

Chair
Supervisor Daron McDaniel
Merced County



Vice Chair
Supervisor Vito Chiesa
Stanislaus County

San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council Executive Committee

**Friday, March 27, 2026
10:00 a.m.**

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

Madera County Transportation Commission

2001 Howard Road, Suite 201
Madera, CA 93637

Stanislaus County

1010 10th Street, 6th Floor Lobby
Modesto, CA 95354

**San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control
District**

1990 E. Gettysburg Ave., Fresno, CA 93726

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

Stanislaus Council of Governments

8607 John Fox Rd, Hughson, CA 95326

Stanislaus Council of Governments

1111 I Street
Modesto, CA 95354

Fresno Council of Governments

2035 Tulare St., Ste. 201., Fresno, CA 93721

Madera County Board of Supervisors

200 W. 4th St., #4
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@vrpatech.com prior to the meeting to determine which physical locations will be utilized.

Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89420074467?pwd=D9cOhl0BBR7S3zT0muD8q4rcGmaKIh.1>

Meeting ID: 894 2007 4467

Passcode: 486348

Phone only: 1 (669) 444-9171

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

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accommodations – The public meeting room and restrooms are ADA accessible. Representatives or individuals with disabilities should contact the SJV Regional Agencies Coordinator, Georgiena Vivian, at (559) 259-9257, at least three days in advance, to request auxiliary aids and/or translation services necessary to participate in the meeting.



San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council Executive Committee

Roll Call

SJVPC	First Name	Last Name	Title	Agency	Present (Y/N)
Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC)					
Member	Robert	Poythress	Supervisor, District 3	County of Madera	
Alternate	Jose	Rodriguez	Councilmember, District 2	City of Madera	
Alternate	Waseem	Ahmed	Councilmember	City of Chowchilla	
Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG)					
Member – Chair	Daron	McDaniel	Supervisor, District 3	County of Merced	
Alternate	Matthew	Serratto	Mayor	City of Merced	
Alternate	Scott	Silveira	Supervisor, District 5	County of Merced	
Stanislaus Council of Governments (StanCOG)					
Member – Vice Chair	Vito	Chiesa	Supervisor, District 2	County of Stanislaus	
Alternate	Rosa	Escutia-Braaton	Councilmember, District 1	City of Modesto	
Alternate	Buck	Condit	Supervisor, District 1	County of Stanislaus	
Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG)					
Member	Rudy	Mendoza	Mayor	City of Woodlake	
Alternate	Dennis	Townsend	Supervisor, District 5	County of Tulare	
Alternate	Linda	Launer	Councilmember, District 5	City of Dinuba	
San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD)					
Member	Samir	Sheikh	Executive Director	SJVAPCD	
Alternate	Mark	Montelongo	Director of Policy & Governmental Affairs	SJVAPCD	

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Agenda Item	Speaker	Enclosure
C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES	Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1. February 13, 2026, Executive Committee Meeting		
D. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS		
1. Discussion: Budget, Policy, and Legislative Updates		
a. State		
1) <i>Legislative Update</i>	Gus Khouri	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) <i>Recap and Next Steps - Valley Voice Sacramento – March 3-4, 2026</i>	Gus Khouri & Georgiena Vivian	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Federal		
1) <i>Legislative Update</i>	Jen Covino	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) <i>Planning Status: Washington, D.C. Valley Voice Trip – September 15-16, 2026</i>	Jen Covino & Georgiena Vivian	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Discussion: RTP/SCS Updates and Air Quality Issues		
a. SB 375 – 2026 GHG Reduction Targets	Ted Smalley Ryan Niblock	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
b. Federal Air Quality Conformity		
3. ACTION: Support Position Urging EPA Approval of Pending Time-sensitive San Joaquin Valley State Implementation Plan (SIP) Actions	Samir Sheikh	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Planning Status: April 30, 2026 – May 1, 2026, Policy Council and Directors’ Committee Retreat	Georgiena Vivian	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. OTHER ITEMS		<input type="checkbox"/>
1. Future Meetings/Agenda Items:		
a. Directors’ Committee – April 2, 2026		
b. Policy Council – April 24, 2026		
c. SJV Retreat – April 30 - May 1, 2026 (Merced)		
d. Directors’ Committee – May 7, 2026 – Approve 2026/27 OWP	Georgiena Vivian	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Executive Committee – May 22, 2026 - Approve 2026/27 OWP		
f. Directors’ Committee – June 4, 2026		
g. Policy Council – June 26, 2026 - Approve 2026/27 OWP		
h. Valley Voice Washington D.C. – September 15-16, 2026		
2. Executive Committee Member Comments	Members	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. PUBLIC COMMENT	Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>
This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons wishing to address the Committee on items within its jurisdiction but NOT on this agenda. Public comment will be allowed during the Discussion Items above.		
G. ADJOURN	Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>

