \$20,000 budget allocation to cover two Valley Voice trips

Finally, Georgiena stated that the draft OWP, calendar, and budget will be reviewed first by the Directors, then the Executive Committee, and ultimately forwarded to the Policy Council for approval.

- E. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS** **Chair**
The following items are for informational purposes only and require no action. Individuals noted will be present to provide a verbal update.

- 1. 2026 Valley Voice Sacramento, Trip - Planning Status Gus Khouri & Georgiena Vivian

Georgiena Vivian, SJV Coordinator, VRPA Technologies, provided the following update on preparations for the Valley Voice trip to Sacramento, scheduled for March 4.

- ✓ A reception has been reserved at Ella for the evening of March 3, and members are encouraged to attend. Meetings with legislators are currently being scheduled, and staff will soon begin preparing the formal program materials for the trip.
- ✓ Lunch arrangements have also been secured for March 4, with a new restaurant selected to improve logistics compared to last year.
- ✓ That the next Policy Council meeting will take place in late February (February 27), during which talking points and final trip details will be reviewed and finalized.

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F. OTHER ITEMS

1. Executive Committee Report

Chair



Members discussed governance and participation related to the Executive Committee

Member Preciado expressed support for reviewing the structure of the newly formed Executive Committee to ensure that all members continue to have opportunities to participate in meetings and discussions. There was general agreement that this item could be placed on a future agenda for consideration.

Additionally, a question was raised about whether Executive Committee meeting minutes are shared with the full Policy Council. Georgiena confirmed that the minutes are prepared but are not routinely distributed to the Policy Council. She agreed to begin forwarding those minutes moving forward, and members expressed support for improved transparency and information sharing. Since the meeting, Georgiena followed up with the Policy Council, noting that minutes are always placed on the SJVCOG website for review.

2. Executive Directors' Committee Report

Stacie Guzman



Robert Phipps, Vice Chair, Directors' Committee, Fresno COG, provided the following an update focused primarily on ongoing air quality matters:

- ✓ That a Directors' subcommittee has been formed to address key issues, including updates to the SB 375 greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction target, the Clean Air Act waiver rescission, and the State Implementation Plan (SIP) matters previously discussed previously by Ryan Niblock and Samir Sheikh. The group has been meeting regularly since the fall to coordinate the Valley's response and strategy.
- ✓ Those valley representatives are also participating in a statewide working group through CalCOG, collaborating with Daryl Steinberg to explore potential reforms to the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) process. Key concepts under discussion include shifting greater regulatory control over SCS away from CARB and extending the SCS update cycle from four years to eight years. Directors indicated they will continue monitoring state and federal developments and provide updates as discussions progress.

3. Policy Council Member Comments

Members



StanCOG Executive Director Recruitment Process:

Chair Vito Chiesa provided an update on StanCOG's Executive Director recruitment process, noting that Interim Executive Director Kate Miller continues to provide strong leadership, that interviews have been completed, and that the candidate pool has been narrowed to three or four finalists. A job offer is expected within approximately 30 days. Chair Chiesa expressed appreciation for Kate's service, though she has indicated she intends to remain in an interim capacity only

Gas Tax Reform:

Member Poythress raised concerns about the state's lack of action on long-term transportation funding reform, particularly regarding a potential conversion of the road user charge (RUC) to address declining gas tax revenues and emphasized that California faces a looming fiscal cliff due to increased vehicle fuel efficiency and electrification and argued that the Policy Council should consider taking a leadership role in

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advancing a practical, incremental solution rather than waiting for the Legislature. He suggested modest adjustments to vehicle registration fees as a starting point to build political momentum.

Other members offered differing perspectives. Some cautioned against new or perceived tax increases, emphasizing public fatigue with additional fees and recommending a focus on reducing mandates and lowering project-delivery costs.

Chair Chiesa, StanCOG, noted that the proposal under discussion is intended as a revenue-neutral conversion rather than a new tax, but acknowledged the political sensitivity and optics challenges. Members discussed agendizing the issue for further consideration, potentially to allow the Policy Council to develop a formal position.

Gus Khouri, Khouri Consulting, provided context, explaining that AB 1421 is currently a placeholder bill that continues the Road User Charge Task Force but could serve as a vehicle for future action. He clarified that declining revenues are driven more by improved fuel efficiency and telecommuting than by electric vehicles alone, and that a conversion model could hold most taxpayers harmless while ensuring sustainable funding for safety, air quality, and infrastructure needs.

Additional concerns were raised about rural impacts, long commuter distances in the Central Valley, and ensuring funds are equitably reinvested in local road infrastructure.

Policy Council Elections:

Member Poythress also raised the issue that it is typically the time of year for electing a new Chair and Vice Chair and noted that officer elections were not included on the current agenda.

He referenced prior action establishing two-year terms and questioned whether the current Chair's term had expired, emphasizing the importance of adhering to adopted policies and maintaining procedural discipline. He clarified that his comments were not directed at any individual, but rather focused on following established governance practices.

Director Robert Phipps, Fresno COG, responded that their understanding was the Chair had effectively been serving a two-year term following bylaw adjustments made shortly after the prior election, which is why the item was not agendized. However, he stated staff would take direction from the Policy Council if members preferred to hold a new election. After a brief discussion, there was general concurrence to place officer elections on the February meeting agenda.

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G. PUBLIC COMMENT

This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons wishing to address the Council on items within its jurisdiction but NOT on this agenda. Public comment will be allowed during the Discussion Items above.

Chair



No public comment was received.

H. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 AM.

Chair



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Other Meeting Participants

Yes	No	Director Agency	Yes	No	Director Agency
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jay Schlosser Kern COG	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gus Khouri Khouri Consulting
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stephan Sanchez Kern COG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mitch Weiss Khouri Consulting
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rob Ball Kern COG	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jen Covino Covino, Smith & Simon
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ted Smalley TCAG	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	David Gellman Covino, Smith & Simon
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ben Kimball TCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aly Hernandez Covino, Smith & Simon
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steven Ingoldsby TCAG	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Georgiena Vivian SJV Coordinator VRPA Technologies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Roberto Brady TCAG	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carolina Ilic VRPA Technologies
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Terri King KCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dena Graham VRPA Technologies
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Robert Phipps Fresno COG Vice Chair, Directors' Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ryan Vivian VRPA Technologies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Paul Herman Fresno COG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Samer Shaath CHSRA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ofelia Abundez Fresno COG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Augie Blancas CHSRA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Simran Jhutti Fresno COG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Peter Whippy CHSRA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Brenda Thomas Fresno COG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Michael Navarro Caltrans D6
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Patricia Taylor MCTC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nabeelah Abi-Rached Caltrans D6
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dylan Stone MCTC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Braden Duran Caltrans D6
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jeff Findley MCTC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Grace Magsayo Caltrans D10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Stacie Guzman Chair, Directors' Committee MCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Eric Mather Caltrans D10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Elizabeth Forte MCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tom Dumas Caltrans D10
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meg Prince MCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Duper Tong Caltrans, D10
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kate Miller StanCOG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gurwinder Sekhon Caltrans D10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jose Luis Caceres StanCOG	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caleb Brock Caltrans D10
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Monica Streeter StanCOG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bill Higgins CALCOG
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nick St. Cook StanCOG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sabrina Bradbury CALCOG
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diane Nguyen SJCOG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gregory McAteer CALCOG
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ryan Niblock SJCOG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Vincenzo Caporale CALCOG
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Kim Anderson SJCOG	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Linda Launer City of Dinuba TCAG
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Samir Sheikh SJVAPCD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Patricia Matthews City of Lemoore KCAG
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mark Montelongo SJVAPCD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Robert Rickman County of San Joaquin SJCOG
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Morgan Lambert SJVAPCD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shane Gunn Caltrans D6
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dan Leavitt SJJPA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jonelle Alvarez MCAG
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ahdel Ahmed SJJPA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kristine Kai LSA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Michael Hanebutt SJJPA			

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AGENDA ITEM D.1.b.3.


