

Kings County Blueprint Summary Document



Kings County Association of Governments



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I. Introduction to Kings County

Kings County is a small, rural county in the San Joaquin Valley. It is adjacent to the counties of Kern, Fresno, Monterey, San Luis Obispo and Tulare. The cities of Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford, and Lemoore are within Kings County in addition to the unincorporated communities of Armona, Home Garden, Kettleman City, and Stratford. In 2010, the population for Kings County was 156,289 with the county seat, Hanford, comprising the bulk of the population with 53,266 residents.

As part of the San Joaquin Valley, Kings County boasts some of the most productive and fertile farmland on earth. Because of this, the economy of Kings County is primarily agrarian. Dairy, agriculture, and agribusiness are at the crux of Kings County's economy. Companies like Del Monte and J.G. Boswell Company are among the biggest private sector employers in Kings County. In addition to agriculture, public facilities such as the Naval Air Station in Lemoore and the State prison facilities at Avenal and Corcoran also serve as major employers for the region.

Home prices in Kings County are relatively low when compared to the rest of the state. According to the Kings County Economic Development Corporation (EDC), the average home sale price was \$160,800 compared to \$524,000 for California. Because of this, Kings County, like the rest of the valley, has been the fastest growing region in the state. The population of the San Joaquin Valley is expected to triple by 2050.

II. Origins of the Blueprint Process

The Kings County Association of Governments (KCAG) serves as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and council of governments (COG) for the Kings County area. As a COG, KCAG addresses inter-jurisdictional public policy matters with transportation being a major area of concentration. As an MPO, KCAG prepares and maintains the planning document known as a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which serves as a guide for state and local officials as they strive to upgrade the overall transportation system in Kings County. KCAG also coordinates other projects that are regional or inter-jurisdictional in nature, such as the Kings County Blueprint Process.

With agriculture being an industry of regional significance in the San Joaquin Valley, planners throughout the valley began to discuss solutions for accommodating growth without jeopardizing the long-term viability of our agriculture industry. To seek a coordinated solution to the valley's growth projections, the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) offered to spearhead a grant application for the eight San Joaquin Valley MPOs for Caltrans' Blueprint program. This program enabled MPOs throughout California to engage in extensive public outreach processes in order to develop contextually-appropriate and constituent-approved smart growth strategies and growth scenarios for their regions.

The initial Kings County Blueprint effort dates back to September of 2005, when the KCAG Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) passed a resolution to apply for Blueprint grant funds in coordination with the seven other regional planning agencies in the San Joaquin Valley. Successfully awarded in January 2006, an unprecedented four-year planning effort was about to begin.

The San Joaquin Valley Regional Blueprint was the first significant land use planning effort to consider the valley's vision for 2050 and to articulate how we could work together as a region to preserve and enhance our quality of life. The overall goals of the California Blueprint Program are to address those challenges that do not end at the county line, including air quality, transportation, water resources, and the overall quality of life of valley residents. The valley effort included the counties of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, and Kern. While the focus of this document is the local, county-wide effort, information on the larger, valley-wide effort can be found at <http://www.valleyblueprint.org/>.

The Kings County Blueprint effort was spearheaded by KCAG staff who worked closely with Kings County and the cities of Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford, and Lemoore. NAS Lemoore also became a close partner in the later part of the effort. The Kings County Blueprint was divided into several phases, each focusing on a specific aspect of the planning effort. The goal of Phase I was to identify the vision and values of the Kings County residents and was driven by public participation. Phase II focused on the technical elements and featured land use modeling. Planning Directors from the member agencies were key in providing the historical land use trends that define the status quo and developing alternative land use growth scenarios. Phase III again looked to the public to provide direction on how Kings County should aspire to grow for the year 2050. Both Phases I and III featured extensive public participation efforts.

- Phase I: Vision and Values (2006-2007)
- Phase II: Defining Status Quo and Alternative Growth Scenarios (2007)
- Phase III: Evaluation of Alternative Growth Scenarios (2007-2008)

It is important to note that the development of growth scenarios referenced above were not intended to supersede our member agencies' local land use authority. Because of the unprecedented nature of this process in our area, staff sought to address and alleviate concerns regarding our agency's role in the land use planning process. As a regional planning agency, KCAG utilized the Blueprint process to engage the public by developing smart growth strategies that are regional in nature and could be implemented by our member agencies in future planning endeavors. As such, local land use authority remains solely with our member agencies. KCAG is proud of the local efforts that took place during our process and believe that the local products produced in conjunction and in consultation with our member agencies are quality and sound.

KCAG conducted the most extensive local outreach effort to date in order to gather and subsequently integrate citizen feedback into our Kings County Blueprint. This summary document highlights the various public outreach strategies used both to develop and get input on the Kings County Blueprint scenarios.

