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April 24 - 26, 2023

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A special shout-out to the core SJCOG conference planning team:

Danielle, Keith, Melissa and Yvette

Welcome to the 2023 San Joaquin Valley Policy Conference in Manteca!

We are excited to host the 2023 San Joaquin Valley Policy Conference with the theme “Better Together.” You will come away with illuminating insights, new connections, and a refreshed commitment to collaborations on transportation, regional housing, air quality and other shared issues that make a difference to the people who live, work and travel in the San Joaquin Valley.

During engaging and informative sessions on a broad range of topics, you will hear from regional, state and national experts about programs, challenges, solutions and successes. General and Breakout Sessions throughout the course of the conference will expose opportunities for us to build or strengthen bridges in addressing our shared concerns. The conference is a great jumping off spot for taking advantage of those opportunities to connect with each other.

Thank you for attending the 2023 San Joaquin Valley Policy Conference. You will leave with new knowledge, tools and connections that empower you in your future work. You will come to see that the eight counties, under the leadership of San Joaquin Valley Policy Council, truly are better together and stronger than ever.



Diane Nguyen
Executive Director, San Joaquin Council of Governments
Chair, San Joaquin Valley Regional Planning Agencies Directors Committee

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Credit: Mary Hinkle

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

Policy Conference

AT A GLANCE

2023

Monday, April 24, 2023 Welcome Reception

4:30 – 7 p.m.	Registration
5 – 7 p.m.	Welcome Reception: Conference Ballroom

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

7:30 – 9 a.m.	Breakfast, Networking & Registration Professional Photographer Available in Photobooth Room
9 – 9:15 a.m.	Welcome Remarks & Introductions
9:15 – 10:15 a.m.	Keynote Speaker: José Hernández
10:15 – 10:20 a.m.	Break/Exhibit Tables/Networking
10:20 – 10:50 a.m.	Session (30 minutes) Partnership Opportunities Between the Valley and the California Transportation Commission
10:50 – 11 a.m.	Break/Exhibit Tables/Networking
11 – 11:45 a.m.	Sessions (45 minutes) Stockton Diamond: Unlocking Future of San Joaquin Valley The Future of Regional Housing Policy in California The Intersection of Transportation & Housing as VMT Mitigation
11:45 a.m. – Noon	Break/Exhibit Tables/Networking
Noon – 1 p.m.	Lunch
1 – 1:10 p.m.	Break/Exhibit Tables/Networking



SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY Policy Conference AT A GLANCE

2023

1:10 - 1:40 p.m.	Sessions (30 minutes) Affordable Housing & Forging Partnerships Federal Funding: Making IIJA Work for the Valley HCD Office Hours
1:40 - 1:45 p.m.	Break/Exhibit Tables/Networking
1:45 - 2:15 p.m.	Sessions (30 minutes) TradePort California: A System of Sustainable Inland Ports Transforming the Housing Funding Landscape
2:15 - 2:45 p.m.	Break/Exhibit Tables/Networking
2:45 - 3:30 p.m.	Sessions (45 minutes) Diverging Diamond Interchange Development in the Central Valley: From Planning Through Construction Valley Rail & High-Speed Rail Connectivity & Enhancements Tell me a story ...
3:30 - 3:40 p.m.	Break/Exhibit Tables/Networking
3:45 - 4:30 p.m.	Sessions (45 minutes) Finishing What We Started on State Route 99: Directors Discussion, Group 1 You Have a Housing Element, Now What? Successful Implementation Tools & Strategies
5 - 7 p.m.	Evening Activities (Check reception desk for details)

Wednesday, April 26, 2023

7:30 - 9 a.m.	Breakfast & Networking
9 - 9:15 a.m.	Welcome Remarks



SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY Policy Conference AT A GLANCE

2023

9:15 - 10 a.m.	Session (45 minutes) Finishing What We Started on State Route 99: Directors Discussion, Group 2 It's Electrifying!
10 - 10:05 a.m.	Break
10:05 - 10:35 a.m.	Session (30 minutes) Role Partner Agencies Play on Mobility on State Route 99
10:35 - 10:45 a.m.	Break/Exhibit Tables/Networking
10:45 - 11:30 a.m.	Sessions (45 minutes) The CERF Experiment: Building Economic Prosperity Through Research & Partnerships Innovations in the Valley: Spotlight on Sustainable Transportation Equity
11:30 a.m. - Noon	Break/Exhibit Tables/Networking
Noon - 1:15 p.m.	Blueprint Awards & Luncheon

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Monday, April 24, 2023 Welcome Reception

4:30 – 7 p.m. **Registration**

5 – 7 p.m. **Welcome Reception: Conference Ballroom**

Speakers: Robert Rickman, Chair, San Joaquin Council of Governments, San Joaquin County Supervisor
Robert Poythress, Chair, San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council, Madera County Supervisor

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

7:30 – 9 a.m. **Breakfast & Networking**

Join us for breakfast and an opportunity to network. A professional photographer will also be available in the photobooth room for professional or fun photos.

9 – 9:15 a.m. **Welcome Remarks & Introductions**

Conference Host: Diane Nguyen, Executive Director, San Joaquin Council of Governments

Speakers: Robert Poythress, Chair, San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council, Madera County Supervisor
Gary Singh, Mayor, City of Manteca

9:15 – 10:15 a.m. **Keynote Speaker**

Presenter: Matt Brogan, Principal and Vice President, Mark Thomas Co.

Keynote Speaker: José Hernández, Former NASA Astronaut



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SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY Policy Conference

10:15 – 10:20 a.m. : Break/Exhibit Tables/Networking (5 minutes)

10:20 – 10:50 a.m. : Sessions (30 minutes)

Session #	Title	Speakers
1	Partnership Opportunities Between the Valley and the California Transportation Commission	Lee Ann Eager, Chair, California Transportation Commission Tanisha Taylor, Interim Executive Director, California Transportation Commission Moderator: Gus Khouri, Principal, Khouri Consulting LLC

A discussion with California Transportation Commission Chair Lee Ann Eager and Interim Executive Director Tanisha Taylor will highlight recent commission activities and how Valley stakeholders can hone partnerships with Commission staff.