***2026 San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council
Approved State Legislative Platform***

*(Speaking Assignments, Talking Points, and Final Itinerary to be sent -
Monday, February 23, 2026)*

San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council

2026 State Legislative Priorities

Issue	Goal	Strategy
<p>1. Pragmatically Address Air Quality, Equity, and Mobility Goals Through Operational Improvements, and without compromising economic activity</p>	<p>Protect transportation funding by reconciling conformity to environmental mandates</p> <p>Support stable, equitable, and environmentally conscious state funding of alternatives to petroleum fuel sources to expand infrastructure and incentives for conversion to electric vehicles to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>Prioritize feasible implementation strategies for State and regional climate goals to improve air quality and mobility.</p> <p>Pursue innovative and pragmatic solutions to address climate and mobility Goals.</p> <p>Monitor activities on conversations regarding the jobs-housing imbalance and the impact on vehicle miles traveled.</p> <p>Monitor the implementation of SB 743, AB 285, and discussion on amending SB 375 and protect the ability to continue addressing congestion</p>	<p>SJVRPC will strongly advocate for the California Air Resources Board to expedite adoption of a State Implementation Plan to conform with the Clean Air Act and protect planned projects from being delayed or restricted.</p> <p>SJVRPC supports a revenue-neutral conversion from the gas tax to a source that ensures equity in revenue collection that does not disadvantage those who must drive further to job centers. Distribution should respect San Joaquin Valley's vital role in maintaining system integrity and providing mobility options. This includes continuing to monitor the Road User Charge Technical Advisory Committee's activities.</p> <p>SJVRPC will collaborate with all stakeholders to implement CAPTI to promote mode-shift where feasible while also working towards completing key highway projects that enhance safety and support goods movement, tourism, disaster response, military operations, and general economic vitality</p> <p>SJVRPC will work to ensure that efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions account for opportunities and limitations within the region due to socioeconomic disadvantages, geographical considerations, the jobs-housing imbalance, the lack of density, and the profile of the regional economy. SJVRPC will oppose efforts to continually revise emissions targets, which undermine previous investments and condition competitiveness for state funding beyond what is achievable for the region.</p> <p>SJVRPC will also work with organizations such as the California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG), California League of Cities, California State Association of Counties, and Self-Help Counties Coalition (SHCC), Cal Chamber, among others, to comply with the statewide mandate to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and endorse policies that promote equity and regional job creation to reduce vehicle miles traveled with pragmatic solutions that fit the region. This includes supporting legislation to allow small to medium-sized metropolitan planning organizations greater flexibility in complying with state air quality standards so that solutions regarding population density, vehicle miles traveled, and housing are emblematic of a region's geography, demographics, travel patterns, and availability of alternative modes.</p>

Issue	Goal	Strategy
	<p>management and safety on the state highway system, without compromising economic activity</p> <p>Restore FARMER funding to accelerate air quality goals.</p> 	<p>SJVRPC will also support greater regional and geographic appropriate investments into transit priority projects, operational improvements such as telecommuting, vanpools, shipping more freight via rail, availability of more e-bikes, and promoting opportunities for regions to sell mitigation credits to generate revenue for providing multi-modal options.</p> <p>SJVRPC will work with organizations such as CALCOG and SHCC, among others, to protect transportation funding from being withheld or diverted, while working with stakeholders to find alternatives to address jobs-housing imbalance. This includes monitoring the implementation of SB 743 and AB 285 recommendations and the impact on addressing safety, congestion management, goods movement on the state highway system to ensure that capacity projects are not precluded from being funded.</p> <p>SJVRPC will work with CALCOG to develop additional revenue sources at the state, regional and local levels to support the planning required by SB 375 to support the construction of affordable housing in the region.</p> <p>SJVRPC will also continue to pursue revenue made available through the Cap and Invest, Active Transportation Program, and Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program, for operations and capital needs for bus, rail and bicycle and pedestrian programs, and any new funding programs that target improving air quality. This includes pursuing a portion of the \$85 million made available in SB 840 of 2025 to support climate-focused technological innovation, related research, and the deployment of climate solutions identified in the California Air Resources Board scoping plan.</p> <p>SJVRPC will advocate for \$200 million be included in this year's budget or from excess Cap and Invest auction revenues for the FARMER Program, and annually over the next five years, to achieve critically needed air quality and GHG emission reductions. The FARMER program's strong demand has resulted in over \$700 million in pending applications. If funded, these projects would deliver highly cost-effective ozone and PM2.5-forming NOx, cancer-causing diesel particulate matter, and greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>SJVRPC will support efforts to maintain local control for air districts and oppose efforts to enact redundant, costly oversight to meet air quality goals.</p>
<p>2. Leveraging State Funding to Address Safety, Goods Movement, and Mobility</p>	<p>Aggressively pursue funds through the State Budget, California Transportation Commission (CTC) allocation process or any other state sources to address safety,</p>	<p>SJVRPC will remain diligent in competing for additional state funds to complete gap closures to improve safety, congestion management, and goods movement throughout on State Route 99 and other regional arterials. This includes building out SR 99 to a minimum of six lanes, consistent with the Caltrans-adopted State Route 99 Business Plan. This will also maximize the return on previous state and local investments.</p>

Issue	Goal	Strategy
	<p>congestion management, and goods movement.</p> <p>Advocate for a successor source to the gas tax to ensure stability and predictability of funding.</p> <p>Ensure that CSIS allows investments to enhance safety and goods movement on state highway system.</p>	<p>SJVRPC will advocate to protect traditional sources of funding, such as the SHOPP, and ITIP program for their intended purpose to ensure that resources are made available to address highway safety, maintenance, preservation, and goods movement needs. Additional resources for mode-shift priorities, such as bicycle and pedestrian projects, or climate resiliency projects, should be pursued through accessing excess Cap and Invest auction revenues or Proposition 4 grant opportunities.</p> <p>SJVRPC will monitor Road User Charge Technical Advisory Committee’s activities and consider sponsoring legislation to implement a successor source to the gas tax and advocating for the restoration of truck weight fees to ensure predictable, stable funding, and consider additional resources to expedite project delivery.</p> <p>SJVRPC will advocate to ensure that goals expressed in the Caltrans System Investment Strategy (CSIS) does not limit the ability to address safety and goods movement projects on the state highway system, while enhancing the Region’s Economic Vitality</p>
<p>3. Access Transit Funding</p>	<p>Support potential changes to the Transportation Development Act that will assist local public transportation systems with funding eligibility.</p> <p>Stabilize and increase transit funding levels.</p> <p>Protect and augment existing programs to encourage mode-shift.</p>	<p>SJVRPC will monitor the CalSTA Transit Transformative Task Force and support modifications to the TDA process as appropriate to ensure that transit operators are provided with flexibility to continue accessing funding to maintain and expand service.</p> <p>SJVRPC will support efforts to advocate for additional flexibility for TDA, State Transit Assistance Program, and State of Good Repair funding. This includes supporting additional funding for operations.</p> <p>SJVRPC will advocate for increased, ongoing transit operations and capital funding, either through existing programs or longer-term programs, including updates to TDA and a successor to the sales tax on diesel, to provide predictable and stable funding.</p> <p>SJVRPC will advocate to protect and acquire the remaining balance of SB 125 formula funds provided by the legislature for operations and capital needs.</p> <p>SJVRPC will also advocate for a portion of the new \$125 million pot set aside for free transit passes to assist with meeting regional mobility options for Valley residents.</p> <p>SJVRPC will also support extending exemptions or revising requirements to meet farebox recovery ratio requirements, which expire on July 1, 2026, per AB 149 of 2021, to maintain and expand transit service.</p>