III. Blueprint Planning Phase 1: Vision and Values

To kick off the Kings County Blueprint effort, KCAG staff, with the assistance of VRPA Technologies, Inc. focused on identifying the values and vision of Kings County residents. This effort included stakeholder meetings, meetings with elected officials, monthly presentations to governing boards, and surveys. Between late 2006 and mid 2007, KCAG staff organized three community workshops, gave presentations to local service groups, held focus group meetings, and participated in local events. In addition, surveys were completed by citizens and local stakeholders to gain a better understanding of their objectives, goals, and concerns with regard to Kings County's future. This survey was distributed at local events including the Corcoran Cotton Festival in order to reach the broadest stakeholder base possible. The table below provides a summary of the public outreach efforts conducted during this time.

Stakeholder Meetings	Date
Kings County Economic Development Corporation	September 2006
Kings/ Tulare Building Industry Association	October 2006
Kings County Public Health	October 2006
Kings County Economic Development Corporation	October 2006
Sequoia Riverlands Trust	October 2006
Tulare Lake Basin Working Group	October 2006
Naval Air Station Lemoore	November 2006
Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program	November 2006
Proteus	November 2006
Kings County Office of Education	November 2006
Proteus	January 2007
Kings County Farm Bureau	January 2007
Community Events and Workshops	Date
Corcoran Cotton Festival	September 2006
Lemoore Workshop	November 2006
Avenal Workshop	January 2007
Wrap-up Workshop	February 2007

A. Community-Identified Values

These public outreach efforts helped KCAG in identifying the planning priorities our citizens want to improve and maintain for future generations. From there, KCAG crafted the Blueprint Smart Growth Principles to reflect the priorities and objectives of Kings County residents. By January 2007, a total of 296 surveys had been completed. These surveys reflected a strong community desire to achieve the following objectives in the future:

- Lower crime
- Increased affordable housing
- Clean air
- Better health care
- More well-paying jobs
- World class education system

- Better water supply for agricultural and urban uses
- Preservation of agricultural land
- More transportation options (bike, rail, etc.)
- More vibrant economy
- More entertainment and cultural activities
- Dependable and diverse power supply
- Reduced congestion levels, improved maintenance and safety of street and highway system
- Better image
- Improved public transit service
- Improved sense of community

The results of the public outreach effort were unveiled at a wrap-up workshop held on February 7, 2007. The wrap-up workshop served as an opportunity to gather additional information on local smart growth priorities that our citizens would most like to see integrated into our local planning efforts. At this meeting, over fifty participants ranked their values in the following order:

- Healthy & Sustainable Environment
- Well Designed Communities
- Natural Resource Protection
- Economic Development
- Improved Educational Opportunities
- Housing Choices
- Transportation Options

Water availability, deliverability, and quality were identified in both the survey and the wrap-up workshop as a concern. A limited and uncertain water supply will continue to be a planning constraint that will need further study and coordination. As discussed later, the valley-wide Greenprint process currently underway seeks to address some long-term planning solutions to this complex and politically-sensitive issue.

The culmination of KCAG's phase I public outreach was through the development of the Kings County Blueprint Roundtable. The roundtable group was comprised of a cross section of the community including representatives from education, agriculture, economic development, and non-profit community organizations. The purpose of the Kings County Blueprint Roundtable was to guide the local Blueprint effort and the development of its final products. This group met several times and was responsible for developing the Kings County Vision Statement and reviewing local products. As detailed below, the vision statement was crafted to serve as a guiding outline of local goals and priorities for implementing smart growth in Kings County. It illustrates our local objectives and aspirations that will enable us to enhance our quality of life as we continue to grow. These were presented to our board and approved on April 25, 2007.

B. Kings County Vision Statement

Before 2050 Kings County will:

Have a healthy and sustainable environment, which encourages smart growth and development that enhances and preserves our air quality, aquifers, surface waters, agricultural lands, soil, and wildlife resources while strengthening our economic vitality and diversity.

Be composed of unique cities, rural areas, and communities with a diverse population.

Have identified economic development niches with competitive advantages and secured a multi-faceted economic development program that enhances and diversifies our economy and ensures an optimal quality of life for all Kings County residents.

Have an educational system that successfully prepares and retains our citizens to drive both job and income growth through a balanced mix of technical and professional careers.

Have a multifaceted transportation system that addresses growth and enhances the ability to sustain even more growth and development in the future.

Become an innovative, energetic, healthy, and inclusive community with a common sense of pride and shared commitment to the effective and efficient utilization of resources and Quality of Life ideals.

IV. Blueprint Planning Phase II: Defining Status Quo and Alternative Growth Scenarios

During the second phase of the Kings County Blueprint efforts, KCAG worked closely with the Planning Directors and Public Works Directors from each of our five member agencies to develop growth scenarios. Naval Air Station Lemoore also participated in the later efforts of this phase. The growth scenarios included a status quo and five other alternative growth scenarios with varying levels of density. This group met quite often during this time. The local jurisdictions provided input on the current land use patterns and future land use forecasts based on adopted general plans and their institutional knowledge of their jurisdictions' growth patterns. They also kept KCAG apprised of any planning constraints that could preclude growth in specific areas. The following individuals were members of the Blueprint Planner's Group.