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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"/>	Ahdel Ahmad SJJPA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ted Smalley TCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gus Khouri Khouri Consulting
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Terri King KCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mitch Weiss Khouri Consulting
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Robert Phipps Vice Chair, Directors' Committee Fresno COG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jen Covino Covino, Smith & Simon
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Patricia Taylor MCTC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	David Gellman Covino, Smith & Simon
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stacie Guzman Chair Directors' Committee MCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Aly Hernandez Covino, Smith & Simon
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Elizabeth Forte MCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Georgiena Vivian SJV Coordinator VRPA Technologies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Amber Collins StanCOG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carolina Ilic VRPA Technologies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Monica Streeter StanCOG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dena Graham VRPA Technologies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diane Nguyen SJCOG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Alex Marcucci Trinity Consulting
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ryan Niblock SJCOG			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mark Montelongo SJVAPCD			

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AGENDA ITEM C.1.

February 13, 2026, Executive Committee

Meeting Minutes

Chair
Supervisor Daron McDaniel
Merced County



Vice Chair
Supervisor Vito Chiesa
Stanislaus County

San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council

Executive Committee

Meeting Minutes

Friday, February 13, 2026
9:00 a.m.

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Meeting ID: 829 4716 7115

Passcode: 553760

Phone only: 1 (669) 444-9171

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Alternate	Waseem	Ahmed	Councilmember	City of Chowchilla	N
Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG)					
Member – Chair	Daron	McDaniel	Supervisor, District 3	County of Merced	Y
Alternate	Matthew	Serratto	Mayor	City of Merced	Y
Alternate	Scott	Silveira	Supervisor, District 5	County of Merced	N
Stanislaus Council of Governments (StanCOG)					
Member – Vice Chair	Vito	Chiesa	Supervisor, District 2	County of Stanislaus	Y
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Alternate	Buck	Condit	Supervisor, District 1	County of Stanislaus	N
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Alternate	Linda	Launer	Councilmember, District 5	City of Dinuba	N
San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD)					
Member	Samir	Sheikh	Executive Director	SJVAPCD	Y
Alternate	Mark	Montelongo	Director of Policy & Governmental Affairs	SJVAPCD	N

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<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Enclosure</u>
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C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair

1. December 8, 2025, Executive Committee Meeting

Vice Chair Chiesa, StanCOG, asked if there were any comments or requested changes to the minutes. Hearing none, Member Mendoza, TCAG, moved to approve the minutes, and Member Poythress, MCTC, seconded the motion. The item proceeded without discussion or objections.

D. ELECTION OF POLICY COUNCIL CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Chair

The Committee discussed Item D: Election of the Policy Council Chair and Vice Chair, focusing on how the organization’s two-year term policy for leadership positions should be interpreted and applied.

Member Poythress initially raised the topic to note that the Policy Council conducts leadership elections every two years and that the next election cycle was approaching. However, he indicated he had only intended to highlight the timing issue and did not intend to initiate a broader debate.