Issue	Goal	Strategy
<p>4. Enhance Passenger Rail Infrastructure and Service</p>	<p>Provide enhanced passenger rail service to better connect the San Joaquin Valley to Sacramento, the Bay Area, and Southern California.</p> <p>Maintain and increase funding for commuter and intercity passenger rail for ACE, San Joaquins, and Valley Link.</p> <p>Pursue funding opportunities made available through CalSTA.</p>	<p>SJVRPC will work cooperatively with CalSTA, Caltrans Division of Rail, Amtrak, CTC, ACE, San Joaquins, Valley Link, BNSF, and Union Pacific Railroad to expand passenger rail service and connectivity to accommodate Valley residents.</p> <p>SJVRPC will continue to diligently work on establishing extended commuter/intercity rail and high-speed rail service, to provide enhanced mobility options and connectivity, reduce vehicle miles traveled, greenhouse gas emissions, and the impacts of congestion on SR 99, and expand equitable transportation options for San Joaquin Valley residents.</p> <p>SJVRPC supports the dedication of excess Cap and Invest Program auction revenues to create a supplemental pot that supports passenger rail service opportunities (capital and operations) along the San Joaquin Valley.</p> <p>SJVRPC will advocate to increase, recalibrate, and acquire funding from CalSTA through the State Rail Assistance (SRA) and TIRCP to help expedite delivery of multimodal options and meet 2030 climate goals.</p> <p>SJVRPC supports the Governor’s plan for further passenger rail investments, the 2024 California State Rail Plan, and CHSRA’s 2024 Business Plan to complete the Early Operating Segment between Merced and Bakersfield between 2030 and 2033. Together, these plans will link high-speed rail with investments for extended ACE commuter service between Stockton, San Jose, Sacramento, and Merced; expanded San Joaquin intercity rail service in the valley, Valley Link passenger rail service between Dublin/Pleasanton BART and Mountain House, and future expansion of passenger service north to Chico. These many passenger rail investments are critical for Valley communities and help promote local and regional coordination efforts around station-area planning, station design, and increase connectivity to align with the region’s priorities for project delivery and enhanced mobility in the San Joaquin Valley.</p> <p>SJVRPC supports accountability measures, included in AB 377 of 2025, and beyond, to ensure that delivery of the Merced to Bakersfield segment is completed on budget and in a timely manner, and considers impacts to communities along the corridor.</p>



2026 Valley Voice Sacramento Agenda

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Time	Activity
9:00 am – 9:30 am	Pre-Briefing w/ Gus Khouri 1021 O Street, Conference Room 8010
9:30 am – 10:00 am	Assemblymember Stan Ellis (Kern, Tulare) 1021 O Street, Conference Room 8010
10:00 am – 10:30 am	Assemblymember Esmeralda Soria (Madera, Merced, Fresno) 1021 O Street, Conference Room 8010
10:30 am – 11:00 am	Assemblymember Alexandra Macedo (Fresno, Kings, Tulare) 1021 O Street, Conference Room 8010
11:00 am – 11:30 am	Break
11:30 am – 11:45 am	Senator Melissa Hurtado (Fresno, Kern, Kings, Tulare) 1021 O Street, Conference Room 8010
12:00 pm – 1:15 pm	Lunch – Assemblymember Lori Wilson Chair, Assembly Transportation Committee Mayahuel, 1200 K Street
1:30 pm – 2:00 pm	Assemblymember David Tangipa (Fresno, Madera) 1021 N Street, Conference Room 8010
2:00 pm – 2:30 pm	Assemblymember Rhodesia Ransom (San Joaquin) 1021 O Street, Conference Room 8010
2:30 pm – 3:00 pm	Senator Jerry McNerney (San Joaquin) 1021 O Street, Conference Room 8010
3:00 pm – 3:30 pm	Assemblymember Juan Alanis (Merced, Stanislaus) 1021 O Street, Conference Room 8010



Valley Voice Sacramento Talking Points

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

1. Air Quality Challenges/Opportunities (Supervisor Chiesa, Director Sheikh)

Director Smalley and the Working Group to draft SB 375 talking points

Director Shiekh

- We need to restore funding for the FARMER Program.
- FARMER expedites the exchange of high-emitting agricultural equipment, such as tractors, harvesters, pumps, and utility task vehicles, for cleaner, zero-emission equipment.
- **ASK: \$200 million for FARMER from Cap and Invest**

2. Leveraging State Funding to Address Safety, Goods Movement, and Mobility (Mayor Mendoza, Supervisor Poythress)

Mayor Mendoza

- Over 92% of all commodities are transported by truck using Highway 99, Interstate 5, and east-west connectors.
- Highway 99 is consistently ranked among the most dangerous highways in the nation.
- Over 25 percent of the nation's produce is grown in the San Joaquin Valley.
- We need to build out Highway 99 to six lanes, consistent with the Caltrans-adopted State Route 99 Business Plan, to eliminate bottlenecks, maximize previous investments, improve safety, and air quality.
- **ASK: Please help us improve safety and complete work on Highway 99 and support the ITIP and SHOPP projects before the CTC in March.**

Supervisor Poythress

- We need stable funding solutions to improve safety and mobility.
- Gas tax revenues are declining. We need to act fast.
- I serve on the Road User Technical Advisory Committee to explore solutions.
- Looking at alternatives, such as a vehicle registration fee, could be a viable alternative.
- No action is the worst action.
- **ASK: We would like to work with you on a successor to the gas tax.**

3. Transit Funding (Chair McDaniel, Mayor Serratto)

Chair McDaniel

- We appreciate receiving money for transit operations and capital in SB 125, but this is one-time funding to keep services afloat.
- We have yet to receive the full balance of SB 125 funds and need to maintain existing service. Governor Newsom has not proposed programming remaining SB 125 funding.
- Transit is vital for our most vulnerable, including seniors, schoolchildren, and people with physical disabilities.
- **ASK: Appropriate the remaining balance of SB 125 funds.**

Mayor Serratto

- We supported extending the Cap and Invest Program (formerly Cap and Trade).
- However, transit funding is the lowest priority in the program.
- We need sustainable investments to meet regional mobility goals and to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- We were told last year that extending Cap and Trade would result in excess revenues due to market stability.
- **ASK: Please dedicate any surplus auction revenue from Cap and Invest to transit and passenger rail programs.**

4. Passenger Rail (Supervisor Verboon)

Supervisor Verboon

- We support increasing funding and expanding commuter and intercity passenger rail lines that serve the San Joaquin Valley.
- We have made significant investments in multimodal options.
- Passenger rail is a big part of our air quality and mobility goals.
- We have supported efforts to complete the initial operating segment of the high-speed rail system with stations at Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings-Tulare, and Bakersfield.
- The High-speed Rail Business Plan is constantly shifting alignments and priorities.
- **ASK: We need better communication about the commitment to complete the initial operating segment. SB 1068 (Wilson) would remove transparency from any public reports published by the Inspector General if there are issues.**

AGENDA ITEM D.1.c.2.