Jurisdiction	Agency Participant
Avenal	Steve Sopp
Corcoran	Jeri Grant & Tami McVay
Hanford	John Stowe & Cathy Cain
Lemoore	Holly Smyth
County of Kings	Greg Gatzka
NAS Lemoore	Roman Benitez

The land use knowledge from the member agencies was transferred into the land use planning tool called UPLAN. Developed by U.C. Davis, UPLAN is a rule based, urban growth model that runs in ArcView. UPLAN allocates future growth based on a set of assumptions in proximity to existing urban areas and transportation infrastructure. KCAG worked with researchers from UC Davis and MCAG for technical expertise in running the software.

In mid-2007, the status quo or base case was the first scenario that was developed in UPLAN. It was based on both existing and historical land use and building trends. Completed in November 2007, the purpose of the base case was to visually show the land use footprint in the year 2050 if the cities of Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford, Lemoore and Kings County were to continue growing without any changes in the current trends. The base case also served as a basis for comparison for the alternative growth scenarios. The scenarios were based on population projections developed by the California Department of Finance in 2007. For all scenarios, the Kings County base population was estimated at 151,381 and projected to be 352,750 in the year 2050. For comparison purposes, in 2050 Kings County would roughly have Tulare County's population from 2000.

Alternative growth scenarios were developed to see how different planning assumptions could change the growth patterns as compared to the Kings County base case. The scenarios below were developed through this process:

A. Agricultural & Critical Resource Protection:

In this scenario, it was assumed that growth would not occur in the flood zones and that farmland, the NAS Lemoore flight buffer, and the Kings River corridor would be protected from growth pressure. Habitat in the Kettleman Hills and other areas of the county were also considered. This scenario also strongly discouraged ranchettes (low density dwellings) and used agricultural buffers to help cities maintain their individuality.

B. New City & Expanded Communities:

In this scenario, it was assumed that a new city would be built in the southern portion of Kings County off Interstate 5 and that substantial growth would occur in the county's unincorporated communities. As both Kettleman City and Stratford are located along SR 41, it was determined that they would receive a higher percentage of growth as compared to Home Garden and Armona. Growth in the existing incorporated cities was severely restricted.

C. Compact Development: Low:

In the Compact Development- Low scenario, growth was again encouraged within existing urban areas. The modeling assumptions included that 60% of new housing units would be the standard single family residential. The remaining 40% of new housing units was broken down into 25% as medium density development and 15% and high density development.

D. Compact Development: High:

The assumptions for the Compact Development- High allow for the greatest of high density infill, housing, and mixed use in the existing urban centers. The greatest amount of housing choices are represented with this scenario, with 30% of new homes allocated as medium density, 30% allocated as high density and the remaining 40% allocated to the familiar single family detached development. This scenario protects the greatest amount agricultural lands and prevents the most acreage from being urbanized.

E. Transportation Corridor/ Economic Development:

For this scenario, growth is focused along transportation corridors, with expansion of SR 43 and SR 41. This scenario includes assumptions for a light rail system and provides the most range of transportation choices. Job growth is focused in the community colleges and industrial parks.

When considering these scenarios, it is important to remember that these and the final Blueprint products do not supersede the local agencies' general plans. Rather, they served as a visioning exercise to help our region understand the potential impacts that status quo development patterns could have on one of our most valued resources, prime farmland. Participation in the Blueprint effort was voluntary and our member agencies retain their local land use authority. From the scenarios detailed above, the Kings County Preferred Growth Scenario was selected. More information on the preferred scenario is detailed in the next section of this document.

V. Blueprint Planning Phase III: Evaluation of Alternative Scenarios

After the alternative growth scenarios were developed by the member agencies, KCAG gave many presentations, conducted four workshops, and held a final wrap-up workshop to garner community input. Presentations were given to classes at the community colleges and to the local governing boards. The table below provides a summary of key outreach efforts during this phase.

Governing Board Meetings	Date
Hanford City Council	April 2008
Kings County Planning Commission	April 2008
Corcoran Planning Commission	April 2008
Lemoore City Council	April 2008
Corcoran City Council	April 2008
Avenal City Council	April 2008
Lemoore Planning Commission	April 2008
Kings County General Plan Advisory Committee	August 2008
College of the Sequoias, Hanford	May 2008
West Hills College, Lemoore	May 2008

KCAG staff made presentations to students in classes at West Hills Community College and the College of the Sequoias Hanford Center. Of the three classes surveyed, the majority of the students were between 20 to 35 in age. Feedback from this segment of the population was particularly important as they are the most likely to be residents Kings County in the year 2050. With almost 60% of the students currently residing in a standard housing subdivision, the group was receptive to living in a smaller lot single family home, townhouse, or mixed-use development in the future. Of the total responses, 67% indicated that there should be a balance of investment between transit and roads with 12% of respondents indicating they would take transit at least once a week if bus service was available in ten to fifteen minute intervals.

In addition to outreach at our local community colleges, staff held visioning sessions to show the growth scenarios to a broader cross-section of our citizenry. During these sessions, the scenarios were displayed on large, poster-sized maps with a comment sheet to provide input on each “station.” A copy of the Blueprint flyer and comment sheet is included in the appendix and the table below outlines when these sessions occurred.

