KERN COUNTY
GENERAL PLAN 2040
REPORT ON OUTREACH
PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOPS
JANUARY TO JUNE 2017

Kern County Planning and
Natural Resources Department
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March 8, 2018
General Plan Introduction

Kern County is the third (3rd) largest County in California and the twentieth (20th) largest County in the United States, consisting of 8,202 square miles. The County has eleven (11) incorporated cities within its boundaries and sixty-five (65) unincorporated communities (2010 US Census) with a combined population estimate of 882,176. The overall population is expected to increase to over 1.2 million by 2023 (California Department of Finance E-5 estimates.) The City of Bakersfield is now one of the “Big 11“ cities in California with populations large enough to have meaningful influence in state policy making ranked as number nine (9) with a population of 383,512.

Since 1990, Kern County has managed two (2) General Plans with the Metropolitan Bakersfield General plan (updated 2002 for 409 square miles) adopted separately but planned jointly with the City of Bakersfield and the Kern County General Plan (updated 2004) for the remaining unincorporated county areas. This comprehensive update will now incorporate the Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan into one Kern County General Plan 2040 with a Metropolitan Bakersfield area plan (same 409 square miles) coordinated with the City of Bakersfield.

The Kern County General Plan 2040 update is more than the legal underpinning for land use decisions; it is a vision about how a community will grow, reflecting community priorities and values while shaping the future. The general plan is a document designed to guide the future actions of a community. It presents a vision for the future, with long-range goals and objectives for all activities that affect the local government. The General Plan Update is intended to review and update pertinent issues, goals and objectives to provide for orderly and appropriate new development in Kern County for the next 20 years, while preserving a quality of life for its residents. Furthermore, the update will result in an organization of these various elements in a consolidated, comprehensive document along with implementable programs, action items and user-friendly guides to allow for a workable document for Kern County departments, stakeholders, partnering agencies, and residents.

Outreach – 2017 Planning Commission Workshops

From January to June 2017, Staff conducted a series of six (6) consecutive General Plan Update public Workshops utilizing the Planning Commission each month. These workshops replaced the regularly scheduled second hearing of the Planning Commission and the agenda did not include any development projects or other matters. This format provided for evening meetings with translation capability, televised and archived on KGOV in the Board chambers. With newsletters circulated in advance for the topic, the workshops allowed community residents, the public, agencies, and other interested stakeholders to hear staff presentations that included a synopsis on required elements within the General Plan and other potential content discussions that should be considered for inclusion in the update. The workshop format was intended to generate new ideas, educate and inform on new general plan and related laws and present an over view of our current land use conditions and challenges. Reformatted of the General Plan from paper to an online version for better access and relevance is part of the update and the workshops provided feedback on how much the public understands about the function of the General Plan in community planning and permitting.
This report provides a summary of the results from the workshops for comments and suggestions. All staff reports can be found on the General Plan 2040 website:

https://kernplanning.com/general-plan-update/

The following attachments have been provided:

- Workshop Newsletters
- Summary of Workshop Comments
- Workshop Submittals
- Public Comment Correspondence

**Workshop 1 Healthy Communities and Economics (January 26, 2017)**

An introduction of Kern County was presented including its geographic features, constituent demographics and economy, a summary of new legislative actions that need to be incorporated into the General Plan 2040.

**Healthy Communities**

Matt Constantine, Director of Public Health Services, presented a review of Kern County’s ranking on the California Department of Public Health’s annual County Health Status Profile Report which presents public health data using a list of eighteen (18) healthy community indicators recommended for tracking by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and provides a County by County ranking of how each jurisdiction compares to each other using the identified indicators. This review resulted in the Kern County Public Health Department making a recommendation that our Healthy Community element focus on the development of policies and programs designed around four (4) key Healthy Community Focus Areas. These focus areas include:

1. Transportation;
2. Green space;
3. Food; and
4. Community Design

The presentation included information indicating that chronic disease is the largest threat to our communities. In addition to Mr. Constantine’s presentation, Staff discussed healthy communities and the potential possibilities for incorporating strategies for creating healthy neighborhoods which give opportunity to active and access to healthy, locally grown food.

**Economics**

The Kern Economic Development Corporation (KernEDC) gave a presentation regarding the state of the county from a business, economic, perspective. It was noted that Kern County has a diverse economic base and it was projected that healthcare positions would grow.

**Public Comment and Presentations**

Twenty-nine (29) residents spoke regarding community concerns including Kern County has one of the highest rates of diabetes, obesity, heart disease, opiate addiction, air pollution, teen pregnancy, asthma,
lack of swimming pools, lowest funded libraries in California, lowest number of all-weather tracks and poor support for park systems. Summarized comments include the following, such as the need(s) and want for:

- Support for a Healthy Communities element in General Plan.
- Health care, access to food, clean water, an increase of commercial businesses, reliable public transportation, and affordable housing should be made readily available in underserved areas.
- A community center including additional funding for library branches for cultural exchange and education.
- Consideration for incorporating SB 1000 and SB 379 into general plan.
- Adding/improve sidewalks, bike lanes, more visible traffic signals, street lights, annex private streets for maintenance, and gutters in unincorporated areas.
- Addressing school closures and delays due to flooding and drainage solutions.
- Improved park maintenance is needed including: walking trails, sufficient trashcans, water fountains, basketball court, boxing club, volleyball court, and a swimming pool with lessons.
- Solutions towards removal of trash and bug infected furniture on the streets, it was suggested cameras be added as well as more no littering signs, and fines for those who litter.
- Buffer zones/setback separating agriculture and oil from new residences and gathering areas such as schools and parks.
- Addressing dog problems that make walking unsafe, it was suggested that fines be imposed to people with multiple dogs through the ordinance.
- Preservation of land around stream courses.
- Additional substance abuse programs.
- Imposing a limit on smoke shops and a social host fine for underage alcohol consumption in a home.

Workshop 2 Healthy Communities, cont. and Land Use (February 23, 2017)

A brief overview of the existing Kern County General Plan Land Use Element and the purpose of the 35 Map Code Designations and how evaluations of these designations will determine prospective modifications and how those may be applied or if new designations might be created to meet the needs of new statutory requirements or the community’s vision.

Public Comment and Presentations

The Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment made a presentation entitled “Our Valley, Our Voices” that proposed policies such as:

- Buffer zones between oil and gas and agriculture and sensitive receptors such as schools and residences;
- Clean and affordable drinking water for all; and
• Access to alternative technology such as rooftop solar, representatives of the environmental justice community requested an Environmental Justice element be added to the General Plan Update.

Audubon, Defenders of Wildlife, Sierra Business Council, the Nature Conservancy and Sequoia Riverland Trust gave a joint presentation recommending policies including improved connectivity for plants and animals, corridors, migratory pathways, land protection, and restoration. In addition, the presentation stressed the need for groundwater availability and the desire for infill development to help guide decision making. The presentation also recommended policies and strategies for working landscapes and the protection of groundwater recharge areas be incorporated in the general plan.

Twenty (20) members of the community spoke. Summarized comments include the following, such as the need(s) and want for:

• Regulations for home businesses not following safety laws.
• Safe routes to school, improved road conditions and walkable communities.
• Easily found information on maps indicating where county/city roads are located and to which jurisdictions reports should be made.
• Limiting the number of Marijuana dispensaries opening in communities and the addressing of rising crime rates surrounding them.
• Staff to research other counties and why they are doing better in their health indicators.
• Separation of agriculture and oil from residential areas and schools.
• Support for a solution of flooding in Lamont, better drainage, and roads.
• Jobs and food the agricultural businesses provided in the county.
• Continued affordable housing and promotion of businesses.
• Policies to protect farmland and a specific agricultural element in the General Plan.

**Workshop 3 Circulation Element, Housing Element, Open Space and Conservation (March 23, 2017)**

Information presented primarily focused on the elements within the adopted Kern County General Plan including a summary of existing major land use categories within the adopted Kern County General Plan.

**Circulation**

The Circulation Element is a Transportation System Plan that identifies what is needed to accommodate existing and future development for Kern County. In consultation with the Kern County Public Works Development Review Division, Staff presented key areas of opportunity for consideration and study in updating the Plan:

• Potential removal of unnecessary Arterial and Collector designations along Section and Midsection Lines;
• Developing Street Design Standards; and
• Incorporating Complete Street Policies in key areas around Kern County.
Public street standards should recognize the multipurpose elements by combining utility, pedestrian, bicycle, transit, truck, auto uses and railroad crossings. Street design standards may include design features such as wider sidewalks to buffer traffic, marked street crossings at intersections, pedestrian-scale lighting, benches, bus shelters and street trees. In addition, local street design intentionally discourages through traffic and is important to neighborhood identity. Kern County Public Works Development Review Division and Planning and Natural Resources Department will be collaborating to refine Kern County street standards to enhance sustainability and promote healthy communities, increase functionality of the road system, and include multimodal features.

Complete Streets policies were presented as well explaining Complete Streets are a street system that is purposely designed to provide safe access for all users including pedestrians, motorists, bicyclists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. In addition, Complete Street policies are designed for a distinct place which means there are countless ways to accomplish this type of functional street system. For example, a Complete Street in a rural area will look quite different from a Complete Street in a highly populated urban area or in a primarily residential suburban area. All are designed with a distinctive purpose in mind depending on the uniqueness of the area.

**Housing**

The 2015-2023 Kern County Housing Element (adopted April 2016) will be incorporated into the update. Part of the Housing Element review process was to recognize or identify disadvantaged unincorporated communities according to Senate Bill (SB) 244 (Wolk) which was approved by the state in October 2011. SB 244 requires cities and counties to address the infrastructure needs of disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUC) in city and county general plans, Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo), Municipal Service Reviews (MSR) and annexation decisions. Government Code Section 65502.10(a) requires that before the due date for adoption of the next housing element after January 1, 2012, the general plan land use element must be updated to identify and describe each DUC (fringe community, legacy community, and/or island community) that exists within unincorporated areas of the county or in spheres of influence of each city; analyze for each identified community the water, wastewater, stormwater drainage, and structural fire protection needs; and identify financial funding alternatives for the extension of services to any identified communities.

**Public Comment and Presentations**

Twenty-two (22) members of the community spoke at the March 23, 2017 workshop. Comments included the following, such as the need(s) and want for:

- Support of policies to promote and support businesses, streamline processes and avoid unnecessary regulations that prohibits job creation. In addition, a request for the development and use of specific and area plans to accommodate larger developments was made.
- Policies to protect agricultural zoning and promote participation in the Williamson Act.
- Encouragement towards the partnership between conservation groups and farmers and ranchers. The example of retired land was used to demonstrate that as farmers retire land, the conservation groups offer grass seed options for planting to help the environment.
- Policies to reduce conflict between zones, buffer zones between industries and residents.
- Support of policies promoting environmental justice and a climate action plan.
- More bicycle lanes, improved street design, sidewalks, safe paths to parks, crosswalks and lights in Lamont, and a program for cleaning up trash along roads.
- Encouragement towards developing community centers and the possible reuse of abandoned buildings for youth programs in disadvantaged communities.
- Development of a soccer field in the Rexland Acres Park.
- Regional bus routes and zero emission buses.
- Solutions for flooding problems and the need for better drainage are wanted.
- Inclusion of mixed use policies and infill development to generate tax revenue.

**Workshop 4 Metropolitan Bakersfield Habitat Conservation Plan and New Water Element (April 27, 2018)**

An introduction of existing Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan (MBGP) major land use categories was presented. The MBGP was adopted by the Kern County Board of Supervisors in 1990, and updated on December 3, 2002. The City of Bakersfield adopted their update on December 11, 2002. The Metropolitan Bakersfield Planning Area encompasses an area of approximately 409 square miles. The boundary includes the entire city limits and sphere of influence for the City of Bakersfield and the unincorporated communities of Oildale, Greenfield, East Bakersfield, Rexland Acres, Lamont and the Western Rosedale Specific Plan and Kern River Corridor Plan. The boundary of the existing Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan is south of Seventh Standard Road to just north of Bear Mountain Boulevard/Interstate 5 and east of Enos Lane to Edison Road and Tower Line Road.

**Metropolitan Bakersfield Habitat Conservation Plan**

The Metropolitan Bakersfield Habitat Conservation Plan (MBHCP) which is a program addressing the effect of urban growth on federally and State protected plant and animal species within the Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan area. The MBHCP is a joint program of the City of Bakersfield and Kern County that was undertaken beginning in 1990, to assist urban development applicants in complying with State and federal endangered species laws while allowing future economic growth of the Metropolitan Bakersfield area thereby bridging both the Land Use Element and the Conservation Element. The HCP permit has ended and the City and County are participating on a five (5) year temporary permit while a more comprehensive new permit is negotiated and environmental work completed.

**New Water Element**

The Kern County Water Agency spoke regarding the history of water in Kern County and the need for regional management strategies to help the water needs of the County. The presentation referenced the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014 (SGMA) which is a three-(3-) bill package that collectively established a new structure for managing California’s groundwater. A central feature of SGMA is the recognition that groundwater management in California is best accomplished locally and required the formation of locally-controlled Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) which must develop Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) in groundwater basins or sub-basins that the Department of Water Resources (DWR) designates as medium or high priority to become sustainable. Kern County has two (2) such basins that meet standards thus requiring Kern County to balance its water budget and fix the overdraft problem.
The Kern Groundwater Authority was established to provide a framework for the active, comprehensive management of the groundwater basin underlying the valley portion of Kern County. The Kern Groundwater Authority is a facilitating voice acting on behalf of its members, not act upon them. SGMA also requires jurisdictions look closer at water quality as well as availability. For the first time in California’s history, groundwater will be regulated. Limits on water pumping are real and impact residents/cities as well as industry.

Public Comment and Presentations
Matt Towery, representing the Home Building Association, noted affordable housing in Kern County is getting more and more difficult including fees and other industry changes have increased the baseline for home building. The presentation included information on rising homebuilding costs and the impact it has on affordability and the economy. A request for policies to support homebuilding growth was made.

Fifteen (15) members of the community spoke, however, many more showed support for the speakers. Those who spoke included the following comments, such as need(s) and want for:

- Road improvements, street lights, sidewalks, flooding solutions and fire hydrants on Lytle Avenue between County Line Road and Cecil Avenue area.
- Policies regarding prisoners near homes.
- Policies for clean water and walkable communities.
- A water element to development of drought plans, groundwater recharge policies and policies for quality water especially in disadvantaged communities.
- Consultation with conservation groups and water management teams.
- Policies encouraging affordable housing, infill, higher density.
- Addressing dumping trash in Oildale and the need for a fence blocking the alley where this is taking place.
- Solutions for contaminated water in disadvantaged communities in Lamont.


A review was given of the County’s Energy Element and possible updates to maintain Kern County’s status as California’s leading energy producer and the County’s current military readiness land use policies and identifying future needs.

Energy Element
Kern County’s energy resources which include: petroleum, oil and gas production, utility-scale solar development, and utility-scale wind production. The following three (3) Energy Element primary objectives were also reasserted:

- Resource management and protection,
- Establishing development standards to provide for the protection of the environment, public health, and safety, and;
- Promoting and facilitating energy development.
Military Readiness – JLUS
A presentation of the County’s current military readiness land use policies and an overview of the Joint Land Use Study Program (JLUS), administered by the Department of Defense’s (DOD) Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) was also made. The program, established in 1985 in an effort to work with local jurisdictions to ensure compatible development around installations and ranges particularly with respect to noise, safety, and operationally sensitive areas, also works to raise awareness at the state and local levels for the sustainability requirements of local military installations, and provides technical or community planning assistance to support compatible land use efforts through grants authorized under title 10 USFC section 2391.

While separate from the General Plan, an update to the JLUS is in the initial stages of moving forward. As with the previous JLUS, it is anticipated that Kern County will have an active role in the preparation and processing of this document. An update to the JLUS will serve as an opportunity to identify necessary changes to our General Plan to ensure ongoing compatibility between our military institutions and the community that support and surround them.

Public Comment and Presentations
Fifteen (15) members of the community spoke at the workshop. Support from non-speakers was shown for these policy requests; in addition, an invitation for Commissioners to visit homes in disadvantaged communities was received. Summarized comments include the following, such as the need(s) for:

- A Climate Action Plan and an Environmental Justice Element.
- Increased investment in renewable energy.
- Increased education county-wide regarding Valley Fever and the need for more Valley Fever mitigation measures for projects.
- Solutions regarding Kern County’s poor air quality.
- Additional policies regarding clean and cheap energy.
- Continued promotion for Kern County’s Oil and Gas Environmental Impact Report and the positive effects it has had on the environment.

Workshop 6 Noise Element, Safety Elements (June 22, 2017)

Noise
The County’s Noise Element seeks to preserve and enhance the acoustical environment which relates directly to the quality of life that can be achieved in the County’s communities. By recognizing existing sources of noise pollution, taking reasonable steps to mitigate future impacts, and preventing additional substantial sources of noise, the County can achieve a quieter environment and a more comfortable and calming community. Noise has been linked directly to human health and aside from general annoyance, excessive noise is a source of discomfort, interferes with sleep and disrupts communication and relaxation.

Safety
Several new laws effect the Safety Element such as AB 3065 (Kehoe, 2004) and SB 1240 (Hancock, 20006). These new requirements include updating the hazard mitigation plan, flood management, and wildfire prevention plans.
Public Comment and Presentations
Twenty-three (23) members of the community spoke at this workshop. Summarized comments from this final workshop include the following, such as the need(s) and want for:

- Research regarding the Western Rosedale Specific Plan was made as to whether the county would be updating or removing the plan.
- Status update regarding the Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan update.
- Solutions for safety issues for communities next to prisons and for a wall to be built to separate the community from the prison.
- Buffers around agriculture and setbacks to oil and gas facilities.
- The addition of strong policies supporting SB 1000.
- Adding and improving sidewalks and public lighting in unincorporated areas.
- Safe routes to schools including possible alternative semi-truck routes, specifically rerouting to not go through neighborhoods where children walk to school.
- An evacuation plan and emergency facilities to be developed including the creation of maps of oil pipelines to be made easily available to emergency responders, and for fire hydrant services in unincorporated areas to be incorporated.

Kern County General Plan 2040 Information:

For more information, please visit our General Plan 2040 website page at:

https://kernplanning.com/general-plan-update/

In addition, to submit a comment, concern, ask questions or to get on our notification list to receive updates and the newsletter, please contact Staff below:

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Kern County 101

Kern County is the 3rd largest county in area in California and the 20th largest in the United States with 8,201 square miles. It contains 11 incorporated cities and has three distinct regions: valley, mountain and desert.

It's Law!

California State law requires counties and cities make General Plans which must include seven elements: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, and open space, noise and safety. Communities may voluntarily adopt additional elements covering subjects of local interest. Some examples include: air quality, healthy communities, or environmental justice.

Healthy Communities

A Healthy Community, as described by the US Department of Health and Human Services, is “one that continuously creates and improves both its physical and social environments, helping people support one another in aspects of daily life and to develop their fullest potential.” (Healthy People 2010) It encompasses health, fresh food, clean air and water, safety, education, transportation, parks, recreation centers, art and culture.

Our County faces rising health issues such as asthma, diabetes and accidental injuries. Some of these can be mitigated through coordinated efforts with multiple jurisdictions. Changes can be made through improved living and working environments such as public transit, healthcare, fresh food, and education and training. Together we can make a difference and live healthily.

Get Involved!

A successful General Plan will reflect the community’s priorities and your input is needed to confirm the community’s values and establish its vision.

Website

http://pcd.kerndsa.com/general-plan-update

Visit the General Plan website to submit questionnaire responses and find out more about meetings, and the status of the General Plan

Workshops

Attend Workshops and share your ideas.

Newsletters

A series of newsletters will be prepared to provide information on upcoming workshops and an overview of the elements being discussed.

Mailing List

If you would like to be added to the General Plan Update mailing list, please visit our website or email us at GeneralPlanUpdate@co.kern.ca.us

Questions

1. What type of data gathering or analysis do you think should be done by Staff to develop potential healthy community goals and policies for the General Plan Update?
2. What is the best part about living in Kern County?
3. What is the worst part about living in Kern County?
4. What does the term healthy community mean to you?
5. Is your neighborhood a health community? If so, why? If not, why not?
6. What amenities do you look for in a community?
General Plan Elements and Workshop Schedule

Healthy Communities  Ensures walkable, bicycle-friendly communities with access to fresh food, health care and other factors of a healthy place to live and work.

Workshop: January 26 and February 23, 2017

Land Use  Establishes land use designations and patterns to support economic stability while protecting our quality of life.

Workshop: February 23 and March 23, 2017

Circulation  Guides transportation decisions for automobiles, bicycles, pedestrians and mass transit.

Open Space  Provides measures to protect and improve open spaces.

Conservation  Addresses protection and enhancement of natural and cultural resources.

Workshop: March 23, 2017

Water  Ensures water resources are available, sustained and protected for quality.

Housing  Plans for housing to meet the needs of all sections of the county.

Workshop: April 27, 2017

Energy  Provides measures that reduce energy use and encourage alternative energy development.

Military Readiness  Addresses military needs such as land, restricted air space and housing.

Workshop: May 25, 2017

Safety  Addresses hazards such as fires, flooding, geological hazards and hazardous materials.

Noise  Addresses noise-generating and noise-sensitive land uses.

Workshop: June 22, 2017

General Plan Update Process

Workshops  General Plan element discussions to develop a potential framework such as plan objectives, goals, policies and implementation measures.

Staff Report to Board Of Supervisors

Plan Development  Finalize a Draft General Plan Document to be circulated for public review and comment.

Environmental Analysis  Analyze the environmental effects of implementing the General Plan through a Program Level Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

Project Consideration  Circulate the final proposed General Plan and Program Level EIR for public review and comment.

General Plan Adoption  The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will consider the General Plan at a series of public hearings.

Contact the General Plan Update Team  GeneralPlanUpdate@co.kern.ca.us or Kern County Planning & Natural Resources Department 2700 M Street, Suite 100 Ph: (661) 862-8600
What’s New

A dedicated email address has been created for the General Plan Update. If you have questions, wish to be added to our mailing list or wish to submit answers to our questionnaires, please contact us at:

GeneralPlanUpdate@co.kern.ca.us

If you missed a meeting or would like to review documents, a portion of our website has been dedicated to the General Plan. Please visit:

http://pcd.kerndsa.com/general-plan-update

“Elementary, my dear Watson, Elementary”

Government Code dictates a community's General Plan must include seven elements: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, and open space, noise and safety. Communities may voluntarily adopt additional elements covering subjects of local interest. Some examples include: air quality, healthy communities, or environmental justice.

Although Mr. Holmes never uttered the above phase in the original 56 short stories or 4 novels, the use of the of the word element, which is defined as, ‘a component or constituent of a whole or one of the parts into which a whole may be resolved by analysis’ is appropriate given these elements are the basic building blocks upon which all other structures of land uses are built.

It is within this framework of a series of public workshops that the Kern County Planning and Natural Resources departments intends to solicit public comment and input from interested parties and stakeholders to develop updated frameworks for each of the elements and optional elements.

Kern County General Plan

Most people who own property are familiar with zoning laws that regulate land use; however, most of those same people are not familiar with the fact that those laws and regulations are built upon the County’s General Plan. A general plan is a community’s broad blueprint for future development. It describes a community’s development goals, objectives, and policies for future development and is the foundation for land use decisions made by the planning commission and/or board of supervisors.

A general plan consists of at least two parts. Not only must it contain a written text describing a community’s goals, objectives, and policies for development, it must also contain a map (or maps) and diagrams that illustrate the generalized distribution of land uses, the road system, environmental hazard areas, the open space system, and other policy statements that can be illustrated.

Vision for the Future

The Kern County Board of Supervisors, the Kern County Planning Commission and the Kern County Planning & Natural Resources Department comprise the General Plan Update Committee. We are reaching out to you, the private individual, business owners, organizations, agencies, and interested stakeholders to provide input and share thoughts and visions for Kern County’s future by developing a general plan that will take all Kern County residents into happier, healthier, more productive, and prosperous future.

The General Plan Update Committee understands and appreciates the diverse range of perspectives, experiences, and ambitions individuals or groups can bring to the planning and visioning process and together we can produce a document of which we can be proud.

Goals to consider

- Opportunity to live, work and be active in our communities
- Access to health, affordable food at school and work.
- Access to education and training for job stability and availability.
When Last We Met
On October 13, 2016, a Planning Commission meeting was held to introduce the General Plan Update and seek direction from the Commission. It was decided that the second Planning Commission meeting of each month (the fourth Thursday) for the first six months of 2017 would be set aside for the General Plan Update. It was also decided that the Planning Commission meeting would start at 7:00 p.m. but Staff would be available at 6:00 p.m. Several members of the community expressed their enthusiasm and support of the General Plan Update.