***2026 San Joaquin Valley Voice, Washington, D.C.
Alternative Trip Dates***

Valleywide Meeting Calendar San Joaquin Valley Policy Council

FY 2026-2027

July 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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Aug 2026						
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Sep 2026						
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Oct 2026						
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Nov 2026						
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Dec 2026						
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Jan 2027						
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Mar 2027						
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Apr 2027						
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May 2027						
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Jun 2027						
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Important dates:

- Directors' Committee Meetings
- Washington DC Valley Voice [September 15-16, 2026 (session/meeting dates)]
- Regional Policy Council Regular Meetings
- Pre Valley Voice Planning Meetings
- Annual Policy Conference (April or May 2027, Dates TBD)
- Sacramento Valley Voice (March 2027, Dated TBD)
- Policy Council Executive Committee Meetings

All scheduled meeting dates may be altered due to conflicts with other planned conferences or meetings with partner agencies.

AGENDA ITEM D.3.

2026 Policy Council and Directors' Committee Retreat Program

DRAFT

Policy Council and Directors' Retreat

Note: The timeframe for conclusion can be extended on Day 2 to 5:00 pm instead of 4:15 pm.

DAY 1

1:00 PM | Group Activity – “Break the Ice”

6:00 PM | Dinner Reception Event

PROPOSED FULL-DAY RETREAT AGENDA

DAY 2

SESSION 1

8:00 AM – 8:30 AM | Arrival, Networking, & Continental Breakfast

- ✓ Informal introductions (Directors, Policy Council members, Regional Agency Staff)
- ✓ Materials distributed:
 - FY 2026–27 Valleywide OWP
 - Organizational Chart
 - Valley Voice Platforms (Federal and State)
 - SR 99 CMCP Brief
 - RTP/SCS Coordination Brief
 - Air Quality Conformity & Modeling Update Brief

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM | Welcome & Opening Remarks

Speakers:

- ✓ **Chair, Policy Council** (Supervisor Daron McDaniel, MCAG)
- ✓ **Chair, Directors' Committee** (Stacie Guzman, MCAG)

Topics:

- ✓ **Retreat Purpose**
 - Strengthen Valleywide coordination
 - Review and refine organizational structure, governance, and meeting protocols
 - Align policy priorities, Valley Voice advocacy themes, and Valleywide OWP activities

- Build stronger relationships among RPAs and external partners
- Establish shared goals and operational improvements for the FY 2025–26 cycle and beyond
- Ensure the Valley speaks with a unified regional voice on transportation, air quality, legislative policy, and funding
- ✓ **Retreat Objectives**
 - Collaboratively refine Valleywide priorities—including goods movement, SR 99 multimodal planning, air quality conformity, modeling, RTP/SCS coordination, and legislative efforts.
 - Importance of unified regional coordination
 - Brief acknowledgment of 2026–27 priority areas

SESSION 2

9:00 AM – 9:30 AM | State of the Valley – Strategic Overview

Panelists: AQ, Housing, Economic Development, Legislative, and Modal Representatives/Experts

Facilitator: Valleywide Coordinator, Georgiena Vivian (VRPA Technologies)

Content:

- ✓ The Valley’s unique role: 27,000 square miles, major freight hub, agricultural epicenter
- ✓ Brief Summary of FY 2026–27 Coordinated Valleywide Activities:
 - SR 99 and major highway coordination
 - Goods movement planning & inland port progress
 - Air quality conformity
 - RTP/SCS coordination & VMT issues
 - State & federal relationship building
 - Valley Voice legislative advocacy
 - Passenger rail & housing planning initiatives

Outcome:

Context-setting for all subsequent discussions.

BREAK

9:30 AM – 9:45 AM

SESSION 3

9:45 AM – 11:00 AM | Organization Vision, Goals, & Priorities Workshop

Panelists:

Facilitator: Valleywide Coordinator, Georgiena Vivian (VRPA Technologies)

Activities:

- ✓ Breakout 1: “What should the Valley accomplish (Goals) by 2031?” – 35 Minutes
 - Define measurable goals in:
 - Funding readiness for SR 99 & I-5
 - High-Speed Rail
 - Freight systems modernization
 - Vehicle Gas Tax Alternative
 - Meeting RTP/SCS GHG targets
 - Improving Valleywide air quality coordination
 - Strengthening multi-county modeling capabilities
 - Enhancing public visibility & legislative impact

Deliverable:

Break-out Group Feedback: Draft Valley-wide priority goals for FY 2026–27 and a 5-year outlook.

SESSION 4

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Strengthening the Organizational Structure

Panelists:

Facilitator: Valleywide Coordinator, Georgiena Vivian (VRPA Technologies)

Topics:

- ✓ Clarify roles between Directors, Executive Committee, Policy Council, Valleywide Coordinator, consultant teams, and agency fiscal responsibilities.
- ✓ Review Directors’ rotation schedule and responsibilities
- ✓ Review roles of agents for Air Quality, Valleywide Coordinator, and Legislative Consultants
- ✓ Ensure clarity for:
 - Directors vs. Policy Council responsibilities
 - Executive Committee role
 - VLAC role (legislative affairs) (If applicable)
 - Staff-level committees (TMG, Housing/Land Use Committee, SJV Swap Meet Group)

Activity:

Organizational “pain points” and structural gaps.

Outcome:

A refined organizational structure map + recommended updates.

Speech Topics:

- ✓ Statewide funding outlook
- ✓ CAPTI implementation
- ✓ Multimodal SR 99 future

- ✓ Federal infrastructure opportunities

LUNCH

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM | Lunch & Keynote From External Partner

Suggested keynote options:

- ✓ **CalSTA Secretary (or designee)**
- ✓ **CTC Commissioner**
- ✓ **Caltrans District Director (District 6 or 10)**

SESSION 5

1:00 PM AM – 2:00 PM | Establishing Meeting & Communication Protocols

Panelists:

Facilitator: Valleywide Coordinator, Georgiena Vivian (VRPA Technologies)

Content:

- ✓ Modernize communication pathways, meeting timing, and interagency coordination (including CTC, CalSTA, ARB, Caltrans Districts 6 & 10, SJVAPCD).
- ✓ Review current meeting frequency changes (Policy Council & Executive Committee updates).
- ✓ Reaffirm the annual meeting calendar aligned with:
 - OWP draft
 - RTP/SCS deadlines
 - Valley Voice visits
 - Federal/State grant cycles

Key Objectives:

- ✓ Improve preparation, agenda structure, timing, and materials flow
- ✓ Improve Director-to-Director communication during CTC/CalCOG cycles
- ✓ Improve communication with ARB, EPA, FRA, FTA, FHWA, USDA, and HCD

Deliverable:

A standardized meeting & communication protocol handbook.