Jurisdiction	Visioning Session Date
Avenal	May 13, 2008
Corcoran	May 19, 2008
Hanford	May 15, 2008
Lemoore	May 14, 2008

Participants at these sessions were asked to provide comments on the scenarios. Thirty-five percent of workshop participants indicated that the Transportation Corridors/Economic Development section was the most important consideration for the county’s future. Within that category, the workshop participants identified “providing additional transportation choices” as the most important factor within this category.

The second-highest category was the Agricultural and Critical Resource Protection section, which received 28% of the vote. The most important factor identified in this scenario was the preservation of farmland.

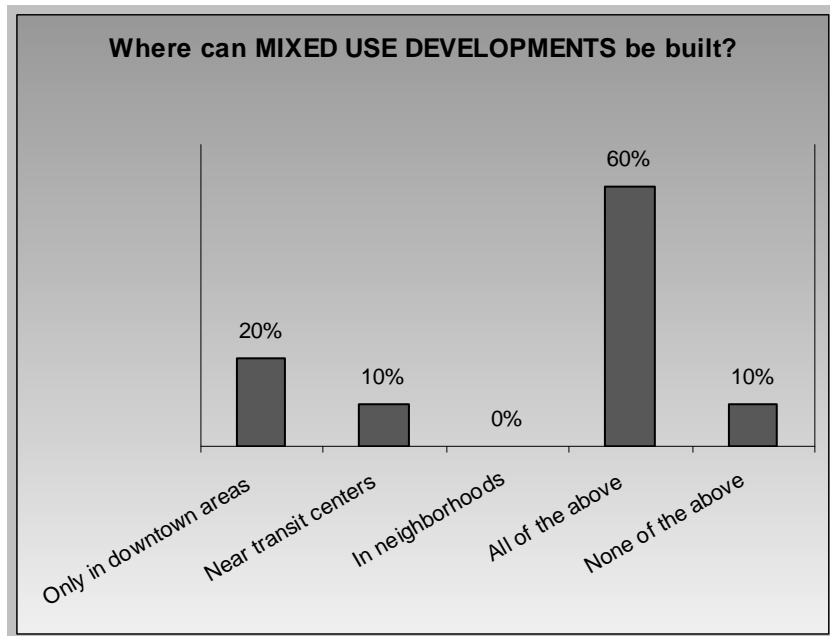
This poll was also taken at the final workshop on May 22nd, where clicker technology was used to provide real-time results of the sixty or so participants from each of the jurisdictions. When asked which of the scenarios was closest to their vision of Kings County in 2050, the Agricultural the Critical Resource Protection Scenario was the significant favorite with 35%. The second closest scenario was the Transportation Corridors/ Economic Development.

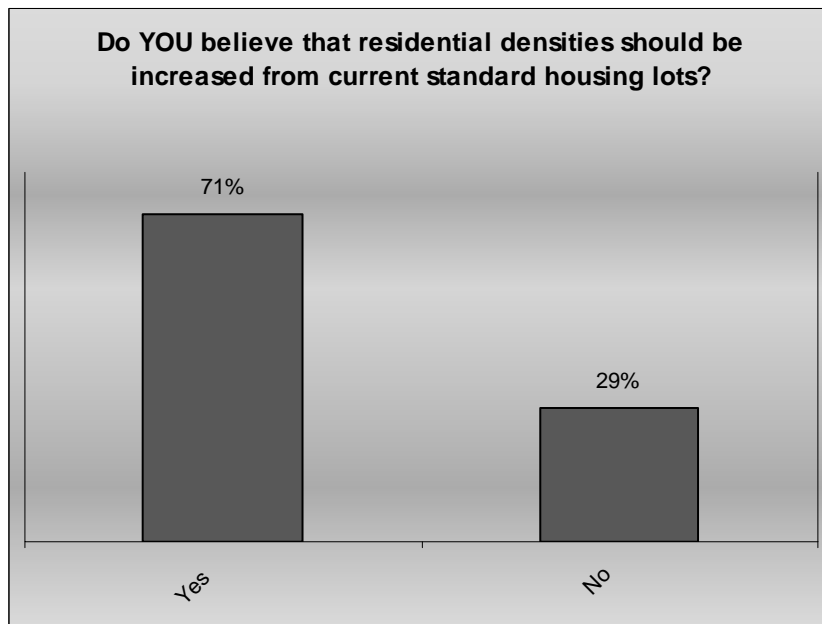
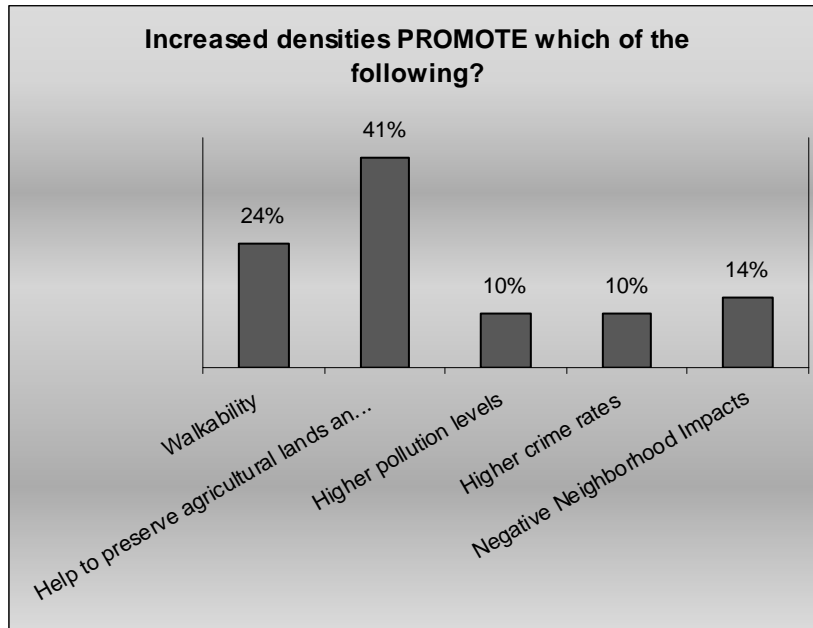
The survey responses from our constituents ultimately aided KCAG in creating smart growth principles tailor-made to our area’s unique circumstances and the wants of our constituents. Highlighted in the following sections are some of these results from the surveys. It also demonstrates how these shaped our Kings County Blueprint.