What's Next
Healthy Communities and Land Use
In February we will continue our discussion of Healthy Communities and hope to continue to hear from you. We will also start our discussion on Land Use.

Land use is the ultimate pattern of development for the county. It addresses future growth and physical development of the County, in other words it is the long-range view for short-term actions.

There are two types of land use designations: the General Plan and Zoning. The General Plan Land Use element addresses broad needs like separating heavy industrial from homes and schools. Zoning addresses specific uses like where in an area a home is placed.

Next Community Workshop
The Kern County Community is invited to participate in the County’s General Plan Update

Healthy Communities
WHEN: Thursday, January 26, 2017 @ 6:00 p.m.
WHERE: Chambers of the Board of Supervisors, 1st Floor
1115 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield
Healthy Communities

Homes, schools, and neighborhoods influence community health in fundamental ways. In these places are opportunities to influence and improve health, by ensuring that everyone has access to the ingredients for a healthy life, including nourishing food, safe water, affordable places to live, safe places to walk, bike, and be active, and clean air indoors and out. Kern County Public Health Department uses indicators to gauge the health of our communities. An overview of indicators of a healthy community and recommended concepts and strategies for the general plan will be presented.

A presentation will be given by a local community group.

Land Use

A land use element which designates the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the land for housing, business, industry, open space, including agriculture, natural resources, recreation, and the enjoyment of scenic beauty, education, public buildings and grounds, solid and liquid waste disposal facilities, and other categories of public and private uses of land. The land use element shall include a statement of standards of population density and building intensity recommended for the various districts and other territory covered by the plan. The land use element shall identify areas covered by the plan which are subject to flooding and shall be reviewed annually with respect to those areas. The land use element shall designate, in a land use category that provides for timber production, those parcels of real property zoned for timberland production pursuant to the California Timberland productivity Act of 1982. (Gov. Code 65302(a))

A presentation will be given by local conservation groups.

Get Involved!

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Website

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3. What is the worst part about living in Kern County?
4. What does the term healthy community mean to you?
5. Is your neighborhood a health community? If so, why? If not, why not?
6. What amenities do you look for in a community?

Our Schedule

- JAN-JUNE 2017: Public Elements, Public workshops
- SEPTEMBER 2017: Draft General Plan, Circulate for Documents
- OCTOBER 2017: Environmental Analysis
- JULY 2017 PLAN DEVELOPMENT PHASE
- AUG 2017: Report to Board of Supervisors
- OCT 2017: ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS
- APRIL 2018: Final GP AND PROGRAM EIR
- SEPTEMBER 2018: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
General Plan Elements and Workshop Schedule

Healthy Communities Ensures walkable, bicycle-friendly communities with access to fresh food, health care and other factors of a healthy place to live and work.

Land Use Establishes land use designations and patterns to support economic stability while protecting our quality of life.

Workshop: February 23

Land Use, Continued

Circulation Guides transportation decisions for automobiles, bicycles, pedestrians and mass transit.

Open Space Provides measures to protect and improve open spaces.

Conservation Addresses protection and enhancement of natural and cultural resources.

Workshop: March 23, 2017

Water Ensures water resources are available, sustained and protected for quality.

Housing Plans for housing to meet the needs of all sections of the county.

Workshop: April 27, 2017

Energy Provides measures that reduce energy use and encourage alternative energy development.

Military Readiness Addresses military needs such as land, restricted air space and housing.

Workshop: May 25, 2017

Safety Addresses hazards such as fires, flooding, geological hazards and hazardous materials.

Noise Addresses noise-generating and noise-sensitive land uses.

Workshop: June 22, 2017

General Plan Update Process

Workshops
General Plan element discussions to develop a potential framework such as plan objectives, goals, policies and implementation measures.

Staff Report to Board Of Supervisors

Plan Development
Finalize a Draft General Plan Document to be circulated for public review and comment.

Environmental Analysis
Analyze the environmental effects of implementing the General Plan through a Program Level Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

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Circulate the final proposed General Plan and Program Level EIR for public review and comment.

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Contact the General Plan Update Team
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Kern County

What’s New

Throughout this process all documents will be posted on our website:

http://pcd.kerndsa.com/general-plan-update

If you are looking for a Staff Report, Summary of Comments, Agenda, or a presentation summary, look no further than the General Plan Update front page. If you put your email address in the box to the right, you will receive notices when new documents are made available or changes have been made to the site.

Formula for Success

Coach John Wooden, UCLA basketball, said Success = Conditioning + Fundamentals + Unity. This formula helped Coach Wooden lead his team to 10 national championships. It can also be used to create a successful general plan update.

Conditioning in a general plan, is preparation. Preparation is reviewing laws and regulations and general readiness for workshops, i.e. getting the team together.

+Fundamentals (basics) of all planning, especially a general plan, is land use. Land use is the designation of use of sections of land, what can be done where.

+Unity (teamwork) is teamwork. In creating the best possible general plan, it is vital that the community take part. Through comments, suggestions, recommendations and requests, the community helps guide the general plan.

=Success in the general plan lies within its comprehensiveness. This means the plan can be implemented and reflects the goals and policies the community and Staff consider the most important for the continued economic growth and health of the county.

Our focus is teamwork. Through detailed comments, written or spoken, Staff can focus and prioritize. Detailed comments include projects, such as sidewalks in an area, that will improve your community.


Land Use Element

Land Use is the pattern of development; the general distribution, location and extent of public and private uses of land.

Kern County combines Land Use, Open Space and Conservation into one chapter because of the close interrelationship between the elements. This chapter provides for varied land uses for economic growth while preserving conserving agricultural lands and natural resources.

The General Plan Land Use Element is the equivalent to using a broad paintbrush on a canvas. Its purpose is to layout where the sky, grass, and water are going to be. Other adopted documents, like the Zoning Ordinance and the Land Division Ordinance, implement the General Plan Land Use Element through site specific standards. Examples include setbacks, height limits, and what type of commercial business is permitted. These documents are the thin bush adding details, like sun rays, grass blades and ripples in the water.

Together the Land Use Element and the other adopted documents determine the growth patterns for the county, where projects are built.

Planning for the Future

The healthy community and land use elements are corner stones in building a better, healthier County. Help create these corner stones by sharing your project ideas. Be specific about what you want to see, what you want the County to prioritize. Have an impact on the future by submitting comments and suggestions today, either in person or on the website.
When Last We Met

On January 26, 2017 Staff met with the public and welcomed all the comments shared. Kern County Public Health discussed the need for long term resolutions to the County's health problems. They recommended safe walking and biking areas and accessible, affordable, nutritious food.

A presentation of Kern County statistics and overview of updated regulations and requirements for the general plan was given. These materials are on the general plan update website.

The Kern Economic Development Corporation shared the economic growth the County experienced in recent years and hopes for continued growth.

After the presentations, the public shared their concerns. Frequent concerns were: better drainage systems, safe parks and recreation areas, bicycle lanes and sidewalks.

Staff greatly appreciates the comments and attendance at this workshop. We hope to continue to hear from you as we continue this process.

What's Next

Land Use, Circulation, Open Space, and Conservation

In March we will continue our Land Use discussion and discuss Circulation, Open Space and Conservation as these elements are interrelated.

The circulation element consists of goals and policies guiding the general location and extent of exiting and proposed transportation routes, major thoroughfares and transportation public facilities (terminals)

The open space element addresses land or water which is unimproved and devoted to an open space use. It includes areas for preserving plant and animal life, forest land, groundwater basins and earthquake faults.

The conservation element addresses conservation, development and utilization of natural resources including water, forests, soils, wildlife, minerals, etc.

Community Workshop

The Kern County Community is invited to participate in the County's General Plan Update

Healthy Communities, Land Use

WHEN: Thursday, February 23, 2017 @ 7:00 p.m.
WHERE: Chambers of the Board of Supervisors, 1st Floor
1115 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield
Land Use
The land use element designates the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the land for housing, business, industry, open space, including agriculture, natural resources, recreation, and the enjoyment of scenic beauty, education, public buildings and grounds, solid and liquid waste disposal facilities, and other categories of public and private uses of land.

Conservation
The conservation element addresses the conservation, development, and use of natural resources, including water, forests, soils, rivers, and mineral deposits.

Open Space
The open space element details plans and measures for the long-range preservation and conservation of open space lands, including open space for the preservation of natural resources, the managed production of resources, agriculture, outdoor recreation, and public health and safety.

The current Kern County General Plan combines Land Use, Conservation and Open Space elements because they are interrelated. This combination of elements allows economic growth while protecting agricultural land and natural resources.

Circulation
The circulation element correlates with the land use element and identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities.

Get Involved!
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Questions
1. Moving forward what do you believe the General Plan needs to focus on?

Our Schedule
- OCTOBER 2016 KICK OFF
- JULY 2017 PLAN DEVELOPMENT PHASE
- AUG 2017 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS
- SEPTEMBER 2017 DRAFT GENERAL PLAN CIRCULATE FOR DOCUMENTS
- OCT 2017 REPORT TO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
- APRIL 2018 FINAL GP AND PROGRAM EIR
- SEPTEMBER 2018 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
General Plan Elements and Workshop Schedule

**Land Use** Establishes land use designations and patterns to support economic stability while protecting our quality of life.

**Circulation** Guides transportation decisions for automobiles, bicycles, pedestrians and mass transit.

**Open Space** Provides measures to protect and improve open spaces.

**Conservation** Addresses protection and enhancement of natural and cultural resources.

**Workshop: March 23, 2017**

**Water** Ensures water resources are available, sustained and protected for quality.

**Housing** Plans for housing to meet the needs of all sections of the county.

**Workshop: April 27, 2017**

**Energy** Provides measures that reduce energy use and encourage alternative energy development.

**Military Readiness** Addresses military needs such as land, restricted air space and housing.

**Workshop: May 25, 2017**

**Safety** Addresses hazards such as fires, flooding, geological hazards and hazardous materials.

**Noise** Addresses noise-generating and noise-sensitive land uses.

**Workshop: June 22, 2017**

**Healthy Communities** Ensures walkable, bicycle-friendly communities with access to fresh food, health care and other factors of a healthy place to live and work.

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**General Plan Update Process**

**Workshops**
General Plan element discussions to develop a potential framework such as plan objectives, goals, policies and implementation measures.

**Staff Report to Board Of Supervisors**

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Kern County's Transportation System
The Circulation Element is a Transportation System Plan identifying what is needed to accommodate existing future development for Kern County. We need your input on key areas of study.

Potential Removal of Unnecessary Arterial & Collector designations along Section and Midsection Lines
Arterials and Collectors are a grid system of general plan lines commonly called: Road Reservations. These road reservations "reserve" a specific right of way width and designate where roads may be built in the future. There are many instances where these lines are more beneficial than others.

Street Design Standards
Streets are important to community identity and provide a needed service. Street design standards may include design features such as wider sidewalks to buffer traffic, marked street crossings at intersections, pedestrian-scale lighting, benches, bus shelters, and street trees. We will be refining Kern County street standards to enhance sustainability and promote healthy communities, increase functionality of the road system, and include multimodal features.

Complete Streets Policies
Complete Streets are streets for everyone. This means a street is designed to provide a safe access for all users: pedestrians, motorists, bicyclists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Street policies are designed for a specific place. For example, a Complete Street in a rural area will look quite different from a Complete Street in a highly populated urban area or in a primarily residential suburban area. All are designed with a distinctive purpose in mind depending on the uniqueness of the area.

Economic Opportunity Areas
Kern County’s Board of Supervisors have adopted five (5) economic opportunity areas:
1. The Airport Economic Opportunity Area
2. Lost Hills Economic Opportunity Area
3. Oildale Reinvestment and Revitalization Area
4. Renewable Energy Neighborhood Enhancement Wind and Solar Business Investment Zone (RENEWBIZ)
5. The Westside Economic Stability and Tourism Area Reinvestment Zone (WESTARZ)

Within these areas, property tax revenue from the area is used to reinvest and redevelop the community. These taxes become grants that business owners apply for to do projects like repainting a storefront or adding awnings or trees.

A closer look will be taken in these areas to develop potential policies or programs to further reinvest within the areas in order to improve the economic stability of Kern County and improve the overall quality of life for residents.

Planning for the Future
Land conservation and open spaces improves quality of life. As part of the General Plan update, Staff will look into policies that will promote land conservation and open spaces while encouraging economic stability.

Public comments and continued participation in workshops provides Staff with information to guide conversation and potential policies. Your continued input is encouraged. Please join us!
When Last We Met

On February 23, 2017 Staff met with the public and welcomed all the comments shared. Staff gave a short presentation on health indicators and an introduction to the land use element.

A presentation entitled “Our Valley, Our Voice” was given regarding creating a healthy environment with job stability for residence of Kern County.

Several members of the public spoke about problems in their communities like road maintenance and safe routes to school.

A presentation entitled “Conserving Lands and Livelihood” was given regarding finding solutions to benefit people and nature through connected conservation spaces while preserving our strong agricultural history.

Members of the community voiced their support for protecting farmland, increasing affordable housing and promoting a dialog between Staff and the public.

What’s Next

Water and Housing Elements

In April, we will discuss Water and Housing Elements. The water element looks at reliable long term water supply, water quality, watershed and groundwater protection and conservation. Staff will assess the county’s water supply and facilities and write policies that reflect future growth and goals.

In 2016 Kern County adopted an updated housing element in compliance with HCD. As part of the General Plan update, the housing element will be reviewed for internal consistency and all necessary revisions will be made to ensure these amendments will not affect the consistency of the Housing Element’s policies and programs. Staff is evaluation potential underserved unincorporated communities and will make changes if needed to address the needs of these areas.

Community Workshop

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Land Use, Circulation, Open Space and Conservation

WHEN: Thursday, March 23, 2017 @ 7:00 p.m.
WHERE: Chambers of the Board of Supervisors, 1st Floor
        1115 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield
Conservation

The conservation element addresses the conservation, development, and use of natural resources, including water, forests, soils, rivers, and mineral deposits.

Conservation, in terms of the General Plan, does not necessarily mean un-improvement, rather the focus is on how to preserve natural resources. The purpose of the conservation element is to layout the foundation by which natural resources are managed to ensure sustainability and compatibility with surrounding uses. Some actions may include preservation of land and un-improvement but others include management that allows utilization of natural resources in a manner that helps sustain long term use.

Water

Water is strongly tied to growth and development and the County’s economic and environmental well being. Droughts and the growing population place strain on water needs and availability throughout the county. Policies, management, and implementation measures will insure water needs are met and increase sustainability while protecting water quality and the environment.

Housing

The development and preservation of adequate and affordable housing is important both to the well-being of the residents and economic prosperity of Kern County. To plan for the development of adequate housing for all income segments, the Housing Element is prepared as part of the General Plan.

Although the current Housing Element was adopted in 2016, it may be refined as part of the update process.

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- JAN-JUNE 2017: PUBLIC ELEMENTS
- SEPT. 2017: DRAFT GENERAL PLAN CIRCULATE FOR COMMENT
- OCT. 2017: ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS
- JULY 2017: PLAN DEVELOPMENT PHASE
- AUG. 2017: REPORT TO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
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- OCT. 2018: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
General Plan Elements and Workshop Schedule

Conservation  Addresses protection and enhancement of natural and cultural resources.

Water  Ensures water resources are available, sustained and protected for quality.

Housing  Plans for housing to meet the needs of all sections of the county.
Workshop: April 27, 2017

Energy  Provides measures that reduce energy use and encourage alternative energy development.

Military Readiness  Addresses military needs such as land, restricted air space and housing.
Workshop: May 25, 2017

Safety  Addresses hazards such as fires, flooding, geological hazards and hazardous materials.

Noise  Addresses noise-generating and noise-sensitive land uses.
Workshop: June 22, 2017

Healthy Communities  Ensures walkable, bicycle-friendly communities with access to fresh food, health care and other factors of a healthy place to live and work.

Land Use  Establishes land use designations and patterns to support economic stability while protecting our quality of life.

Circulation  Guides transportation decisions for automobiles, bicycles, pedestrians and mass transit.

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Comments can be submitted through our website at:
http://pcd.kerndsa.com/community-input
These comments are part of the record. If you wish to remain anonymous, please note an email address does not have to be provided.

Water Management
Discussions of water are prepared in coordination with any county wide water agency and with all district and city agencies, including flood management, water conservation, or groundwater agencies that have developed, served, controlled, managed, or conserved water of any type for any purpose in the county and must include any information on water supply and demand. Policies should take into account future development impacts on bodies of water.

Metropolitan Bakersfield Area Plan
Bakersfield is the largest incorporated city in Kern County. It also has a large sphere of influence, meaning the boundary outside it’s legal borders where the city believes it will grow, which affects several unincorporated communities. The policies and design standards that govern these communities mimic those of within Bakersfield’s legal borders.
The goal of both the city and county planning departments is to create seamless transitions between city and county lands.

Metropolitan Bakersfield Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)
The Metropolitan Bakersfield HCP addresses urban development, specifically the effect of urban growth on protected plant and animal species within the Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan area.
The HCP covers endangered species like the kit fox, kangaroo rat, blunt nosed leopard lizard and Bakersfield cactus.
The purpose of an HCP is to provide an effective framework to protect, enhance and when necessary restore natural resources in the general area addressed by the Metropolitan Bakersfield planning area, while streamlining the environmental permitting process for impacts on threatened and endangered species. The existing HCP is set to expire in the coming years and a new plan to replace the existing plan is currently in progress.
The updated Habitat Conservation Plan is being prepared under the combined efforts of the City of Bakersfield, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the County of Kern. The proposed permit area, where all covered activities will take place, encompasses approximately 258,406 acres or 404 square miles.

Planning for the Future
Water management policies and conservation policies will help direct economic growth and stability in the county.
Public comments and continued participation in workshops provides Staff with information to guide conversation and potential policies. Your continued input is encouraged. Please join us!
When Last We Met

On March 23, 2017 Staff met with the public and welcomed all comments shared. This was the third General Plan Update meeting.

Staff gave a presentation about land use designations and the evaluation of specific and rural plans; economic opportunity area plans; and an overview of proposed circulation policies.

The public then addressed Staff and the Commissioners. Comments and requests regarding sidewalks, crosswalks, street lights and better drainage systems were received. Support for Complete Street policies and road design standards was given. Support of policies that promote and support business was also received.

Staff appreciated the public participation in this workshop and feedback from the Commissioners.

What's Next

Energy and Military Readiness Elements

In May, we will discuss Energy and Military Readiness Elements.

The energy element addresses existing and potential energy resources. Kern County has a wealth of oil, natural gas, and electricity producers. The element defines critical energy related issues and sets forth goals, policies and implementation measures to protect resources and encourage development while protecting the public's health, safety and the environment.

The military readiness element is a collaboration between the military and the County to prevent land use conflicts with military installations and training activities.

Community Workshop

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Water and Housing Elements

WHEN: Thursday, April 27, 2017 @ 7:00 p.m.
WHERE: Chambers of the Board of Supervisors, 1st Floor
1115 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield
SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP COMMENTS
Summary of Comments
General Plan Update First Workshop, January 26, 2017

The following is a summary of comments from the public at the January workshop:

- A request to present “Our County, Our Voice” at the next workshop was made and Staff is happy to discuss it further.

- A comment was received regarding concerns that Kern County has one of the highest rates of diabetes, obesity, heart disease, opiate addiction, air pollution, teen pregnancy, asthma, lack of swimming pools; lowest funded library is California; lowest number of all-weather tracks; poor support for park system

- Support for a Healthy Communities element in General Plan was expressed.

- A request was made to consider incorporating SB 1000 and SB 379 into general plan

- Several comments were made to add/improve sidewalks in unincorporated areas

- Several comments suggested bike lanes

- Several comments were received that school closures and delays due to flooding should be addressed, as well as the desire to see drainage solutions

- Requests were made for improved park maintenance including: walking trails, sufficient trashcans, water fountains, basketball court, boxing club, volleyball court, and a swimming pool with lessons

- Several requests were made for a community cultural classes/center

- A few comments were received requesting roads maintenance including: safer, wider roads, more visible traffic signals and gutters.

- A few requests were made for street lights.

- A couple requests for sewage systems in septic tank areas were made.

- A comment was received that there is trash on the streets, especially bug infected furniture, it was suggested that cameras be added as well as more no littering signs, and fines for those who litter

- A couple comments received requested affordable housing

- A few comments suggested buffer zones/setback separating agriculture and oil from new residences and gathering areas such as schools and parks

- A request for health, affordable food made available in underserved areas was made.

- A comment was received to increase commercial business in small communities

- A request was made to annex private streets for maintenance
• The fee for Hart Memorial Park was noted a couple times and it was suggested that either all parks be the same or no fee at all.

• A comment was received requesting reliable public transportation

• A comment was received that drinking water is contaminated and it was requested that water treatment be made available to schools, homes and businesses affected.

• A comment was received that there are dog problems makes walking unsafe it was suggested that an ordinance to fine people with multiple dogs be added

• A comment was received requesting the preservation of land around stream courses

• A request for additional funds for library branches for cultural exchange and education was made.

• The comment was made that the following are needed: employment and substance abuse programs.

• It was suggested to impose social host fine for underage alcohol consumption in a home.

• A request for limited smoke shops was received.

The following are comments provided from the Planning Commissioners:

• It was requested that a hard look be taken into incorporating urban farming and marketing what is grown.

• It was requested that a look be taken into using parks for weekly farmer’s markets with small seller’s fees in disadvantaged areas.

• The comment was received that poor water, air and sewage should not be normal for children and that General Plan policies should focus on improving these problems.

• All the Planning Commissioners made it a point to thank the community for coming out and sharing ideas and problems.
Summary of Comments
General Plan Update Workshop, February 23, 2017

The following is a summary of comments from the public at the February workshop:

• Presentation of “Our County, Our Voice”
• A concern was voiced about home businesses not following safety laws.
• Several comments were received regarding safe routes to school and improved road conditions.
• A request was made for the names of small communities.
• A request was made for the right to vote.
• Several requests were made for maps showing where county/city roads are located and to which jurisdictions reports should be made.
• Several comments were made regarding improving streets and roads.
• A request was made to add environmental quality to the general plan, specifically addressing improved air quality.
• A request for definitions of land use designations was made.
• Several members of the community raised concern regarding the number of Marijuana dispensaries opening in communities and the rising crime rates surrounding them.
• A request for Staff to research other counties and why they are doing better in the health indicators was made.
• A comment was received regarding the separation of agriculture and oil from residential areas and schools.
• Several comments were received regarding walkable communities.
• A comment was received regarding flooding in Lamont and the need for better drainage and roads.
• A concern was raised regarding ranches in the middle of Arvin that are a county pocket.
• A comment was received regarding the jobs and food the agricultural businesses provide our county. A request for continued promotion of business was made.
• A comment was received regarding the encouragement of affordable housing.
• A presentation was given entitled “Conserving Lands and Livelihood” which promoted finding solutions for people and nature, conservation and connectivity
• A comment was received regarding policies to protect farmland and a specific agricultural element in the General Plan.
Summary of Comments  
General Plan Update Workshop, March 23, 2017

The following is a summary of comments from the public at the March workshop:

• A comment was received supporting of policies that promote and support businesses and avoid unnecessary regulations that prohibits job creation and the use of specific area plans to accommodate larger developments

• Support for policies to protect agricultural zoning and promote participation in the Williamson act was received

• A request for continued policies that reduce conflict between zones was received

• Support of policies promoting environmental justice was made

• A couple requests for fewer conservation easements were made

• A comment was received in support of a more streamlined government

• Several requests were made for bicycle lanes and sidewalks in disadvantaged communities.

• Requests for safe paths to parks was made by several residents.

• A request was made for regional advanced mitigation lands to increase connectivity.

• A comment was made regarding cleaning up trash

• Several requests were made for community centers in disadvantaged communities.

• Requests for help to develop a soccer field in the Rexland Acres park were received.

• Comments were received requesting better regional bus routes and zero emission buses.

• Several comments were received regarding flooding problems

• Several comments were received for crosswalks and lights in Lamont

• A request was received for buffer zones between industries and residents

• A request was received to use abandoned buildings for youth programs

• A comment was received regarding the partnership between conservation groups and farmers and ranchers. The example of retired land was used to demonstrate that as farmers retire land, the conservation groups offer grass seed options for planting to help the environment.

• A couple comments were received requesting mixed use policies and infill development to generate tax revenue

• A request for a climate action plan was received.

• A few comments were received requesting better drainage and better streets

• A few requests for continued cooperation between the County, Kern Cog and Metro Bakersfield were received.