SESSION 6

2:00 PM – 2:45 PM | Valley Voice 2026–27 – Planning and Development

- ✓ Washington D.C. (Sept 2026)
- ✓ Sacramento (Spring 2027)

Panelists:

Facilitator: Valleywide Coordinator, Georgiena Vivian (VRPA Technologies)

Deliverable:

Draft Valley Voice Purpose, Planning, Process, New Ideas

BREAK

2:45 PM – 3:00 PM

SESSION 7

3:00 PM – 3:30 PM | Investment in Training & Leadership Development

Panelists:

Facilitator: Valleywide Coordinator, Georgiena Vivian (VRPA Technologies)

Recommended Training Areas:

- ✓ Legislative advocacy & coalition-building
- ✓ Transportation funding readiness
- ✓ Air quality conformity & EMFAC modeling
- ✓ Interagency communication practices

Deliverable:

Annual Training & Professional Development Plan

CLOSING SESSION

3:30 PM – 4:15 PM

- ✓ Summary of next steps
- ✓ Assignment of responsibilities (Directors, Coordinator, consultants)
- ✓ Positive reflections and adjournment

Speakers:

- ✓ **Chair, Policy Council** (Supervisor Daron McDaniel, MCAG)
- ✓ **Chair, Directors' Committee** (Stacie Guzman, MCAG)

RETREAT OUTPUT PACKAGE (Deliverables)

- ✓ **Updated Valleywide Vision & Goal Framework**
- ✓ **Refined Organizational Structure Overview**
- ✓ **Meeting & Communication Protocol**
- ✓ **2026–27 Valley Voice Planning Guide**
- ✓ **Training & Professional Development Roadmap**
- ✓ **Draft 2026–27 Valleywide Priorities Integrated with Final OWP**

AGENDA ITEM D.4.

***Draft 2026/27 San Joaquin Valley Regional Agencies
Overall Work Program (OWP), Budget, and Meeting Schedule***

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY REGIONAL POLICY COUNCIL



OVERALL WORK PROGRAM FY 2026-27



San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council Members and Staff, July 2026

Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG)

Supervisor Daron McDaniel, Merced County - **CHAIR, POLICY COUNCIL**

Mayor, Matthew Serratto, City of Merced

Alternate: Supervisor Scott Silveira, Merced County

**STAFF: Stacie Guzman, Executive Director.
Chair, Directors' Committee**



Stanislaus Council of Governments (StanCOG)

Supervisor Vito Chiesa, Stanislaus County - **VICE CHAIR, POLICY COUNCIL**

Councilmember Rosa Escutia-Braaton, City of Modesto

Alternate: Supervisor Buck Condit, County of Stanislaus

STAFF: Kate Miller, Interim Executive Director



Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG)

Mayor Alma Beltran, City of Parlier

Councilmember Gary Yep, City of Kerman

Alternate: Mayor Pro Tem Bill Nijjer, City of Kerman

STAFF: Robert Phipps, Executive Director, Vice Chair, Directors' Committee



Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG)

Supervisor David Couch, Kern County

Mayor Saul Ayon, City of McFarland

Alternate: **Mayor Pro Tem Cathy Prout, City of Shafter**

STAFF: Jay Schlosser, Executive Director



Kings County Association of Governments (KCAG)

Mayor Alvaro Preciado, City of Avenal

Supervisor Doug Verboon, Kings County

Alternate: **Mayor Patricia Matthews, City of Lemoore**

STAFF: Terri King, Executive Director



Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC)

Supervisor Robert Poythress, Madera County
Councilmember Jose Rodriguez, City of Madera
Alternate: Councilmember Waseem Ahmed, City of Chowchilla
STAFF: Patricia Taylor, Executive Director



San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJ COG)

Mayor Gary Singh, City of Manteca
Supervisor **Robert Rickman, San Joaquin County**
STAFF: Diane Nguyen, Executive Director



San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJPA)

Ahdel Ahmed, Public Relations Manager



San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD)

Samir Sheikh, Executive Director
Alternate: **Mark Montelongo, Director, Policy, and Government Affairs**



Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG)

Mayor Rudy Mendoza, City of Woodlake
Supervisor Dennis Townsend, Tulare County
Alternate: Councilmember Linda Launer, City of Dinuba
STAFF: Ted Smalley, Executive Director



Introduction

The San Joaquin Valley covers over 27,000 square miles and encompasses the eight-county region of Kern, Kings, Tulare, Fresno, Madera, Merced, Stanislaus, and San Joaquin counties. Since 1992, the San Joaquin Valley Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs) have coordinated planning activities involving interregional issues, including air quality conformity, goods movement, funding for regional transportation projects, legislative advocacy, and Sustainable Communities Strategies.

Planning efforts of Valleywide importance are conducted among the eight RPAs through the San Joaquin Valley Regional Agencies' Directors' Committee (Directors' Committee) and the San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council (Policy Council), a governing board including elected officials from each Valley RPA and the Executive Director of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (Air District), and the Executive Director of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJA). In Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22, government affairs contracts for state and federal representation were implemented for the Policy Council.

The FY 2026-2027 Valleywide Overall Work Program (OWP) is a summary document that details major coordinated activities in which all eight regional planning agencies, along with the Air District and SJJA, are actively engaged. The Valleywide OWP does not replace the need or requirements of each RPA to conduct its own OWP; instead, it is a planning and budgeting tool for shared Valleywide activities.

Note: The terms Regional Planning Agency (RPA), Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA), Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and Council of Governments (COG) are used interchangeably throughout this document.

Current Valleywide Major Activities

1. MAJOR HIGHWAYS AND INTERSTATES

Objective: To develop and foster regional coordination and prioritization for improving State Route 99 (SR 99), Interstate 5 (I-5), and other regionally significant corridors.

Lead: Kern COG, MCAG, TCAG, MCTC

The RPAs work closely with Caltrans and other stakeholders to prioritize funding for SR 99 and other major highways and interstates. The 99 Business Plan helped the Valley achieve dedicated funding for SR 99 through Proposition 1B in 2006, the only transportation earmark in the bond placed before the voters. Caltrans Districts 6 and 10 have updated the 99 Business Plan and Master Plan and worked with the RPAs on project selection and funding alternatives. The Directors, working in close consultation with Caltrans District 6 and 10 staff, routinely meet to discuss continued project planning and funding using Senate Bill 1 (SB1), Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE), and other funding strategies.

In recent years, multiple funding requests related to SR 99 improvements have been made, including State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and SB1, as well as federal grant funding awards for the Tulare, Merced, and Madera segments.

Additionally, Caltrans initiated the **State Route 99 Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan (CMCP)** to identify a broad range of multimodal opportunities for improving and enhancing the SR 99 corridor and for developing a stakeholder-shared vision and implementation plan for the corridor that aligns with state goals to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emission and passenger vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and increase freight reliability and throughput for inclusive economic development. The CMCP is a prerequisite for additional state funding for SR 99 capital projects. **The final CMCP was published by Caltrans in November 2025.**

Activities for FY 2026-2027:

- Continue to advocate for completing the SR 99 system, with at least six lanes of travel throughout the San Joaquin Valley, including non-**single occupant vehicle (SOV)** and truck lanes, which the CMCP is considering.
- **The regional agencies, Caltrans, and other affected agencies will continue to improve, develop, and implement the initiatives and programs suggested in the SR 99 CMCP. Caltrans will maintain communication with stakeholders, including representatives from regional and local agencies, industry, tribal organizations, and corridor residents, to assist in refining recommended strategies as they move from planning to implementation.** Participate in and lead discussions with the Regional Policy Council, the California Transportation Commission, legislators, and others on the importance of identifying and prioritizing state and federal funding for all significant Valley projects.
- **Continue to seek** federal and state funding for major highway and interstate projects and coordinate pre-construction activities when feasible to ensure project readiness. Federal infrastructure funding programs, including the State Trade Corridor Enhancement Program (TCEP), the Solutions for Congested Corridors Program (SCCP), and the STIP, are major SB1 funding sources to be targeted.
- Work closely with Caltrans Districts 6 and 10 to identify the most congested highway segments for eligibility in the TCEP and the SCCP or SB 1 funding. Continue to refine and prioritize regionally significant projects through a methodical and mutually agreed-upon evaluation process.
- Outline policies for converting temporary lanes to permanent lanes when feasible. Kern COG will coordinate with Caltrans District 6, and MCAG will coordinate with District 10 on opportunities for additional programming.

