



# Meeting Minutes

2022 Measure T Renewal Investment Plan

## Steering Committee Meeting #4

Date: December 16, 2021

Time: 2:00 – 4:00 P.M.

Place: Zoom Meeting

### IN ATTENDANCE:

**Steering Committee Members:** Supervisor Robert Poythress (Co-Chair), Madera County Board of Supervisors; Supervisor Brett Frazier (Co-Chair), Madera County Board of Supervisors; Conrad Gaunt, Active Transportation Advocate; Geoffrey Wheeler, Active Transportation Advocate; Michael Prandini, Building Industry Association of Fresno and Madera Counties; Matt Watson, Cal Fire; Michael Navarro, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans); Nichole Mosqueda, Camarena Health Center; Paulo Soares, Camarena Health Center; Derek Robinson, Community Advocate; Council Member Diana Palmer, City of Chowchilla; Rod Pruet, City of Chowchilla; Jason Rogers, City of Chowchilla; Ellen Bitter, City of Madera; Keith Helmuth, City of Madera; David Huff, City of Madera; Arnolando Rodriguez, City of Madera; Council Member Jose Rodriguez, City of Madera; Sara Bosse, County of Madera; Jared Carter, County of Madera; Matt Treber, County of Madera; Jay Varney, County of Madera; Davinder Mahil, Creekside Farming; Madeline Harris, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability; Debi Bray, Madera Chamber of Commerce; Bobby Kahn, Madera County Economic Development Commission (EDC), Christina Beckstead, Madera County Farm Bureau; Patricia Taylor, Madera County Transportation Commission/Madera County Transportation Authority (MCTC/MCTA); John Reed, MVP Realty; Paul Herman, San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission; Frank Simonis, Social Service Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC); Tim Curley, Valley Children’s Hospital

**Members of the Public:** Leticia Casillas Luquin, Andy Russell

**Madera County Transportation Commission/Madera County Transportation Authority Staff and Consultants:** Troy McNeil, MCTC/MCTA; Dylan Stone, MCTC/MCTA; Jeff Findley, MCTC/MCTA; Sandy Ebersole, MCTC/MCTA; Georgiena Vivian, VRPA Technologies, Inc. (VRPA); Rose Willems, VRPA; Richard Lee, VRPA; Dena Graham, VRPA; Hector Guerra, VRPA; Charles Heath, TBWBH Props & Measures; Alex Wara-Macapinlac, TBWBH Props & Measures; Ellen Moy, Moy & Associates

### I. Introductions and November 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Supervisor Robert Poythress started the meeting and introduced Hector Guerra, VRPA, to review meeting protocols.. Dena Graham, VRPA, was later introduced to take roll call.

Supervisor Poythress then asked the group if there were any needed corrections to the meeting minutes. There were none. A motion to approve the meeting minutes was made by Bobby Kahn,



Madera County EDC, and seconded by Jason Rogers, City of Chowchilla. Supervisor Poythress asked if there were any objections.

Geoffrey Wheeler, Active Transportation Advocate, said that at the last meeting Madeline Harris talked about induced demand, and that it was his understanding that Caltrans responded that they did not expect induced demand. Mr. Wheeler asked that the minutes reflect a concern that projects that move forward do not induce demand. Ms. Vivian said that staff will go back and check the previous meeting recording, and make sure that the appropriate information is reflected in the minutes.

Motion approved by consensus.

## **II. Overview – Federal Infrastructure Bill**

Patricia Taylor, MCTC/MCTA, provided a review of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and its relationship to Measure T. The presentation included discussion on the guaranteed formula transportation funding that California is expected to receive, new transportation discretionary grant programs, and increased funding for the existing discretionary grant program between FY 2022-2026, what this means for MCTC and the Madera County region, and what is next.

Frank Simonis, SSTAC, asked if there was a way to determine the funding that Madera County could potentially receive. Ms. Taylor said that staff would be looking into this once all the information becomes available, and that she would be participating in an upcoming call with the State to further discuss this item.