A. Housing Mix/Density:

As discussed in the land use scenarios section of this document, KCAG looked at increased housing densities as a way to be adaptive to changing family structures, preserve our agricultural heritage, maintain our water resources, and accommodate the mushrooming 65+ population in California. Before doing this, KCAG wanted to better understand the community's receptiveness to increased densities through targeted workshops. Participants were shown various types of developments, such as "ranchettes," patio homes, condominiums, and mixed-use developments and asked if they would consider living in these dwellings.

Below are some of the other questions asked of the participants that provide insight into our residents' values and needs. The survey results reflect a community willingness to increase densities where appropriate while still providing traditional housing choices. They also reflect a willingness to live in higher density developments in the future, direct mixed-use development in urban cores, and promote transit-oriented development.



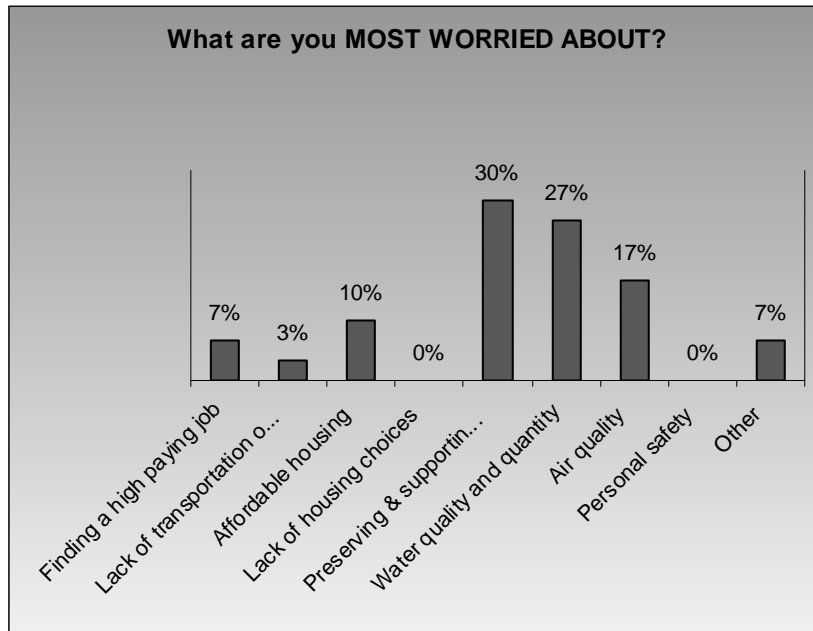


B. Commercial Development:

As the San Joaquin Valley has been ravaged by the foreclosure crisis, retail has served as a key resource for local governments in maintaining property tax revenues. Kings County jurisdictions will continue to incorporate innovative planning strategies and redevelopment tools into their communities to accommodate economic prosperity through commercial development. Future transportation improvements on State Routes 198, 41, and 43 will help to encourage commercial development.

C. Future Concerns:

As demonstrated below, housing affordability and our local economy are the most frequently referenced concerns in our area. To address this, the Kings County Blueprint focuses on agricultural preservation strategies that seek to ensure the long term viability of one of the most crucial sectors to our local economy.



VI. The Kings County Preferred Growth Scenario and Urban Growth Boundaries

The Kings County Preferred Growth Scenario is the result of local Blueprint efforts beginning in 2006 and based on the Kings County Blueprint Principles. The Preferred Growth Scenario provides an attainable and realistic growth scenario that is based on the values of our residents. It also takes into consideration general plans and constraining variables like FEMA-designated flood areas and critical or sensitive environmental resources in order to allow for continued prosperity and growth through 2050. The Preferred Growth Scenario assumes that the greatest concentration of new growth will occur within the Blueprint Urban Growth Boundary and that land outside of the boundary will not be developed. The KCAG Commission approved the Preferred Growth Scenario and the Kings County Blueprint Principles in August of 2008.