- Combine State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) and Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP) funding to address rehabilitation and expansion of the SR 99 segments that need to be widened.
- Consider funding for truck-only and high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes along SR 99.
- Continue to review findings of the 2025 Rural Induced Demand Study, funded by Caltrans (<https://www.nctc.ca.gov/Reports/RCTF-Rural-Induced-Demand-Study/index.html>), which was conducted to determine impacts in predominantly rural areas.

2. SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY INTERREGIONAL GOODS MOVEMENT

Objective: To prioritize, coordinate, and implement goods movement planning and capital projects to improve the Valley's economic competitiveness.

Lead: Fresno COG, TCAG, and Kern COG

The San Joaquin Valley has long been California's geographic and agricultural production center, generating more than \$50 billion annually in agricultural commodities. It also plays a significant role in the national and international distribution of processed foods and energy products, with a burgeoning logistics and distribution industry.

The RPAs have a strong history of planning for regional goods movement. The San Joaquin Valley Interregional Goods Movement Plan (2015), San Joaquin Valley I-5/SR 99 Goods Movement Corridor Plan (2017), the San Joaquin Valley Goods Movement Sustainable Implementation Plan (2017), and the I-5 Freight ZERO Pilot Study (2019) are examples of regional coordination to enhance freight movement in the Valley. In 2020, funding and regional support for the California Inland Port concepts were solidified among the RPAs.

Activities for FY 2026-27:

- Continue to coordinate project prioritization for RAISE, SB1, and other federal and state funding for goods movement, particularly for State Route 99.
- Participate and provide input to California's Freight Mobility Plan and the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI).
- Continue to collaborate with regional partners on logistics and economic development initiatives, enhancing goods movement planning and implementation efforts.
- Continue to identify multimodal strategies to complement and support the movement of goods in the Valley.
- Continue to fund and participate in inland port concepts for the Valley, including the now TradePort California and the Castle Commerce Center.

- Continue to explore alternative fuels and technology strategies for meeting California's Sustainable Freight mandates.

3. AIR QUALITY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND COORDINATION

Objective: To continue the successful coordination of Valleywide air quality planning, minimizing potential impacts on project delivery.

Lead: San Joaquin COG, TCAG, Kern COG, SJV Air Pollution Control District

The federal Clean Air Act (CAA) requires transportation conformity, ensuring that federal funding is allocated to transportation activities that are consistent with air quality goals. The CAA strengthened conformity requirements for transportation projects, necessitating a more enhanced level of technical analysis of plans, programs, and projects than in the past. Conformity determinations must be conducted at least every four years or as amendments are made to plans or projects. The federal transportation conformity rule requires interagency consultation on issues that **affect the conformity analysis, such as the underlying assumptions and methodologies used to prepare it.** Consultation is generally conducted through the San Joaquin Valley Interagency Coordinating Committee (IAC). The IAC has been established to provide a coordinated approach to addressing air quality, conformity, and transportation modeling issues in the Valley.

Coordination among the Valley RPAs, the Air District, and other air quality and transportation agencies is proving to be very effective. The RPA Directors have budgeted to continue joint funding for a Valleywide Air Quality Coordinator, who will be responsible to the Directors, to ensure that air quality conformity and related modeling within the Valley are accomplished **consistently and on a** timely basis.

In FY 2023-24, the ***SJV Swap Meet Committee*** was reinstated at the staff level. The SJV Swap Meet Group comprises transportation programming staff from each of the San Joaquin Valley Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). The group meets virtually approximately every other month. Meetings provide a forum for staff to discuss various programming topics, including Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) best practices, apportionment exchange opportunities, new programming rules and regulations, air quality conformity, and other vital issues. The forum also offers an excellent opportunity for entry-level programmers to learn about the complexities of programming from more experienced staff members. In the coming months, meetings will focus on preparing the 2026 FTIP and Air Quality Conformity documentation.

In FY 2023-24, the ***Valley Transportation Modelers Group (TMG)*** was **established at the staff level to coordinate with the Valleywide air quality modeling consultant and the** RPA transportation modeling consultants. The Valley TMG offers the COG Directors group a staff perspective on technical modeling issues, such as induced demand, and coordinates resource-saving collaborations, including travel model updates, training, data collection, software licensing, and best practices.

Activities for FY 2026-27:

- Monitor state and federal guidance related to air quality transportation planning requirements.
- Conduct conformity determinations to ensure that the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP), and subsequent amendments conform to the State Implementation Plans (SIPs), as required by federal laws and regulations.
- Submit future-year travel forecasts to the SJVAPCD and the California Air Resources Board (CARB) as requested.
- Continue to utilize the Interagency Coordinating Committee (IAC) for routine communication and coordination.
- Coordinate with CARB staff related to future Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) review templates.
- Assist Valley staff in demonstrating conformity; provide EMFAC emissions modeling support.
- Assist Valley staff in target setting and SCS review performed by CARB.

4. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGIES / REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANS

Objective: To develop and coordinate SB 375-compliant Sustainable Communities Strategies for the Valley

Lead: San Joaquin COG and Fresno COG

California's Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (SB 375) require each RPA to develop a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) as part of its Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). An SCS outlines a plan to reduce per capita greenhouse gas emissions by integrating transportation and land-use elements.

Under the Sustainable Communities Act, CARB establishes regional targets for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from passenger vehicle use. The RPAs will work independently and collectively to meet the 2022 and 2026 targets, having invested considerable resources in technical staff, modeling, and scenario development. Furthermore, SB 743 (2014) introduced the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) metric, which is separate from SB 375 but shares similar goals with reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips.

In addition, the RPAs will continue to work with CARB on new protocols for the updated SCS review guidelines and establish regular and ongoing communication with CARB staff to better implement the SCS planning process for future plan cycles.

In FY 2023-24, a ***staff-level Housing and Land Use Committee was formed to further evaluate and monitor state-level land-use policy and funding decisions*** that impact the RTP/SCS planning process.

Activities for FY 2026-27:

- Work with and encourage CARB staff to finalize the 2022 RTP/SCS reviews as quickly as possible.
- Establish regular and ongoing communication between CARB staff and Valley MPOs to enhance transparency and ensure consistency in SCS planning and review processes in future cycles.
- As needed, assist CARB and other state entities with SB 375 progress reporting and other guidance or policy documents.
- Continue implementing transportation and land use strategies developed in the RTP/SCS.
- Continue to evaluate and monitor the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI), California System Investment Strategy (CSIS), and other climate change and social equity policies for implementation into Valley RTPs where appropriate.
- Monitor RPAs' preparation of RTP/SCS documents.

5. RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPMENT WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES AND ENTITIES

Objective: To develop and foster greater communication and coordination between Valley Regional Planning Agencies and other related agencies and stakeholders.

Lead: Valleywide Coordinator, Government Affairs Consultants

To maintain ongoing communication and cooperation with other external agencies, the RPAs have incorporated a relationship development component to foster routine, two-way communication with related state and federal transportation and associated agencies.