Tim Curley, Valley Children's Hospital, wanted to know more about the Regional Transportation Plan, particularly the funding opportunities that are identified. Ms. Taylor said that MCTC is in the process of updating the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) and confirmed that the RTP/SCS identifies all funding sources, and that the RTP/SCS also contains a financially constrained list of projects. Dylan Stone, MCTC/MCTA, added that the adopted 2018 RTP/SCS is available on the MCTC website, along with supporting technical documentation.

John Reed, MVP Realty, asked if it would be possible to identify which funding sources specifically require matching or leveraged funds. Ms. Taylor said that staff will be able to identify which new programs require matching funds, and that this would be dependent on the guidance packages and the guidelines that are developed.

Ms. Harris thought that the development of an investment plan for Measure T should include community engagement from the community and should be focused on the investments that community members want to see Measure T fund, and not just developing the investment plan based on existing County priorities. Ms. Taylor said that the public will be engaged as the Measure T Renewal is developed, and that later in the meeting there will be additional discussion on public outreach activities for the Measure T Renewal.

Council Member Jose Rodriguez, City of Madera, said that one of the bullet points in Ms. Taylor's presentation made mention of a permanent fix to the Highway Trust Fund, and wanted to see if there could be some elaboration on this item. Ms. Taylor said that the Highway Trust Fund has been in a deficit for many years and has had to be backfilled. Ms. Taylor said that the cause of this deficit goes back to the federal gas tax, and how this tax has not increased since the early 1990s.

### **III. Measure T Renewal Plan Goals/Objectives and Transportation System Priorities**

Ms. Vivian explained that to assist with the identification of Programs, which will be included in the Measure T Renewal, it would be important to understand the Goals and Objectives, and the Transportation System Priorities that should be accomplished with the Measure T Renewal.

Rose Willems, VRPA, then gave an overview of the process undertaken to collect Transportation System Priorities from Steering Committee members. Ms. Willems added that a matrix of Steering Committee members' Transportation System Priorities has been developed, with the goal that each sector is reflected. Ms. Willems said that any Steering Committee members who have not yet provided their input can email their priorities information to her, and the information will be added to the matrix.

#### Measure T Renewal Plan Goals and Objectives

Ms. Vivian provided an overview of the Draft Measure T Renewal Plan Goals and Objectives.

Christina Beckstead, Madera County Farm Bureau, had previously asked about studies being done to determine how many people are using public transportation in Madera County, and wanted to see if this is a viable use of funds or if transit services are not being adequately utilized. Ms. Vivian said that the City of Madera is in the process of updating its Transit Plan and should have preliminary information on ridership in the near future.

Ms. Beckstead also said that before the Steering Committee commenced there were individual meetings with many Steering Committee members to discuss their priorities and wanted to confirm that input received at these meetings was also considered. Ms. Vivian said that staff has taken into consideration information received during the stakeholder interview process, Steering Committee meetings, and information received during the public engagement process.

Mr. Simonis asked if Special Road Districts will be included in the funding priorities. Jared Carter, County of Madera, said that there is Special Road District money in Measure T right now. Mr. Carter said that there is a component of Measure T that is for maintenance districts, and from the County's perspective this money goes towards matching funds in the Special Road Districts. Mr. Simonis said that there is \$400,000 available per year to be used for maintenance and vegetation mitigation in the Special Road Districts. Mr. Simonis added that the money has not increased as the years have gone by and wanted to know if increasing this amount will be addressed because it has been 16 years since it has been adjusted. Ms. Vivian said that one of the next steps is to identify the Measure T Renewal Programs, and at that point there will be discussion on the allocation of funding to Programs, such as

maintenance. Ms. Vivian also said that implementing guidelines will be looked at as part of the Measure T Renewal process, and that these guidelines can specify whether there needs to be an increase annually.