• Support for street design was received
Summary of Comments
General Plan Update Workshop, April 27, 2017

The following is a summary of comments from the public at the April workshop:

- A presentation was given regarding the history of Kern County’s water sources and how water is distributed throughout California.
- A presentation was given regarding the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and how Kern County is responding to the new legislature and what the real impacts may be on the county going forward.
- A presentation was given regarding rising homebuilding costs and the impact it has on affordability and the economy. A request for policies to support homebuilding growth was made.
- A request and support for the request were made for road improvement, street lights, sidewalks, and fire hydrants on Lytle Avenue between County Line Road and Cecil Avenue area.
- A comment was received regarding flooding along Cecil Avenue.
- A request for policies regarding prisoners near homes was made.
- A few requests for more affordable housing were received.
- Requests for flood management policies were made.
- A request for walkable communities was received.
- Support for the water element was received along with requests for drought plans, groundwater recharge policies and policies for quality water especially in disadvantaged communities.
- A comment was received supporting consultation with conservation groups and water management teams.
- A comment was received for policies encouraging infill and higher density building and supporting a change in the view of housing.
- A request was made for a policy restricting front yard parking.
- A comment was received regarding dumping in Oildale and a request was made for a fence blocking the alley where this is taking place.
- Several comments were received regarding contaminated water in disadvantaged communities especially Lamont.
- Requests for filters or a better water system in the elementary school in Lamont were made.
- Policies protecting water quality in disadvantaged communities were requested.
- A request was made to connect smaller water districts to larger ones was made.
Summary of Comments
General Plan Update Workshop, May 25, 2017

The following is a summary of comments from the public at the April workshop:

• A presentation was given regarding the Energy Element and the Military Readiness Element.
• Several supported a Climate Action Plan
• Several requests for increased investment in renewable energy were made.
• A request for increased education about Valley Fever and mitigation measures was received.
• A comment was received regarding a separate Environmental Justice Element.
• Several comments were received regarding Kern County’s poor air quality.
• An invitation for Commissioners to visit homes in disadvantaged communities was received.
• Requests for policies regarding clean and cheap energy were received.
• A couple comments were received supporting Kern County’s Oil and Gas EIR and the positive effects it has had on the environment.

After receiving public comments, Staff noted the General Plan is the constitution, the basis for all land use, in Kern County. While updating the General Plan, Staff is looking into air quality, climate change and other concerns for policies, goals and implementation measures. Staff also noted Kern County is the leading county in alternative/renewable energy and the Zoning Ordinance allows solar to be added as an accessory with only a building permit.
Summary of Comments
General Plan Update Workshop, June 22, 2017

The following is a summary of comments from the public at the June workshop:

• A request regarding the Western Rosedale Specific Plan was made as to whether the county would be updating the plan or getting rid of it.
• A request for information about the Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan updated was made.
• Several comment were received regarding safety issues for communities next to prisons. Requests for a wall to be built to separate the community from the prison were made.
• Several comments were made to add/improve sidewalks in unincorporated areas.
• Several comments requested public lighting
• A comment was received for an evacuation plan and emergency facilities.
• A request for fire hydrant services in unincorporated areas was made.
• Several comments were received regarding paved roads.
• A request for oil and gas setbacks was made.
• A member of the community informed the public “Safe Walks to School” is a federal program done through Kern COG
• Requests were made for alternative semi-truck routes, specifically rerouting to not go through neighborhoods where children walk to school.
• A request for strong policies supporting SB 1000 was made.
• A request for buffers around agriculture be looked into.
• A comment was received regarding clarifying how noise levels are determined.
• It was requested that maps of oil pipelines be available to emergency responders.

The following are comments provided from the Planning Commissioners:
• It was requested that discovery of state and federal representatives be made known to public.
• It was requested that a look be taken into furthering communication with Bakersfield and other jurisdictions within the county.
• The Planning Commissioners thanked the community for coming out and sharing ideas and problems throughout this process.
WORKSHOP SUBMITTALS

Senate Bill No. 1000

CHAPTER 587

An act to amend Section 65302 of the Government Code, relating to land use.

[ Approved by Governor September 24, 2016. Filed with Secretary of State September 24, 2016. ]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1000, Leyva. Land use: general plans: safety and environmental justice.

(1) The Planning and Zoning Law requires the legislative body of each county and city to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the county or city and of any land outside its boundaries that bears relation to its planning. That law requires this general plan to include several elements, including, among others, a safety element for the protection of the community from unreasonable risks associated with the effects of various geologic hazards, flooding, wildland and urban fires, and climate adaptation and resilience strategies. That law requires that the safety element be reviewed and updated, in the case of flooding and fire hazards, upon the next revision of the housing element after specified dates or, in the case of climate adaptation and resilience strategies, upon either the next revision of a local hazard mitigation plan after a specified date or on or before January 1, 2022, as applicable. That law also requires, after the initial revision of the safety element to address flooding, fires, and climate adaptation and resilience strategies, that for each subsequent revision the planning agency review and, if necessary, revise the safety element to identify new information that was not available during the previous revision of the safety element.

This bill would instead require a planning agency to review and revise the safety element to identify new information, as described above, only to address flooding and fires.

This bill would, in addition, add to the required elements of the general plan an environmental justice element, or related goals, policies, and objectives integrated in other elements, that identifies disadvantaged communities, as defined, within the area covered by the general plan of the city, county, or city and county, if the city, county, or city and county has a disadvantaged community. The bill would also require the environmental justice element, or related environmental justice goals, policies, and objectives integrated in other elements, to identify objectives and policies to reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities, as specified, identify objectives and policies to promote civil engagement in the public decisionmaking process, and identify objectives and policies that prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities. The bill would require the environmental justice element, or the environmental justice goals, policies, and objectives in other elements, to be adopted or reviewed upon the adoption or next revision of 2 or more elements concurrently on or after January 1, 2018. By adding to the duties of county and city officials, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

(2) This bill would incorporate additional changes to Section 65302 of the Government Code, proposed by AB 2651 that would become operative only if this bill and AB 2651 are enacted and become effective on or before
January 1, 2017, and this bill is chaptered last.

(3) The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: yes

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 65302 of the Government Code is amended to read:

65302. The general plan shall consist of a statement of development policies and shall include a diagram or diagrams and text setting forth objectives, principles, standards, and plan proposals. The plan shall include the following elements:

(a) A land use element that designates the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of the land for housing, business, industry, open space, including agriculture, natural resources, recreation, and enjoyment of scenic beauty, education, public buildings and grounds, solid and liquid waste disposal facilities, and other categories of public and private uses of land. The location and designation of the extent of the uses of the land for public and private uses shall consider the identification of land and natural resources pursuant to paragraph (3) of subdivision (d). The land use element shall include a statement of the standards of population density and building intensity recommended for the various districts and other territory covered by the plan. The land use element shall identify and annually review those areas covered by the plan that are subject to flooding identified by flood plain mapping prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or the Department of Water Resources. The land use element shall also do both of the following:

(1) Designate in a land use category that provides for timber production those parcels of real property zoned for timberland production pursuant to the California Timberland Productivity Act of 1982 (Chapter 6.7 (commencing with Section 51100) of Part 1 of Division 1 of Title 5).

(2) Consider the impact of new growth on military readiness activities carried out on military bases, installations, and operating and training areas, when proposing zoning ordinances designating land uses covered by the general plan for land, or other territory adjacent to military facilities, or underlying designated military aviation routes and airspace.

(A) In determining the impact of new growth on military readiness activities, information provided by military facilities shall be considered. Cities and counties shall address military impacts based on information from the military and other sources.

(B) The following definitions govern this paragraph:

(i) "Military readiness activities" mean all of the following:

(1) Training, support, and operations that prepare the men and women of the military for combat.

(2) Operation, maintenance, and security of any military installation.

(iii) Testing of military equipment, vehicles, weapons, and sensors for proper operation or suitability for combat use.

(ii) "Military installation" means a base, camp, post, station, yard, center, homeport facility for any ship, or other activity under the jurisdiction of the United States Department of Defense as defined in paragraph (1) of subsection (g) of Section 2687 of Title 10 of the United States Code.

(b) (1) A circulation element consisting of the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, any military airports and ports, and other local public utilities and facilities, all correlated with the land use element of the plan.

(2) (A) Commencing January 1, 2011, upon any substantive revision of the circulation element, the legislative body shall modify the circulation element to plan for a balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users of streets, roads, and highways for safe and convenient travel in a manner that is suitable to the rural, suburban, or urban context of the general plan.
(B) For purposes of this paragraph, "users of streets, roads, and highways" mean bicyclists, children, persons with disabilities, motorists, movers of commercial goods, pedestrians, users of public transportation, and seniors.

(c) A housing element as provided in Article 10.6 (commencing with Section 65580).

(d) (1) A conservation element for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources including water and its hydraulic force, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, harbors, fisheries, wildlife, minerals, and other natural resources. The conservation element shall consider the effect of development within the jurisdiction, as described in the land use element, on natural resources located on public lands, including military installations. That portion of the conservation element including waters shall be developed in coordination with any countywide water agency and with all district and city agencies, including flood management, water conservation, or groundwater agencies that have developed, served, controlled, managed, or conserved water of any type for any purpose in the county or city for which the plan is prepared. Coordination shall include the discussion and evaluation of any water supply and demand information described in Section 65352.5, if that information has been submitted by the water agency to the city or county.

(2) The conservation element may also cover all of the following:

(A) The reclamation of land and waters.

(B) Prevention and control of the pollution of streams and other waters.

(C) Regulation of the use in stream channels and other areas required for the accomplishment of the conservation plan.

(D) Prevention, control, and correction of the erosion of soils, beaches, and shores.

(E) Protection of watersheds.

(F) The location, quantity and quality of the rock, sand, and gravel resources.

(3) Upon the next revision of the housing element on or after January 1, 2009, the conservation element shall identify rivers, creeks, streams, flood corridors, riparian habitats, and land that may accommodate floodwater for purposes of groundwater recharge and stormwater management.

(e) An open-space element as provided in Article 10.5 (commencing with Section 65560).

(f) (1) A noise element that shall identify and appraise noise problems in the community. The noise element shall analyze and quantify, to the extent practicable, as determined by the legislative body, current and projected noise levels for all of the following sources:

(A) Highways and freeways.

(B) Primary arterials and major local streets.

(C) Passenger and freight online railroad operations and ground rapid transit systems.

(D) Commercial, general aviation, heliport, helistop, and military airport operations, aircraft overflights, jet engine test stands, and all other ground facilities and maintenance functions related to airport operation.

(E) Local industrial plants, including, but not limited to, railroad classification yards.

(F) Other ground stationary noise sources, including, but not limited to, military installations, identified by local agencies as contributing to the community noise environment.

(2) Noise contours shall be shown for all of these sources and stated in terms of community noise equivalent level (CNEL) or day-night average sound level (Ldn). The noise contours shall be prepared on the basis of noise monitoring or following generally accepted noise modeling techniques for the various sources identified in paragraphs (1) to (6), inclusive.

(3) The noise contours shall be used as a guide for establishing a pattern of land uses in the land use element that minimizes the exposure of community residents to excessive noise.

(4) The noise element shall include implementation measures and possible solutions that address existing and foreseeable noise problems, if any. The adopted noise element shall serve as a guideline for compliance with the state's noise insulation standards.
(g) (1) A safety element for the protection of the community from any unreasonable risks associated with the effects of seismically induced surface rupture, ground shaking, ground failure, tsunami, seiche, and dam failure; slope instability leading to mudslides and landslides; subsidence; liquefaction; and other seismic hazards identified pursuant to Chapter 7.8 (commencing with Section 2690) of Division 2 of the Public Resources Code, and other geologic hazards known to the legislative body; flooding; and wildland and urban fires. The safety element shall include mapping of known seismic and other geologic hazards. It shall also address evacuation routes, military installations, peak load water supply requirements, and minimum road widths and clearances around structures, as those items relate to identified fire and geologic hazards.

(2) The safety element, upon the next revision of the housing element on or after January 1, 2009, shall also do the following:

(A) Identify information regarding flood hazards, including, but not limited to, the following:

(i) Flood hazard zones. As used in this subdivision, “flood hazard zone” means an area subject to flooding that is delineated as either a special hazard area or an area of moderate or minimal hazard on an official flood insurance rate map issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The identification of a flood hazard zone does not imply that areas outside the flood hazard zones or uses permitted within flood hazard zones will be free from flooding or flood damage.

(ii) National Flood Insurance Program maps published by FEMA.

(iii) Information about flood hazards that is available from the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

(iv) Designated floodway maps that are available from the Central Valley Flood Protection Board.

(v) Dam failure inundation maps prepared pursuant to Section 8589.5 that are available from the Office of Emergency Services.

(vi) Awareness Floodplain Mapping Program maps and 200-year flood plain maps that are or may be available from, or accepted by, the Department of Water Resources.

(vii) Maps of levee protection zones.

(viii) Areas subject to inundation in the event of the failure of project or nonproject levees or floodwalls.

(ix) Historical data on flooding, including locally prepared maps of areas that are subject to flooding, areas that are vulnerable to flooding after wildfires, and sites that have been repeatedly damaged by flooding.

(x) Existing and planned development in flood hazard zones, including structures, roads, utilities, and essential public facilities.

(xi) Local, state, and federal agencies with responsibility for flood protection, including special districts and local offices of emergency services.

(B) Establish a set of comprehensive goals, policies, and objectives based on the information identified pursuant to subparagraph (A), for the protection of the community from the unreasonable risks of flooding, including, but not limited to:

(i) Avoiding or minimizing the risks of flooding to new development.

(ii) Evaluating whether new development should be located in flood hazard zones, and identifying construction methods or other methods to minimize damage if new development is located in flood hazard zones.

(iii) Maintaining the structural and operational integrity of essential public facilities during flooding.

(iv) Locating, when feasible, new essential public facilities outside of flood hazard zones, including hospitals and health care facilities, emergency shelters, fire stations, emergency command centers, and emergency communications facilities or identifying construction methods or other methods to minimize damage if these facilities are located in flood hazard zones.

(v) Establishing cooperative working relationships among public agencies with responsibility for flood protection.

(C) Establish a set of feasible implementation measures designed to carry out the goals, policies, and objectives established pursuant to subparagraph (B).
(3) Upon the next revision of the housing element on or after January 1, 2014, the safety element shall be reviewed and updated as necessary to address the risk of fire for land classified as state responsibility areas, as defined in Section 4102 of the Public Resources Code, and land classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, as defined in Section 51177. This review shall consider the advice included in the Office of Planning and Research’s most recent publication of “Fire Hazard Planning, General Plan Technical Advice Series” and shall also include all of the following:

(A) Information regarding fire hazards, including, but not limited to, all of the following:

(i) Fire hazard severity zone maps available from the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

(ii) Any historical data on wildfires available from local agencies or a reference to where the data can be found.

(iii) Information about wildfire hazard areas that may be available from the United States Geological Survey.

(iv) General location and distribution of existing and planned uses of land in very high fire hazard severity zones and in state responsibility areas, including structures, roads, utilities, and essential public facilities. The location and distribution of planned uses of land shall not require defensible space compliance measures required by state law or local ordinance to occur on publicly owned lands or open-space designations of homeowner associations.

(v) Local, state, and federal agencies with responsibility for fire protection, including special districts and local offices of emergency services.

(B) A set of goals, policies, and objectives based on the information identified pursuant to subparagraph (A) for the protection of the community from the unreasonable risk of wildfire.

(C) A set of feasible implementation measures designed to carry out the goals, policies, and objectives based on the information identified pursuant to subparagraph (B) including, but not limited to, all of the following:

(i) Avoiding or minimizing the wildfire hazards associated with new uses of land.

(ii) Locating, when feasible, new essential public facilities outside of high fire risk areas, including, but not limited to, hospitals and health care facilities, emergency shelters, emergency command centers, and emergency communications facilities, or identifying construction methods or other methods to minimize damage if these facilities are located in a state responsibility area or very high fire hazard severity zone.

(iii) Designing adequate infrastructure if a new development is located in a state responsibility area or in a very high fire hazard severity zone, including safe access for emergency response vehicles, visible street signs, and water supplies for structural fire suppression.

(iv) Working cooperatively with public agencies with responsibility for fire protection.

(D) If a city or county has adopted a fire safety plan or document separate from the general plan, an attachment of, or reference to, a city or county’s adopted fire safety plan or document that fulfills commensurate goals and objectives and contains information required pursuant to this paragraph.

(4) Upon the next revision of a local hazard mitigation plan, adopted in accordance with the federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-390), on or after January 1, 2017, or, if a local jurisdiction has not adopted a local hazard mitigation plan, beginning on or before January 1, 2022, the safety element shall be reviewed and updated as necessary to address climate adaptation and resiliency strategies applicable to the city or county. This review shall consider advice provided in the Office of Planning and Research’s General Plan Guidelines and shall include all of the following:

(A) (i) A vulnerability assessment that identifies the risks that climate change poses to the local jurisdiction and the geographic areas at risk from climate change impacts, including, but not limited to, an assessment of how climate change may affect the risks addressed pursuant to paragraphs (2) and (3).

(ii) Information that may be available from federal, state, regional, and local agencies that will assist in developing the vulnerability assessment and the adaptation policies and strategies required pursuant to subparagraph (B), including, but not limited to, all of the following:

(I) Information from the Internet-based Cal-Adapt tool.

(II) Information from the most recent version of the California Adaptation Planning Guide.
(III) Information from local agencies on the types of assets, resources, and populations that will be sensitive to various climate change exposures.

(IV) Information from local agencies on their current ability to deal with the impacts of climate change.

(V) Historical data on natural events and hazards, including locally prepared maps of areas subject to previous risk, areas that are vulnerable, and sites that have been repeatedly damaged.

(VI) Existing and planned development in identified at-risk areas, including structures, roads, utilities, and essential public facilities.

(VII) Federal, state, regional, and local agencies with responsibility for the protection of public health and safety and the environment, including special districts and local offices of emergency services.

(B) A set of adaptation and resilience goals, policies, and objectives based on the information specified in subparagraph (A) for the protection of the community.

(C) A set of feasible implementation measures designed to carry out the goals, policies, and objectives identified pursuant to subparagraph (B) including, but not limited to, all of the following:

(i) Feasible methods to avoid or minimize climate change impacts associated with new uses of land.

(ii) The location, when feasible, of new essential public facilities outside of at-risk areas, including, but not limited to, hospitals and health care facilities, emergency shelters, emergency command centers, and emergency communications facilities, or identifying construction methods or other methods to minimize damage if these facilities are located in at-risk areas.

(iii) The designation of adequate and feasible infrastructure located in an at-risk area.

(iv) Guidelines for working cooperatively with relevant local, regional, state, and federal agencies.

(v) The identification of natural infrastructure that may be used in adaptation projects, where feasible. Where feasible, the plan shall use existing natural features and ecosystem processes, or the restoration of natural features and ecosystem processes, when developing alternatives for consideration. For the purposes of this clause, “natural infrastructure” means the preservation or restoration of ecological systems, or utilization of engineered systems that use ecological processes, to increase resiliency to climate change, manage other environmental hazards, or both. This may include, but is not limited to, floodplain and wetlands restoration or preservation, combining levees with restored natural systems to reduce flood risk, and urban tree planting to mitigate high heat days.

(D) (i) If a city or county has adopted the local hazard mitigation plan, or other climate adaptation plan or document that fulfills commensurate goals and objectives and contains the information required pursuant to this paragraph, separate from the general plan, an attachment of, or reference to, the local hazard mitigation plan or other climate adaptation plan or document.

(ii) Cities or counties that have adopted a hazard mitigation plan, or other climate adaptation plan or document that substantially complies with this section, or have substantially equivalent provisions to this subdivision in their general plans, may use that information in the safety element to comply with this subdivision, and shall summarize and incorporate by reference into the safety element the other general plan provisions, climate adaptation plan or document, specifically showing how each requirement of this subdivision has been met.

(5) After the initial revision of the safety element pursuant to paragraphs (2) and (3) upon each revision of the housing element, the planning agency shall review and, if necessary, revise the safety element to identify new information relating to flood and fire hazards that was not available during the previous revision of the safety element.

(6) Cities and counties that have flood plain management ordinances that have been approved by FEMA that substantially comply with this section, or have substantially equivalent provisions to this subdivision in their general plans, may use that information in the safety element to comply with this subdivision, and shall summarize and incorporate by reference into the safety element the other general plan provisions or the flood plain ordinance, specifically showing how each requirement of this subdivision has been met.

(7) Prior to the periodic review of its general plan and prior to preparing or revising its safety element, each city and county shall consult the California Geological Survey of the Department of Conservation, the Central Valley Flood Protection Board, if the city or county is located within the boundaries of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, respectively, and other agencies.
Drainage District, as set forth in Section 8501 of the Water Code, and the Office of Emergency Services for the purpose of including information known by and available to the department, the agency, and the board required by this subdivision.

(8) To the extent that a county's safety element is sufficiently detailed and contains appropriate policies and programs for adoption by a city, a city may adopt that portion of the county's safety element that pertains to the city's planning area in satisfaction of the requirement imposed by this subdivision.

(h) (1) An environmental justice element, or related goals, policies, and objectives integrated in other elements, that identifies disadvantaged communities within the area covered by the general plan of the city, county, or city and county, if the city, county, or city and county has a disadvantaged community. The environmental justice element, or related environmental justice goals, policies, and objectives integrated in other elements, shall do all of the following:

(A) Identify objectives and policies to reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities by means that include, but are not limited to, the reduction of pollution exposure, including the improvement of air quality, and the promotion of public facilities, food access, safe and sanitary homes, and physical activity.

(B) Identify objectives and policies to promote civil engagement in the public decisionmaking process.

(C) Identify objectives and policies that prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities.

(2) A city, county, or city and county subject to this subdivision shall adopt or review the environmental justice element, or the environmental justice goals, policies, and objectives in other elements, upon the adoption or next revision of two or more elements concurrently on or after January 1, 2018.

(3) By adding this subdivision, the Legislature does not intend to require a city, county, or city and county to take any action prohibited by the United States Constitution or the California Constitution.

(4) For purposes of this subdivision, the following terms shall apply:

(A) "Disadvantaged communities" means an area identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency pursuant to Section 39711 of the Health and Safety Code or an area that is a low-income area that is disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation.

(B) "Public facilities" includes public improvements, public services, and community amenities, as defined in subdivision (d) of Section 66000.

(C) "Low-income area" means an area with household incomes at or below 80 percent of the statewide median income or with household incomes at or below the threshold designated as low income by the Department of Housing and Community Development's list of state income limits adopted pursuant to Section 50093.

SEC. 1.5. Section 65302 of the Government Code is amended to read:

65302. The general plan shall consist of a statement of development policies and shall include a diagram or diagrams and text setting forth objectives, principles, standards, and plan proposals. The plan shall include the following elements:

(a) A land use element that designates the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of the land for housing, business, industry, open space, including agriculture, natural resources, recreation, and enjoyment of scenic beauty, education, public buildings and grounds, solid and liquid waste disposal facilities, greenways, as defined in Section 816.52 of the Civil Code, and other categories of public and private uses of land. The location and designation of the extent of the uses of the land for public and private uses shall consider the identification of land and natural resources pursuant to paragraph (3) of subdivision (d). The land use element shall include a statement of the standards of population density and building intensity recommended for the various districts and other territory covered by the plan. The land use element shall identify and annually review those areas covered by the plan that are subject to flooding identified by flood plain mapping prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or the Department of Water Resources. The land use element shall also do both of the following:
(1) Designate in a land use category that provides for timber production those parcels of real property zoned for timberland production pursuant to the California Timberland Productivity Act of 1982 (Chapter 6.7 (commencing with Section 51100) of Part 1 of Division 1 of Title 5).

(2) Consider the impact of new growth on military readiness activities carried out on military bases, installations, and operating and training areas, when proposing zoning ordinances or designating land uses covered by the general plan for land, or other territory adjacent to military facilities, or underlying designated military aviation routes and airspace.

(A) In determining the impact of new growth on military readiness activities, information provided by military facilities shall be considered. Cities and counties shall address military impacts based on information from the military and other sources.

(B) The following definitions govern this paragraph:

(i) "Military readiness activities" mean all of the following:

(1) Training, support, and operations that prepare the men and women of the military for combat.

(II) Operation, maintenance, and security of any military installation.

(III) Testing of military equipment, vehicles, weapons, and sensors for proper operation or suitability for combat use.

(ii) "Military installation" means a base, camp, post, station, yard, center, homeport facility for any ship, or other activity under the jurisdiction of the United States Department of Defense as defined in paragraph (1) of subsection (g) of Section 2687 of Title 10 of the United States Code.

(b) (1) A circulation element consisting of the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, any military airports and ports, and other local public utilities and facilities, all correlated with the land use element of the plan.

(2) Commencing January 1, 2011, upon any substantive revision of the circulation element, the legislative body shall modify the circulation element to plan for a balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users of streets, roads, and highways for safe and convenient travel in a manner that is suitable to the rural, suburban, or urban context of the general plan.