10:50 – 11:00 a.m. : Break/Exhibit Tables/Networking (10 minutes)

11:00 – 11:45 a.m. : Sessions (45 minutes)

2	Stockton Diamond: Unlocking the Future of San Joaquin Valley	Mike Higgins, Project Manager, HDR Stacey Mortensen, Executive Director, San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission Ryan Niblock, Deputy Director of Programming and Project Delivery, San Joaquin Council of Governments Moderator: Brianna Brewer, Vice President/Area Business Development Leader, HDR
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The Stockton Diamond rail intersection is the busiest, most congested rail bottleneck in California. The rail backup at the Stockton Diamond creates operational inefficiencies for movement both locally within the Central Valley and across the national railway network, impacting the frequency, reliability and potential expansion opportunity of passenger rail services that operate on the same rail lines. Currently, passenger service is limited through this corridor due to the existing congestion caused by the at-grade crossing. The train backups also cause local delays at crossings and potential vehicle/rail/bike and pedestrian conflicts. The proposed project will grade separate the principal lines of BNSF Railway and Union Pacific Railroad at the Stockton Diamond creating uninterrupted flow of rail traffic through the crossing. By grade separating the two rail lines, the project will enhance efficiency and mobility for the surrounding communities.



Credit: Visionary Home Builders of California

2023 SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY Policy Conference

3	The Future of Regional Housing Policy in California	<p>Anthony Errichetto, Policy Analyst, California Housing and Community Development (HCD)</p> <p>Thomas Pogue, Executive Director, Center for Business and Policy Research (CBPR), University of the Pacific</p> <p>Moderator: Alex Goelzer, HCD REAP 2.0 Manager</p>
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Hear about how HCD and other agencies across the state are promoting and facilitating integrative planning approaches to meld housing, AFFH, climate and transportation goals. This panel presentation will include an overview of the 6th Cycle Housing Elements and how that ties into REAP (Regional Early Action Planning) 2.0 and regional collaborative approaches across the San Joaquin Valley. This session will also cover other policy topics such as the Prohousing Designation Program.

4	The Intersection of Transportation & Housing as VMT Mitigation	<p>Bruce Griesenbeck, Senior Associate, Fehr & Peers</p> <p>Eric Sundquist, Sustainability Coordinator, California Department of Transportation</p> <p>Moderator: Kari McNickle, Associate/Central Valley Market Leader, Fehr & Peers</p>
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Many agencies are wrestling with how to mitigate VMT impacts of land use and transportation projects. Most mitigation measures focus on transportation improvements, such as enhancements to transit, transit fare discounts, expansion of TDM services, etc. This session will introduce concepts focused on land use change and housing, and present some of the advantages and challenges of this type of mitigation measure.

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY Policy Conference

11:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. : Break/Exhibit Tables/Networking (15 minutes)

12:00 – 1:00 p.m. : Lunch

1:00 – 1:10 p.m. : Break/Exhibit Tables/Networking (10 minutes)

1:10 – 1:40 p.m. : Sessions (30 minutes)

5	Affordable Housing and Forging Partnerships	Carol J. Ornelas, CEO, Visionary Home Builders of California Inc. Introduction by: Rosa Escutia-Braaton, City of Modesto Councilmember
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Join Visionary Homebuilders CEO Carol Ornelas to hear about the importance of partnerships in not only building affordable housing, but in creating and nurturing community. Carol has been a leader in the funding, construction and rehabilitation of beautiful, innovative, energy-efficient infill projects that reflect a commitment to the communities they serve throughout San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Merced Counties.

6	Federal Funding: Making IIJA Work for the Valley	Vince Mammano, Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration, California Division Antonio Johnson, Director of Planning, Environment and Right-of-Way, Federal Highway Administration, California Division Moderator: Kevin Forgett, CJ Lake
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The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) will provide \$550 billion over five years in new federal investment in infrastructure, including in roads, bridges, and mass transit, water infrastructure, resilience, and broadband. This session will allow staff from the Federal Highway Administration to outline some of the key programs developed under IIJA and help Valley partners understand the types of projects that can be most competitive for funding.

7	HCD Office Hours	Alex Goelzer, HCD REAP 2.0 Manager Paul McDougall, HCD Planning Grants & Incentives Chief Anthony Errichetto, HCD Housing Policy Analyst (Housing Elements, REAP, Prohousing) Jose Jauregui, HCD Housing Policy Analyst (Housing Elements, REAP, Prohousing) Jose Ayala, HCD Policy Specialist (Housing Elements)
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Come stop by HCD office hours to discuss housing elements. This is an informal session where you can meet your assigned reviewers and ask specific questions about your housing element.



SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY Policy Conference 2023

1:40 – 1:45 p.m. : Break/Exhibit Tables/Networking (10 minutes)

1:45 – 2:15 p.m. : Sessions (30 minutes)

8	TradePort California: A System of Sustainable Inland Ports	Yatman Kwan, Transportation Planning Deputy Division Chief, Caltrans Headquarters Moderator: Tony Boren, Executive Director, Fresno Council of Governments
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For decades, the San Joaquin Valley has served as the principal North-South goods movement corridor in California. Approximately 1.1 million ocean containers move through the San Joaquin Valley, about half that number representing imports (mostly consumer products from Asia), the other half exports (mostly agricultural products destined for Asia). Catalyzed by conversations between the Port of Los Angeles, California Forward and Global Logistics Development Partners, this project was originally conceived in 2019 to reduce congestion, improve air quality at the San Pedro port complex area and in the San Joaquin Valley. This session will provide a brief overview of the project and opportunity for the audience to engage in conversations about California’s sustainable strategies and the role of the Central Valley in goods movement for both economic and environmental advancements.

9	Transforming the Housing Funding Landscape	Peter Ragsdale, Executive Director, Housing Authority County of San Joaquin (HACCSJ) Tom Collishaw, President/CEO, Self-Help Enterprises Kate Owens, PhD, Principal, HR&A Advisors, Inc. Moderator: Jim Harnish, Principal/Owner, Mintier Harnish
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It is no secret that the San Joaquin Valley has an affordable housing shortage. This panel explores the depth of the problem, highlighting the ongoing dearth of competitive funding coming to the Valley, and explores potential solutions, from policy changes to new regional funding mechanisms. Our panel includes experienced and innovative housing development and funding experts from the San Joaquin Valley: Peter Ragsdale of the Housing Authority of the County of San Joaquin and Tom Collishaw of Self-Help Enterprises. Joining them will be Kate Owens of HR&A Advisors, the consultant team exploring the feasibility of a regional housing trust fund in San Joaquin County and Jim Harnish of Mintier Harnish, a planning firm serving many Central Valley agencies and involved with the valleywide REAP 1.0 activities. You will come away with a fuller understanding of the housing crisis and be inspired to explore workable regional solutions.