Ms. Harris thought that one of the items missing from the Goals and Objectives is the right for all people to have a healthy environment and healthy air quality regardless of race, income, national origin, age, location, physical ability, or any other factor. Ms. Harris felt that it would make sense to add this item to the *Vibrant communities that are supported by sustainable transportation systems* goal.

Sara Bosse, County of Madera, said that there was not specific language around reducing traffic congestion, and air quality was not called out as part of the *Multimodal transportation systems that are fully accessible, encourage quality and sustainable growth and development, support the region's environmental resource management strategies, and are responsive to the needs of current and future travelers'* goal. Ms. Bosse also said that infrastructure for electric vehicles was missing from the Goals and Objectives.

Derek Robinson, Community Advocate, thought that a roundabout was needed at Raymond Road and Avenue 16, because traffic can get backed up on Raymond Road as vehicles attempt to make the turn onto Avenue 16. Ms. Vivian said that roundabouts could be called out in the Transportation System Priorities. Mr. Robinson also said that the streets where the City and the County meet are heavily used, but often times not well maintained.

Conrad Gaunt, Active Transportation Advocate, said that it would be great if the shoulders can also be repaved anytime a road is repaved, so that cyclists can utilize the shoulders and not be out in the roadway. Mr. Gaunt identified Avenue 25, from Road 13 to the Merced County line, as a location that has a great shoulder for cyclists.

Mr. Reed thought that safety deserved a higher priority in the Goals and Objectives, especially in correcting existing roadways with poor design and conditions. Mr. Vivian said that staff will look to emphasize safety to a greater extent, where appropriate.

#### Measure T Renewal Plan Transportation System Priorities

Ms. Vivian said that the Measure T Renewal Plan Transportation System Priorities were developed based on input received from Steering Committee members, as well as input received from the stakeholder interviews, voter poll, and other related public engagement to date. Ms. Vivian then provided an overview of the Measure T Renewal Plan Transportation System Priorities.

Mr. Robinson thought that motorized/electric bikes could be an affordable mode of transportation and could also allow for employment opportunities for those who transport others, similar to what is done overseas. Ms. Vivian said that agencies are looking at opportunities to fund electric bikes and scooters, and that this item is on the horizon.

Jason Rogers, City of Chowchilla, said that the City currently receives about 7% of Measure T funding, which generally means that the City cannot do a project every year. Mr. Rogers added that if funding is still tied to population size, then this could potentially reduce the City of Chowchilla's funding allocation. If you then have funding that ends up being too specifically tied to an objective, it will take that much longer the City to do a project. Ms. Vivian said that based on feedback received from the Steering Committee, staff will develop an initial list of Measure T Renewal Programs that the Steering Committee can review and revise. Ms. Vivian said that one of the things that will be taken into consideration is flexibility, understanding that Madera County is a smaller rural County, and that funding availability is not as prevalent as with some of the larger Counties where it is easier to fund projects on an annual basis.

Mr. Simonis wanted to make sure that public-private partnerships would be looked at for transportation, specifically for those in the mountains who need to go into the Cities for various services. Mr. Simonis also wants to see flexibility with Measure T funds so that people are not stuck with how to use funds but can be flexible with how to address needs as they arise.

Ms. Harris said that one of the first things that was discussed in the Goals and Objectives was the importance of equity in transportation investments, but was not really seeing anything in the Transportation System Priorities where it is clear how equity would be prioritized. Ms. Harris thought that two key areas for ensuring that equity is prioritized would be incorporating an equity component into the pavement management system, and for clean mobility and active transportation type projects. Ms. Harris was also uncomfortable with how often widening and goods movement was mentioned in the Transportation System Priorities, and that one of the things that is heard from residents in communities such as La Vina and Fairmead is immense frustration over seeing their local roads get damaged by goods movement. Ms. Harris was also concerned that connectivity between rural communities and urban areas is currently grouped with Goods Movement and felt it should be among public transit and local roads priorities. Ms. Harris also said that zero emission and clean mobility projects have to receive a higher percentage than projects that would facilitate automobile and heavy-duty truck use.