(B) For purposes of this paragraph, "users of streets, roads, and highways" mean bicyclists, children, persons with disabilities, motorists, movers of commercial goods, pedestrians, users of public transportation, and seniors.

(c) A housing element as provided in Article 10.6 (commencing with Section 65580).

(d) (1) A conservation element for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources including water and its hydraulic force, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, harbors, fisheries, wildlife, minerals, and other natural resources. The conservation element shall consider the effect of development within the jurisdiction, as described in the land use element, on natural resources located on public lands, including military installations. That portion of the conservation element including waters shall be developed in coordination with any countywide water agency and with all district and city agencies, including flood management, water conservation, or groundwater agencies that have developed, served, controlled, managed, or conserved water of any type for any purpose in the county or city for which the plan is prepared. Coordination shall include the discussion and evaluation of any water supply and demand information described in Section 65352.5, if that information has been submitted by the water agency to the city or county.

(2) The conservation element may also cover all of the following:

(A) The reclamation of land and waters.

(B) Prevention and control of the pollution of streams and other waters.

(C) Regulation of the use of land in stream channels and other areas required for the accomplishment of the conservation plan.

(D) Prevention, control, and correction of the erosion of soils, beaches, and shores.

(E) Protection of watersheds.
(F) The location, quantity, and quality of the rock, sand, and gravel resources.

(3) Upon the next revision of the housing element on or after January 1, 2009, the conservation element shall identify rivers, creeks, streams, flood corridors, riparian habitats, and land that may accommodate floodwater for purposes of groundwater recharge and stormwater management.

(e) An open-space element as provided in Article 10.5 (commencing with Section 65560).

(f) (1) A noise element that shall identify and appraise noise problems in the community. The noise element shall analyze and quantify, to the extent practicable, as determined by the legislative body, current and projected noise levels for all of the following sources:

(A) Highways and freeways.

(B) Primary arterials and major local streets.

(C) Passenger and freight online railroad operations and ground rapid transit systems.

(D) Commercial, general aviation, heliport, helistop, and military airport operations, aircraft overflights, jet engine test stands, and all other ground facilities and maintenance functions related to airport operation.

(E) Local industrial plants, including, but not limited to, railroad classification yards.

(F) Other ground stationary noise sources, including, but not limited to, military installations, identified by local agencies as contributing to the community noise environment.

(2) Noise contours shall be shown for all of these sources and stated in terms of community noise equivalent level (CNEIL) or day-night average sound level (Ldn). The noise contours shall be prepared on the basis of noise monitoring or following generally accepted noise modeling techniques for the various sources identified in paragraphs (1) to (6), inclusive.

(3) The noise contours shall be used as a guide for establishing a pattern of land uses in the land use element that minimizes the exposure of community residents to excessive noise.

(4) The noise element shall include implementation measures and possible solutions that address existing and foreseeable noise problems, if any. The adopted noise element shall serve as a guideline for compliance with the state’s noise insulation standards.

(g) (1) A safety element for the protection of the community from any unreasonable risks associated with the effects of seismically induced surface rupture, ground shaking, ground failure, tsunami, seiche, and dam failure; slope instability leading to mudslides and landslides; subsidence; liquefaction; and other seismic hazards identified pursuant to Chapter 7.8 (commencing with Section 2690) of Division 2 of the Public Resources Code, and other geologic hazards known to the legislative body; flooding; and wildland and urban fires. The safety element shall include mapping of known seismic and other geologic hazards. It shall also address evacuation routes, military installations, peak load water supply requirements, and minimum road widths and clearances around structures, as those items relate to identified fire and geologic hazards.

(2) The safety element, upon the next revision of the housing element on or after January 1, 2009, shall also do the following:

(A) Identify information regarding flood hazards, including, but not limited to, the following:

(i) Flood hazard zones. As used in this subdivision, “flood hazard zone” means an area subject to flooding that is delineated as either a special hazard area or an area of moderate or minimal hazard on an official flood insurance rate map issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The identification of a flood hazard zone does not imply that areas outside the flood hazard zones or uses permitted within flood hazard zones will be free from flooding or flood damage.

(ii) National Flood Insurance Program maps published by FEMA.

(iii) Information about flood hazards that is available from the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

(iv) Designated floodway maps that are available from the Central Valley Flood Protection Board.

(v) Dam failure inundation maps prepared pursuant to Section 8589.5 that are available from the Office of Emergency Services.
(vi) Awareness Floodplain Mapping Program maps and 200-year flood plain maps that are or may be available from, or accepted by, the Department of Water Resources.

(vii) Maps of levee protection zones.

(viii) Areas subject to inundation in the event of the failure of project or nonproject levees or floodwalls.

(ix) Historical data on flooding, including locally prepared maps of areas that are subject to flooding, areas that are vulnerable to flooding after wildfires, and sites that have been repeatedly damaged by flooding.

(x) Existing and planned development in flood hazard zones, including structures, roads, utilities, and essential public facilities.

(xi) Local, state, and federal agencies with responsibility for flood protection, including special districts and local offices of emergency services.

(B) Establish a set of comprehensive goals, policies, and objectives based on the information identified pursuant to subparagraph (A), for the protection of the community from the unreasonable risks of flooding, including, but not limited to:

(i) Avoiding or minimizing the risks of flooding to new development.

(ii) Evaluating whether new development should be located in flood hazard zones, and identifying construction methods or other methods to minimize damage if new development is located in flood hazard zones.

(iii) Maintaining the structural and operational integrity of essential public facilities during flooding.

(iv) Locating, when feasible, new essential public facilities outside of flood hazard zones, including hospitals and health care facilities, emergency shelters, fire stations, emergency command centers, and emergency communications facilities or identifying construction methods or other methods to minimize damage if these facilities are located in flood hazard zones.

(v) Establishing cooperative working relationships among public agencies with responsibility for flood protection.

(C) Establish a set of feasible implementation measures designed to carry out the goals, policies, and objectives established pursuant to subparagraph (B).

(3) Upon the next revision of the housing element on or after January 1, 2014, the safety element shall be reviewed and updated as necessary to address the risk of fire for land classified as state responsibility areas, as defined in Section 4102 of the Public Resources Code, and land classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, as defined in Section 51177. This review shall consider the advice included in the Office of Planning and Research’s most recent publication of “Fire Hazard Planning, General Plan Technical Advice Series” and shall also include all of the following:

(A) Information regarding fire hazards, including, but not limited to, all of the following:

(i) Fire hazard severity zone maps available from the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

(ii) Any historical data on wildfires available from local agencies or a reference to where the data can be found.

(iii) Information about wildfire hazard areas that may be available from the United States Geological Survey.

(iv) General location and distribution of existing and planned uses of land in very high fire hazard severity zones and in state responsibility areas, including structures, roads, utilities, and essential public facilities. The location and distribution of planned uses of land shall not require defensible space compliance measures required by state law or local ordinance to occur on publicly owned lands or open space designations of homeowner associations.

(v) Local, state, and federal agencies with responsibility for fire protection, including special districts and local offices of emergency services.

(B) A set of goals, policies, and objectives based on the information identified pursuant to subparagraph (A) for the protection of the community from the unreasonable risk of wildfire.

(C) A set of feasible implementation measures designed to carry out the goals, policies, and objectives based on the information identified pursuant to subparagraph (B) including, but not limited to, all of the following:

(i) Avoiding or minimizing the wildfire hazards associated with new uses of land.
(ii) Locating, when feasible, new essential public facilities outside of high fire risk areas, including, but not limited to, hospitals and health care facilities, emergency shelters, emergency command centers, and emergency communications facilities, or identifying construction methods or other methods to minimize damage if these facilities are located in a state responsibility area or very high fire hazard severity zone.

(iii) Designing adequate infrastructure if a new development is located in a state responsibility area or in a very high fire hazard severity zone, including safe access for emergency response vehicles, visible street signs, and water supplies for structural fire suppression.

(iv) Working cooperatively with public agencies with responsibility for fire protection.

(D) If a city or county has adopted a fire safety plan or document separate from the general plan, an attachment of, or reference to, a city or county's adopted fire safety plan or document that fulfills commensurate goals and objectives and contains information required pursuant to this paragraph.

(4) Upon the next revision of a local hazard mitigation plan, adopted in accordance with the federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-390), on or after January 1, 2017, or, if a local jurisdiction has not adopted a local hazard mitigation plan, beginning on or before January 1, 2022, the safety element shall be reviewed and updated as necessary to address climate adaptation and resiliency strategies applicable to the city or county. This review shall consider advice provided in the Office of Planning and Research's General Plan Guidelines and shall include all of the following:

(A) (i) A vulnerability assessment that identifies the risks that climate change poses to the local jurisdiction and the geographic areas at risk from climate change impacts, including, but not limited to, an assessment of how climate change may affect the risks addressed pursuant to paragraphs (2) and (3).

(ii) Information that may be available from federal, state, regional, and local agencies that will assist in developing the vulnerability assessment and the adaptation policies and strategies required pursuant to subparagraph (B), including, but not limited to, all of the following:

(I) Information from the Internet-based Cal-Adapt tool.

(II) Information from the most recent version of the California Adaptation Planning Guide.

(III) Information from local agencies on the types of assets, resources, and populations that will be sensitive to various climate change exposures.

(IV) Information from local agencies on their current ability to deal with the impacts of climate change.

(V) Historical data on natural events and hazards, including locally prepared maps of areas subject to previous risk, areas that are vulnerable, and sites that have been repeatedly damaged.

(VI) Existing and planned development in identified at-risk areas, including structures, roads, utilities, and essential public facilities.

(VII) Federal, state, regional, and local agencies with responsibility for the protection of public health and safety and the environment, including special districts and local offices of emergency services.

(B) A set of adaptation and resilience goals, policies, and objectives based on the information specified in subparagraph (A) for the protection of the community.

(C) A set of feasible implementation measures designed to carry out the goals, policies, and objectives identified pursuant to subparagraph (B), including, but not limited to, all of the following:

(i) Feasible methods to avoid or minimize climate change impacts associated with new uses of land.

(ii) The location, when feasible, of new essential public facilities outside of at-risk areas, including, but not limited to, hospitals and health care facilities, emergency shelters, emergency command centers, and emergency communications facilities, or identifying construction methods or other methods to minimize damage if these facilities are located in at-risk areas.

(iii) The designation of adequate and feasible infrastructure located in an at-risk area.

(iv) Guidelines for working cooperatively with relevant local, regional, state, and federal agencies.
(v) The identification of natural infrastructure that may be used in adaptation projects, where feasible. Where feasible, the plan shall use existing natural features and ecosystem processes, or the restoration of natural features and ecosystem processes, when developing alternatives for consideration. For the purposes of this clause, “natural infrastructure” means the preservation or restoration of ecological systems, or utilization of engineered systems that use ecological processes, to increase resiliency to climate change, manage other environmental hazards, or both. This may include, but is not limited to, floodplain and wetlands restoration or preservation, combining levees with restored natural systems to reduce flood risk, and urban tree planting to mitigate high heat days.

(D) (i) If a city or county has adopted the local hazard mitigation plan, or other climate adaptation plan or document that fulfills commensurate goals and objectives and contains the information required pursuant to this paragraph, separate from the general plan, an attachment of, or reference to, the local hazard mitigation plan or other climate adaptation plan or document.

(ii) Cities or counties that have an adopted hazard mitigation plan, or other climate adaptation plan or document that substantially complies with this section, or have substantially equivalent provisions to this subdivision in their general plans, may use that information in the safety element to comply with this subdivision, and shall summarize and incorporate by reference into the safety element the other general plan provisions, climate adaptation plan or document, specifically showing how each requirement of this subdivision has been met.

(5) After the initial revision of the safety element pursuant to paragraphs (2) and (3) upon each revision of the housing element, the planning agency shall review and, if necessary, revise the safety element to identify new information relating to flood and fire hazards that was not available during the previous revision of the safety element.

(6) Cities and counties that have flood plain management ordinances that have been approved by FEMA that substantially comply with this section, or have substantially equivalent provisions to this subdivision in their general plans, may use that information in the safety element to comply with this subdivision, and shall summarize and incorporate by reference into the safety element the other general plan provisions or the flood plain ordinance, specifically showing how each requirement of this subdivision has been met.

(7) Prior to the periodic review of its general plan and prior to preparing or revising its safety element, each city and county shall consult the California Geological Survey of the Department of Conservation, the Central Valley Flood Protection Board, if the city or county is located within the boundaries of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Drainage District, as set forth in Section 8501 of the Water Code, and the Office of Emergency Services for the purpose of including information known by and available to the department, the agency, and the board required by this subdivision.

(8) To the extent that a county’s safety element is sufficiently detailed and contains appropriate policies and programs for adoption by a city, a city may adopt that portion of the county’s safety element that pertains to the city’s planning area in satisfaction of the requirement imposed by this subdivision.

(h) (1) An environmental justice element, or related goals, policies, and objectives integrated in other elements, that identifies disadvantaged communities within the area covered by the general plan of the city, county, or city and county, if the city, county, or city and county has a disadvantaged community. The environmental justice element, or related environmental justice goals, policies, and objectives integrated in other elements, shall do all of the following:

(A) Identify objectives and policies to reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities by means that include, but are not limited to, the reduction of pollution exposure, including the improvement of air quality, and the promotion of public facilities, food access, safe and sanitary homes, and physical activity.

(B) Identify objectives and policies to promote civil engagement in the public decisionmaking process.

(C) Identify objectives and policies that prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities.

(2) A city, county, or city and county subject to this subdivision shall adopt or review the environmental justice element, or the environmental justice goals, policies, and objectives in other elements, upon the adoption or next revision of two or more elements concurrently on or after January 1, 2018.
(3) By adding this subdivision, the Legislature does not intend to require a city, county, or city and county to take any action prohibited by the United States Constitution or the California Constitution.

(4) For purposes of this subdivision, the following terms shall apply:

(A) "Disadvantaged communities" means an area identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency pursuant to Section 39711 of the Health and Safety Code or an area that is a low-income area that is disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation.

(B) "Public facilities" includes public improvements, public services, and community amenities, as defined in subdivision (d) of Section 66000.

(C) "Low-income area" means an area with household incomes at or below 80 percent of the statewide median income or with household incomes at or below the threshold designated as low income by the Department of Housing and Community Development’s list of state income limits adopted pursuant to Section 50093.

SEC. 2. Section 1.5 of this bill incorporates amendments to Section 65302 of the Government Code proposed by this bill and Assembly Bill 2651. It shall only become operative if (1) both bills are enacted and become effective on or before January 1, 2017, (2) each bill amends Section 65302 of the Government Code, and (3) this bill is enacted after Assembly Bill 2651, in which case Section 65302 of the Government Code, as amended by Assembly Bill 2651, shall remain operative only until the operative date of this bill, at which time Section 1.5 of this bill shall become operative, and Section 1 of this bill shall not become operative.

SEC. 3. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because a local agency or school district has the authority to levy service charges, fees, or assessments sufficient to pay for the program or level of service mandated by this act, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code.
CHAPTER 2

Sustainable Development and Environmental Justice

*All statutory references are to the California Government Code unless otherwise noted.*

This chapter addresses the incorporation of environmental justice into the general plan. While environmental justice is not a mandatory topic in the general plan, there is a strong case for its inclusion. Federal and state anti-discrimination statutes, which have a long history, apply to planning as they do to other policy areas. As discussed below, environmental justice issues are often related to failures in land use planning. Planning policies that promote livable communities and smart growth can be tools for achieving environmental justice. In keeping with that idea, this chapter begins with a discussion of sustainable development. Sustainable development provides a context for understanding how environmental justice fits into land use planning. This chapter concludes with a discussion of transit-oriented development, which has important implications for environmental justice and sustainable development.

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Sustainable development encompasses established principles of good planning and advocates a proactive approach to future development. The basic concept of sustainability is meeting the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development can be further defined as promoting the “three E’s:” environment, economy, and equity. For example, a decision or action aimed at promoting economic development should not result in decreased environmental quality or social inequity. Ensuring that a given decision or action promotes all three E’s is often referred to as the triple bottom line.

What does sustainable development look like on the ground? In a community that is developing sustainably, the neighborhood is the basic building block of urban design and is characterized by walkability, mixed-use development, and mixed-income housing. Walkability is a function of compactness and density. Attention to streetscape and public spaces is a key design element in creating desirable places to live. Such neighborhoods, also known as neo-traditional or new urbanist development, are more likely to support efficient transit systems. The character and function of each neighborhood is then placed properly within its regional setting. This approach to planning, from the neighborhood to the regional level, is often referred to as smart growth.

Sustainable development goals and policies include the following:

- Decrease urban sprawl.
  - Promote compact, walkable, mixed-use development.
  - Promote infill development.
  - Restore urban and town centers.
  - Limit non-contiguous (leapfrog) development.
  - Promote transit-oriented development.

- Protect open space and working landscapes.
  - Conserve prime agricultural lands.
  - Conserve lands of scenic and recreational value.
  - Use open space to define urban communities.

- Protect environmentally sensitive lands.
  - Conserve natural habitat lands.
  - Preserve habitat connectivity.
  - Minimize impact to watershed functions, including water quality and natural floodways.
  - Avoid natural hazards.

- Create strong local and regional economies.
  - Encourage jobs/housing balance.
  - Provide adequate housing for all income levels.
  - Encourage the expansion of telecommunications infrastructure.
  - Provide a fair and predictable land use planning process.

- Promote energy and resource efficiency.
  - Support energy- and resource-efficient industries.
  - Promote waste reduction programs, such as recycling.
Chapter 2: Sustainable Development and Environmental Justice

- Promote alternative forms of transportation.
- Promote energy- and resource-efficient buildings.

Promote equitable development.

- Require fair treatment in the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.
- Promote mixed-income housing development.
- Promote alternative transportation options to increase access.
- Promote economic opportunity for all segments of the community.
- Protect culturally significant sites.

The comprehensive, integrated, and long-term nature of the general plan makes it an ideal vehicle for implementing local sustainable development goals. When preparing or amending a general plan, sustainable development policies or programs may be addressed within the various elements of the plan. For example, policies on minimizing urban sprawl may be addressed in the land use element; policies for prime agricultural land preservation may be introduced in the open-space element; and the transportation element may be used to address public transportation concerns.

The principles of sustainable development may also guide the overall goals of the general plan. For example, Santa Clara County’s general plan addresses four themes of sustainable development in its general plan vision: social and economic well-being, managed and balanced growth, livable communities, and responsible resource conservation. The general plan’s goals for social and economic well-being include achieving “a healthy, diverse economy and adequate employment opportunities” by reaching “sustainable levels of growth and job formation consistent with planned improvements in housing, transportation, urban services, and maintenance of environmental quality.” Goals for the other themes also reflect the necessary balance of social, environmental, and economic objectives that characterizes sustainable development.

General plans can work in concert with other plans and policy documents to promote sustainability. For instance, the City of Pasadena uses a quality-of-life index to identify, measure, and set quality-of-life indicators for a healthier, more sustainable city. “The Quality of Life in Pasadena” index combines information from the city’s general plan and other documents and addresses such topics as the environment, health, education, transportation, the economy, and employment. The City of Oakland includes in each staff report to the City Council a discussion of how the proposed action would promote the three E’s of sustainability. The concept and application of sustainable development is evolving through creative interpretation and use.

Jobs/Housing Balance

One issue that cuts across several elements of the general plan is jobs/housing balance. Jobs/housing balance compares the available housing and available jobs within a community, a city or other geographically defined subregion. Relying on the automobile as our primary means of transportation has encouraged patterns of development and employment that are often inefficient. Suburbanites routinely commute 25 miles or more from their homes to their places of employment. Public transit is impractical for most people because jobs are dispersed throughout employment regions and housing density is too low. With residential and commercial land uses often separated by long distances, people must make multiple car trips to perform routine errands, such as grocery shopping, going to the bank, eating out, going to the dentist, etc.

Jobs/housing balance is based on the premise that commuting, the overall number of vehicle trips, and the resultant vehicle miles traveled can be reduced when sufficient jobs are available locally to balance the employment demands of the community and when commercial services are convenient to residential areas. Planning for a jobs/housing balance requires in-depth analyses of employment potential (existing and projected), housing demand (by income level and housing type), new housing production, and the relationship between employment opportunities and housing availability. Other factors, such as housing costs and transportation systems, must also be evaluated.

Improving the jobs/housing balance requires carefully planning for the location, intensity, and nature of jobs and housing in order to encourage a reduction in vehicle trips and miles traveled and a corresponding increase in the use of mass transit and alternative transportation methods, such as bicycles, carpools, and walking. Strategies include locating higher-density housing near employment centers, promoting infill development, promoting transit-oriented development, actively recruiting businesses that will utilize the local workforce, developing a robust telecommunications infrastructure, developing workforce skills consistent with evolving local economies, and providing affordable housing opportunities within the community. Jobs-housing provisions most directly affect the land use, circulation, and housing elements.

The question of a jobs/housing balance on the scale of a community should not be confused with the design of mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods. Planning for a
jobs/housing balance alone could easily result in a city composed of single-use residential subdivisions on one side of town and single-use business parks and shopping centers on the other side of town. At the scale of the region, this might be preferable to a jobs/housing imbalance, but at the scale of the community and of the neighborhood it does not improve livability or reduce dependence on the automobile. While it is not likely that most employees of a local business will also live in the neighborhood, it is important that the planning of the neighborhood not preclude that possibility for those who would choose it.

**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

Environmental justice is defined in state planning law as the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies (§65040.12(c)). The Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) is required to provide guidance to cities and counties for integrating environmental justice into their general plans (§65040.12(c)). This section discusses the framework for environmental justice and the relationship of environmental justice to the general plan. The recommendations in this chapter are also reflected in the chapters on the required general plan elements (Chapter 4), optional elements (Chapter 6), and public participation (Chapter 8).

**Federal Framework**

The basis for environmental justice lies in the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution. The Fourteenth Amendment expressly provides that the states may not “deny to any person within [their] jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws” (U.S. Constitution, amend. XIV, §1).

On February 11, 1994, President Clinton signed Executive Order (E.O.) 12898, titled “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations.” The executive order followed a 1992 report by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) indicating that “[f]acial minority and low-income populations experience higher than average exposures to selected air pollutants, hazardous waste facilities, and other forms of environmental pollution.” Among other things, E.O. 12898 directed federal agencies to incorporate environmental justice into their missions.

In a memorandum accompanying E.O. 12898, President Clinton underscored existing federal laws that can be used to further environment justice. These laws include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), among others. Title VI prohibits any recipient (state or local entity or public or private agency) of federal financial assistance from discriminating on the basis of race, color, or national origin in its programs or activities (42 USC §2000d-§2000d-7). State and local agencies that receive federal funding must comply with Title VI. Pursuant to the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, this requirement applies to all agency programs and activities, not just those that receive direct federal funding. In response, many state and local agencies that receive federal funding have initiated environmental justice programs of their own.

NEPA applies to projects carried out or funded by a federal agency (including the issuance of federal permits). NEPA is useful relative to environmental justice because it requires public participation and discussion of alternatives and mitigation measures that could reduce disproportionate effects on low-income and minority populations. On December 10, 1997, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) released NEPA Guidance for Federal Agencies on Key Terms in E.O. 12898. This document is a useful reference for planners, although it is focused on environmental review of individual projects rather than long-term comprehensive land use planning.

**State Framework**

Anti-discrimination laws existed in California prior to the passage of the first state environmental justice legislation in 1999. The California Constitution prohibits discrimination in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting (Article I, §31). State law further prohibits discrimination under any program or activity that is funded or administered by the state (§11135). The Planning and Zoning Law prohibits any local entity from denying any individual or group of the enjoyment of residence, land ownership, tenancy, or any other land use in California due to the race, sex, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, ancestry, lawful occupation, or age of the individual or group of individuals (§65008). The Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) specifically prohibits housing discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, familial status, disability, or source of income (§12900, et seq.)

In 1999, Governor Davis signed SB 115 (Solis, Chapter 690, Statutes of 1999) into law, defining environmental justice in statute and establishing OPR as
the coordinating agency for state environmental justice programs (§65040.12). SB 115 further required the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) to develop a model environmental justice mission statement for boards, departments, and offices within the agency by January 1, 2001 (Public Resources Code §72000-72001).

In 2000, Governor Davis signed SB 89 (Escutia, Chapter 728, Statutes of 2000), which complemented SB 115 by requiring the creation of an environmental justice working group and an advisory group to assist Cal/EPA in developing an intra-agency environmental justice strategy (Public Resources Code §72002-72003). SB 828 (Alarcon, Chapter 765, Statutes of 2001) added and modified due dates for the development of Cal/EPA’s intra-agency environmental justice strategy and required each board, department, and office within Cal/EPA to identify and address any gaps in its existing programs, policies, and activities that may impede environmental justice no later than January 1, 2004 (Public Resources Code §71114-71115).