Credit: Dena Marquez

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY Policy Conference 2023

2:15 – 2:45 p.m. : Break/Exhibit Tables/Networking (30 minutes)

2:45 – 3:30 p.m. : Sessions (45 minutes)

10	Diverging Diamond Interchange Development in the Central Valley: From Planning Through Construction	<p>Matt Brogan, PE-Principal, Mark Thomas Sam Sherman, PE, Acting Caltrans District 10 Clean California Coordinator</p> <p>Kevin Jorgensen, II, PE, PLS, Director/City Engineer, City of Manteca</p> <p>Koosun Kim, PE, City Engineer, City of Tracy</p>
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Developing innovative transportation solutions in California comes with unique challenges. In particular, the aging infrastructure and rapid growth in the Central Valley requires the development of out-of-the-box solutions that provide cost-effective and safe facilities for all modes of traffic. This session will highlight how Caltrans and the cities of Manteca and Tracy are on the forefront of planning and construction of innovative projects in California with their implementation of Diverging Diamond Interchanges (DDIs).

11	Valley Rail and High-Speed Rail Connectivity and Enhancements	<p>Margaret “Meg” Cederroth, Director of Planning and Sustainability, California High-Speed Rail Authority</p> <p>Dan Leavitt, Manager of Regional Initiatives, San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission/San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority</p>
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Representatives of the California High-Speed Rail Authority and the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission/San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority will present on the implementation of state-of-the-art high-speed rail in the San Joaquin Valley and the efforts to integrate other passenger rail services with high-speed rail to improve mobility throughout the San Joaquin Valley and the state. The speakers will focus on how these efforts are helping to create a more sustainable and connected San Joaquin Valley.

12	Tell me a story....	<p>Divya Gandhi, PTP, Planner, Kittelson & Associates Inc.</p> <p>Keith Michaud, Communications Journalist, San Joaquin Council of Governments</p>
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As advocates, researchers, and change makers, planners must tell compelling stories to clients, agencies, and communities to affect real change. We are all storytellers. We use stories to convey information about ourselves, our families and our work. Culture, education, history and more are passed along using stories because we retain more information from stories than we do from other sources. We can use storytelling to effectively pass along information about planning projects, programs, and processes. And we can do it using plain English so we reach the broadest audiences and all stakeholders.



SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY Policy Conference

2023

3:30 – 3:45 p.m. : Break/Exhibit Tables/Networking (15 minutes)

3:45 – 4:30 p.m. : Sessions (45 minutes)

Break-out Session

13	<p>You Have a Housing Element, Now What? Successful Implementation Tools & Strategies</p>	<p>Brenna Weatherby, Principal, Rincon Ryan Martinez, Associate, Economic & Planning Systems (EPS), Inc. Moderator: Xiomara Cisneros, Manager-Housing Affordability, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative (CZI)</p>
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Housing element updates for the 6th Cycle are complex. However, the work does not stop when the document is submitted to HCD. In this session, panelists will discuss legislation that requires updates to other elements of a general plan and will provide Valley jurisdictions with details on the level of scrutiny associated with housing element goals and programs. In addition, panelists will discuss tools and strategies that can assist jurisdictions to ensure that programs can be successfully implemented and will outline best practices for engaging others.

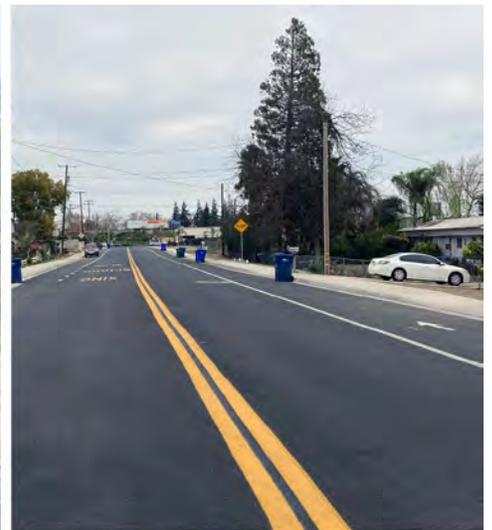
General Assembly

14	<p>Finishing What We Started on State Route 99 (Directors Discussion) Group 1</p>	<p>Diane Nguyen, AICP, Executive Director, San Joaquin Council of Governments Stacie Guzman, Executive Director, Merced County Association of Governments Patricia Taylor, Executive Director, Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC) and Madera County Transportation Authority (MCTA) Ted Smalley, Executive Director, Tulare County Association of Governments Dennis T. Agar, Director, Caltrans District 10 Diana Gomez, Director, Caltrans District 6 Moderator: Will Kempton, Retired Transportation Executive</p>
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A safe and efficient multimodal transportation system is the heart of a strong economy, and here in the San Joaquin Valley, that backbone is State Route 99. It is a critical corridor for moving our bountiful agricultural goods up and down the state on their way to feed people across the nation. It is a connector of people and jobs, of students and education, of economy and sustainable communities. State Route 99 is indeed the “main street” of California and yet State Route 99 remains unfinished. It has never been built out to six continuous travel lanes through the Valley as envisioned in the Caltrans Highway 99 Business Plan. This is the first of two sessions during the conference bringing together the director-level partners among the eight Valley regional planning agencies, Caltrans Districts 10 and 6, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, and San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority to tackle the hard questions on how to deliver a transportation solution and “finish what we started.” It will look at multimodal corridor investments, east-west transportation connectors, and other comprehensive strategies to provide mobility and safety on the 99 Corridor, while also addressing air quality and climate change. The session offers a candid discussion of the hurdles that have adversely impacted the delivery momentum and explores a solution-oriented approach to achieving the functional goals of transforming State Route 99.

5:00 – 7:00 p.m. : Activities

Need an activity before dinner or throughout the conference? Great Wolf Lodge offers fun and attractions not only for kids, but adults too! The SJV Policy Conference team has developed ways for you to tap activities throughout the lodge while engaging in friendly competition with your colleagues or other conference attendees. To find out more, check in at the reception area for details.