Federal entities include the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). State entities include the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), California Transportation Commission (CTC), California Air Resources Board (ARB), Caltrans Districts 6 and 10, Caltrans Headquarters, California Association of Council of Governments (CalCOG), California Self Help Counties Coalition, Strategic Growth Council (SGC), the High-Speed Rail Authority, and Housing and Community Development (HCD). Regional entities include the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, the San Joaquin Valley JPA for Passenger Rail, Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), Sacramento Council of Governments (SACOG), MPOs in the Central Coast, and the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG). Other stakeholders include the California Trucking Association, agricultural associations (County Farm Bureaus, California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), Western Growers Association, County Agricultural Commissioners, Water Management Districts, and others), the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley, colleges and universities, environmental groups, the business community (Economic Development Corporations, Chambers of Commerce, and other business stakeholders), and the public.

A high level of participation by Policy Council members is critical for successful relationship development with external agencies and entities. Policy Council members will partner with Directors in activities noted below for 2026 to 2027.

Activities for FY 2026-2027:

- Directors will coordinate and attend one-third of CTC meetings and meet yearly with our CTC Commissioner representative.
- Directors to meet annually with the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) Secretary or pertinent staff.
- CTC staff will be invited to the Directors' Committee meeting once a year; Directors will meet with at least two CTC Board Members they don't know.
- RPA staff should be encouraged to take leadership positions on Valleywide matters.
- Valley Directors to develop and maintain relationships with the Caltrans Director and Deputy for Planning.
- Valley Directors' Committee meetings should be scheduled periodically at a time of the month when Valley Directors can review and discuss the California Association of Council of Governments (CalCOG) meetings to develop timely joint strategies on key issues.
- Request sister MPOs (MTC, Central Coast, or SCAG) to come to a Valley Directors' Committee meeting.
- Valley Directors meet annually with CARB management and board members and attend the joint CTC/CARB and joint CTC/CARB/HCD Board meetings.

6. VALLEY VOICE ADVOCACY AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Objective: To engage in a unified process that allows the eight-county region to discuss and comment on legislative affairs and build consensus on issues of Valleywide importance.

Lead: Government Affairs Consultants, Valleywide Coordinator, VLAC

In FY 2021-22, government affairs contracts for state and federal representation for the Regional Policy Council were implemented with StanCOG as the fiscal agent. The federal and state government affairs staff routinely update the Directors and Policy Council when legislative advocacy is needed for the Valley. Several times a year, position letters are written and circulated regarding legislation to support or oppose, as well as funding opportunities to pursue and support. Working closely with the Directors and government affairs personnel, the coordinator will plan and coordinate the annual Valley Voice advocacy visits to Sacramento and Washington, D.C.

In FY 2023-24, the **Valley Legislative Affairs Committee (VLAC)** was reinstated as a subcommittee of the Directors' Committee. In conjunction with government affairs personnel, the VLAC provides a staff perspective to the COG Directors' Committee and the SJV Regional Policy Council on legislative priorities and potential bills to sponsor, and helps direct logistics for the annual "Valley Voice" trips to Sacramento and Washington, D.C.

Activities for FY 2026-27: Under discussion – will be updated at a later date

- Track legislation and regulations, develop a unified Valley-wide position, communicate those positions to federal and state officials, and participate in advocacy campaigns and other coalition-building activities as appropriate.
- Share information regarding grant opportunities and other financial resources available at the state or federal level.
- Develop the Valleywide Legislative Platform (state and federal).
- Continue to meet regularly with state and federal officials, including regional elected representatives, to discuss legislation, regulations, and funding opportunities that interest or concern the Valley.
- Plan and execute the "Valley Voice" Washington D.C. visit scheduled for September 2026.
- Plan and execute the "Valley Voice" Sacramento visit scheduled for Spring 2027.
- Advocate for additional PL funding to address inflation and increased transportation planning funding needs.

7. OTHER VALLEYWIDE ACTIVITIES

- **Passenger Rail.** The Valley regional planning agencies coordinate and implement regional passenger transportation planning and capital efforts with the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJPPA). The SJPPA was added as a member of the Policy Council at the beginning of FY 2021-22. The SJPPA advises the Policy Council on passenger rail matters that require a coordinated and unified position, and passenger rail remains a significant component of the annual state and federal legislative platforms. The Policy Council fully supports passenger rail activities and frequently provides letters of support for funding applications. The creation of the Passenger Rail, Transit, and Land Use Working Group occurred in FY 2024-25 and ongoing.
- **San Joaquin Valley Policy Conference.** The Valleywide conference is held in the spring at a different location each year and is coordinated by the host agency. The 2025 conference was held in Merced County. The next scheduled conference will be in 2027 in Madera County. The Central California American Planning Association (APA) also contributes to the conference and helps manage the Blueprint Awards.

Past Conferences

Stockton (SJ COG), Fall 2013
Visalia (TCAG), Fall 2014
Tenaya (MCAG), Fall 2015
Fresno (Fresno COG), Spring 2017
Modesto (StanCOG), Spring 2018
Lemoore (KCAG), Spring 2019
Fresno (Fresno COG), Spring 2022
Manteca (SJ COG), Spring 2023
Visalia (TCAG), Spring 2024
Merced County (MCAG), 2025

Future Conferences

Madera County, 2027
Kings County (KCAG), 2028
Fresno County (Fresno COG), 2029
San Joaquin County (SJ COG), 2030
Tulare County (TCAG), 2031
Kern County (Kern COG) – may be available to host at some time.

- **Policy Council, Executive Committee, and Directors’ Committee Meetings.** The Valleywide Coordinator will continue to schedule monthly meetings for the Directors’ Committee, the Policy Council, and the Policy Council’s Executive Committee.

The Regional Policy Council typically meets four to five times a year, and it is anticipated that the Executive Committee will also meet six to seven times a year before the Policy Council meetings. Additionally, up to four provisional and emergency meetings may be held annually.

The Policy Council Chair is elected for a two-year term at the first meeting of the fiscal year (usually in January). Activities for the Valley’s coordinated efforts are maintained at www.sjvcogs.org.

In the fiscal year 2024-25, revisions were made to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the Bylaws to ensure clarity and alignment with current operational needs. These updates included essential administrative edits that streamlined various processes and adjustments to reflect recent changes in the organization’s name and the name of the Directors’ Committee. Additionally, the frequency of meetings was modified to better accommodate the evolving dynamics of the organization, allowing for improved collaboration and communication.

Recognizing the critical role of the Overall Work Program (OWP) in coordinating efforts among member agencies, the annual Draft San Joaquin Valley Council of Governments (SJVCOG) OWP must be prepared to reflect proposed work activities and budget estimates, allowing member agencies to incorporate this information into their budgets and OWPs. This draft should be presented to the Directors’ Committee, the Executive Committee and the Policy Council in January or February each year. The presentation serves as an opportunity for collaboration and feedback, ensuring that all member agencies are aligned in their objectives and strategies. Final adoption of the OWP is expected by June of each year.