AB 1553 (Keeley, Chapter 762, Statutes of 2001) required OPR to incorporate environmental justice considerations in the General Plan Guidelines. AB 1553 specified that the guidelines should propose methods for local governments to address the following:

- Planning for the equitable distribution of new public facilities and services that increase and enhance community quality of life.
- Providing for the location of industrial facilities and uses that pose a significant hazard to human health and safety in a manner that seeks to avoid overconcentrating these uses in proximity to schools or residential dwellings.
- Providing for the location of new schools and residential dwellings in a manner that avoids proximity to industrial facilities and uses that pose a significant hazard to human health and safety.
- Promoting more livable communities by expanding opportunities for transit-oriented development.

**Forms of Inequity**

Problems of environmental justice can be broken down into two categories: procedural inequity and geographic inequity. In other words, unfair treatment can manifest itself in terms of process or in terms of results.

Procedural inequity occurs when the planning process is not applied uniformly. Examples of procedural inequity include:

- “Stacking” commissions or committees with certain interests while ignoring the interests of other segments of the community, such as minority and low-income residents.
- Holding meetings at times or in locations that minimize the ability of certain groups or individuals to participate.
- Using English-only written or verbal communication when a non-English speaking population will be affected by a planning decision.
- Requiring lower levels of mitigation for projects affecting low-income or minority populations.
- Unevenly enforcing environmental rules.

Geographic inequity describes a situation in which the burdens of undesirable land uses are concentrated in certain neighborhoods while the benefits are received elsewhere. It also describes a situation in which public amenities are concentrated only in certain areas. Examples of geographic inequity include situations in which:

- Certain neighborhoods have a disproportionate share of industrial facilities that handle or produce hazardous waste, while the economic benefits are distributed to other neighborhoods (in the form of jobs and tax revenue).
- Certain neighborhoods have a disproportionate share of waste disposal facilities, while the benefits of such facilities are received by the community or region as a whole.
- Certain neighborhoods have ample community centers, parks, and open space and thus experience more of the environmental benefits associated with these amenities, while other neighborhoods have fewer such amenities.

**Public Participation**

Community involvement in the planning process is an important part of environmental justice. Cities and counties should develop public participation strategies that allow for early and meaningful community involvement in the general plan process by all affected population groups. Participation plans should incorporate strategies to overcome linguistic, institutional, cultural, economic, and historic barriers to effective participation. Chapter 8 is dedicated to the issue of public participation and suggests methods to improve outreach to and communication with all population groups, including low-income and minority populations.
Compatibility

At the general plan level, discussions about environmental justice involve a central land use concept: compatibility. The primary purpose of planning, and the source of government authority to engage in planning, is to protect the public health, safety, and welfare. Incompatible land uses may create health, safety, and welfare issues for the community. Geographic inequity occurs when incompatible land uses disproportionately affect a particular socioeconomic segment of the community. In this sense, environmental justice problems indicate a failure of land use planning to deliver on its original promise—reducing the harmful effects of incompatible land uses.

Traditionally, zoning has attempted to minimize health and safety risks by segregating land uses. However, taking this approach too far has negative consequences that run counter to the goals of sustainable development. Rigid separation of land uses has resulted in disconnected islands of activity and contributed to sprawl. As discussed above, development patterns characterized by single-use zoning result in the automobile being the only viable transportation option, which has high environmental, economic, and social costs.

The traditional pyramidal zoning model places single-family homes at the pinnacle, followed by denser multi-family housing, followed by office and commercial uses, and, finally, followed by industrial uses at the base. In this model, land uses at a lower level on the pyramid are not allowed within the higher designations (e.g., commercial uses are not allowed in multifamily zones, and apartments are not allowed in single-family zones). This is giving way to a much more sustainable model, where the middle of the pyramid consists of mixed-use development that integrates housing, commercial, and recreational/cultural activities. Despite the desirability of mixed-use zoning, it is important to recognize that there are certain industrial uses that will always be incompatible with residential and school uses.

Residential and school uses are harmed by incompatible land uses that have environmental effects, such as noise, air emissions (including dust), and exposure to hazardous materials. The compatibility problem also operates in reverse. Incompatible uses adjacent to residential units, schools, or environmentally sensitive areas may also suffer negative consequences in the form of higher mitigation costs or the curtailment of economic activities. Specific examples of land use incompatibility include:

- Residential and school uses in proximity to industrial facilities and other uses that, even with the best available technology, will contain or produce materials that, because of their quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, pose a significant hazard to human health and safety.
- Residential and school uses adjacent to intensive agricultural uses.
- Residential and school uses adjacent to major thoroughfares, such as highways.
- Residential or commercial uses in proximity to resource utilization activities, such as mining or oil and gas wells.

Issues related to industrial overconcentration and the location of residential dwellings and schools are discussed below.

Information and Analysis

Good information is critical to making informed decisions about environmental justice issues. The analysis of environmental justice problems has benefited from the advancement of geographic information systems (GIS), as has the entire planning field. The role of data in the general plan process is discussed more fully in Chapter 3. The data suggestions for the mandatory general plan elements (Chapter 4) include much of the information necessary for developing environmental justice policies.

Relevant information for addressing environmental justice issues includes, but is not limited to:

- Base map of the city or county planning area.
- General plan designations of land use (existing and proposed).
- Current demographic data.
  - Population location and density.
  - Distribution of population by income.
  - Distribution of population by ethnicity.
  - Distribution of population by age.
- Location of public facilities that enhance community quality of life, including open space.
- Location of industrial facilities and other uses that contain or produce materials that, because of their quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, pose a significant hazard to human health and safety.
- Location of existing and proposed schools.
- Location of major thoroughfares, ports and airports.
- Location and density of existing and proposed residential development.
Although the use of population data is a normal part of the planning process, cities and counties do not always gather socioeconomic data when preparing or substantially revising their general plans. Jurisdictions do have to collect some socioeconomic data during the preparation of the housing element, such as income level and persons with special housing needs (elderly, farmworkers, single head of household, etc.), but this required information is not enough to paint a complete socioeconomic picture of the community. From an environmental justice perspective, socioeconomic data is useful for a number of things, including:

- Improving the public participation process.
- Identifying low-income and minority neighborhoods that are underserved by public facilities and services that enhance quality of life and planning for the equitable distribution of such facilities and services.
- Planning for infrastructure and housing needs.
- Identifying low-income and minority neighborhoods in which industrial facilities and uses that pose a significant hazard to human health and safety may be overconcentrated.

As discussed below, the definitions of both equitable distribution and overconcentration do not depend on socioeconomic factors. However, reversing historical problems of procedural and geographic inequity requires accurate socioeconomic information in order to develop policies and prioritize implementation measures.

**Relationship to the General Plan**

Cities and counties may incorporate environmental justice into their general plans in several ways. A city or county may choose to adopt an optional environmental justice element. However, OPR recommends incorporating policies supportive of environmental justice in all of the mandatory elements of the general plan. These policies should also be reflected in any optional elements. In keeping with the internal consistency requirement, environmental justice policies in one element cannot conflict with the policies of another element. For example, if the land use element contains a policy prohibiting residential uses adjacent to certain industrial uses, properties affected by that policy could not be used as part of the housing element site inventory.

**Public Facilities and Services**

Cities and counties should plan for the equitable distribution throughout the community of new public facilities and services that increase and enhance community quality of life, given the fiscal and legal constraints that restrict the siting of such facilities.

Public facilities and services that enhance quality of life include, but are not limited to, parks, open space, trails, greenbelts, recreational facilities (including senior and youth centers), community centers, child care centers, libraries, museums, cultural centers, science centers, and zoos. The equitable distribution of facilities and services has two components. The first component is the number and size of facilities. Simply put, a community should have adequate facilities and services to serve all residents equally. The second component is access, which can be measured as the distance or travel time from each residential area to the facility or service. Access may also be measured by the ability to use a variety of transportation modes, including public transit, walking, and bicycling, to travel between each residential area and the facility or service. A geographic analysis of residential areas and the location of public amenities may reveal underserved neighborhoods. Policies addressing the distribution of beneficial public facilities and services should address existing disparities as well as the needs of future residents.

Public facilities and services that enhance community quality of life can be divided into three basic types for purposes of distribution. The first type is neighborhood facilities, such as parks, that serve a specific neighborhood or subdivision. The second type is district facilities, such as branch libraries or recreational centers, that serve more than one neighborhood. The third type is unique facilities, where one facility serves the entire community—“community” being an incorporated city or, for counties, an unincorporated area.

Neighborhood facilities should be geographically dispersed throughout the community. Examples include parks, tot lots, and neighborhood activity centers. These facilities should be located within the neighborhood they serve. Public amenities can serve to anchor a neighborhood and should be centrally located. Furthermore, locating neighborhood-serving public facilities within walking distance of most residents will encourage use and provide a sense of place. A distance of a quarter to a half mile is generally considered a walkable distance.

Planning for the location of district facilities should follow the same principles as above. Since these facilities serve several neighborhoods, they should be centrally located relative to the neighborhoods they serve. Locating such facilities along transit corridors or in transit-oriented developments will increase their accessibility (see Transit-Oriented Development later in this chapter).

Examples of unique public facilities include the central library or city museum. Where a community has
only one recreational or cultural center, that would be considered a unique facility or service. These facilities should be located in the civic center or urban core rather than isolated in remote single-use complexes. They should be close to transit to allow maximum access for the entire community.

Consideration should also be given to regional facilities, which may exhibit the characteristics of all three basic types described above. Regional facilities include trails, networks of open space such as greenbelts, regional parks and recreation areas, etc. Linear facilities (such as trails and greenbelts) may serve several neighborhoods but are also a unique amenity for the entire area. The same is true of large regional recreational areas. Individual cities and counties may have less control over the location of regional facilities, which may be operated by special districts or joint powers authorities. Cities and counties have even less control over state and federal parks, recreational areas, and forests, although cities and counties should account for such facilities in the planning process. New regional facilities are rare, and when the opportunity to acquire or develop such facilities arises, the location may be predetermined by such factors as natural features, abandoned rail lines (for trail use), or the availability of large undeveloped properties. Nevertheless, planners should consider existing and proposed regional facilities when analyzing community access to public facilities that contribute to quality of life and when planning for future such facilities.

Locating public facilities and uses according to these planning principles may be limited by fiscal and legal constraints. Fiscal constraints include the relative cost of land and the ability of public agencies to obtain financing for acquisition and construction. Legal constraints include, but are not limited to, local, state, and federal regulations for the protection of the environment, public health and safety, and the preservation of natural and cultural resources, including historical and archeological resources.

Industrial Facilities

Cities and counties should develop policies that provide for the location of industrial facilities and other uses that, even with the best available technology, will contain or produce materials that, because of their quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, pose a significant hazard to human health and safety in a manner that seeks to avoid overconcentrating these uses in proximity to schools or residential dwellings.

Overconcentration occurs when two or more industrial facilities or uses, which do not individually exceed acceptable regulatory standards for public health and safety, pose a significant hazard to adjacent residential and school uses due to their cumulative effects.

Facilities that emit, handle, store, or dispose of hazardous materials are regulated by a variety of agencies. These agencies include local Certified Unified Program Agencies (such as environmental health departments or fire departments), air districts, regional water quality control boards, the California Department of Health Services, the California Integrated Waste Management Board, and the California Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC). However, cities and counties, as the local land use authority, are primarily responsible for the location and distribution of potentially hazardous industrial facilities through their general plans and zoning ordinances.

Cities and counties may pursue several strategies within their general plans to address overconcentration. Strategies may include:

- Buffer zones between industrial and residential land uses.
- Policies addressing individual project siting decisions.
- Capping the number of certain facilities and uses.
- Changing land use designations in overconcentrated areas.

Buffer zones are a broad approach to land use compatibility. Buffer zone policies may be approached in one of two ways. First, the general plan land use diagram may designate transitional land uses between industrial and residential areas. Transitional uses may include open space, light industry, office uses, business parks, or heavy commercial uses. The land use policies for these buffer areas should prohibit school uses (see discussion below on school siting). Appropriate distances for buffer areas will vary depending on local circumstances. Factors such as the intensity of nearby residential uses, prevailing
winds, geographic features, and the types of facilities and uses allowed in industrial areas should be considered.

Second, buffer zones may be implemented at the project level. One weakness of general buffer zone policies is the difficulty of making a priori decisions about how much distance is needed to minimize potential health and safety hazards to residential and school uses. A stronger approach may be buffer policies aimed at individual siting decisions.

Approval of certain industrial facilities or uses can be made conditional if they are within a certain distance of residential or school uses and/or contain or produce hazardous materials. This allows the city or county to consider the potential hazards associated with individual facilities or uses on a case-by-case basis. General plan policies can outline consistent standards to be used in approving, conditionally approving, or denying proposed locations for industrial facilities and other uses that may pose a significant hazard to human health and safety. Such standards should be reflected in the zoning ordinance that implements the general plan (see Chapter 10 for a discussion of zoning consistency).

Approval of a conditional use is discretionary and thus would be subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CEQA requires decision makers to consider the environmental consequences of their actions. CEQA also serves as an important consultation tool. A lead agency must consult with an affected school district if any facility that would create hazardous air emissions or handle acutely hazardous material is proposed within a quarter mile of a school (Public Resources Code §21151.4).

Another policy response to overconcentration is to cap the number of potentially hazardous facilities within a certain distance of each other. For example, the State of Georgia does not allow siting of a new solid waste facility if two such facilities already exist within a two mile radius of the proposed facility. While capping policies are easy to implement and understandable to the public, they have serious drawbacks. Numerical caps are more likely to be based on perception and political compromise than scientific merit. Without analyzing the type, quantity, and concentration of materials to be contained or produced at a proposed facility, it is difficult to determine the number of facilities that would create a situation of overconcentration.

The general plan strategies above can assist a city or county in addressing future problems of overconcentration. General plans, which are by their nature concerned with future development, are not as effective at correcting past problems. One way to address existing or potential future problems of overconcentration is to change the land use designation for existing industrial areas. This approach differs from buffer zones in that buffer zones affect the land use designation of areas adjacent to existing or proposed industrial areas. Changing the allowable land uses in existing industrial areas prevents new industrial land uses from being established and may affect the expansion of existing facilities and uses (depending on how local policies treat pre-existing or “legal non-conforming,” land uses).

An important caveat is to consider what new uses will be allowed in the previously industrial areas. A new environmental justice problem could be created if residences and schools are allowed without considering any lingering effects of industrial overconcentration. At the same time, where overconcentration is no longer an issue and effective remediation or clean-up is possible, so-called “brownfield” development is an important tool for a community’s continued sustainable development.

Finally, planners should remember to differentiate between overconcentration and the mere presence of materials that may be classified as hazardous. Many neighborhood businesses, such as gas stations, photography studios, retail paint stores, dry cleaners, etc., may have hazardous materials present. While these activities must be conducted in a responsible manner in accordance with all environmental regulations, they should not be confused with those truly industrial activities that are inappropriate for residential or mixed-use areas.

New Residential Uses and Schools

Cities and counties should provide for the location of new schools and residential dwellings in a manner that seeks to avoid locating these uses in proximity to industrial facilities and uses that will contain or produce materials that, because of their quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, pose a significant hazard to human health and safety.

The location of new residential and school development is the flip side of the problem discussed in the section above. Given the need for new housing and schools and given the need to make efficient use of land, how do cities and counties deal with existing overconcentration of industrial uses? When designating areas for residential development, the city or county should identify any areas of overconcentration. Appropriate buffers should be placed between overconcentrated industrial areas and new residential areas. Using their authority over the approval and design of subdivisions, cities and counties may develop
policies and standards related to industrial overconcentration and new residential subdivision approvals. These policies could include buffer zones, as well as the criteria to be used for rejecting new residential development (such as standards for risk to human health and safety from nearby industrial facilities and uses).

The location of new schools is of particular concern to both local governments and school districts. The general plan should identify possible locations for new schools. Such locations may be approximate and need not indicate specific parcels. Identifying appropriate school locations as part of the general plan process may avoid project-level problems of proximity to certain industrial facilities and uses. Due to the fragmentation of authority in the areas of land use planning and school siting and construction, it is recommended that the planning agency work closely with the school district to identify suitable school locations. Prior to adopting or amending a general plan, the planning agency must refer the proposed action to any school district within the area covered by the proposed action (§65352). The city or county should use this opportunity to engage school districts on issues of school siting.

For their part, school districts are required to notify the planning commission of the city or county prior to acquiring property for new schools or expansion of an existing school. School districts are not bound by local zoning ordinances unless the ordinance provides for the location of schools and the city or county has adopted a general plan (§53091). School districts can override the general plan and zoning ordinances with regard to the use of property for classroom facilities by a two-thirds vote of the school board (§53094). The school board cannot exercise this power for non-classroom facilities, such as administrative buildings, bus storage and maintenance yards, and warehouses. If the school board exercises their override power, they must notify the city or county within 10 days (§53904).

CEQA requires that the environmental document prepared for a new school identify whether the proposed site is any of the following: a current or former hazardous waste or solid waste disposal facility, a hazardous substances release site identified by DTSC, the site of one or more pipelines that carry hazardous substances, or located within a quarter mile of a facility that emits hazardous air emissions or handles acutely hazardous material (Public Resources Code §21151.8). If such facilities exist, the school board must make findings that the facilities would not endanger the health of those attending or employed by the proposed school or that existing corrective measures would result in the mitigation of any health endangerment.

**TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT**

Cities and counties should promote more livable communities by expanding opportunities for transit-oriented development (TOD) so that residents minimize traffic and pollution impacts from traveling for purposes of work, shopping, school, and recreation.

TOD is defined as moderate- to high-density development located within an easy walk of a major transit stop, generally with a mix of residential, employment, and shopping opportunities. TOD encourages walking and transit use without excluding the automobile. TOD can be new construction or redevelopment of one or more buildings whose design and orientation facilitate transit use (Statewide Transit-Oriented Development Study: Factors for Success in California, California Department of Transportation, 2002).

A well-designed, vibrant TOD community can provide many benefits for local residents and businesses, as well as for the surrounding region. Compact development near transit stops can increase transit ridership and decrease rates of vehicle miles traveled (VMT), thereby yielding a good return on transit system investments. TOD can also provide mobility choices, increase public safety, increase disposable household income by reducing transportation costs, reduce air pollution and energy consumption rates, help conserve resources and open space, and contribute to the housing supply.

TOD is a strategy that may help a community achieve its general plan goals related to circulation, housing, environmental quality, and economic development. Additionally, by improving access to jobs and housing and revitalizing existing neighborhoods, TOD can be a tool for promoting environmental justice.

A variety of factors need to be considered during the development and implementation of TOD. These factors include transit system design; community partnerships; understanding of local real estate markets; coordination among local, regional, and state organizations; and providing the right mix of planning and financial incentives and resources. A successful TOD will reinforce the community and the transit system. Transit operators, property owners, and residents should be involved in the development of TOD proposals.

Data to identify and assess potential locations for TOD should be collected during preparation of the land use, circulation, and housing elements of the general plan. An inventory of potential development (and redevelopment) sites within a quarter to a half mile of existing and proposed transit stops may reveal potential locations for TOD. Additional data may be used to verify the optimum location and mix of uses to further refine
the viability of TOD at specific transit hubs. This data may include origin and destination studies, transit ridership projections, and data to determine the appropriate jobs-to-housing ratio and level of retail services. The appropriate density and intensity will support a high level of transit service. An optimal mix of uses will provide opportunities to shop, work, live, and recreate without the need for an automobile.

Local governments can promote TOD through general plan policies that encourage supportive densities and designs and a mix of land uses. TOD-supportive policies may provide for higher land use densities, reduced parking requirements, decreased automobile traffic levels of service, and increased transit levels of service. TOD policies should facilitate a pedestrian-oriented environment with features such as traffic calming strategies, traditional grid street patterns with smaller blocks, and architecture that orients buildings to sidewalks, plazas, and parks rather than to parking.

**TOD Standards and Policies**

TOD design will vary with local needs and context, but there are several generally accepted characteristics. These characteristics should be addressed broadly in general plan policies and standards. Policies for specific neighborhood districts or development sites can be implemented through the planning tools discussed at the end of this section.

**Density**

Density is a key concern in designing TOD policies. A higher residential density relative to the community as a whole is necessary to achieve a high level of transit service and maximize the use of land suitable for such developments. Density levels vary significantly based on local circumstances, but a minimum of 15 to 25 units per acre may be required to sustain an appropriate level of transit use and commercial activity. The location of the TOD (regional urban core, town center, suburban development, etc.) and the mix of uses envisioned for a particular TOD will affect the optimal level of density and intensity.

**Mixed Use**

A mix of uses is also a key element in TOD. Mixed-use development facilitates a pedestrian-oriented environment, encouraging walking and transit over automobile trips. A mix of uses also creates an environment that encourages both day and night activity. For example, residential development supports restaurants and entertainment uses after regular work hours have ended. This can increase safety by avoiding the “dead zone” atmosphere that many residential areas have by day and that many downtowns and commercial districts have in the evening. Public uses also can contribute to the success of TOD. Some TODs are anchored by a public facility, such as a police station, child care center, recreation center, or government office. Not only does a TOD benefit from the presence of public amenities, but the public also benefits by having these amenities convenient to transit.

A mix of uses may be within the same building (such as first-floor commercial with residential units above) or in separate buildings within a quarter to a half mile of the transit stop. Particularly with the latter case, referred to as “horizontal mixed-use,” it is important to provide safe and direct pedestrian linkages between different uses.

It is recommended that general plan standards and definitions of mixed-use development exclude industrial facilities and uses that, even with the best available technology, will contain or produce materials that, because of their quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, pose a significant hazard to human health and safety.

**Pedestrian Scale**

With higher-density mixed-use development, scale is important. Pedestrian scale should be maintained through appropriate street and sidewalk widths, block lengths, the relationship of the buildings to the street, and the use of public spaces.

**Safety**

In addition to the round-the-clock activity mentioned above, it is important to maintain “eyes on the street” in urban development through the appropriate placement of windows and entrances. Appropriate lighting also contributes to safety and the attractiveness of the development.

**Landscaping**

A TOD, particularly when it is infill development, may not have large areas available for landscaping. Nevertheless, high quality landscaping should be used to enhance public spaces. The generous use of trees creates a more livable environment and reduces energy costs for cooling. Street trees can make development more pedestrian friendly by providing a barrier between the sidewalk and street.

**Circulation**

Circulation within a TOD should, in addition to supporting transit, maximize walking and bicycling without eliminating the automobile. Cities and counties may designate certain qualifying areas served by transit as
CASE STUDY: Integrating Transit-Oriented Development into the General Plan

The following policies from the agriculture and land use element of the Fresno County General Plan illustrate how local jurisdictions can facilitate and guide transit-oriented development:

Policy LU-F1 The County shall encourage mixed-use development that locates residences near compatible jobs and services.

Policy LU-F2 The County shall encourage the combination of residential, commercial, and office uses in mixed use configurations on the same site.

Policy LU-F3 The County shall promote development of higher-density housing in areas located along major transportation corridors and transit routes and served by the full range of urban services, including neighborhood commercial uses, community centers, and public services.

Policy LU-F4 The County shall selectively redesignate vacant land for higher density uses or mixed uses to facilitate infill development.

Policy LU-F5 The County shall encourage subdivision designs that site neighborhood parks near activity centers such as schools, libraries, and community centers.

Policy LU-F6 The County shall encourage the creation of activity centers including schools, libraries, and community centers in existing neighborhoods.

Policy LU-F7 The County shall seek to reduce the amount of land devoted to parking in new urban non-residential development and encourage the use of shared parking facilities.

Policy LU-F8 The County shall adopt transit- and pedestrian-oriented design guidelines and incorporate them into community plans and specific plans. The County shall review development proposals for compliance with its adopted transit-and pedestrian-oriented design guidelines to identify design changes that can improve transit, bicycle, and pedestrian access.

Policy LU-F9 The County shall plan adequate pedestrian-oriented neighborhood commercial shopping areas to serve residential development.

Policy LU-F10 The County shall encourage school districts to site new schools in locations that allow students to safely walk or bicycle from their homes, and to incorporate school sites into larger neighborhood activity centers that serve multiple purposes.

“infill opportunity zones.” (§65088.1) These zones, which must be identified by December 31, 2009, are exempt from county Congestion Management Plan level of service requirements (§65088.4).

Parking

Parking requirements for TOD are typically lower than for conventional development and often specify a maximum rather than a minimum number of spaces. In order to maximize the use of land, parking structures are favored over surface parking, particularly at infill TOD sites. The placement of parking structures should not physically separate the TOD from the surrounding community.