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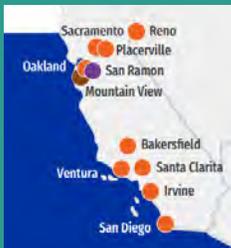
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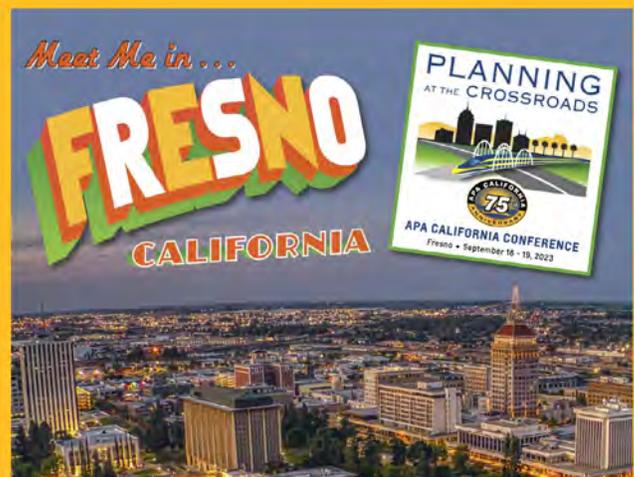
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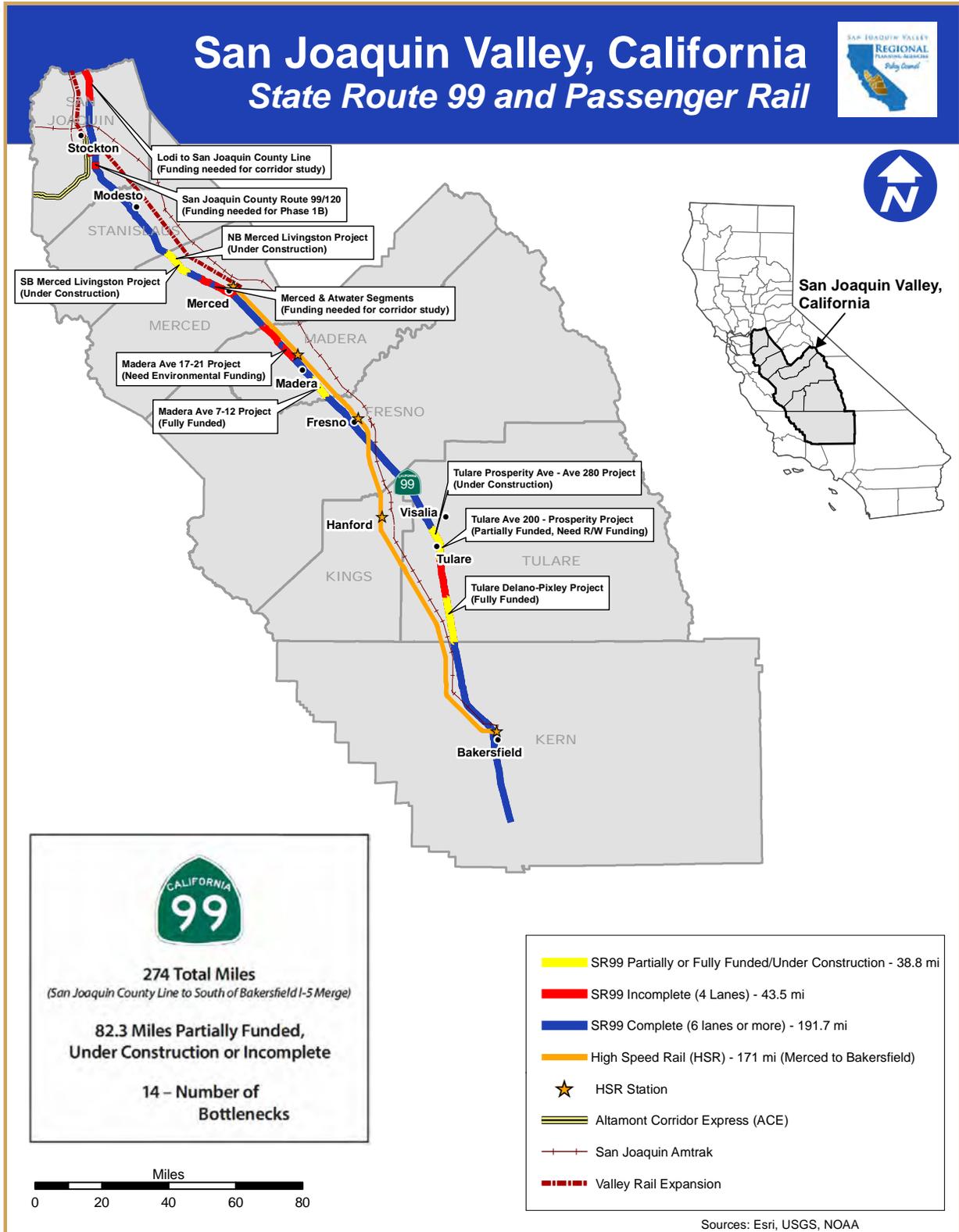
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State Route 99 and Passenger Rail Map



Wednesday, April 26, 2023

7:30 - 9:00 a.m. **Breakfast and Networking**

9:00 - 9:15 am **Welcome Remarks**

Conference Host: Diane Nguyen, Executive Director, San Joaquin Council of Governments

Speaker: Daron McDaniel, Vice Chair, San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council, Merced County Supervisor

9:15 – 10:00 a.m. : **General Assembly** (45 minutes)

15	<p>Finishing What We Started on State Route 99 (Directors Discussion) Group 2</p>	<p>Rosa De León Park, Executive Director, Stanislaus Council of Governments Tony Boren, Executive Director, Fresno Council of Governments Terri King, Executive Director, Kings County Association of Governments Ahron Hakimi, Executive Director, Kern Council of Governments Marlon Regisford, Deputy District Director-Planning, Local Assistance and Environmental Support, Caltrans District 10 Michael Navarro, Deputy Director-Planning, Local Assistance and Environmental Analysis, Caltrans District 6 Moderator: Will Kempton, Retired Transportation Executive</p>
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This is the second of two sessions during the conference on Finishing What We Started on State Route 99. It is another opportunity to hear from directors of regional agencies in the Valley, and representatives from Caltrans Districts 10 and 6 on their perspectives on the 99 Corridor. This panel will continue the momentum of yesterday's session with a concentrated look at multimodal corridor investments, east-west transportation connectors, and insight on how to further strengthen partnerships.



SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY Policy Conference

2023

Break-out Session

16	It's Electrifying!	David Tokarski, Senior Transportation Planner, DKS Associates
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Talk of electric vehicles, charging infrastructure and grid resilience is everywhere. There is money available, but what is the best way to plan and be competitive for the coming funding streams? DKS Associates is currently completing planning and strategic implementation studies for the deployment of electric vehicle charging infrastructure in San Joaquin and Madera counties, and along California's Central Coast region. This panel discussion will include important infrastructure siting characteristics, data sources for analyses, partnerships for implementation planning, working with utilities, and potential issues with grid resiliency. The discussion will provide the tools needed to successfully plan for and implement the regional electric charging infrastructure needed for an electrified future of transportation.

10:00 – 10:05 a.m. : Break (5 minutes)

10:05 – 10:35 a.m. : General Assembly (30 minutes)

17	Role Agencies Play on Mobility on State Route 99	Dan Leavitt, Manager of Regional Initiatives, San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission/San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority Samir Sheikh, Executive Director/APCO, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Moderator: Will Kempton, Retired Transportation Executive
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The final session of the Finish the 99 series wraps up with conversations with the Air District and the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority. You will hear about how they connect with the State Route 99 Corridor efforts. They will elaborate on their respective agency strategies to address SR 99 mobility and climate resiliency. Speakers will provide additional insight on how to elevate the visibility of the combined efforts beyond Valley boundaries.

10:35 – 10:45 a.m. : Break/Exhibit Tables/Networking (10 minutes)

10:45 – 11:30 a.m. : Sessions (45 minutes)

18	<p>The CERF Experiment: Building Economic Prosperity Through Research & Partnerships</p>	<p>Thomas Pogue, Executive Director, Center for Business and Policy Research (CBPR), University of the Pacific</p> <p>Erick Serrato, Executive Director, Merced County Workforce Development Board</p> <p>Moses Zapien, CEO/President, San Joaquin Community Foundation</p> <p>Danna Stroud, Community-Based Solutions Regional Manager – Central California Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz)</p> <p>Moderator: Thomas Pogue, Executive Director, Center for Business and Policy Research (CBPR), University of the Pacific</p>
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The Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF) is a state initiative and tool to lead transformative sustainable development. This session will describe the origins and evolution of CERF at the state level and how that vision is being translated in the North San Joaquin Valley to build an inclusive transformative regional development vision.

19	<p>Innovations in the Valley: Spotlight on Sustainable Transportation Equity</p>	<p>Christine Corrales, Senior Regional Planner, San Joaquin Council of Governments</p> <p>Carolina Ilic, AICP, Assistant Director, Department of Transportation – Fresno Area Express, City of Fresno</p> <p>Courtney Espinoza, MBA, Business Manager, City of Fresno</p> <p>Benjamin Kimball, Deputy Executive Director, Tulare County Association of Governments</p> <p>Moderator: Melissa Kuehne, MPA, Senior Program Manager, Institute for Local Government</p>
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Now, more than ever, equity is front and center for funding programs available to regional agencies. But what does sustainable transportation equity look like? This session presents innovative projects currently in implementation up and down the Central Valley. The panel will highlight projects in San Joaquin (Stockton Mobility Collective), Fresno (Transform Fresno), and Tulare (Cross Valley Corridor Plan) counties under a variety of funding programs. You will see and hear what can be accomplished when historically underserved and rural communities have a real voice in shaping solutions for the transportation and housing issues they face.

11:30 – 12:00 p.m. : Break/Exhibit Tables/Networking (30 minutes)
12:00 – 1:15 p.m. : Blueprint Awards and Luncheon

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Attend the Rincon Panel

Come hear the Rincon team speak at the "Session 10: You Have a Housing Element, Now What? Successful Implementation Tools & Strategies" panel at 3:20 PM on April 25.



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KEYNOTE SPEAKER

José Hernández

Former NASA astronaut, aerospace consultant, education advocate and winemaker

San Joaquin County native and former NASA astronaut José Hernández wanted to fly in space ever since he heard that the first Hispanic American, Franklin Chang-Díaz, had been chosen to travel into space. One of four children in a migrant farming family who worked California farm fields, Hernández didn't learn English until he was 12. After graduating high school in Stockton, Hernández enrolled at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, where he earned a degree in electrical engineering and was awarded a full scholarship to the graduate program at UC Santa Barbara, where he continued his engineering studies.

In 1987, he accepted a full-time job with Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory where he worked on signal and image processing applications in radar imaging, computed tomography, and acoustic imaging. Later, he worked on developing quantitative X-ray film imaging analysis techniques. He has also represented Lawrence Livermore and the U.S. Department of Energy on Russian nuclear non-proliferation issues. It was during his time at Lawrence Livermore that he began applying to be an astronaut. Rejected over and over again, he finally joined the 2004 astronaut candidate class and flew Discovery to the International Space Station on space shuttle mission STS-128. Back on Earth, Hernández created an aerospace consulting firm, Reaching for the Stars Foundation, and Tierra Luna Cellars.



Moving Forward »

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General Sessions Speakers

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY Policy Conference

Finishing What We Started on State Route 99 (Directors Discussion) Group 1



Diane Nguyen, AICP

Executive Director, San Joaquin Council of Governments

Diane Nguyen views projects through a public-private sector lens with more than 25 years of work in transportation planning and financing. She aims to modernize the delivery of safe, affordable and accessible multimodal transportation choices for all residents. Ms. Nguyen joined SJCOG in 1995, but shifted to the private sector in 2005 when a transportation consulting firm tapped her to manage engineering and planning teams to develop transportation policy and deliver multi-million-dollar capital improvement programs for jurisdictions throughout California. She returned to SJCOG in 2012 and started as executive director in 2021 pioneering innovative projects. She implemented EZHub, the first seven-public transit agency mobile ticketing application in the state. Ms. Nguyen oversees Measure K, the 30-year, \$2.5 billion half-cent transportation sales tax that leverages local funds for additional state and federal funding that helped to fund the first Interstate 5 HOV lanes in the Central Valley and the state's first diverging diamond interchange. Under her watch the agency's annual operating budget has gone from \$13 million to \$42 million, and Measure K annual revenue exceeded \$90 million. She led the inception of the Megaregion Dozen where SJCOG joined with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Sacramento Area Council of Governments to back a multimodal list of 12 projects that have interregional functionality and policy alignment. Ms. Nguyen also envisioned electric carshare and bikeshare, work force development, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and expansions to mobile ticketing and trip planning for San Joaquin, made possible through a \$7.4 million grant from the California Air Resources Board and broad range partnerships. Ms. Nguyen graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in social ecology and a master's in urban and regional planning, both from UC Irvine.