Mr. Robinson said that he would like to see more city connectivity between places such as Oakhurst, Raymond, Coarsegold, Chowchilla, and the Madera Ranchos. Mr. Robinson said that some people cannot get around as easily, and if there was transit that could go to these locations it would help people travel more.

Mr. Reed commented that project specificity can be a double-edged sword. Mr. Reed felt that there will be specific projects that the average voter will be able to relate to very closely, and these projects may be what they are going to vote for. On the other side of the coin, some of the opposition that Mr. Reed has heard is the belief that the original Measure did not follow through and produce some of the projects or outcomes that were promised. Mr. Reed felt that the Measure T Renewal would need to be approached carefully from a marketing standpoint in order to pass.

Arnoldo Rodriguez, City of Madera, believed that there would need be an identification of several attractive projects to help entice voters. Mr. Rodriguez also felt that funds from the first few years of the Measure T Renewal should go towards mitigating existing challenges, and that new development should not cause transportation system deficiencies since they should be already mitigating any issues that they are causing.

Ms. Bosse said that it would be good to include in the language, funding flexibility towards grant writing that would help reduce traffic. Ms. Bosse also mentioned broadband funding that is going to roll out from the State, and how this will help facilitate more telework activity, and potentially reduce the cost of maintaining the roads that we already have.

#### **IV. Measure Renewal Duration Alternatives**

Ms. Vivian said that the three (3) Measure T Renewal duration alternatives are 20-year, 30-year, or until ended by voters. Ms. Vivian then reviewed the estimated revenue that the alternatives are projected to generate. Mr. Troy McNeil, MCTC/MCTA, added that in developing the alternatives funding projections, reasonable assumptions were made based upon historical averages. Ms. Vivian said that staff would like the Steering Committee to make a recommendation to the MCTA on the Measure T Renewal duration.

Ms. Harris asked how the duration of the sales tax polling question was worded. Charles Heath, TBWBH Props & Measures, said that a split sample poll was conducted among a representative sample of voters likely to participate in the November 2022 election. When voters were asked a sample ballot question that would actually appear on the ballot, a random half of these likely voters received language that said that the Measure would automatically expire in 20 years, while the other half received language that said that the Measure would expire only when ended by voters. Mr. Heath said that it was consistently seen throughout the polling that support among the half that received the until ended by voters language was about 2 to 4 percentage points higher than the half that received the 20-year duration language. Mr. Heath added that the polling also replicated the campaign environment by testing arguments in favor/against the Measure. One of the arguments tested was that this Measure does not include a sunset date, and of all the negative arguments against the Measure that were tested, this argument was the least compelling to voters. Ms. Harris asked if the sample ballot language could be shared. Mr. Heath mentioned that this information was shared at the first Steering Committee meeting and could be forwarded to Ms. Harris.

Ellen Bitter, City of Madera, asked if the until ended by voters alternative could end up being sooner than 20 years. Mr. Heath said that for any tax measure that is passed, citizens will always have the right to the initiative process to repeal the tax. Mr. Heath added that a repeal is a significant process and requires collecting enough signatures to qualify for the ballot. Mr. Heath said that it is the experience of public agencies who have Measures in place that it takes quite a bit of controversy before citizens decide to repeal a Measure.

Mr. Arnoldo Rodriguez asked Mr. Heath if the polling asked about a ½ cent sales tax Measure, or a sales tax Measure in general. Mr. Heath said that it asked about extending the existing ½ cent sales

tax Measure. Mr. Rodriguez wondered if a ½ cent sales tax or an increase to the existing sales tax would be appropriate. Mr. Heath said that the polling did not contemplate an increase on the tax rate. Mr. Heath explained that the focus of the polling was on extending the existing tax rate, and the support levels were north of 70% for this approach. Mr. Heath added that he would be surprised if there was similar support for increasing the tax rate, but that this has not been investigated specifically.