Implementation Tools

Successful TOD implementation is dependent upon TOD-supportive general plan policies enabled by specific zoning codes, development regulations, and design guidelines. To create an effective regulatory and review environment, local jurisdictions can modify existing zoning codes to encourage TOD; tailor development regulations to individual TOD sites where appropriate; develop TOD-friendly design standards; and simplify and streamline the permit and review process.

The following planning tools are typical ways a community can implement TOD-supportive general plan policies.
CASE STUDY: Integrating Transit-Oriented Development into the General Plan

The following policies from the 1998 City of Oakland General Plan illustrate how local jurisdictions can facilitate and guide transit-oriented development:

**Goal:** Integrate land use and transportation planning; integrate transportation and land use planning at the neighborhood, city and regional levels by developing transit-oriented development where appropriate at transit and commercial nodes.

**Objective:** Provide mixed use, transit-oriented development that encourages public transit use and increases pedestrian and bicycle trips at major transportation nodes.

**Policy 1:** Encourage Transit-Oriented Development. Transit-oriented development should be encouraged at existing or proposed transit nodes, defined by the convergence of two or more modes of public transportation such as BART, bus, shuttle service, light rail or electric trolley, ferry and inter-city or commuter rail.

**Policy 2:** Guiding Transit Oriented Development. Transit-oriented developments should be pedestrian oriented, encourage night and day time use, provide the neighborhood with needed goods and services, contain a mix of land uses, and be designed to be compatible with the character of surrounding neighborhoods.

**Policy 3:** Promoting Neighborhood Services. Promote neighborhood-serving commercial development within one-quarter to one-half mile of established transit routes and nodes.

**Policy 4:** Linking Transportation and Economic Development. Encourage transportation improvements that facilitate economic development.

**Policy 5:** Linking Transportation and Activities. Link transportation facilities and infrastructure improvements to recreational uses, job centers, commercial nodes, and social services (i.e., hospitals, parks, or community centers).

Specific Plan

Specific plans are a useful zoning tool for implementing the TOD-related policies and objectives of the general plan. A specific plan can provide detailed land use policies, development standards, and infrastructure requirements in the TOD area. For a further discussion of specific plans, see Chapter 10 as well as the OPR publication The Planner’s Guide to Specific Plans.

Transit Village Plan

The Transit Village Development Planning Act of 1994 (§65460, et seq.) authorizes cities and counties to prepare “transit village plans” to encourage mixed-use development in close vicinity to transit stations. Transit village plans occupy a niche similar to the community plans described in Chapter 1. What distinguishes them is their specific role in encouraging high-density pedestrian-oriented development around transit stations.

A transit village plan must be consistent with the city or county general plan (§65460.8). The plan is adopted by resolution, like the general plan, and becomes the policy foundation for village zoning provisions, public works projects, and future subdivision activity.

To encourage pedestrian use, the entire village must be contained within a one-quarter mile radius of a transit station. The Act provides that a city or county adopting a plan will be eligible for state transportation funds but does not indicate that areas with such plans will receive priority funding. Transit villages may be excluded from conformance with county Congestion Management Plan level of service standards with the approval of the Congestion Management Agency.

Zoning

Transit-oriented development will typically involve changes in zoning, either as a separate action or in conjunction with a specific plan or a transit village plan. The purpose of the rezoning is to specify uses and allow the necessary density and building intensity for a successful TOD. Zoning changes may take the form of a new zoning district or an overlay zone. Planned unit development (PUD) zoning may also be used for TOD. Considerations for TOD zoning include mixed-use, minimum residential densities, intensity of commercial and office uses, appropriate automobile parking standards, and optimal building setbacks to create pedestrian scale.
## Regional Opportunity Index Report (Dataset 2014)

**Regional Opportunity Index: People**
- Education
- Health/Env
- Civic Life
- Mobility/Transp
- Overall Mean
- Education Opportunity: People
- Health/Env
- Civic Life
- Mobility/Transp
- Overall Mean
- Economic Opportunity: People
- Employment Rate
- Min. Basic Income
- Overall Mean
- Housing Opportunity: People
- Homeownership
- Housing Cost
- Overall Mean
- Health/Env Opportunity: People
- Infant Health
- Years of Life Lost
- Overall Mean
- Civic Life Opportunity: People
- Voting Rates
- English Speakers
- Overall Mean

**Regional Opportunity Index: Place**
- Education
- Economic
- Social
- Civic Life
- Overall Mean
- Education Opportunity: Place
- Economic
- Social
- Civic Life
- Overall Mean
- Economic Opportunity: Place
- Employment Rate
- Min. Basic Income
- Overall Mean
- Housing Opportunity: Place
- Homeownership
- Housing Cost
- Overall Mean
- Health/Env Opportunity: Place
- Infant Health
- Years of Life Lost
- Overall Mean
- Civic Life Opportunity: Place
- Voting Rates
- English Speakers
- Overall Mean

**Mobility/Transp. Opportunity: People**
- Vehicle Availability
- Commute Time
- Overall Mean

**Mobility/Transp. Opportunity: Place**
- Internet Access
- Overall Mean

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Provided by the UC Davis Center for Regional Change, Regional Opportunity Index (ROI). The ROI is an index of community and regional opportunity for understanding social and economic opportunity in California. The goal of the ROI is to help target resources and policies toward people and places with the greatest need, to foster thriving communities of opportunity for all Californians. It does this by incorporating "people" and "place" components, integrating economic, infrastructure, environmental, and social indicators into a comprehensive assessment of the factors driving opportunity. For more information, please visit: [http://dataset.regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/roi](http://dataset.regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/roi)

Open the [Data Descriptions PDF](http://dataset.regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/roi) to learn more about the ROI indicators.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROI Indicator</th>
<th>Selected Area</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Opportunity: People</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Educated Adults</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Proficiency</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Proficiency</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Truancy</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Opportunity: Place</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduation Rate</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UC/CSU Eligibility</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Experience</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Discipline Rate</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Opportunity: People</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Rate</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Basic Income</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Opportunity: Place</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Availability</td>
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<td>701.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job Quality</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Growth</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bank Accessibility</td>
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<td>0.24</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Housing Opportunity: People</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Ownership</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing Cost Burden</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing Opportunity: Place</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Adequacy</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Affordability</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mobility/Transp Opportunity: People</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle Availability</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commute Time</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Access</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health/Env Opportunity: People</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant Health</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth to Teens</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Life Lost</td>
<td>40.29</td>
<td>29.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health/Env Opportunity: Place</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Quality</td>
<td>14.94</td>
<td>10.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prenatal Care</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Supermarket</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care Availability</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Civic Life Opportunity: People</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting Rates</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Speakers</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Civic Life Opportunity: Place</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Citizenship</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Stability</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note: The statistics in this report are based upon the census tracts selected in black. Indicators with null values are excluded from the population-weighted averages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics Characteristics</th>
<th>Selected Area</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>857,730</td>
<td>38,066,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population under age 18</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population over age 64</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race: African American</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race: Asian and Pacific Islander</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race: Hispanic</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race: Non-Hispanic White</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race: All Other</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NEEDS OF OILDALE - 2017

Healthy Communities:

1. Communication: Digital sign with events, opportunities
   Centennial Plaza: poles close enough & tall to hang banners securely

2. Education: Preschools, Parenting Classes, Nutrition, Life Skills, Adult Ed
   i. Enrichment, espec. summer & vacation time
   ii. Education for nonprofits, and churches on best practices of working in low income areas. (We can save gov. $$).

3. Housing: Low rent apts, houses, senior housing, mobile homes
   i. Code enforcement—ease the reporting mechanism. APP?
   ii. Habitat for Humanity – funding, volunteers, houses

4. Medical: Pediatricians, Vision Drs w/VSP coverage, high risk prenatal
   "Immunization quick access, Add IZ to Memorial Urgent Care/ER, Good Samaritan; have all connected to the electronic registry for IZ.
   a. One-Stop Medical w/MH, DOA, Pediatrician, IZ, PN, counselors.
      i. All accessible with cash, insurance, MediCal.
      ii. (Have Child Guidance, CSV, Omni, 2 dental, 1 ophthalmologist, WIC)

5. Parks: Need safer ones w/lighting, and more surveillance by peace officers. Offer more totally free programs which operate within Oildale itself, not requiring transportation. Keep track of attendees’ # from 93308 area of Oildale.

6. Recreation: More swimming lessons and longer dates/hours pools open
   Increased team sports, sponsorship of teams, gym available for kids

7. Recreation Center for Oildale: Other areas have Martin Luther King Center, SAL & PAL gyms, downtown church gym, McMurtrey Center.

8. Safety: Crack down on the internet cafes & marijuana shops (violating set standards), a plan for a safe downtown area with quality shops, cafes.
   increased lighting, increased peace officer patrols,

9. Substance/Alcohol Abuse: Enforce the Social Host Ordinance ($1,000 fine).
   A type of rescue mission near the river. Residential, trmt, social work
   Ease method of reporting drug activity, underage drinking. APP?
   CBERR Grant in place: mtgs q last Tues of month @ 6:30pm NHS.
   OLA/Oildale Neighborhood Watch in partnership with KSMN.
Transportation: More transportation within Oildale area...to events, swimming, games, along with affordable family passes. Bicycle safety events, including availability of reflectors, helmets, locks.

10. Miscellaneous: Downtown drinking fountains, businesses responsible for trash clean up, health fairs, smoking cessation programs locally.

11. Waste Management: GOOD: 2 lg item free pickups/month. CON: Does not apply to apartment dwellers and alleys fill with lg item trash.
February 23, 2017

Ms. Lorelei H. Oviatt
AICP, Director
2700 “M” Street, Suite 100
Bakersfield, CA 93301-2323

Re: Comment Letter in response to the General Plan Update 2017 Healthy Communities and Land Use Element

Dear Ms. Oviatt:

Thank you and your staff for including an overview of the January 26, 2017 General Plan update by Kern County Public Health Director, Matt Constantine in the staff report. Mr. Constantine stated the current and real growing threat to our community is the increase in chronic diseases such as diabetes, coronary heart disease, and chronic liver disease.

The indicators that Mr. Constantine highlights in the report are of critical importance to all Kern County residents and of particular interest to those residents living along the fence line of oil & gas production, agriculture, and high traffic areas including Arvin, Buttonwillow, Lamont, Lost Hills, Shafter, and Wasco. We understand not all residents of Kern County will agree with our opinions, experiences and recommendations, however the potential hazards we face on a daily basis from sources of air and water pollution have a devastating long-term impacts on our health.

The first pesticide law was enacted by Congress in 1910. The Insecticide Act was not instituted to protect citizens from deleterious effects of chemicals but to protect farmers from unscrupulous vendors selling pesticides and oil products that did not perform as advertised. In 1948 the Federal Water Pollution Control Act addressed water pollution. The law was amended in 1972 and became the Clean Water Act. The Clean Water Act regulates polluting discharges into waters of the United States making it unlawful for anyone to discharge pollutants from a point source into navigable waters – unless a permit was obtained.

In 1970 the Clean Air Act authorized the development of comprehensive federal and state regulations to limit emissions from both stationary (industrial) and mobile sources. In many outlying unincorporated, low-income areas of Kern access to water is a privilege. In other affluent and middle-class areas, access to fresh clean water is a right. Life in most low-income, fence line communities is not equitable and the costs are high.

Residents of Lost Hills receive their drinking water from the Semitropic Water District which is also the water source for Lost Hills Elementary School. These children who are exposed to these toxic chemicals everyday are being exposed to hazardous chemicals through their drinking water and the school yard soil. We strongly oppose the expansion of Lost Hills because of the threat to children’s health.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

[Name]
rates in the county for water that is yellow, smells of chlorine, has bits of sediment floating in it as well as a distinctive bitter taste. Most residents refuse to drink the water and purchase vending machine water or bottled water to drink and cook with. For most families that adds another $50 to their monthly expenses. The average water bill in Lost Hills is $150/mo. Just over six years ago, the Semitropic Water District was ordered by the federal government to install an arsenic filtration system to remove high levels of arsenic. Residents report the change in the quality of drinking water occurred about the same time as the arsenic filtration system was installed. Look closely at the elbows, knees, ankles and necks of Lost Hills residents and you will see the strands of raised, dry, cracked skin that comes with bathing in water that is highly corrosive. Urging residents to shower in cool water to reduce the interaction of hot water & corrosive chemicals is met with resistance. Those homes cooled by swamp coolers are at a disadvantage because the chemicals in the water cause corrosion within three to six months and swamp coolers are no longer functional.

In March 2014 eight families living on Nelson Court were evacuated from their homes because of a leaking gas pipeline. More than 200 claims were filed on behalf of 100 residents who live in or near the Arvin neighborhood where the underground field gas pipeline ruptured. There were no regulations in place to protect the residents of Arvin.

**Healthy Communities:**

When we think of Healthy Communities, Arvin, Buttonwillow, Lamont, Lost Hills, Shafter, Wasco, and unincorporated disadvantaged communities come to mind. An equitable distribution of infrastructure and economic resources is missing. Many outlying communities have four-lane highways in the business district adjacent to residences where trucks carrying carrots, tomatoes, potatoes and citrus breeze through town. Children and seniors risk bodily harm crossing the street.

There is a serious lack of healthy community design elements bringing residents together. In fact, it appears that many of the aforementioned towns were specifically designed to restrict close-knit relationships and impose pockets of cultural and linguistic isolation. Central to the discussion of Healthy Communities and Land Use is health, safety and toxicity. Situating housing next door to refineries, injection wells, sumps, above ground storage tanks and vestiges of oil and gas equipment of small producers who went belly-up as the price of oil fell is negligent and foolhardy.

Potential hazards of air pollution emissions and pesticide exposure have a direct impact on the health of infants, children, youth, young adults, adults and seniors. Across the age continuum cumulative impacts exposure from multiple sources affect the health, well-being and quality of life for low-income residents of Kern County. The American Lung Association released its State of the Air 2016 report\(^1\), in which Bakersfield, CA is ranked the highest for worst air quality for short-term and year-round particle pollution (PM 2.5). This means the greater Metropolitan Bakersfield and Kern County areas are affected at higher rates, an issue that must be addressed with specific projects and strong policy identified in the Healthy Communities Element.

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We ask that the Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department collaborate with the Kern County Public Health Department to identify specific projects that will address the issue of air pollution, and launch an in-depth study that accounts for all major variables affecting low-income fence line communities including long-term exposures, cumulative exposures, and the effects of combined exposure to multiple pesticides and contaminants over the short and long-term. Additionally, communities must have access to health service providers specifically trained to deal with their unique medical symptoms. Residents must have a voice and an understanding of ways to solve their health problems before addressing land use elements.

Air pollution can cause a range of reactions in the human body from acute to chronic effects. A number of health impacts can result, including respiratory irritation, heart disease, lung disease, and increased susceptibility to acute and chronic infections. Acute respiratory symptoms, shortness of breath, wheezing and coughing have been linked to ozone exposure. This is particularly harmful in school-age children.

In the 2016 report, *Kids on the Frontline: How pesticides are undermining the health of rural children* reports each year more than 680 million pounds of pesticides are applied to agricultural fields across the country. How much pesticide is enough? Where is the tipping point? Rural children face additional exposures when agricultural chemicals contaminate water supplies or drift from nearby fields. Farmers, farm workers and their families are regularly exposed to chemicals known to harm human health. The best way to protect children, adults and seniors from pesticide harm is to reduce the volume of use. The burden cannot be shifted onto individual families, policy changes are required.

The system is broken and must be fixed. It’s time for a reduction in the amount of agricultural pesticides used in our rural communities. Pesticide-free buffer zones should be established. Investments in healthy, innovative incentives so that farmers reduce their dependence on pesticides is another solution.

As mentioned by many residents and the youth in the January 26, 2017 Healthy Community Workshop, there is a need for green and open spaces, infrastructure, sewer system, reliable and affordable transportation, cultural center, low-income and affordable housing, youth clinics, youth programs and leadership opportunities, and jobs with living wages. Many of the residents reside in the Southeast communities of Bakersfield such as Lamont, Rexland Acres, and Greenfield. In order to build a healthy community and strong community investments we need to revisit the Kern County Public Health – Healthy Community Indicator and explore our options with regard to Transportation, Green Space, Food and Community Design. Place matters.

**Land Use:**

The Land Use Element included in the February General Plan Update must adhere to SB1000 and CalEnviroScreen 3.0, the screening tool used to identify CA communities that are disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution. Environmental justice is the heart of the General Plan and reflects environmental conditions and population vulnerability to pollution.

On February 9, 2017 at Rexland Recreation Center organizers from Leadership Counsel and
Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment posed the question, “What would you like to see in your community?” to a group of low-income, Latinx youth in south Kern from communities of Lamont and Rexland Acres. The responses were similar to those of youth in neighboring communities: Access to healthy and affordable fruits and vegetables, parks, soccer field, skate park, gym, cultural center, accessible and reliable bus stops, youth clinic, designated cross walk, water park, extended library hours, free banda dance in plaza, a place to hold fundraisers, and an off road area designated for youth with driver’s permit to practice driving prior to taking the written test (Rules of the Road). What is categorically different in a low-income community is a lack of investment in infrastructure. In moderate to higher income residential communities of Kern County community improvements exist as part of the overall design of the community.

**Land Use Ideas from Youth**

**Lamont Youth:**

- Repurpose private unused buildings like the KFC building located in Lamont.
- Transform the burnt-out building into a homeless shelter, soup kitchen, teen health clinic, or public computer lab.
- Bring and support local businesses such as have a farmers market, coffee shop or fruit stands.
- Encourage to have a central plaza in the community in which activities and entertainment can happen, and goods and arts and crafts can be sold.
- Other Ideas: New High School, Mall, Gymnasium, Walking Path, Better lighting and Streets.

**Rexland Acres Youth:**

- Repurpose unused building as an Art Center on Fairview and Gary.
- Shut-down marijuana dispensaries and replace them with healthy markets.
- Have the County and Health Dept partner up and make programs happen in our communities.

It is critical as we approach the Land Use element, to incorporate strong zoning policy that will protect disadvantaged communities by not allowing industrial uses like oil refinery or commercials such as marijuana dispensaries to be located in nearby houses, schools, parks, or public spaces. It is important to start investing in what the community wants to see. Moreover, it is crucial for infill and mix used development to be planned, with affordable a reliable housing opportunities. For this, we need a clear list that defines the type of usage allowed to be built in community.

**Policy Recommendation:**

**Monitoring stations** set-up to specifically distinguish emissions associated with oil & gas production and pesticides from ambient air quality are necessary to understand the source of the emissions. Stations throughout oil & gas areas and pesticide application areas such as oil fields, disposal areas, processing facilities, farmland, schools, hospitals, etc will allow for better data collection. Detecting emissions is vital in order to reduce the impact on Kern County’s air
quality, and fully protect our communities. Data provided publicly in an easily understandable format can aid in efforts to increase transparency, raise awareness, and allow the public to protect themselves.

**An independent, in-depth study** that accounts for all major variables should be conducted to understand how air and water pollution is affecting local communities.

A multi-faceted approach to solving the problems facing Kern County’s most vulnerable communities is what environmental justice requires. Proper scientific studies, comprehensive monitoring, involved grassroots communities and regulatory agencies that fully protect all residents in Kern County can lead to a prosperous future premised on protection of public health and the environment.

**Prevent Incompatible Land Uses by Creating Human Health Buffer Zone.** Establish at least one and ½ mile buffer zone between oil and gas extraction operations and sensitive receptors (schools, housing, hospitals). Establish at least one mile buffer zone between dairies and sensitive receptors such as schools, residences, day care, etc.

**Provide Clean and Affordable Drinking Water for All.** Create new and pursue existing state and federal funding assistance programs to assist small and mid-size communities to pay for new water treatment systems and prevent increased water rates. Ensure that small communities are connected to existing water systems and other infrastructure.

**Reduce Industry Impacts through Improved Regulation and Control.** Require notification and place of pesticide application to avoid potential exposures at schools, including a prohibitions of pesticides near schools during school hours.

**Plan for infill land use development.** This will allow for investment in already existing communities, with affordable housing options. Not allow outward growth.

**Address the over-concentration of marijuana dispensaries and liquor stores** and associated health and safety impacts. Not allow for marijuana dispensaries and limit the amount of liquor stores to be built in nearby schools, parks, residential houses/apartments, as such stores can have a negative effect on neighborhood’s health.

Overall, we look for comments to be considered. Draft plan should specify in a policy and corresponding implementation action that the report will incorporate quantifiable indicators that will allow the County to measure the success or lack thereof of the implementation of the Final Plan policies in achieving the Final Plan’s goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Very truly yours,

Rosanna Esparza, PhD, Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment
Gustavo Aguirre, Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment
Patricia Leal-Gutierrez, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability
Improving Safety and Mobility in South Kern County

COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES

A Report to the City of Arvin and the Communities of Lamont and Weedpatch

February 2013
Improving Safety and Mobility in South Kern County
Community Revitalization Strategies

A Report to the City of Arvin and the Communities of Lometa and Woodpatch
February 2013

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Introduction

This report is the outcome of an intensive community-based planning process for three communities located in southern Kern County, California: the City of Arvin and the unincorporated communities of Lamont and Weedpatch.

Project Intent

The goal of the project was to help create a safer, more comfortable, and aesthetically pleasing environment that accommodates all users and all abilities, through a process that engaged a diverse set of community members. The project was further tailored to the present needs of each community in the context of other planning efforts. For the City of Arvin, the process focused on a series of infill sites within the community that have been targeted for mixed-use, walkable places in the Arvin General Plan. For the communities of Lamont and Weedpatch, the effort focused on pedestrian safety and mobility in the vicinity of State Route 184 (also known as "Weedpatch Highway").

The planning effort was made possible through a California Department of Transportation Environmental Justice: Context-Sensitive Design Planning Grant received by Kern County in partnership with the Local Government Commission (LGC) and the South Kern Building Healthy Communities (BHC) Group. The LGC is a Sacramento-based nonprofit organization that works with local governments and communities to create healthier, and more vibrant and resource-efficient places. South Kern is one of 14 communities in California that has been selected to take part in the California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities Initiative, and the South Kern BHC is working to create an environment for children in the area that is healthy, safe, and conducive to learning.

The project partners assembled a multi-disciplinary professional team to develop the plan. Dan Burden of the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute assisted the LGC with the public visioning process. Opticos Design, Inc. provided community planning and design expertise and prepared the plan document, with assistance of Nelson\Nygaard (providing transportation engineering expertise) and GRC Associates (assisting with issues related to the General Plan process in Arvin).
Community Engagement Process

Community input and participation in the planning process was an essential component of developing the design recommendations presented in this report. Two separate community engagement strategies were developed - one for the City of Arvin and one for the combined unincorporated communities of Weedpatch and Lamont located in South Kern County. As a first step, LGC worked closely with each municipality (i.e., City of Arvin and Kern County) to identify leaders from the community and other key stakeholders to serve as Advisory Group members responsible for providing guidance to the overall planning process and specifically the community planning events or 'charrette'.

Community Engagement in Arvin

In the City of Arvin, LGC worked with the existing General Plan Update Citizen Advisory Committee to receive feedback on the direction of the Caltrans-funded planning effort and on the community planning charrette used to engage residents. The charrette was scheduled over the days of May 7 - 10, 2012 and included a series of focus group meetings, presentations, and workshops with residents, businesses, community organizations and local government staff. The kick-off community event was held on the evening of Monday, May 7, 2012, where residents were introduced to the project, listened to educational bilingual presentations by Dan Burden (with Walkable Communities) and Paul Zykofofsky (LGC), shared their vision for the City of Arvin, and worked at tables around large aerial maps to identify opportunities and challenges related to the two infill sites being considered by the design team.

Three focus group meetings were also held over the course of the charrette. These meetings allowed the design team to meet with and learn from individuals who represented public agencies that serve Arvin; representatives from the business and economic development community; and youth from Arvin High School. The design team also presented and received feedback at the Arvin Planning Commission meeting held on May 8, 2012.

A Community Open House was held on May 9, 2012, where residents were invited to come to the design team’s workspace to meet with them one-on-one, look at draft plans the design team was working on, and provide feedback. A meeting was also organized with Caltrans staff and a separate meeting with Arvin’s City Manager to go over draft design recommendations. A final public meeting was held on Thursday, May 10, 2012, where the design team presented draft site design recommendations and other visuals for residents to comment on. The design team used all input received at the Arvin charrette to create and refine the design recommendations presented in this report.
Community Engagement in Lamont and Woodpatch

The Lamont/Woodpatch charrette was conducted over the days of September 12-18, 2012. An opening public workshop was held on September 12th where community members were introduced to the project, listened to educational bi-lingual presentations by Paul Zykowski (LGC); participated in an interactive visioning exercise; and worked at tables around large aerial maps where residents were able to identify opportunities and challenges related to the Woodpatch Highway Corridor. Core values that were identified in the visioning exercises included:

- Community/Family
- Work / Business / Agriculture
- Culture / History
- Health
- Natural Environment / Open Space

A half-day Community Design Workshop was held on Saturday, September 15, 2012. Participants were led on an hour-long walk audit guided by members of the design team where they were able to discuss positive and negative aspects of the highway corridor. After the walking audit, residents listened to a bi-lingual presentation by Paul Zykowski summarizing the opening workshop and highlighting design options that might work in their community to improve the safety and appearance of the highway corridor. Residents also worked around large aerial maps and identified their own ideas for improvements that could be made to the highway corridor.