Chair McDaniel, MCAG, explained that when he was last elected chair, the council had just adopted bylaws establishing two-year terms for the chair position. Based on that change, he believed his current term should be interpreted as a two-year term, meaning the next elections would occur in January 2027.

The discussion centered on whether the bylaw change—adopted shortly after his election—retroactively applied to his current term, potentially extending his tenure beyond a one-year cycle. Some members noted the need for clarity and consistency in interpreting the bylaws.

Member Sheikh, SJVAPCD, emphasized that the key issue was simply clarifying the term structure to avoid confusion moving forward. To address this, Georgiena Vivian recommended formally documenting the interpretation and ensuring the timeline for the next election (January 2027) is clearly established.

The Committee agreed that the matter should be clarified in the record, with supporting documentation prepared if needed. The discussion concluded with a recommendation that the chair and Supervisor Poythress continue any remaining discussion offline, and that the issue could return to the agenda later if necessary.

E. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

1. Discussion: Budget, Policy, and Legislative Updates

a. State

- 1) *Legislative Update*

Gus Khouri

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Gus Khouri, Khouri Consulting and State Legislative Advocate, reported that the Legislature is currently in a transition period, as bills must move out of their house of origin by the end of January, and the deadline for introducing new legislation is approaching. He indicated that staff will soon prepare a bill matrix identifying priority legislation for the committee's review.

Gus highlighted Assembly Bill 1608, authored by Assemblymember Lori Wilson, as a measure that has raised concerns. The bill relates to oversight of the California High-Speed Rail project and includes language directing the Inspector General to keep certain findings, specifically, any identified weaknesses in project delivery, confidential and to report them only to the Legislature, rather than publicly releasing them. Gus noted this could create transparency issues, particularly given the Legislature's recent extension of the Cap-and-Invest program, which allocates significant funding to high-speed rail. As a result, the committee may consider taking a position of "oppose" or "oppose unless amended" if the confidentiality language remains.

2) *Valley Voice Sacramento – March 3-4, 2026*

A) Event Status

Gus Khouri & Georgiena Vivian



The discussion then transitioned to Valley Voice advocacy activities in Sacramento. Gus Khouri, Khouri Consulting and State Legislative Advocate, reported that eight meetings with legislators had already been scheduled, with a few more pending confirmations, including potential meetings with Assemblymember Wilson and Senator Cortese. Transportation Secretary Toks Omishakin will not be available due to another event.

Georgiena Vivian, VRPA Technologies and SJV Coordinator, provided additional logistical updates, noting that a reception at Ella Dining Room and Bar is scheduled for the evening before the advocacy meetings. Invitations were being sent to legislative offices, and a lunch hosted by legislators had also been arranged. She confirmed that preparations were progressing well and that she would arrive early to ensure the lunch logistics were in place before participants arrived.

B) Legislative Platform – Discuss CHSRA Business Plan Approach

Stacie Guzman



The Executive Committee discussed whether the Legislative Platform should be refined to better address current issues surrounding passenger rail and high-speed rail before the upcoming Valley Voice advocacy meetings in Sacramento. Stacie Guzman, Chair of the Directors' Committee, MCAG, explained that the existing platform language is fairly general, while several major developments now require a more coordinated regional response. These include the upcoming High-Speed Rail business plan, Senator Cortese's request for Inspector General review, and Assembly Bill 1608, which could limit public disclosure of certain oversight findings. Because these topics are likely to arise in legislative meetings, members agreed it would be important for the Valley delegation to avoid appearing disorganized or divided.

The discussion highlighted that experiences with the High-Speed Rail Authority vary significantly across the Valley. Stacie described a generally positive working relationship with the Authority, while Jay Schlosser of Kern COG reported serious concerns about poor communication, unilateral project changes, and a lack of local engagement. Jay explained that Kern officials feel they have been largely excluded from meaningful discussions, citing both a problematic public meeting in

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Shafter and the lack of notice regarding a recent project event in Wasco. Jay urged the group to review the Authority's legislative requests and identify specific items the region may want to oppose or seek to amend.