Stacie Guzman

Executive Director, Merced County Association of Governments

Stacie Guzman has been the Merced County Association of Governments executive director since 2018. She joined MCAG in 2014 as the public information officer and was promoted to deputy executive director in 2016. She also serves as the executive director of the Transit Joint Powers Authority for Merced County, the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System, and the Merced County Regional Waste Management Authority. Ms. Guzman is also responsible for implementing Measure V, Merced County's half-cent sales tax for transportation. Before joining MCAG, she spent five years as the associate director of the Office of Community and Economic Development at Fresno State where she managed several valleywide initiatives, such as the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley, Smart Valley Places, and the San Joaquin Valley Housing Collaborative. Ms. Guzman earned her bachelor's degree in political science from Fresno State and her master's in public administration from CSU Stanislaus. She lives in Merced with her husband Danny and their two children.

General Sessions Speakers

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY Policy Conference

2023



Patricia Taylor

Executive Director, Madera County Transportation Commission and Madera County Transportation Authority

Patricia Taylor has 32 years of transportation planning experience and has served as Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC) executive director since June 1999. She has been employed with the MCTC since 1993. Her primary goal is to establish a solid organizational foundation to ensure that the MCTC and Madera County Transportation Authority (MCTA) can carry out their mission to provide a quality regional transportation network throughout

Madera County. An ongoing objective is to maximize MCTC and MCTA dollars as efficiently and effectively as possible. Prior to MCTC, Ms. Taylor was rideshare coordinator for the Fresno Council of Governments. Before working in transportation, she was assignment editor for KFSN-TV, Channel 30, in Fresno. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Fresno State in telecommunications with an emphasis in news and public affairs. Ms. Taylor is inspired daily by her husband and their four adult children. In her free time, she enjoys ballroom dancing, traveling, and spending time with her family.



Ted Smalley

Executive Director, Tulare County Association of Governments

Ted Smalley is the executive director of the Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG), which is responsible for regional transportation planning and funding, including Measure R. Mr. Smalley has the pleasure of leading an outstanding staff. He participated in the development of the local sales tax effort expenditure plan as one of the principal writers and has been at TCAG for over 22 years. Previous duties have included managing the Transportation Improvement Programs and the preparation of the Regional Transportation

Plan. Prior to coming to TCAG, Mr. Smalley was a senior transportation planner for a private firm in San Diego where he prepared numerous transportation studies. He lives in Visalia with his wife and two boys and serves as a minister.



Dennis T. Agar

Director, Caltrans, District 10

Dennis T. Agar, who has more than 30 years of diverse Caltrans leadership, managerial, supervisory, and technical experience working at districts and headquarters, was appointed District 10 director in October 2020. Mr. Agar oversees 3,500 highway lane miles in eight counties, including San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Merced counties. He also oversees several programs in the district, more than 700 permanent and temporary employees, and an annual budget of approximately \$182 million and more than \$3 billion worth of programs

and highway construction projects. He is an ex officio member of the governing boards of the San Joaquin Council of Governments, Stanislaus Council of Governments, and San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission. He is the Caltrans representative for the Merced County Association of Governments. Mr. Agar is a 1989 graduate of the California State University of Sacramento with a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering, and he is a California licensed professional civil engineer and a project management professional.

General Sessions Speakers

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY Policy Conference 2023



Diana Gomez
Director, Caltrans, District 6

Diana Gomez is the Caltrans District 6 director and oversees the state highway system in Fresno, Madera, Kings, Tulare and Kern counties. She is responsible for all department programs and activities in the district and for the administration and operation of Caltrans programs. Prior to her appointment as District 6 director in July 2020, Ms. Gomez was a member of the California High-Speed Rail Authority executive team from 2013-2020, serving as the Central Valley regional director working to bring the first high-speed electric passenger operations to California. She was responsible for ensuring the high-speed rail project in the Central Valley continued forward on the planned schedule and budget by developing and maintaining relationships with local residents, policy makers and consultants, and by building strategies for communicating with local advocates. Before her time with the High-Speed Rail Authority, Ms. Gomez worked in a variety of roles during more than 25 years at Caltrans. She earned a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering at Fresno State. She is also a registered electrical engineer and a certified project manager.





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Finishing What We Started on State Route 99 (Directors Discussion) Group 2



Rosa De León Park

Executive Director, Stanislaus Council of Governments

Rosa De León Park, Stanislaus Council of Governments (StanCOG) executive director, is responsible for the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization, state-designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency, and Local Transportation Authority. Ms. Park is a leader in innovative enhancements to the transportation network and instrumental in establishing MOVE, which serves the mobility needs of seniors, veterans and those with disabilities through inventive programs. Her support of improvements and efficiencies helped lead to the formation of the Stanislaus Regional Transit Authority to serve Stanislaus County residents' transit needs. Ms. Park has been a strategic partner with the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission on the extension of Altamont Corridor Express passenger rail service to Stanislaus County. Ms. Park has also worked tirelessly in implementing Measure L, the county's sales tax measure for transportation projects. The public education effort for Measure L was recognized in 2017 with the Public Outreach Project of the Year Award by CTF, and Ms. Park was honored by the Sacramento Chapter of Women's Transportation Seminar International with the Transportation Solutions Award. She was recently appointed to the Executive Directors Council of the National Association of Regional Councils. Ms. Park was especially honored in 2020 to be the WTS Woman of the Year. A native of Stockton, Park received her Bachelor of Arts degree from California State University, Sacramento.



Tony Boren

Executive Director, Fresno Council of Governments

Tony Boren is the executive director of the Fresno Council of Governments, where he is responsible for administration and management of agency budget and staff, program and policy development, intergovernmental relations, supervision, and control of all work activities at Fresno COG. That includes activities related to Measure C implementation and the California Transportation Commission. Prior to joining Fresno COG, Mr. Boren worked for the City of Fresno for eight years in land-use planning, development services and annexations. He has a bachelor's degree in public administration and master's in city and regional planning from Fresno State, where he now serves as the chair of the Transportation Institute Advisory Board.

Terri King

Executive Director, Kings County Association of Governments

Terri King, the executive director of the Kings County Association of Governments since 2007, has a genuine connection to the San Joaquin Valley as a native, born and raised in Exeter. Her work as KCAG executive director has been instrumental in garnering highway funds for a few interchange projects along State Route 198, and in collaboration with the state and Kings and Tulare counties to widen State Route 198 between State Routes 43 and 99. She also spearheaded the formation of a coalition among KCAG, Kings County, Fresno County, City of Lemoore and the Lemoore Naval Air Station to conduct a joint land-use study. Ms. King joined KCAG as a transportation planner in April 1985. She has a bachelor's degree in geography from San Diego State University with an emphasis in urban planning and transportation.