Three focus groups were held during the Lamont/Woodpatch charrette. Those meetings allowed the design team to meet with and learn from individuals who represented public agencies that serve the Lamont/Woodpatch area; representatives from the Vineland and Lamont School Districts; and members of the South Valley Neighborhood Partnership. A meeting was also organized with Caltrans and County staff on Monday, September 17, 2012, to go over draft recommendations and plans.

The final community event was held on Tuesday, September 18, 2012. The design team presented conceptual design ideas and policy recommendations to residents for their review and comment. The residents were supportive of the ideas presented and especially liked the idea of roundabouts at intersections located at the north end and south end of their community so as to slow down traffic and act as a gateway for the community. Improving crossings at intersections was also a high priority expressed by residents.
The project area includes three communities in southern Kern County south of Bakersfield. Although it is rich in natural resources (including oil) and has a large agricultural economy that supports large numbers of farm workers, the area suffers from high rates of poverty, substandard education, unhealthy air and water, and inadequate infrastructure and public services. Arvin, Lamont, and Weedpatch are all located in South Kern.

The City of Arvin is located about 25 miles southeast of Bakersfield along State Route 223. Arvin's population according to the 2010 U.S. Census was 18,304; over 92% of residents identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino, and nearly half (47%) identify as foreign-born. Nearly 1/3 of Arvin's residents fall below the poverty level, with median household income little more than half of the statewide average. Arvin also suffers from poor air quality (it has been known to have some of the highest smog levels in all of California).

Lamont and Weedpatch are located about 14 miles southeast of Bakersfield along State Route 184. Lamont is home to about 15,000 residents while Weedpatch has about 2,700 residents. Nearly 95% of residents identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino, and 44% identify as foreign-born. Poverty is widespread, with over 25% of residents falling below the poverty level, and median household income slightly more than half of the statewide average.

According to a July 2009 Transportation Concept Report, State Route 184 carries approximately 14,000 cars per day through the community of Lamont, and serves as a truck route for the region.

Since residents in both project areas are very low income, they either need to walk in an area of inconsistent sidewalks and little shade, or spend a high percentage of their income to maintain a car. Non-motorized infrastructure, including sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and adequate shade and shelter are not common along area streets making it uncomfortable and sometimes physically impossible for residents to access services and reach primary destinations during hot summer months when temperatures rise above 100 degrees.

Pedestrian and bicycle accessibility is also an important component of local economic activity, as safe and comfortable streets and sidewalks allow local entrepreneurs and their potential customers to connect.

All three communities have limited resources and are challenged to implement planning policies, programs, and projects. There are a number of organizing and advocacy partners currently working to improve South Kern. It will be important for local agencies to work together with these partners in order to respond creatively in addressing local issues.
Project Area and the Community

Lamont and Weedpatch are two closely affiliated communities located in central Kern County, approximately fifteen miles southeast of downtown Bakersfield. Both are located on the State Route 184 (Weedpatch Highway) corridor, with Weedpatch one mile directly south from neighboring Lamont. According to most recent 2010 Census data, Lamont is home to 15,132 residents and is modestly growing, while Weedpatch maintains a smaller and slowly declining population of 2,658. About 94% of the population is Latino.

Lamont and Weedpatch were both settled in the 1920s. Weedpatch holds historical significance in that it is the location of the Arvin Federal Government Camp, created in 1935 for fleeing “Okies” and featured in John Steinbeck’s novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. The camp was later known as the Sunset Labor Camp and today is managed by the Kern County Housing Authority. It is located on Sunset Boulevard adjacent to Sunset Elementary School (in the Vineland School District). Three of the remaining buildings from the original camp are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historic Resources.

Lamont and Weedpatch face significant challenges. The local economy is strongly linked to agriculture—an industry generally linked with hard working conditions and low incomes. According to the 2010 Census, about 27% of Lamont’s population lives below poverty level. Relative remoteness of the communities also limits residents’ access to needs such as health services and healthy food options. However, there are numerous organizations and community groups advocating and working for the improved quality of life for local residents. The communities are invested and enthusiastic about creating meaningful change, and have the support of various working organizations to do so.

Study Areas

This project studied possible improvements to the quality of life for Lamont and Weedpatch residents through manageable, incremental changes to the State Route 184 corridor, from Mountain View Road to Sunset Boulevard. SR 184 slices through the centers of Lamont and Weedpatch. While the roadway needs to accommodate vehicular through traffic, it also must provide local residents with a safe, walkable, and welcoming main street environment in which to work, shop, gather, and recreate. This project explored how the street could be adapted to better serve all users in keeping with community values and desires. Caltrans publication *Main Streets: Flexibility in Design and Operations* (2005) was utilized as a starting point for generating context-sensitive solutions along the corridor.

Above, aerial map of Lamont and Weedpatch, showing the extents of the project.

Above, clockwise from top left: Focus areas for community activity in Lamont, and the focus area in Weedpatch; students walk together on a separated trail toward Mountain View Middle School; Lamont’s original gateway sign; active agriculture fields in the shadow of the beautiful southern Sierra Nevada range.
Key Constraints and Opportunities

Key Constraints

State Route 184/Main Street is within short distance of many important community destinations in Lamont and Weedpatch. Lamont Elementary, Alicante Avenue, and Myrtle Avenue Schools lie on either side of the corridor in central Lamont; in addition, Mountain View Middle School is located about one mile north of the primary commercial corridor of Lamont, and Sunset School (part of the Vineland School District) is located one mile south of Weedpatch. Bear Mountain Park, Lamont Park, the County Library, and other community amenities are also within a five-minute walk from SR 184/Main Street in either direction. Commercial activity is also consistently spread along the entire one-mile length of the corridor in Lamont. Thus, the highway requires consideration not only as a walkable main street environment, but also as a key junction to support connections throughout the community.

Challenging Pedestrian Environment

SR 184 within Lamont is very wide, which is not necessarily conducive to safety and comfort, nor to the aesthetics and commercial viability of the main street. Wide travel lanes, a five-lane cross section, and limited use of on-street parking all contribute to an environment that encourages motorists to drive quickly through the project area.

Narrow sidewalks and poor lighting also minimize the comfort of walking on the main street. Pedestrian crossings, whether over the wide expanse of five travel lanes in Lamont or the high-speed, rural road conditions around Weedpatch, are largely at one’s own risk. There are only four marked pedestrian crossings on the one-mile stretch of SR 184 in central Lamont, while pedestrians must traverse, on average, 90 feet before reaching the opposite sidewalk edge. While pedestrians frequently utilize the central median, its plantings hide pedestrians from drivers. There are no marked crossings in Weedpatch or by Sunset Middle School.

Lamont has made progress in improving the safety of those walking along the northern rural section of SR 184 by building a trail up to Mountain View Middle School. A similar effort is necessary to provide for the regular southern walking traffic between the communities and Sunset Middle School.

The street also lacks the amenities necessary to make Main Street a true center of its community. It offers little in the way of public spaces, street furniture, shade, landscaping, and lighting - the elements which transform a thoroughfare into a destination in itself, welcoming use of the space for gathering and lingering.

Above, Clockwise From Top Left: With only four marked pedestrian crossings on Main Street in central Lamont, most residents cross SR 184 at their own risk; long stretches of rural road conditions between the communities can be a difficult condition for walking; intense summer temperatures require several dovetail for some shading and lee heat radiating movement; where possible, while large pedestrian opportunities seem unlikely in the near future, some local residents demonstrate that opportunity is plentiful for smaller ventures, such as roadside food stand; while the median is a great amenity for Lamont’s Main Street, it could be better utilized by tree plantings; pedestrians navigate missing sidewalks along Main Street.

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Limited Opportunities for Redevelopment

Lamont's Main Street is a developed, mature commercial corridor, with businesses consistently running its one-mile length. Parcels along SR 184 in central Lamont are largely built out, and with a pattern of small parcels under different ownership, there is little opportunity or incentive for redevelopment. While the corridor could use energizing and would benefit from better public space through new development projects, Kern County will have limited ability to guide redevelopment through traditional means. Innovative solutions and cooperation with current landowners and businesses will be required for improvements to the quality of places and spaces along Main Street.

Key Opportunities

Foundations for a Better, Safer Main Street

SR 184 has several advantages which enable it to easily transform into a more effective, enjoyable main street in the short term. First, its median is a great asset. Visually, it divides the street in half and potentially encourages slower driving speeds functionally, it improves crossing safety, as pedestrians only have to cross one direction of traffic at a time. Adding street trees to the median could provide additional shade along the street and improve the overall environment for pedestrians, and small changes to the median can provide opportunities for formal pedestrian refuges at key crossings. The street also has ample pavement space to implement several key improvements through new paint alone, without any significant re-engineering of the road. For example, bicycle lanes could be added without any reduction of the number of travel lanes.

During the design workshop the potential for reducing the number of general use traffic lanes along the corridor was also discussed. Practitioners generally refer to such a reduction as a "Road Diet." In the long term, the County could work with Caltrans to consider the implementation of a "road diet" or a reduction in the number of travel lanes from 5 (2 in either direction plus a central turn lane) to 3 (1 in either direction plus a central turn lane). Road diets for downtown corridors typically result in an environment that is safer and friendlier to drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians. The slowing of vehicular traffic generally results in a reduction in collisions and an increased comfort level for pedestrians and bicyclists. Recent research has also begun to quantify economic benefits of road diets. Case studies have shown that downtown corridors that undergo a road diet generally experience an increase in sales and property values while experiencing a decrease in vacancy rates.

Despite the decrease in travel lanes, road diets can often result in improved vehicle operations through the provision of roundabouts, dedicated turn lanes, or customized signal timing to make intersections operate more efficiently. At the same time, road diets may increase the availability of on-street parking, and make off-street parking easier to access.

Preliminary traffic analysis suggests that the reduction in travel lanes along SR 184 would not impose a significant reduction in Level of Service, provided that key intersections can be upgraded. Further discussions would need to be had with Caltrans to review traffic projections for SR 184 and to discuss trade-offs between Level of Service and other community benefits, such as reduced vehicle speeds.

Above: Residents mark constraints and opportunities on a map of central Lamont.
Framework for Design

Improve Streetscape and Frontage to Stimulate Commercial Activity

SR 184 is an active commercial main street that provides an environment where small businesses and local shoppers can connect to do business. Small-scale, individual improvements in the public realm, such as street furniture, landscaping, and lighting can improve the physical environment and help to make it more appealing for shoppers and visitors. In turn, increased pedestrian traffic and business can help to stimulate private improvements to frontage.

Existing, underutilized parking spaces provide perhaps the greatest opportunity to make low-cost, pedestrian-friendly improvements to the corridor. They can be used to plant trees, install landscaping and outdoor seating, and can accommodate temporary commercial activities, such as food trucks and local vendors.

Identify Activity Nodes

By pinpointing the most important areas of focus for community life, Lamont and Weedpatch can better prioritize and consolidate improvement efforts for maximum benefit to their residents. In the diagram to the near right, activity nodes are marked by a quarter-mile radius circle, representing the average distance a pedestrian walks within five minutes. In Lamont and Weedpatch, these centers of activity are identified as:

- Mountain View Middle School;
- SR 184 at Alicante Avenue, connecting Lamont's central commercial blocks with Alicante Avenue School;
- Myrtle Avenue School, Saint Augustine Catholic Church, the Lamont Community Health Center, and the Nueva Continuation High School;
- SR 184 at Kearney Avenue, including Lamont's older commercial blocks, Lamont Elementary School, Lamont Park, and the public library;
- Central Weedpatch; and
- Sunset School

Reinforce Complete Street Network

Once activity nodes have been established, key through streets that serve as connections to and between these centers can be determined. These streets can be prioritized for improvements, especially to ensure their safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. The middle-right diagram marks these priority routes in blue.

Improve Gateways

Finally, streets that also serve as important connections on a regional scale can be articulated by gateways to welcome visitors to Lamont and Weedpatch, and encourage increased awareness and safer speeds within the community zones. Potential gateway locations are marked in the far-right diagram with red stars. Major gateways occur at the Mountain View Road and Sunset Boulevard intersections on SR 184. Other smaller gateway elements could be considered for central Weedpatch (SR 184 and Buena Vista Boulevard) and the western boundary of Lamont on regionally significant Panama Road.

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SR 184 Improvements

Existing Roadway Conditions
SR 184 within central Lamont is currently built with five travel lanes: two travel lanes in each direction, and regular left-turn pockets cut into the central median. The parking "lanes" are not marked, therefore creating the appearance of an excessively wide outer travel lane and encouraging higher vehicular speeds. The street is flanked by 10-foot sidewalks.

Preferred Option: Keep Five Travel Lanes, Add Bicycle Lanes
Without great cost, SR 184 can be greatly improved for pedestrians and bicyclists by a simple restriping of the street. There is already enough width from curb to curb to add seven-foot Class II bicycle lanes and mark the seven-foot parking lanes without removing any of the five travel lanes. Defining the outside travel lane may likely promote more reasonable vehicle speeds, and the bicycle and parking lanes create a more pronounced buffer for the comfort of pedestrians on the sidewalks.

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Alternative I: Reduce to Three Travel Lanes, Add Buffered Bicycle Lanes

Traffic volumes on SR 184 through Lamont are moderate enough to allow a "road diet," a reduction in the number of vehicular travel lanes which generally increases vehicular safety; provides more space, safety, and comfort for pedestrians and bicyclists; and creates a more economically friendly environment. This option shows Class II bicycle lanes with buffer zones on either side, improving cyclists' safety by spacing them from dangers such as large trucks and opening doors of parked cars. In the longer term, this extra pavement space could be given to planting strips for greening and street trees. If Alternative I is pursued, then it should be noted that further analysis and conversations with Caltrans would need to occur.

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Alternative II: Reduce to Three Travel Lanes, Add Bicycle Lanes and Reverse-Angle Parking

This alternative road diet shows the roadway reducing to three travel lanes with bicycle lanes, and adding reverse-angle parking spaces. To utilize reverse-angle parking spaces, drivers back in to the space rather than pull forward into it. This improves safety by allowing drivers to see oncoming vehicles and bicyclists when they pull out, and by opening car doors in the direction of the sidewalk, guiding passengers naturally toward the safe pedestrian zone. Reverse-angle parking also increases front door parking for businesses by between 20% and 70% compared to parallel parking. If Alternative II is pursued, then it should be noted that further analysis and conversations with Caltrans would need to occur.

February 2013
General Intersection Improvements

Crossing SR 184 in Lamont, given its width, traffic, and infrequent marked crossings, can be a daunting task for pedestrians. Improving existing crosswalks and adding several new marked crossings at other significant intersections along the corridor can help make the corridor safer and more welcoming place for pedestrians.

Raised Medians as Pedestrian Refuges
SR 184’s current median in Lamont offers a great safety advantage for pedestrian crossings. In general, medians promote pedestrian safety and comfort by giving pedestrians the opportunity to cross one direction of vehicular traffic at a time. On SR 184, however, there are no formal pedestrian refuges, and from drivers’ perspectives pedestrians frequently “dart out” from behind low landscaping when making mid-block crossings. Medians on the corridor should be extended at all major intersections in Lamont, so that they continue just past the marked crossing path for pedestrians and provide a walkway cut through the median. In this way, crossings are protected from turning vehicles and offer a safe refuge for those pedestrians who might require extra time to traverse the street. At formal mid-block crossings, median islands should be designed to provide good visibility for both pedestrians and drivers. The width of the existing medians on SR 184 are 8 feet wide, which is wide enough to accommodate a pedestrian refuge based on Caltrans standards of minimum of 1.2 meters.

High-Visibility Crosswalk Markings
High-visibility markings signal to motorists that they should be aware of the potential presence of individuals in the roadway. Only four intersections along SR 184 in Lamont have marked crosswalks. All major intersections along the corridor should be striped for crosswalks; and all intersections, including those with current parallel-line crosswalks, should be marked with longitudinal bars, which have greater visibility than simple double lines. Alternatively, crosswalks can be emphasized with special pavers, cobblestones, or textures where desired to enhance both visibility and streetscape aesthetics in pedestrian-intensive areas.

Advance Yield Lines
On multi-lane roadways, many crashes involving pedestrians at marked crosswalks are the “multiple threat” crash type, occurring when a driver in the first lane stops for the pedestrian but stops in close proximity to the crosswalk, reducing sight lines between the pedestrian and drivers in the next lane. By placing a yield line and accompanying sign ahead of the crosswalk, sight lines are improved, and the chance of a crash is reduced. Advance yield lines are recommended at any unsignalized crosswalk on SR 184 in Lamont, as long as the lines can be placed at the intersection in a manner that does not create potential for driver confusion.

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Curb Extensions

Curb extensions extend the sidewalk and curb line into the parking lane, reducing effective street widths at intersections and improving safety conditions for pedestrians. Curb extensions can significantly improve pedestrian crossings by: reducing the distance of pedestrian crossings and thus pedestrian’s exposure to traffic; improving sight lines between drivers and pedestrians waiting to cross the street; reducing vehicle turning speeds; and calming traffic by visually and physically narrowing the roadway.

They also improve the public realm by providing space for accessible ramps and crossing infrastructure, as well as additional space for landscaping and streetscape features. Where an extension of the sidewalk may conflict with existing storm drainage, a curb extension may be built as concrete planters that do not attach to the existing curb and leave the gutter open for drainage. Along SR 184/Main Street in Lamont, curb extensions should be installed at every major intersection, as marked on the previous page.

Universally Accessible Curb Ramps

To improve mobility for all, curb ramps with detectable warning strips (truncated domes) should be installed at every intersection. Where feasible, two per corner at right angles to the curb should be encouraged, rather than one "diagonal" curb ramp per corner (acceptable but not recommended). Curb ramp slopes must be perpendicular to any grade break, and wherever possible should align with the crosswalks for the benefit of the visually impaired.
Illustrative Plan: Central Lamont

Existing Conditions: The northern half of Lamont's Main Street is mostly an assembly of older small commercial buildings with surface parking at the street edge. There is limited connectivity between the Alisante School and Main Street.

Illustrative Plan: The plan above shows examples of small infill buildings completing vacant places along the corridor, and portions of surface parking lots converted into small public green spaces. Paradise Road is continued through to Stimson to improve connectivity through a current 2000-foot long block on the west side of SR 184. Street trees are added on major streets, the median is planted, and crosswalks are added. Notably, a large plaza is built in the center of the community on part of the County Fair Market parking lot at Hall Road.

Above: Location of improvements shown on this page.

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Short Term Improvements: The parking lot for County Fair Market, Lomont General Store, and Auto Zone is currently oversized for customers' demands; a substantial portion of the lot, about one lane of parking, could be quite feasibly converted into a beautiful, tree-lined central plaza for Lomont; over time it could be expanded to a double row as shown. Substantial diagonal parking can be maintained around the public space for store patrons.

Long Term Improvements: As Lomont grows and develops, and as the shopping center requires ultimate renovation and reconstruction, new buildings could be designed to face the plaza. The building footprints could be narrowed, with no loss of commercial square footage, to allow Capper Street's extension out to SR 180—improving connectivity with Shafter Avenue School and its surrounding neighborhood.

Top: The Lomont Center parking lot, with cars hugging an already small sidewalk.
Bottom: An example of how the front bay of parking could be converted into a central public plaza, capitalizing on a dramatic row of soaring palm trees; further trees, landscaping, and street furniture complete the public space. Parking is retained between the plaza and shopping center.
Existing Conditions: Main Street’s southern end contains Lamont’s older urban fabric, very narrow shopfront buildings set along the sidewalk’s edge. Lamont School is built right along the street, but unfortunately has no entrance on Main Street.

Proposed Improvements: Again, small parking lots are at least partially transformed into public spaces, and few vacant spaces are filled with new buildings. An inefficient parking lot at Lamont Elementary School is turned into a small green courtyard, and an entrance reopened to Main Street. Trees and landscaping are added to the street and median, and a median pedestrian refuge is added at the El Ciego Road crossing.

Above: Location of improvements shown on this page.
Above: At Lamont School, a teachers' parking lot along Main Street is converted into a more useful space as an entry courtyard for the building. To resolve community concerns for supervision and maintenance, the school property fence could be moved further east to encompass a playground and basketball court on the edge of Lamont Park. In this way, amenities could be closed behind the fence when unsupervised. A through driving lane is recommended to connect through the block, consolidating parking for the park and library. This not only improves connectivity for vehicles and pedestrians, but also gives further "eyes" to the interior of the park for community comfort and safety. The current pool site is turned into a new public splash park as planned.

Top: This parking lot at Lamont Elementary School is used for faculty parking, but it's not large enough to accommodate all teachers at the school. With ample parking on the north and south sides of school property, it could be transformed into a welcoming public space. Bottom: This space is transformed into a green courtyard to serve as a more welcoming entry along Lamont's Main Street, especially for the students, parents, teachers, and staff who may walk to school.
Above: A new trail on the west side of SR 184 connects Lamont with Weedpatch and Sunset Elementary Schools, shaded by newly planted trees, in front of the county offices and Post Office. The project improves sidewalks and adds a planting strip of trees. Additional improvements include a landscaped median and improved bus stop in front of the Post Office.

Above: In central Weedpatch, commercial buildings currently maintain an unusually large setback from SR 184, especially on the west side of the road. A frontage road is proposed, from Osborne Lane to a half block south of Lucerne Vista Boulevard, to capitalize on this extra space between the buildings and the highway. No longer competing with the high speeds of Weedpatch Highway, a frontage road would offer a more comfortable main-street environment for residents and local businesses to thrive. Small new commercial buildings are shown ultimately infilling the empty lots on the corridor.

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Weedpatch: Frontage Road

Above: This can be used to great advantage for the community, as it would allow enough space to build a parallel frontage road to SR 184. While traffic on SR 184 keeps higher speeds in this large, rural section of the route, a 10-foot-wide frontage road (including parking lane) with 10-foot-side walk would allow Weedpatch residents to enjoy a safer and friendlier walking environment for their local businesses. The highway is buffered by an eight-foot planting strip, allowing opportunity for street trees to provide shade and to signify to passing motorists that they are entering a community.

Top: An image of existing conditions of central Weedpatch looking southward, with large, dusty building setbacks.

Above: An illustration of proposed improvements with a frontage road and landscaped buffer parallel to SR 184. The buffer strip on the west side of the right-of-way new sidewalks on the east side are planted with street trees, offering a sense of arrival into the heart of the community; in addition to the enjoyment of new pavement and planting.
Key Intersection Design

Above: The intersection of Alisante Avenue and SR 184 is a natural crossing location for pedestrians. On one side of the road is a popular McDonald's restaurant and Alisante Avenue Elementary School; on the other is a large shopping center and market. This intersection improvement closes the left-turn into the shopping center, guiding the median to be extended to provide a central pedestrian refuge for the new marked crosswalk. A median island is also introduced in the middle of the intersection and designed in such a way that would make it impossible or very difficult for a car exiting the shopping center in one area Alisante Ave will allow right turns in and out of the shopping center. Access to the shopping center for multi-lane traffic on SR 184 would be maintained at the Escondido/184 intersection and access for multi-lane traffic would remain the same.

Above: The intersection of Sunset Boulevard and SR 184 has proven dangerous. Sunset Elementary School's crossing location has caused spikes in vehicle and pedestrian traffic before and after school, creating high-speed cross traffic on SR 184 due to the rural condition in this area. This would be an ideal location to install a roundabout. When designed properly, roundabouts require all traffic to slow below 25 miles per hour, virtually eliminating the possibility of high-impact crashes. Splitter islands additionally offer refuge for safer pedestrian crossings. The roundabout is also designed in a manner that allows the passage of large trucks and farming equipment, which is an important consideration in this region.
Gateways work in several ways for the betterment of a community. Most simply, they establish the identity of a community; they introduce visitors to a place, and offer residents a sense of collective, positive pride. However, they also more generally function by making motorists aware of a context change. Drivers who are conscious that they are entering a neighborhood or main street are more likely to slow their speeds, contributing immensely to the increased safety and quality of a place. Gateways can also add interest to the approach of a main street, and may invite travelers to explore its shops and spaces further.