Several members agreed that the strongest regional message should focus on the need for better communication, transparency, and collaboration from the High-Speed Rail Authority across all Valley communities. Vice Chair Chiesa of StanCOG emphasized that while Kern's concerns are valid, the Valley delegation should present them in a measured, unified manner rather than in a confrontational manner that could undermine the region's credibility. He suggested framing the issue by acknowledging that some areas have had positive experiences while others have not, and then collectively calling for more consistent engagement.

The Committee agreed that members should review the High-Speed Rail legislative proposals before the next meeting to identify points of agreement and develop a more unified advocacy message. Gus Khouri, Khouri Consulting and State Legislative Advocate, added that he would continue working on potential strategies and noted that maintaining a collaborative tone with the administration has generally yielded better results than a more combative approach. Overall, the discussion centered on ensuring the Valley enters upcoming legislative meetings with a clear, constructive, and regionally aligned message on high-speed rail.

- C) Preliminary Itinerary and Speaker Assignments
(Approved Platform is also attached for reference)

Gus Khouri



The Committee discussed the preliminary itinerary and speaker assignments for the upcoming Valley Voice advocacy meetings. Vice Chair Chiesa, StanCOG, noted that speaker assignments are typically made by the full board, but Gus explained that this year the Executive Committee was reviewing them in advance so the group could be better prepared. Gus emphasized that the Valley Voice meetings work best when they feel like a conversation, with designated lead speakers but room for other members to share local stories and offer support.

Committee members agreed that the advocacy platform covers several broad and technical topics, especially the air quality and conformity section, and that those topics should be broken into smaller components rather than assigned to a single person. Member Poythress, MCTC, stressed that the group should use its "A-team" for these meetings and avoid assigning speaking roles to individuals who are unprepared or who may not follow through. Several members also emphasized the need for speakers to know their material and speak naturally, rather than reading talking points during meetings.

The Committee then began identifying likely lead speakers by issue area. For air quality, SIPs, federal conformity, SB 375 reform, and cap-and-invest/FARMER funding, the group discussed a team approach involving Vice Chair Chiesa, StanCOG, Member Sheikh, SJVAPCD, and Ryan Niblock, SJCOG, with Vice Chair Chiesa handling political framing and Ryan providing technical details. For goods movement and transportation funding, members supported assigning Member Mendoza, TCAG, and Member Poythress, MCTC, while transit funding was discussed as a possible role for Merced representatives, including Policy Council and Alternate Executive Committee Member Serratto, MCAG, due to his direct transit experience. For passenger rail, Member Verboon, KCAG, was identified as a natural lead, while Kern representatives were seen as appropriate voices on high-speed rail, provided the messaging remained constructive and coordinated.

A recurring theme throughout the discussion was the importance of having clear lead speakers, while also allowing others, especially local representatives, to meet with their own legislators to contribute relevant stories and county-specific perspectives. Members noted that this helps demonstrate that the Valley is speaking with one voice, even when

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experiences vary by county. There was also discussion about informally coordinating among primary and backup speakers before meetings so their comments would be smooth and complementary.

In closing, Gus said he would prepare and distribute talking points by the following week so speakers would have time to review, personalize, and practice them. The Committee agreed that the Executive Committee’s speaker assignments would be forwarded to the full Policy Council as an informational item, rather than requiring formal board action. Overall, the discussion focused on making sure the Valley delegation is organized, polished, and strategically aligned for the advocacy trip.

b. Federal

1) Legislative Update

Jen Covino



Jen Covino, Covino, Smith, and Simon, and Federal Legislative Advocate, provided the Committee with a federal funding update. She informed members that U.S. Senators Alex Padilla and Adam Schiff had announced the opening of their Congressionally Directed Spending (earmark) request process, with submission portals expected to open on Tuesday, the 17th. Jen noted that House member offices are also preparing their submission portals and forms, which her team is distributing in real time to the Director’s Committee so that MPOs, the Air District, the Rail Commission, and local jurisdictions can submit project requests.