General Sessions Speakers

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY Policy Conference

2023



Ahron Hakimi

Executive Director, Kern Council of Governments

Ahron Hakimi has been Kern Council of Governments' executive director the past 10 years. Before joining Kern COG, Mr. Hakimi was a Caltrans supervising transportation engineer in Bakersfield overseeing the Thomas Road Improvement Program (TRIP), a unique multi-agency coalition among the Bakersfield, Kern County, Caltrans and Kern COG. He served as a TRIP liaison to local, state and federal elected officials to ensure projects were completed on schedule and within budget, including the \$640 million Centennial Corridor now under construction. In 2003, he began working on joint projects with Bakersfield and was accountable for delivering federal highway projects valued at more than \$1.5 billion, including auxiliary lanes installed at the State Route 58/99 interchange in 2007 to ease traffic flow for thousands of drivers. He joined the Bakersfield Caltrans office in 1991. Mr. Hakimi is also a combat veteran having served tours in Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan for which he was awarded the Legion of Merit and Bronze Star, and five Meritorious Service Medals. He retired as a colonel in June 2017. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering from the Polytechnic University, Brooklyn, N.Y.; a Master of Science degree in transportation management from San Jose State University; and Masters of Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College. He is a registered professional civil engineer in California.



Marlon Regisford

Deputy District Director of Planning, Local Assistance and Environmental, Caltrans, District 10

Marlon Regisford is the deputy district director of planning, local assistance and environmental for Caltrans District 10. He is responsible for the delivery of division functions, including development of long-range strategic plans for the preliminary planning and feasibility studies. In addition, he supports regional transportation planning and transit agency partners on regional planning and project development activities, and oversight of environmental review to ensure compliance with federal and state laws and regulations. Mr. Regisford engages in developing innovative and effective transportation strategies for the district and provides technical support and assistance to local cities and counties to aid the delivery of locally sponsored projects utilizing transportation funds. Previously, he served as the Caltrans Headquarters sustainability projects manager. Prior to that, Mr. Regisford served as the District 12 system planning branch chief and Complete Streets coordinator. He previously served on the American Planning Association, California Chapter, Orange County Section Board, and earned a Master of Science in transportation management degree from San Jose State University.



Michael Navarro

Deputy Director of Planning, Local Assistance and Environmental Analysis, Caltrans, District 6

Michael Navarro has more than 23 years of professional planning experience. In 2000, Mr. Navarro joined Caltrans District 6 in the Planning Division as a transportation planner. Later he became a senior transportation planner and was responsible for overseeing transportation planning functions in Madera, Fresno and Tulare counties. Since 2020, he has been the Caltrans District 6 deputy director of planning, local assistance and environmental analysis, which covers Madera, Fresno, Tulare, Kings and Kern counties. Mr. Navarro is a proud lifelong San Joaquin Valley resident. He was born and raised in Fresno and is a graduate of Fresno State.

Role Agencies Play on Mobility on State Route 99



Dan Leavitt

Manager of Regional Initiatives,
San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission and San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJPA)

Dan Leavitt, manager of regional initiatives for the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission and the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority, is responsible for managing Amtrak San Joaquins and Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) service expansion planning, network integration and connectivity studies, environmental studies, and agency coordination and advocacy efforts for the San Joaquins and ACE services. In 2015, Leavitt was appointed by Gov. Jerry

Brown to the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley board. He is a long-time supporter and user of public transportation and a life-long resident of California.



Samir Sheikh

Executive Director and Air Pollution Control Officer,
San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

Samir Sheikh, the executive director and air pollution control officer for the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, has more than 20 years of experience in directing, developing, applying and administering air quality improvement programs. He leads the largest air district in California with some of the toughest air quality challenges in the nation.

The district has developed and implemented among the toughest and most innovative air pollution control strategies in the nation, while working to achieve air quality objectives as efficiently as possible. Mr. Sheikh has worked with a wide range of stakeholders to form a variety of successful coalitions to bring significant resources to the Valley for clean air programs and strategies, so that the Valley has access to hundreds of millions of dollars per year in local, state and federal funds for clean air projects that expedite air quality improvement. So far, more than \$5 billion in public and private clean air investments have been administered by the district to support its clean air mission through voluntary programs. The district uses innovative ways to effectively engage with and empower communities throughout the Valley to address air quality concerns and issues. With a staff of more than 350 air quality professionals, Mr. Sheikh has made employees' welfare and well-being a top priority and has instituted programs to motivate and empower employees, while focusing on providing excellent customer service to all Valley stakeholders.

General Sessions Speakers

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY Policy Conference

2023

Moderator:



Will Kempton
Retired Transportation Executive

Transportation innovator and manager Will Kempton has almost 50 years of experience in transportation, government affairs, and public service. At various times during his career, Mr. Kempton has been the executive director of the Sacramento Transportation Authority, Transportation California, an industry-based California transportation advocacy group that was a leader in the effort to pass Senate Bill 1, the Santa Clara County Traffic Authority, and the California Transportation Commission. He also served as the CEO of Orange County

Transportation Authority after he was appointed Caltrans director by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and oversaw an annual operating budget of more than \$13.8 billion and 22,000 employees. He also was a partner in Smith, Kempton & Watts, a Sacramento advocacy firm, and started his career with Caltrans in 1973. Mr. Kempton has a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from the University of San Francisco and completed graduate studies in government and public administration at California State University, Sacramento. He lives in Folsom with his wife, Beverley.

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Partnership Opportunities Between the Valley and the California Transportation Commission



Lee Ann Eager

Chair
California Transportation Commission

Lee Ann Eager has served on the California Transportation Commission since 2020 and is serving her second term as chair of the CTC. She is the president and CEO of the Fresno County Economic Development Corp. (EDC), a business development nonprofit focused on driving inclusive economic growth throughout Fresno County. Ms. Eager plays a key strategic and leadership role in the Central Valley, working with stakeholders in national and international private, public, philanthropic, and academic sectors. She has earned a strong reputation for leading the EDC to becoming a dynamic, agile and internationally award-winning organization that strives to meet the needs of employers, workers and job seekers to take part in the community's economic growth. A consistent thread throughout Ms. Eager's career is working to improve the conditions of families in her community. Before the EDC, she practiced law at the firm Lang, Richert & Patch. She also served as executive director of Rape Counseling Services of Fresno, growing the organization's influence and programs. Ms. Eager graduated summa cum laude from Fresno State and earned her doctorate in jurisprudence from the UC Davis School of Law.