The Blueprint Urban Growth Boundary is based on either the primary the secondary Sphere of Influence as defined by the Kings County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) and then further modified them to the address the concerns or constraints of each jurisdiction. The primary sphere of influence was used for Avenal, Hanford and the Communities of Armona, Home Garden, Kettleman City, and Stratford. For the City of Lemoore and Corcoran, the Blueprint Urban Growth Boundary is based on the secondary sphere of Influence with several modifications. Special considerations for Corcoran included expanding the northern boundary due to the constraints of the Tulare County line limiting growth to the east and the difficulties of developing in the flood zones to the west and south. The City of Lemoore's Blueprint Urban Growth Boundary line was tailored to address encroachment concerns on the west towards Naval Air Station Lemoore by expanding growth opportunities to the north and east. The Kings County Blueprint Urban Growth Boundaries represent an unprecedented level of cooperation among the local governing agencies.

The Blueprint Urban Growth Boundary and the adopted planning principles discussed below are the most influential components of the Kings County Blueprint effort. These two efforts provide a framework for the Cities of Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford, and Lemoore and the County of Kings to continue their local land use decisions.

VII. The Kings County Planning Principles

In addition to the Blueprint Urban Growth Boundaries, the Kings County Blueprint Planning Principles were also developed at this time. Planners from the cities of Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford, Lemoore, Kings County, and Naval Air Station Lemoore identified ten Blueprint Planning Principles that build upon the values of Kings County residents that helped guide the development of the Kings County Preferred Growth Scenario. As such, the principles serve as a reflection of the extensive outreach and community involvement that was conducted throughout the process.

These principles were adopted by the KCAG Transportation Policy Commission on August 27, 2008. Since then, the Kings County region has seen these principles continue to be incorporated into local planning documents and inform local planning decisions. The section below provides specific examples of how the principles have been integrated into our local planning efforts following their adoption by our board.

A. The cities and county of Kings will retain local land use authority.

As previously discussed, KCAG serves as a regional planning agency in Kings County and has no legal land use authority over Kings County and the cities of Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford, and Lemoore. Rather, KCAG serves as an agency that plans and coordinates for regional transportation projects and other projects that are regional in nature. As such, KCAG appreciates that land use authority rests wholly within the hands of our member agencies. Participation in the Blueprint process has been voluntary from the beginning and is not required of any agency. Moreover, participation in the Blueprint effort does not in any way supersede our member agencies' general plans or other planning documents.

This distinction is critical when considering KCAG's role in Senate Bill 375 implementation. This legislation is geared at reducing transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions in California. As a metropolitan planning organization in California, KCAG must demonstrate how the Kings County region will achieve reduction targets established by the Air Resources Board in a document known as a sustainable communities strategy (SCS). However, it is important to keep in mind that MPOs like KCAG have no legal land use authority over their member agencies. Instead, SB 375 implementation will require continued coordination between our agencies as we develop a sustainable communities strategy that is reflective of our member agencies' planned smart growth efforts.

B. Direct future growth to existing urbanized areas within Kings County to ensure orderly and sufficient provision of services and infrastructure.

Completed in 2010, the County of Kings' 2035 General Plan update explicitly addresses this principle through policies that direct growth to existing cities and unincorporated communities. This policy seeks to preserve our agricultural heritage while simultaneously limiting urban sprawl and leapfrog development, as over 90% of Kings County is zoned as agriculture or open space. The issue of directing growth to existing urbanized areas is currently at the forefront of discussions between local planners and the California High Speed Rail Authority, as the Kings-Tulare Regional Station proposed by the Authority is outside the City of Hanford's urban core in an area lacking existing infrastructure.

C. Concentrate urban growth within the Blueprint Urban Growth Boundaries for cities and Community Service Districts to minimize outward expansion into important farmlands.

As mentioned above, the County of Kings' 2035 General Plan directs growth to existing cities and unincorporated communities. The development of the Blueprint urban growth boundaries relied on extensive coordination with our Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). KCAG continues to coordinate with LAFCO and our local agencies on issues pertaining to concentric growth.

- D. Preservation of agricultural lands surrounding Cities and Communities shall serve as open space buffers that separate and maintain the individual identities and uniqueness of Cities and Communities within the County.

As a rural county in California, the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (the Williamson Act) has remained a critical resource for maintaining the economic viability of our local farms and dairies for over fifty years. Unfortunately, budgetary straits at the state level have made a fully-funded Williamson Act an unlikely outcome. Instead, it appears as though the state may shift the responsibility of Williamson Act funding to local governments if they so chose. While conducting the 2035 General Plan update, Kings County landowners expressed hesitation to pursue land trusts and tax-saving mechanisms other than the Williamson Act due to concerns surrounding permanently forgoing land development rights. These issues continue to be evaluated by local planners with the hope that a resolution favorable to all will be reached.