Jen encouraged agencies to reach out for assistance with preparing or submitting earmark requests. She also cautioned that federal budget negotiations may be delayed beyond the start of the Federal Fiscal Year 2027 (October 1) due to political factors and the upcoming election cycle. As a result, she advised agencies, particularly when submitting to House members, to consider projects that align with both current and potential future congressional district boundaries.

Jen highlighted several federal funding programs that could support regional projects, including U.S. DOT programs for highways and transit, the CRISI rail program, the Port Infrastructure Development Program, the FAA Airport Improvement Program, and HUD’s Economic Development Initiative for community development and public infrastructure projects such as streetscape improvements and ADA accessibility upgrades.

In response to a question from Vice Chair Chiesa, StanCOG, Jen clarified that boundary changes would affect only a small number of districts and should not be a concern for most applicants. Given the political uncertainty surrounding the federal budget, she recommended prioritizing “nice-to-have” project funding requests over those dependent on critical funding.

2) Washington D.C Valley Voice Travel/Session Dates

Georgiena Vivian



Georgiena Vivian, VRPA Technologies and SJV Coordinator, explained that the U.S. Congress will not be in session during the first full week of September, which is typically when the trip occurs, so alternative dates were presented. The proposed options included September 13–17 (preferred), September 20–24, or September 27–October 1. The goal was to finalize dates soon so participants could begin arranging travel and hotel reservations.

Several members noted potential scheduling conflicts during September, including the CalCOG meeting, the Association for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) national conference in Sacramento, the San Joaquin Valley Air District

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board meeting, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) meeting, the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) meeting, and the San Joaquin Valley Counties conference. Additionally, Vice Chair Chiesa mentioned that later September dates could conflict with the harvest season, making attendance more difficult.

After discussing the conflicts and availability, members generally expressed support for the September 13–17 timeframe, with the understanding that some agencies might adjust their meeting schedules if necessary. Jen Covino, Covino, Smith, and Simon, and Federal Legislative Advocate, noted that any of the proposed weeks would work from the Washington, D.C. perspective but encouraged the group to finalize a decision before early March to allow adequate planning time.

The Committee agreed to recommend the September 13–17 dates for the Valley Voice trip for forwarding to the full board for consideration and approval.

- 2. Discussion: 2027 San Joaquin Valley Policy Conference – Madera County/MCTC Host – Review Alternative Conference Dates Patricia Taylor

The Committee discussed Item E2: Planning for the 2027 San Joaquin Valley Policy Conference, which will be hosted by MCTC. Patricia Taylor, MCTC, explained that Madera County is beginning early planning for the event and has circulated several potential conference dates to agency directors to identify any scheduling conflicts.

Initial feedback has been limited, but the first week of April 2027 appears to be the most viable timeframe, as it generally avoids conflicts with MPO board meetings, Washington, D.C. advocacy trips, and other statewide conferences. Final dates have not yet been selected, but Patricia indicated that the goal is to confirm a timeframe soon because Madera County has limited venue options capable of hosting a conference of this size.

Patricia noted that one potential location being explored is a new facility in the Oakhurst area, and that staff will conduct a site visit in the coming weeks to determine whether it can accommodate the event. Patricia said she will provide the proposed dates to Georgiena Vivian, SJV Coordinator, so they can be included on the upcoming Policy Council agenda for further discussion.

Committee members generally supported the early April timeframe, and the item concluded with confirmation that planning for the 2027 San Joaquin Valley Policy Conference in Madera County is moving forward.

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

The Committee received an update on the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) and air quality issues from Ted Smalley, TCAG. Ted explained that staff are currently preparing two fact sheets, one addressing state air quality issues and another addressing federal air quality issues. These documents are being developed by technical

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staff, including Ryan Niblock, SJCOG, and Alex Marcucci, Trinity Consultants and Policy Council Air Quality Consultant, and will first be reviewed by the Directors before being distributed to the Policy Council.