Directors' Chair

FY 2025-26 - Merced County Association of Governments

Rotation Schedule

FY 26-27 - Madera County Transportation Commission

FY 27-28 - Kern Council of Government

FY 28-29 - Stanislaus Council of Governments

FY 29-30 - Kings County Association of Governments

FY 30-31 - San Joaquin Council of Governments

FY 31-32 - Tulare County Association of Governments

FY 32-33 - Fresno Council of Governments

FY 33-34 - Merced County Association of Governments

Policy Council Chairs

Daron McDaniel, Merced County Supervisor, 2025

Daron McDaniel, Merced County Supervisor, 2024

Robert Poythress, Madera County Supervisor, 2023

Robert Poythress, Madera County Supervisor, 2022

Robert Poythress, Madera County Supervisor, 2021

Charles "Chuck" Winn, San Joaquin County Supervisor, 2020

Rudy Mendoza, Mayor, City of Woodlake, 2019

Rudy Mendoza, Mayor, City of Woodlake, 2018

Rudy Mendoza, Mayor, City of Woodlake, 2017

Amarpreet "Ruby" Dhaliwal, Mayor, City of San Joaquin, 2016

Robert Poythress, Mayor, City of Madera, 2015

Robert Poythress, Mayor, City of Madera, 2014

Allen Ishida, Tulare County Supervisor, 2013

Allen Ishida, Tulare County Supervisor, 2012

Bill Spriggs, Mayor, City of Merced, 2011

Bill Spriggs, Mayor, City of Merced, 2010

Michael Rubio, Kern County Supervisor, 2009

Michael Rubio, Kern County Supervisor, 2008

- **San Joaquin Valley Policy Council and Directors' Retreat**

Plans are currently underway to conduct the Policy Council and Directors' Retreat in late Spring or early Summer at a location within the San Joaquin Valley. The Retreat will be a two-day event aimed at defining the Policy Council's vision and goals, enhancing organizational structure, setting meeting protocols, and investing in training programs.

Major topics include the following:

- ✓ Plan and Facilitate the Annual Retreat: Organize a thoughtful and engaging retreat where participants can collaboratively explore and discuss critical elements of the organization.
- ✓ Develop Organization Vision, Goals, and Objectives: Collaboratively refine the organization's vision and goals, setting measurable objectives that align with the mission, ensuring that all members are aligned and motivated toward a common purpose.
- ✓ Review and Improve the Organization and Structure: Examine the current organizational framework, identifying strengths and areas for improvement to ensure clarity and efficiency in roles and responsibilities.
- ✓ Establish Meeting Protocols: Review and establish effective meeting procedures that promote inclusivity, efficiency, and productive discussions, ensuring that every voice is heard and valued.
- ✓ Establish Communication Protocols: Develop clear internal and external communication guidelines to foster transparency, consistency, and cohesion among all members.
- ✓ Invest in Comprehensive Training and Development Programs: Focus on empowering Directors, staff, and Policy Council Members by enhancing their skills through targeted workshops and learning opportunities.

This retreat aims to enhance operational effectiveness, strengthen team dynamics, and foster a shared commitment to the organization's future.

Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget

The budget for the shared Valleywide activities noted in this document is detailed below. Budget amounts by agency represent the total direct cost for this activity. Budget amounts by activity are apportioned by population share for all items, except for legislative advocacy and Valley Voice trips, which are apportioned equally.

SJ COG serves as the fiscal agent for Air Quality Planning, a project conducted by Trinity Consultants with project management support from SJ COG staff.

Fresno COG is the fiscal agent for the Valleywide Coordinator contract with VRPA Technologies.

MCAG is the fiscal agent for the federal government affairs contract with Covino, Smith, and Simon.

Fresno COG is the fiscal agent for the state government affairs contract with Khouri Consulting.

The total budget for shared valleywide activities for the fiscal year 2026-2027 is detailed below.

Fiscal Year 2026-27 Meeting Schedule

The FY meeting schedule of the Policy Council, Executive Committee, Directors' Committee, Valley Voice Trips, and other valleywide activities are provided below.

Costs by Agency

Last Updated 02/06/2026

Agency	Population ⁽¹⁾	% of Population	Air Quality Planning ⁽²⁾	Legislative Advocacy, Valley Voice DC ⁽³⁾	Legislative Advocacy, California ⁽⁴⁾	Valleywide Coordinator ⁽⁵⁾	Legal Counsel ⁽⁶⁾	Valley Voice / Retreat Misc. Costs ⁽⁷⁾	Total FY 2025-26
Fresno COG	1,037,053	23.47%	58,663	5,250	13,220	43,504	1,200	2,000	123,837
Kern COG	923,961	20.91%	52,266	5,250	13,220	38,760	1,200	2,000	112,696
KCAG	154,015	3.48%	8,712	5,250	13,220	6,461	1,200	2,000	36,843
MCTC	162,599	3.68%	9,198	5,250	13,220	6,821	1,200	2,000	37,689
MCAG	293,080	6.63%	16,579	5,250	13,220	12,295	1,200	2,000	50,543
SJCOG	805,856	18.23%	45,585	5,250	13,220	33,806	1,200	2,000	101,061
StanCOG	555,765	12.58%	31,438	5,250	13,220	23,314	1,200	2,000	76,422
TCAG	487,209	11.02%	27,560	5,250	13,220	20,438	1,200	2,000	69,668
SJIPA				5,250	13,220		1,200	2,000	21,670
SJVAPCD				5,250	13,220		1,200	2,000	21,670
Total FY 2026-27:	4,419,538	100.0%	\$ 250,000	\$ 52,500	\$ 132,200	\$ 185,400	\$ 12,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 652,100

Notes:

- (1) State of California, Department of Finance, E-1 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State with Annual Percent Change — January 1, 2024 and 2025. Sacramento, California, May 2025. Note: Will update when May 2026 estimates are available.
- (2) SJCOG Staff (\$50,000). Air Quality Consultant, Trinity (\$200,000 or \$175,000 with \$25,000 contingency, if needed). Contractor cost approved to \$170,000 as of July 11, 2024 and an additional \$25,000 in October 2025.
- (3) No Federal Metropolitan Planning (PL) Funds; cost for Valley Voice D.C. is apportioned equally (not by population). Legislative advocacy costs are November 2024 approved contract costs.
- (4) No PL Funds; cost for Valley Voice Sacramento is apportioned equally (not by population). Legislative advocacy costs are November 2024 approved contract costs of \$120,000, plus a 5% Cost of Living (COL) increase for each contract year.
- (5) VRPA Technologies, Inc. A 3% COL increase was applied consistent with the approved contract.
- (6) No PL Funds; cost for Legal Counsel is apportioned equally (not by population).
- (7) Other Direct Costs (Valley Voice DC Breakfast and Dinner Costs, Sacramento Reception and Lunch Costs, and Retreat Costs for Meals and Venue - Calculated equally by agency). In reality, the costs will be billed considering the

*** Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget:**

- Budget amounts by activity are apportioned by population share for all items, except as otherwise noted.
- SJCOG is the fiscal agent for Air Quality Planning, which is conducted by Trinity Consultants with project management support by SJCOG staff.
- Fresno COG is the fiscal agent for the Valleywide Coordinator contract with VRPA Technologies.
- **Fresno COG and MCAG are the fiscal agents for the state and federal government affairs contracts and legal support.**

Valleywide Meeting Calendar San Joaquin Valley Policy Council

FY 2026-2027

July 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Aug 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Sep 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Oct 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Nov 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Dec 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Jan 2027						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Feb 2027						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

Mar 2027						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			
						TBD

Apr 2027						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	
						TBD

May 2027						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Jun 2027						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Important dates:

- Directors' Committee Meetings
- Washington DC Valley Voice [September 15-16, 2026 (session/meeting dates)]
- Regional Policy Council Regular Meetings
- Pre Valley Voice Planning Meetings
- Annual Policy Conference (April or May 2027, Dates TBD)
- Sacramento Valley Voice (March 2027, Dated TBD)
- Policy Council Executive Committee Meetings

All scheduled meeting dates may be altered due to conflicts with other planned conferences or meetings with partner agencies.