- E. Balance the Countywide need for urban growth and economic development with reinforced preservation of the County's prioritized agricultural resources.

In addition to the local agricultural preservation measures listed above, KCAG is participating in the San Joaquin Valley Greenprint process, a planning endeavor geared at protecting natural resources, open space, and agriculture. This project is currently underway and will integrate extensive GIS mapping technologies to better integrate natural resources information into planning efforts.

Furthermore, infill development projects have been a key component to protecting our agricultural resources. One example of an infill project is the city of Avenal's reconstruction of the Avenal Movie Theatre, a beautiful art deco-style theatre that was built by Chevron for its employees in the 1940s. Sadly, the theatre burned down in an electrical fire in 2005. The city worked with a local company who provided the funding for the theatre to be rebuilt in 2010. The theatre was converted into a mixed-use facility with several meeting spaces and a courtyard for events behind the two screening rooms. The theatre once again serves as the focal point for the community and Avenal received a San Joaquin Valley Blueprint Award in 2010 for this achievement.

- F. Enhance economic development connectivity through transportation highway infrastructure improvements that focus on expanding State Route 198 and 43 to four lanes through Kings County.

Regional connectivity remains a critical priority for our area. KCAG continues to seek funding from the various programs for these projects. In addition, KCAG anticipates future volumes on SR 43 will be evaluated in the California High Speed Rail Authority's EIR/EIS for California's High Speed Rail project. Given the proximity of the proposed Kings-Tulare station to SR 198 and SR 43, we expect the Authority will help mitigate future volumes through infrastructure projects on these highways.

- G. Improve air quality through enhanced commuter connectivity by implementing alternative transportation modes and enhancing existing modes, and supporting the continuation of Amtrak passenger rail service through Kings County on the existing BNSF alignment.

Because of the rural nature of many of Kings County's employment centers, the Kings County Area Public Transit Agency (KCAPTA) has promoted vanpooling as the third leg of transportation in communities where fixed route transit service would not be cost effective. KCAPTA currently operates two programs with one being specifically geared at agricultural workers. Combined, these two programs account for 48 million annual passenger miles of what were once private vehicle trips.

Additionally, KCAG applied for a Fiscal Year 2010/2011 Caltrans Community-Based Transportation Planning Grant for the Kings-Tulare High Speed Rail Station. One of the topics to be covered in this application is maintaining the economic vitality of Hanford's downtown core. Specifically, in the event the HSR tracks east of Hanford are set up as an independent utility as required by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, they could replace the existing, centrally-located Amtrak alignment and station. Our hope is to prevent this outcome and maintain the viability of Hanford's historic Amtrak station.

KCAG also received Proposition 84 funds for a county-wide Climate Action Plan. This plan will outline strategies for our communities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and will establish implementation and monitoring strategies for our region moving forward. The establishment of the county-wide CAP can be seen as Kings County doing its part to help the state achieve the ambitious goals set forth in the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32).

- H. Create a range of housing alternatives and minimum and maximum densities that meet the changing needs of County residents.

Across the state, data indicates the average age of Californians is increasing. What has been referred to as a "silver tsunami" is approaching California as the Baby Boomer generation begins to turn 65. With the projected doubling of California's elderly population from 4.6 million to 8.8 million over the next twenty years, people from all sectors recognize the need to adapt to the anticipating influx of senior citizens in our communities.

Because of the anticipated demographic shift, it is critical to provide a mix of housing options that are better suited to our anticipated population. In Kings County, many of the planned high density projects in our region are senior centers in downtown cores. These are transit oriented developments within walking distance to our Amtrak stations and bus service.

In addition to serving our senior population, the Kings County area has a precedent of providing multi-family units to accommodate US Navy personnel working at NAS Lemoore. For this reason, Kings County has had a market for multi-family housing units for decades that has been accommodated over the years.

- I. Protect the many natural resources and sensitive environmental habitats such as the Kings River corridor and wetlands from urban encroachment.

As mentioned previously, the San Joaquin Valley Greenprint effort is a targeted valley-wide project geared at natural habit, water resource, and habitat preservation. The Greenprint project is in its early stages and KCAG looks forward to coordinating with our member agencies and the other seven San Joaquin Valley MPOs as this project reaches its fruition.

- J. Provide for an encroachment free operating environment for Naval Air Station Lemoore in coordination with the City of Lemoore and County of Kings.

KCAG, the city of Lemoore, Fresno County, Kings County and the Naval Air Station Lemoore are in the process of developing a Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) to outline strategies that will accommodate growth without jeopardizing NAS Lemoore's future operability. The JLUS initiated dialogue between all of the respective agencies' planners, executives, and elected officials to evaluate strategies that will be mutually beneficial to all parties. The JLUS is in its final phases of planning.

VIII. Valley-wide Coordination

As mentioned in the introduction, the Kings County Blueprint process was part of a coordinated, valley-wide effort. The Merced County Association of Governments served as the project manager for the valley-wide effort with the Fresno Council of Governments taking over in 2009. Initially, the valley-wide coordination took place to ensure that the local efforts were consistent between the eight counties. Currently, the valley-wide effort continues to function as a vehicle for local planners and elected officials to meet and confer on a variety of topics of shared interest.