Because air quality policies and regulatory developments are rapidly changing, the fact sheets will be kept separate from the main printed briefing packet for the upcoming advocacy trip. This approach will ensure that the information provided to policymakers remains current and free of outdated material.

Ted noted that regional staff across the Valley are actively working on transportation modeling for the RTP, and he emphasized the strong coordination among agencies and technical teams addressing the complex air quality challenges. He also thanked Vice Chair Chiesa, StanCOG, for dedicating significant time to a briefing on the issue so he can effectively represent the region in upcoming discussions.

The update concluded with Smalley noting that additional information will be provided in the coming weeks as the fact sheets are finalized and the work progresses.

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4. Discussion/POSSIBLE ACTION: Road User Charge/Transportation Funding Conversion Issue, Including an Executive Committee Position or Recommendation to the Policy Council | Member Robert Poythress
Gus Khouri | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|

The Committee focused on the growing challenge of declining transportation revenues as vehicles become more fuel-efficient and electric vehicles become more common. Member Poythress, MCTC, explained that recent public discussion around AB 1421, which extends the study period for a potential road user charge, has become politically contentious and widely misunderstood in the media. While the bill primarily extends the timeline for evaluating mileage-based fees, some public commentary has framed it as a new or additional tax. Because of this political sensitivity, the Legislature currently appears reluctant to advance any major changes to transportation funding.

Member Poythress noted that despite the lack of political momentum, California is approaching a transportation funding “cliff” as revenues from the gas tax decline due to the rise of electric vehicles, hybrids, and increasingly fuel-efficient cars. With state policies targeting the end of internal combustion engine sales by 2035, the existing fuel-tax model will become increasingly unsustainable. He suggested that the Regional Policy Council consider recommending alternative approaches to replace declining fuel tax revenues, rather than relying solely on a road user charge proposal that currently lacks political support.

Gus Khouri, Khouri Consulting and State Legislative Advocate, provided additional context, noting that transportation funding already shows signs of decline, with the State Transportation Improvement Program programming about 16% less funding this year, equivalent to roughly \$800 million. He explained that the road user charge was originally intended as a revenue-neutral replacement for the gas tax rather than an additional tax, but public messaging and political resistance have complicated the discussion. Gus suggested that policymakers may need to consider a “menu of options,” such as mileage-based user fees, expanded vehicle registration fees, or other alternative funding models.

Committee members discussed several ideas, including focusing on electric and hybrid vehicles, targeting commercial or heavy-duty vehicles, or designing different approaches for different vehicle types. However, staff noted that EVs currently account for less than 7% of California’s registered vehicles, meaning they cannot generate enough revenue on their own

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to replace gas tax funding. Concerns were also raised about privacy issues and political resistance related to mileage-based tracking for passenger vehicles.

Vice Chair Chiesa summarized the group's emerging position, suggesting that the Valley's advocacy message should emphasize that "doing nothing is not an option." He recommended presenting policymakers with several potential solutions rather than promoting a single funding mechanism.

The Committee agreed that the issue requires further discussion and decided to hold a future workshop with the full Policy Council to explore transportation funding alternatives in greater detail. The workshop is expected to be at the next Policy Council meeting on February 27. The discussion concluded with members reaffirming the importance of proactively addressing the transportation funding shortfall before the situation becomes more severe.

5. Continued Review: Draft 2026/27 SJV Overall Work Program (OWP) Georgiena Vivian

Georgiena Vivian, VRPA Technologies and SJV Coordinator, explained that the item was for discussion only and that formal approval would come at a later Executive Committee and Policy Council meeting. She noted that the draft had been included in the agenda packet and asked members to provide any comments or suggested revisions.

Georgiena further explained that the highlighted sections in yellow reflect updates from the prior year, including new member information and revisions to certain policy areas. She also noted that one unresolved issue is the future of the Valley Legislative Affairs Committee (VLAC), which is still being discussed and has not yet been finalized in the work program.