Tanisha Taylor

Interim Executive Director
California Transportation Commission

Tanisha Taylor was appointed interim executive director of the California Transportation Commission (CTC) in March 2023. She has a major role in affecting the outcome of all policies and actions adopted by the CTC, including the programming and allocation of several billion dollars annually for the construction of highway, passenger rail, transit, and active transportation improvements throughout California. Ms. Taylor initially joined the commission as the chief deputy director in May 2020. Before joining the CTC, Ms. Taylor held positions at the California Association of Councils of Governments and the San Joaquin Council of Governments. In each of these positions, Ms. Taylor was responsible for advocating for the diverse voices of regional transportation agencies statewide. In 2022, Ms. Taylor was awarded the WTS Sacramento Chapter's Women of the Year Award for her accomplishments with the commission. While with the San Joaquin Council of Governments, Ms. Taylor received the 2015 Certificate of Appreciation from the Stockton Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People for her work leading the regional transportation planning process. Ms. Taylor is a graduate of Alabama A&M University, one of the nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Partnership Opportunities Between the Valley and the California Transportation Commission

Moderator:



Gus Khouri
Principal, Khouri Consulting LLC

Gus Khouri, principal of government relations firm Khouri Consulting LLC, has 22 years of experience in lobbying and consulting. Khouri Consulting LLC provides legislative advocacy and consulting services for 15 county transportation planning agencies, including the eight-county San Joaquin Valley Policy Council, Stanislaus Council of Governments, Madera County Transportation Commission, Tri-Valley San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority, Central Coast Coalition, Santa Barbara County Association of Governments, San Luis Obispo Council of Governments, San Mateo County Transportation Authority, Sonoma-Marin Area Transit District, Transportation of Agency for Monterey County, and Transportation Authority of Marin. Mr. Khouri has been involved in every significant transportation policy development or funding issue in Sacramento for more than two decades. He is the former legislative director for the California Transit Association. He is regularly consulted on funding for highways and transit programs by Caltrans and the California Transportation Commission. Mr. Khouri worked closely with the Brown Administration and several legislators to craft and secure the deciding votes on Senate Bill 1, a \$5.2 billion annual transportation-funding package for highways, local streets and roads, and public transit, including commuter and intercity rail. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science from University of the Pacific and a master's in government from Sacramento State University.





2023 San Joaquin Valley Blueprint Awards

The San Joaquin Valley Blueprint Awards program encourages quality planning and development by recognizing outstanding achievements and practices in the built environment. In recognizing and celebrating projects that reflect the Blueprint Principles, we hope to provide visual examples of attractive, functional, and environmentally friendly projects that could have relevance throughout the Valley. Additional awards are provided to outstanding leaders for the region.

Blueprint Award of Excellence for Residential Development

Victory Gardens, LP
Delta Community Development Corp.

Blueprint Award of Merit for Residential Development

Sugar Pine Village
Self-Help Enterprises

Blueprint Award of Excellence for Commercial Development

Merced County – Castle Development
Community and Economic Development

Blueprint Award of Excellence for Downtown Revitalization

Stone Plaza Project
City of Kingsburg

Blueprint Award of Excellence for Transportation Enhancement

Griggs Neighborhood Improvements Project
City of Dinuba

Blueprint Award of Excellence for a Planning Project

Accessory Dwelling Unit Program (ADU)
City of Kerman

Darrel Hildebrand Blueprint Leadership Award

Benjamin A. Kimball, Deputy Executive Director
Tulare County Association of Governments

Outstanding San Joaquin Valley Local Elected Official

Robert L. Poythress,
Madera County Supervisor
Madera County Board of Supervisors

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2023 San Joaquin Valley Policy Council

The San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council is a partnership that exemplifies the regional transportation planning agencies' commitment to working collaboratively to address regional issues, challenges and opportunities. The 18-member Policy Council was established to build regional consensus and provide a forum for the Valley to organize, coordinate and communicate as a region.

The Policy Council consists of two elected officials from each of the eight regional planning agencies' policy boards, and the Executive Directors of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority.

The San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council is led by Chair Robert Poythress, Supervisor of District 3, Madera County.

The eight regional planning agencies include:

San Joaquin Council of Governments

Madera County Transportation Commission

Stanislaus Council of Governments

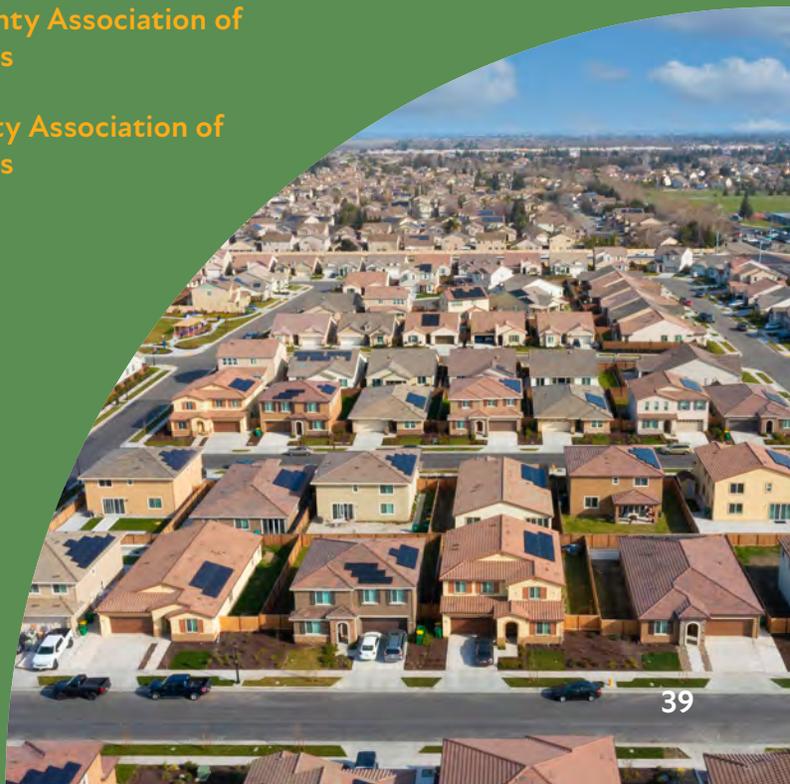
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