Ms. Harris was concerned about an until ended by voters alternative because it would be unfair for Madera County voters to get stuck with an Expenditure Plan that is created in 2021, especially since a lot of things can change. Ms. Harris also said that it was a little unclear what the process would be for voters to alter the Expenditure Plan without completely creating a ballot referendum to end the tax. Ms. Vivian said that there will likely be check in points in the Measure implementing guidelines, where the entire Expenditure Plan will be revisited to ensure that it is still addressing the needs of the County.

Ms. Beckstead said that implementing a sales tax indefinitely and waiting for voter approval to come back to eliminate the tax is very concerning. Ms. Beckstead said that things change over the years from a government standpoint, and a sales tax should not be implemented indefinitely without creating a system of checks and balances, which can be accomplished by setting a term for that sales tax. Ms. Beckstead suggested that Measure T Renewal be kept at a 20-year term.

Ms. Beckstead agreed with earlier comments on the need to make our communities better and added that with all the new development taking place in Madera County, we need to leverage the funding of those developments against State and federal funds to get improvements.

Mr. Curley felt that the Measure T Renewal duration alternatives needed to be discussed a little bit more and suggested that this item be tabled, and a decision be made at the next meeting. Mr. Curley added that he is not confident that the community will in the end support a tax measure that has no end to it, and that it would be helpful to see a set of pros and cons for each of three (3) duration alternatives. Supervisor Poythress agreed to give the Steering Committee more time to consider the duration alternatives, and that this item will be revisited at the next meeting.

**V. Public Engagement Status/Update**

Mr. Heath provided an update on the public outreach accomplishments to date, which included stakeholder interviews to help form the Steering Committee membership, distribution of online surveys to stakeholders who are not Steering Committee members, development of Measure T renewal branding and outreach materials, development of messaging on Measure T accomplishments and messaging related to the proposed Measure T Renewal, and MCTC website messaging related to Measure T accomplishments and planning for a Measure Renewal.

Alex Wara-Macapinlac, TBWBH Props & Measures, then shared with the Steering Committee messaging materials that highlight what Measure T has accomplished. These messaging materials

included a highly graphical transportation improvements map, frequently asked questions (FAQ) sheet, talking points, and a fact sheet.

Mr. Heath then discussed planned upcoming public outreach activities, which included social media posts, direct mail, information video, and other outreach strategies to reach the community. The public outreach team will also develop an email database for regular updates, will conduct meetings with key stakeholders and opinion leaders after development of the draft investment plan, and will provide Steering Committee members and their organizations with a social media toolkit, Measure T accomplishments map, informational video, and other outreach materials.

Ms. Harris requested that there be sections added to the FAQ and talking points sheets that ask for feedback on the funding allocations percentages, and if the Measure T Renewal should be in place until under by voters, for 30 years, or for 20 years. Ms. Harris also asked who the key stakeholders and opinion leaders are, and if there are plans to conduct direct outreach in disadvantaged and unincorporated communities. Mr. Heath said that groups representing disadvantaged and unincorporated communities have been part of the outreach strategy, and that the comprehensive list of groups that are being engaged during the outreach process can be shared.

Mr. Reed asked if the social media posts, direct mail, information video, and other outreach strategies to reach the community would be initially generic in nature since the Steering Committee is still working through a lot of the details for the Measure T Renewal. Mr. Reed also asked if the Steering Committee would have an opportunity to review these outreach pieces before that are distributed. Mr. Heath said that these outreach pieces will be shared with the Steering Committee, and that the public outreach team is being careful so that the messaging does not get ahead of the work that the Steering Committee is doing. Mr. Heath added that the initial messaging will be focused on what Measure T has accomplished since 2006.

## **VI. Next Steps**

### **a. Staff Items**

There were none.

### **b. Renewal Schedule/Steering Committee Vacancy**

Ms. Vivian reviewed the future meetings schedule and previewed what would be discussed at upcoming Steering Committee meetings.

### **c. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting date is Thursday, January 20, 2022, at 1:30 PM.

## **VII. Public Comments**

There were none.