She asked committee members to send along any additional comments so staff could prepare a final version for later consideration.

6. Discussion/Review: April 30, 2026 – May 1, 2026, Policy Council and Directors' Committee Retreat – Preliminary Program Georgiena Vivian

The Committee reviewed the preliminary program for the April 30–May 1, 2026, Policy Council and Directors Committee Retreat, which will be held in Merced. Georgiena Vivian, VRPA Technologies and SJV Coordinator, explained that the retreat will begin on April 30 at 1:00 p.m. with a "Break the Ice" networking activity, followed by a dinner reception at 6:00 p.m. Participants will be offered a group room rate at the El Capitan Hotel for the overnight stay.

The main retreat sessions will occur on May 1, beginning with networking and breakfast at 8:00 a.m. and concluding in the late afternoon. The agenda will include several structured discussions focused on regional collaboration and organizational improvement. Planned sessions include:

- State of the Valley overview, covering topics such as air quality, housing, economic development, legislative issues, State Route 99, and RTP updates.
- Organizational vision, goals, and priorities for the Valley group.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accommodations – The public meeting room and restrooms are ADA accessible. Representatives or individuals with disabilities should contact the SJV Regional Planning Agencies Coordinator, Georgiena Vivian, at (559) 259-9257, at least three days in advance, to request auxiliary aids and/or translation services necessary to participate in the meeting.



- Clarifying organizational structure and roles, including responsibilities of directors, the Executive Committee, and the Policy Council.
- Meeting and communication protocols to improve coordination.
- Planning improvements for Valley Voice advocacy trips to Sacramento and Washington, D.C.
- Training and leadership development opportunities for new and existing members.

A luncheon keynote speaker is also being explored, potentially including the Governor, the CalSTA Secretary, a California Transportation Commission member, or the Caltrans Director.

Committee members generally supported the agenda, noting it was comprehensive and well-structured for the limited time available. One suggestion was made to invite the statewide Caltrans Director, since the Valley group has not previously met with that official as a full body. Georgiena indicated the agenda is still in draft form, and members were encouraged to submit additional comments before it is finalized.

F. OTHER ITEMS

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*
 - g. *Executive Committee – May 22, 2026*
 - h. *Directors’ Committee – June 4, 2026*
 - i. *Policy Council – June 26, 2026*

Georgiena Vivian

Georgiena Vivian, VRPA Technologies and SJV Coordinator, provided an overview of the upcoming meeting schedule for the Committee and related bodies to help members plan their calendars.

Georgiena also noted that the fiscal year will conclude in June, with a Directors’ Committee meeting and a Policy Council meeting scheduled for June 26, where the Overall Work Program will be formally approved.

2. Executive Committee Member Comments

Members

No comment provided.

G. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair

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

No comment provided.

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H. ADJOURN

Chair



The meeting adjourned at 11:05 AM.

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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"/>	Ahdel Ahmad SJJPA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ted Smalley TCAG	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gus Khouri Khouri Consulting
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Terri King KCAG	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mitch Weiss Khouri Consulting
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Robert Phipps Vice Chair, Directors' Committee Fresno COG	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jen Covino Covino, Smith & Simon
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Patricia Taylor MCTC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	David Gellman Covino, Smith & Simon
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stacie Guzman Chair Directors' Committee MCAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aly Hernandez Covino, Smith & Simon
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Elizabeth Forte MCAG	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Georgiena Vivian SJV Coordinator VRPA Technologies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Kate Miller StanCOG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Carolina Ilic VRPA Technologies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Monica Streeter StanCOG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dena Graham VRPA Technologies
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Diane Nguyen SJCOG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Linda Launer TCAG Alternate & Dinuba City Councilmember
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ryan Niblock SJCOG			Doug Verboon KCAG Policy Council Member and Kings County Supervisor
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mark Montelongo SJVAPCD			

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