While the Kings County Blueprint was underway, elected officials, local planners, and community members participated in the larger San Joaquin Valley Blueprint efforts. This included both regional events and coordinated work groups. Valley-wide events were held in June 2006, January 2009, and June 2010 with representatives from Kings County participating. Specifically, the Blueprint Regional Advisory Committee (BRAC) and the Valley Planner's Workgroup were two important groups that allowed for the valley-wide interaction. In addition, a

Blueprint Executive Forum was held on June 25, 2010. This event was held specifically for elected officials and was attended by Supervisor Tony Barbra and Avenal City Council Member Sid Craighead. Statewide, a Blueprint Learning Network was developed and several workshops were held through the state to promote sharing of best practices.

The eight San Joaquin Valley MPOs developed the Blueprint Regional Advisory Committee (BRAC) to coordinate our separate efforts. The BRAC contained elected leaders, planners, and community leaders from each county to oversee the process at a valley-wide level. Initial participants from Kings County included Sid Craighead, David Ayers, Ron Hughes, John Lehn, and Judy Horn. Sid Craighead was selected as Vice-chair of the BRAC. The objectives of the BRAC are detailed below:

- Regularly communicate with San Joaquin Valley COG Director's Association regarding work of the BRAC to assure the process and products reflect COG SJV Regional Blueprint process guidelines.
- Regularly communicate with local and regional Interest Groups regarding regional issues that arise in SJV Regional Blueprint process.
- Assist in the integration of San Joaquin Valley Partnership products and the SJV Regional Blueprint Planning process.
- Provide a forum for the participation of varying regional interest groups in the SJV Regional Blueprint process.
- Help identify and validate SJV Regional "Values" and "Vision," as well as a Regional "Identity."
- Develop consensus regarding the current SJV Regional Planning "status quo."
- Develop BRAC consensus on what planning variables constitute the "status quo."
- Educate participants on the reality of allowing the current SJV Regional "status quo" to continue.
- Educate participants that no change from the current SJV Regional "status quo" becomes an active decision that will determine the future of the SJV.
- Champion the SJV Regional Blueprint Planning process and a Preferred Regional Blueprint Scenario as a critical opportunity to determine the future of the SJV.
- Conceptually explore and review possible alternative SJV Regional Blueprint Scenarios that would allow communities to actively support their local values, vision, and community identities.

- Construct a Draft SJV Regional Blueprint Vision from the eight local SJV Blueprint Vision products (regional segments only) for review by the SJV COG Directors Association.
- Communicate (as needed) with the SJV COG Directors Association regarding any concerns about the Draft SJV Regional Blueprint Vision as it relates to regional “Values.”
- Facilitate (as needed) regional consent for the final SJV Regional Blueprint Preferred Scenario.

A complete summary of the valley process is documented and available at www.valleyblueprint.org.

In addition to the BRAC, a valley-wide group of planning staff known as the Valley-wide Professional Planners Workgroup was developed. This group was initiated to serve as a forum for local planners to meet and receive updates on the valley-wide Blueprint effort. They provided crucial feedback on documents throughout the process. The Valley Planners’ Workgroup typically received updates on action items before they went before both the San Joaquin Valley COG Directors and the Regional Policy Council.

In addition, the workgroup continues to thrive as a venue for local planners to meet and discuss topics of shared interest, including the reinstatement of Fresno State’s graduate degree in planning. These meetings are currently held quarterly and are anticipated to continue beyond the span of the Blueprint grant funding.

IX. Blueprint Planning, Sustainable Planning and Climate Change Legislation

The Kings County Blueprint initiated a sustainable planning dialogue in our county. By providing tangible outlines for how our citizenry would like our communities to grow, through smart growth strategies like increased vanpooling, agricultural preservation, higher densities in urban cores, and transit-oriented development, it will be easier for our member agencies to incorporate sustainable planning practices into their local plans that reflect the values of our residents.

In many respects, the Kings County Blueprint effort addresses the tenets of California’s groundbreaking climate change laws, Senate Bill 375 and Assembly Bill 32. These bills are geared at reducing greenhouse gas emissions with specific provisions for KCAG as a metropolitan planning organization in reducing transportation-related emissions. SB 375 is widely regarded as legislation that inextricably ties land use and transportation planning by focusing on improving the built environment to reduce greenhouse gases. KCAG is required to do this through the creation of a document known as a sustainable communities strategy, which will be a component of our future regional transportation plans.

California’s climate change laws underscore the importance of facilitating alternative modes of transportation and active transportation through improvements to the built environment. With an increased focus on how infrastructural improvements will reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions in our communities, the tenets of our Kings County Smart Growth Principles serve as a vital framework for our communities moving forward. As

previously outlined in the document, we are already seeing these principles integrated into our local and regional planning efforts. As California continues to lead the nation in the fight against global warming, thanks to the Kings County Blueprint process, we have carved out our county's niche in this ambitious effort.