SR 184 is a key entry route into Lamont and Weedpatch, and the first introduction to the communities for most visitors and through-travelers. While new gateway signage has been placed at both Mountain View Middle School for those coming from the north, and at Sunset Elementary School for those approaching from the south, the monument signs are set quite far back from the roadway. Moving these signs within better sight of SR 184 and pairing these signs with actual changes to the roadway could make these even more effective gateways.

A gateway to a community can be communicated in many forms. Beyond welcome and identification signage, public art or monuments are commonly used to draw attention to gateways. Special landscaping, such as a tree-lined street, also calls attention to a change in context. Gateways are especially effective when they are articulated by changes in the structure of the road. Medians and roundabouts are two great examples, and they work well with other gateway features, as they enable signage, monuments, and landscaping elements to be placed in the center of the thoroughfare. Both the Mountain View Road and Sunset Boulevard intersections are ideal for major gateways, and both could be candidates for roundabouts. (A roundabout at Sunset Boulevard and SR 184 would also address vital safety concerns regarding that intersection; see "Key Intersection Design" above.)
Creating a successfully walkable main street requires more than simply establishing continuous pedestrian amenities such as sidewalks and safe crossings; the nature and character of the buildings and spaces along the street are also important.

Property frontage is a critical determinant of a street's walkability. Definition of a sidewalk edge by buildings creates the sense of a more "enclosed," comfortable space for walking. Conversely, surface parking lots on the sidewalk edge generally discourage walking, as they lack both interest and a sense of safety. Currently, many lots along SR 184 in Lamont have surface parking lots at the edge of the public pedestrian realm. Buffering these parking lots with landscaping or short walls can easily and effectively help to define the sidewalk edge and improve the pedestrian experience. Consolidating parking lots for adjacent parcels and repurposing underutilized parking spaces would provide further flexibility for new public spaces, trees, landscaping, and small structures. Lot consolidation could also enable the closing of extraneous curb cuts, further improving sidewalk safety.

Minor improvements to buildings can also better welcome pedestrians. Buildings with windows and entrances facing the street offer greater safety through perceived "eyes" on the street, as well as greater visual interest for passing pedestrians. Opening facades to the street with windows, adding awnings for shade, introducing pedestrian-scaled signage, and engaging the sidewalk with outdoor seating and/or planters can entirely change the warmth and invitation of a streetscape.

These improvements to the pedestrian experience on SR 184 may happen through a combination of public and private efforts. While the County and Caltrans can focus on improvements to the public realm, such as planting shading trees within the parking lane and adding pedestrian-scaled lighting to the sidewalk, property owners can be incentivized to make incremental improvements to their properties through policies and programs.
Small Lots
Parking requirements often limit the optimal use of property. In the example to the left, two parking spaces are actually lost on-street because building a parking lot on the small parcel requires a curb cut that takes up the entire width of the lot.

By removing the curb cut and parking lot, the two on-street spaces are regained for patrons—and the 60 feet of depth in front of the storefront is freed for more advantageous space for patrons, employees, and the public. The reclaimed space can be used for a variety of amenities, such as a patio and outdoor seating; landscaping, greening, and trees; and sidewalk benches.

The County should consider exempting small projects from parking requirements in order to encourage better pedestrian spaces along SR 184. Improvements such as these can be incentivized through reducing parking requirements and a "pavement to parks" program for property owners.

Medium Lots
There are several examples of medium-size lots along SR 184 with strip commercial where parking demand is very low. By removing excess parking stalls, a strip mall has the opportunity to transform into a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

The sidewalk along the parking lot can be expanded for more flexible use by the commercial spaces, particularly in front of the corner shops to encourage activity along the public sidewalk. Stalls can be intermittently replaced for planting trees. A semi-permanent structure can activate the street corner with flexible commercial opportunities. A short landscaping wall serves ideally to comfortably hold the sidewalk edge between the pedestrian and vehicular realms.

Above: Example of existing parking conditions on a small parcel.

Above: Example of potential improvements on a small parcel by repurposing underutilized parking spaces.

Above: Example of existing parking conditions on a medium parcel.

Above: Example of potential improvements on a medium parcel by repurposing underutilized parking spaces.
Large Lots: Consolidating Parking from Different Parcels

Individual parking lots in Lamont are generally oversized but they are increasingly inefficient when placed side-by-side. Individual properties seeking to meet individual parking requirements create redundant curb cuts that contribute to difficult pedestrian environments.

There are several locations along SR 184 where adjacent property owners can work together to consolidate parking lots. This can improve the pedestrian environment and help to create opportunities for greening and public spaces. The example at right reduces the total amount of parking only by four spaces; even more improvements could be considered with reductions in numbers of stalls. Half of the curb cuts are removed from the sidewalk; a 15-foot green public space is gained along the sidewalk for trees, landscaping, and street furniture. The first row of parking can also be removed in strategic locations for a public plaza. Parking spaces are removed between every 4 to 5 stalls for planting of well-spaced trees. New marked crosswalks guide pedestrians from the sidewalk through the parking lot. These improvements offer benefits for store owners, pedestrians, and drivers alike: more efficient parking allows better amenities to attract patrons; and pedestrians and drivers both have safer experiences due to a clearer separation between areas for walking and driving.

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## Projects Summary

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Implementation Concepts

Facade and Facade Improvement Programs

In the short term, improvements along SR 184 could focus on improved frontage. Private property owners could be encouraged to establish a "landscape and facade zone" within the front 5' to 10' of their properties where a concerted effort could be made to organize new landscape and signage, and consider additional permeable surfaces or the closing of extraneous driveways. This could be accomplished through a "frontage improvement program" wherein the County provides some financial incentive (such as discounted/complimentary design, grants, and/or a match) for private property owners to complete the work. Some communities have utilized Community Development Block Grants to support a facade improvement program.

In the longer term, such a program could be extended to include more substantial improvements, such as façade and exterior building renovations and signage.

Signage Improvements

Signage along SR 184 forms a large part of the visual landscape that visitors and residents experience. It includes both public realm signage, such as street signs and wayfinding, and private realm signage visible from the public right-of-way. Many signs do not appear to be in compliance with the County's existing sign ordinance.

Non-Conforming Signage

The County could consider a "Sunset Ordinance" for non-conforming signage. Such an ordinance would develop a strategy of amortizing non-conforming signs over a period of time. The amortization period would be based on the value of a given sign, with more substantial and expensive signs granted a longer amortization. Similar strategies have been effective in other California jurisdictions.

In the event that such an ordinance were adopted, the California Business and Professional Code Section 5491.1 states that the County would need to conduct an inventory of illegal or abandoned signs within 120 days of adoption of any such amendment to the Sign ordinance.

Main Street Design Manual

Public investment and improvements along the Main Street corridor will help to stimulate continued private investment in commercial properties and businesses. Much of the business environment along SR 184 is informal, and minimal improvements to facades and frontage are typical. Frontage and facade improvement techniques could be captured and summarized into a design manual that would serve as an ideas resource for local business and property owners to improve their buildings in ways that will improve the pedestrian environment. The manual could also incorporate tighter standards for sign types that are appropriate to pedestrian-oriented environments, including window signs, wall signs, wall mural signs, blade signs, and awning signs.

Local Area or Community Plan

Lamont and Weedpatch are somewhat unique in the rural area of Metro Bakersfield as they are both far more "urban" than surrounding agricultural and industrial properties and yet far more "rural" than Bakersfield. The County could consider drafting a local Community Plan for Lamont and Weedpatch that would provide an opportunity to draft specific goals and policies for the communities, determine land use designations and other components that are appropriate to a mixed-use walkable community, and provide a mechanism for the implementation of some of the more complex improvements that are discussed in this plan.

Future Zoning Amendments

The County could consider amendments to existing zoning standards applicable to Lamont and Weedpatch that would promote a more pedestrian-friendly environment. As discussed in this plan this might include minimizing (or exempting) parking requirements for small commercial projects to allow more efficient use of open space, encouraging build-to-liners rather than building setbacks, and adding graphically-oriented standards for frontage, with particular attention to the GC (General Commercial) designation.

Next Steps

1. Determine a Preferred Alternative for SR 184

If necessary, conduct supplemental traffic analysis that analyzes in further detail the potential impact of reducing travel lanes and/or modifying intersections to the corridor's level of service.

If necessary, formulate an acceptable strategy for the rerouting and/or management of truck traffic.

2. Maintain the existing Advisory Committee, or convene a Working Group involving County representatives of Roads and Planning, Caltrans, and other interested parties to determine the following:

A strategy and schedule to implement public realm projects.

A strategy to implement private realm improvements, including frontage, signage, and building facades within the project area.
Project Area and the Community

The City of Arvin encompasses an area of about 4.82 square miles in Kern County, about 15 miles southeast of Bakersfield and at the foot of Bear Mountain. At the southern extent of California’s Central Valley, the community is centered upon an agricultural economy and landscape.

As of the 2010 Census, Arvin’s population was 19,304. The City has rapidly expanded in the last decade, with a 49 percent growth in population since the last Census, substantially higher than California’s average population growth of 10 percent. The Census counted 17,892 residents, or 92.7 percent of the population, as Hispanic or Latina. About 72 percent of Arvin’s households had children under age 18 living in them. The median household income was reported as $32,949, and 33.1 percent of Arvin’s residents live below the Census determined poverty level.

At the time of this report, several public and private projects were in the process of approval and implementation in Arvin. Bear Mountain Boulevard was slated for continued improvements along its extents within the City; the final eastern portion was prepared to receive medians, landscaping and pedestrian improvements, in coordination with the rest of the corridor. Several private commercial projects also received entitlement to build along Bear Mountain Boulevard. Finally, the City had received funding to implement a large community park in Jewett Square.

Study Areas

The northern study area, Jewett Square, is a large vacant area of land in the superblock bounded by Varsity Road to the north, Bear Mountain Boulevard to the south, Comanche Drive to the west, and Campus Drive to the east. The current residential and civic blocks within this superblock were not part of the study; however, creating reasonable connections with this context was an important element of the visioning process. The site is centrally located among the high school, a new middle school, and the City Hall; funding has also been secured for a large park on the site, and further program possibilities for the site include a community college campus, and commercial and residential uses.

The second, southern study area is the vacant site bounded by Syamese Road to the north, Ellen Way to the south, Meyer Street to the east, and the rear of several cul-de-sacs branching from Comanche Drive to the west. The location is surrounded by primarily residential blocks; potential programming for the site proposes a modest neighborhood-serving commercial center, including a possible market, in addition to further residential units.

These sites were also studied in the larger context of the City, both in their connections and relationships with existing neighborhoods and amenities of the community, and in their responses to current issues in Arvin. Specifically, the design team reviewed and recommended pedestrian and bicycle routes to ensure uninterrupted and safe connections throughout the city, and reviewed the draft 2010 Circulation Element to ensure that future circulation plans would harmonize with the goals of this plan.

Above: Aerial map of the City of Arvin, highlighting the two opportunity sites for future development studied by the, Olivos Design team.

Top: A map highlighting locations of current known planned projects in Arvin. Bottom Left: Arvin is an agriculturally productive community with active oil deposits. Bottom Right: Teenaged students walk home across one of Arvin’s large vacant opportunity sites after a day at the high school.
Challenging Pedestrian Environment

Despite a well-connected street grid, Arvin can be a challenging environment for pedestrians, with incomplete sidewalks and few marked crossings. Curbs ramps at many intersections are not ADA compliant, creating further difficulty for those with disabilities. Major thoroughfares such as Bear Mountain Boulevard lack pedestrian amenities such as consistent pedestrian-scaled lighting and seating. There is also a lack of shade along most streets. During the hotter months of the year, this results in higher ambient temperatures and increased discomfort for pedestrians.

Gaps in the urban fabric also contribute to a challenging pedestrian environment. Along Bear Mountain Boulevard, street-facing parking lots and vacant parcels create gaps between destinations that make walking to destinations more difficult. As new development occurs within the community, it will be important to address these “missing teeth” to promote more pedestrian-friendly conditions.

In general, major streets in Arvin are relatively narrow and thus fairly easy for pedestrians to cross. As the City grows, it will be important to ensure that new roadways continue to be “right-sized” to facilitate easy pedestrian crossings.

Lack of Clear Identity and Image

Arvin currently lacks a clear social “center” of activity, serving to bring the community together. Often a city’s main street fills this need, as important commercial, social, and civic activities combine to create the vibrant energy and identity of a community. However, Bear Mountain Boulevard lacks a clear identity; the street is interspersed with chain restaurants and retailers, small local shops and offices spread out over the corridor, and expansive stretches of vacant land. Arvin’s infill sites, especially the large Jewett Square site on Bear Mountain Boulevard, will be important in fostering an appropriate identity and image for the community. Arvin needs better development standards and policies directing physical form.

Need for Good Quality Public Space and “Social Infrastructure”

A substantial portion of Arvin’s population is particularly sensitive due to high poverty and unemployment rates. Cultural amenities, such as plazas, are also lacking. Good public space and planning can help to provide opportunities for entreprenuers, access to public services, new social services and institutions in a walkable and bikeable framework. Thoughtful planning enables many quality-of-life improvements on a community-wide scale, making better living accessible for all.
Key Opportunities

There are many ways in which Arvin can improve upon its physical characteristics in order to become a more vibrant, pedestrian and bicycle-friendly community. Its compact form and existing gridiron pattern of streets mean that many of these improvements are achievable without significant investments in new infrastructure. With the current General Plan update process underway, there is an opportunity to identify ways in which new goals and policies can help to implement these improvements. Following is a summary of some of the key opportunities and guiding strategies identified during the charrette process.

Compact Size

By the nature of its close pattern of development, Arvin’s street network is better poised to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists than many communities with sporadically-spread growth. The City already has much connectivity potential for walking and cycling, and only requires smaller infrastructure details such as crosswalks, complete sidewalks, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and bicycle lanes.

Bear Mountain Boulevard as Community Gateway

Bear Mountain Boulevard (SR 223) is the primary route to approach the City and an ideal opportunity for a community gateway. Through traffic traveling on SR 223 can be encouraged to stop and linger in downtown Arvin or Jewett Square if they provide a comfortable and hospitable pedestrian environment. Recent median improvements are a beneficial first step toward making a positive, welcoming first impression.

Site Design to Foster Community and Healthy Activity

If approached with thoughtful design that considers a comprehensive view of the City, development of Jewett Square and Sycamore/Meyer as mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods could offer Arvin opportunities for community interaction and healthy, safe lifestyle choices. A new central public plaza could provide a place for community interaction and a place of identity for Arvin. Parcels oriented toward new public plazas and parks could promote their safety through perceived “eyes” on the spaces. Missing links in the street network could be completed, enabling residents to safely walk and cycle. A neighborhood market at Sycamore Road and Meyer Street could give southern residents easier access to healthy food.

Right-Sizing Roadways

As Arvin grows and opportunity sites are filled, standards for appropriate street sizes will maintain the safety and comfort of the City's streets for all users. By ensuring that streets are not built wider than necessary, the City saves money on construction and maintenance; vehicles maintain safer speeds for pedestrians and cyclists; and streets generally stay more pleasant, attractive places for all.

Framework for Design

Focus pedestrian-friendly development patterns in and around three mixed-use neighborhood centers.

Improvements and development should be prioritized in those locations that serve best as the centers of activity and identity for Arvin’s neighborhoods. The City’s key neighborhood centers, marked in the diagram left with a five-minute walking radius, are identified as:

- Bear Mountain Boulevard at Walnut Drive (Jewett Square)
- the old Downtown, around Bear Mountain Boulevard and C Street; and
- the intersection of Sycamore Road and Meyer Street.

Focus pedestrian and bicycle improvements on key streets connecting neighborhood centers and important destinations.

Selected streets provide good connectivity across all of Arvin for pedestrians and bicyclists. These should be prioritized for infrastructure improvements, including completion of sidewalks and safe pedestrian crossings at intersections, bicycle lanes and routes, and landscaping such as street trees. Arvin’s priority street network is marked in the diagram left in blue; future key connections are dashed.

Provide central civic spaces and gathering places at the core of each neighborhood center.

Well-designed public space can provide active gathering places for the community and help to stimulate economic activity. Within Jewett Square, Jewett Square park will provide a beneficial asset for the neighborhood; the City will need to ensure that development patterns around it help maintain it as a safe and welcoming place. Within the other two neighborhood centers, a well-designed public space can help to establish each address and revitalize land uses around it.

Encourage infill development within and around each neighborhood center that utilizes land efficiently and promotes pedestrian and bicycle activity.

It will be important to ensure that new development in all three locations is designed to attract and encourage pedestrian and bicycle access and activity. This means new buildings should be placed with an orientation to the public realm, placed at or near the sidewalk, with well-designed elements scaled to pedestrians, rather than set behind large parking lots with primary access for automobiles.
**Jewett Square**

Along Arvin's main street and with important connections to local schools and a future park, Jewett Square is a prime location to establish the center of the community, with a new public plaza, mixed-use development, and possible civic and institutional uses.

**Sycamore and Meyer**

The vacant site at Sycamore Road and Meyer Street is an ideal opportunity for a small mixed-use node to serve the southern neighborhoods of Arvin, giving residents easier access to healthy foods through a new market. Green parks are integrated regularly within new residential neighborhoods.

**East Downtown**

At the center of Arvin's older commercial area, this node is an excellent target for revitalization. Its compact built form is beneficial for walkability; its modestly-sized shopfronts are optimal for small-scale entrepreneurs; and its revitalization can be realized through small, incremental, and manageable improvements.
Estimated Potential Program Summary

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
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<td>Civic Space</td>
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Prior planning for Jewett Square included a layout for the extension of Walnut Street between Bear Mountain Boulevard and Varsity Avenue, and the design and ongoing implementation of a Community Park on both sides of Walnut Street around 4th Street. At the time of writing, construction of the park had been funded by a grant from the California State Parks Department. These two projects are initial steps in a broader vision that has included the layout of adjacent parcels for commercial, institutional, and residential uses. The framework plans on this and the following pages incorporate the following design principles:

- **Layout of an interconnected network of streets and blocks**
- **Buildings with primary entrances oriented to streets rather than parking lots**
- **Parking to the rear of buildings**
- **Straightening of the northern section of Walnut Street to provide for more efficient block and parcel layout and create an intersection at the Arvin High School parking lot entrance**
- **Interspersed, well-defined civic spaces with active uses fronting them to provide “eyes on the street” as well as opportunities for appropriately-scaled stormwater management features**
- **Supportive, fine-grained residential fabric that can increase night-time residential population and improve viability for retail and services**

*Improving Safety and Mobility in South Kern County*

Page 32
Above: Detailed illustrative plan of the southern end of town square, illustrating the proposed town square surrounded by retail/office use buildings and the refined community park to the north. The community has expressed interest in building a museum to showcase the unique history of Arvin. Ideally, a site for the museum should be found that can be a central focal point and near other community amenities. One possibility would be to locate it across from the park as shown or integrate it with the Town Square to the south. It should be noted that the current Community Park project that will be built in the near future also has a smaller park area located across Walnut Drive where the museum is shown above. Therefore, the recommendation to locate the museum in the location shown above could be considered later on in the future based on community interest.

Improving Safety and Mobility in South Kern County
Optics Design, Inc.
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Above: Space for a community college is integrated into the northern portion of the site, surrounded by residential neighborhoods. Locating the Community College in close proximity to Arvin High School will help maximize the potential for the two entities to collaborate. A core of institutional buildings across from Arvin High School are organized around an outdoor plaza that could be used for casual activities (such as food stands) started by the High School and College. The plan demonstrates how a campus could grow incrementally over time while achieving a walkable, mixed-use district over the long term. Parking for the college is organized primarily on-street and behind buildings in parking lots hidden from the street.

Above: This alternative demonstrates how a much smaller community college program could be integrated into the plan that still achieves the overarching goals of pedestrian connectivity for the site.
Caption: Varsity Road provides access to Arvin High School and will connect to the Walnut Drive extension once completed. Today the southern edge of Varsity along Hewitt Street is unimproved. Varsity can be developed as a 2-lane roadway with Class II bike lanes, on-street parallel parking, and sidewalk on either side. Roundabouts at the intersections of Walnut Drive and Campus Drive can improve the functionality of those respective intersections and help to facilitate circulation around Arvin High School.

Caption: Conceptual cross section for Varsity Drive illustrating central landscaped median, one travel lane in either direction, Class II bicycle lanes, and on-street parking.

Above: Proposed Single-Lane Roundabout at Varsity Drive, Walnut Drive, and the Arvin High School parking lot entrance.

Above: Proposed Single-Lane Roundabout at Varsity Drive and Campus Drive.
Above: A plan of potential improvements to Campus Drive at Bear Mountain Boulevard. The plan illustrates a two-lane roadway with a central median, Class II bicycle lanes, and on-street parking. The section transitions from parallel parking to "back-in" or "front-out" diagonal parking in the central portion of the block.

Top: Proposed two-lane cross section for Campus Drive, with central median, on-street parallel parking, and Class II bicycle lanes. Bottom: Left: Proposed cross section illustrating "back-in" or "front-out" diagonal parking.
South Arvin is a predominantly residential area that is lacking in services and open space. The development of the Sycamore/Meyer neighborhood can integrate both in order to ameliorate these issues. The framework plans on this and the following pages integrate the following design principles:

- Layout of an interconnected network of streets and blocks that connects to the surrounding residential neighborhoods
- Buildings with primary entrances oriented to streets rather than parking lots
- Houses with alley access and garages oriented to the rear or properties to encourage pedestrian activity along streets
- Interspersed, well-defined civic spaces with active uses fronting them to provide "eyes on the street" as well as opportunities for appropriately-scaled stormwater management features
- A core of small-scaled commercial uses at the intersection of Sycamore Road and Meyer Street that could incorporate a small corner grocery store as well as health services

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During the community workshop project stakeholders discussed the need for both increased access to healthy foods in south Arvin as well as health care services such as doctor's offices. The mixed-use neighborhood center could incorporate both and serve as a demonstration project for the region.

The California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley's Health and Human Services Workgroup and the Central California Public Health Partnership have made the recommendation to establish "medical enterprise zones" that can provide tax credits and other financial incentives for health care providers to locate in underserved areas.

The California Freshworks Fund has also been established to support corner store conversions that increase the availability of fresh and healthy foods.

The mixed-use neighborhood center could benefit from the participation of both programs.
Above: Optional Single-Lane roundabout at the intersection of Meyer Street and Sycamore Road. This roundabout could improve traffic circulation at this intersection, improve crossing conditions for pedestrians, and help to announce the Sycamore/Meyer neighborhood center.

Above: This 1-story commercial building holds the corner along La Jolla Boulevard in Wind Rock, San Diego, where a "road diet" and several roundabouts were implemented. The Neighborhood Market could have a similar relationship to the roundabout at the corner of Sycamore and Meyer.
Meyer Street

This Page: Meyer Street provides an important corridor for pedestrians and bicyclists traveling north-south across the City. Between Bear Mountain Boulevard and Sycamore Road Meyer fluctuates in width. Recommendations are illustrated here, moving north to south clockwise from top left.

49. Foot ROW, Between Bear Mountain Boulevard and Tucker Street: Meyer Street is very narrow for one block south of Bear Mountain (approx. 35’ curb-to-curb). Class II Bicycle lanes should be striped, leaving space for on-street parking on the western side of the street.

63. Foot ROW, South of Haven Drive: South of Haven the roadway narrows slightly. Class II Bicycle lanes should continue while maintaining on-street parking on one side of the street.

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Infill Design

Above: Design for a two-family house on a single, rear-loaded, 50' x 125'-135' lot. The two houses share a central courtyard.

50' x 125'-135'
2 Units
13 du/a

Above: Design for 3-6 units on a 75' x 125'-135' rear-loaded lot. A large house (a duplex or fourplex) at the street forms one side of a shared courtyard with a smaller house (single family or duplex) to the rear of the lot.

75' x 125'-135'
3-6 Units
14-28 du/a

Above: Design for 4-6 small, attached units organized around a central courtyard on a rear-loaded, 75' x 125'-135' lot.

75' x 125'-135'
4-6 Units
14-28 du/a

Building Types

Arvin like many communities in South Kern has limited options for affordable housing. Both the Jewett Square and Sycamore-Meyer neighborhoods would be appropriate locations to encourage medium-density residential neighborhoods that support a broad variety of housing types. These types can provide increased choices, especially for nontraditional families, as well as increased affordability. Medium-density neighborhoods are also more supportive of nonresidential activities (such as neighborhood-serving retail and services) and transit.

Many of these types are based on actual houses recently built in California communities with similar demographics. Houses that incorporate courtyards and internal open spaces are also effective in providing passive heating and cooling in hot climates.
Building Types

Above: Design for 8 units that share a multi-use courtyard on a front-loaded, (80' x 125'-130'). Two larger homes (duplexes) at the street flank a central driveway that accesses two smaller units to the rear of the lot.

Above: Design for a multi-family courtyard building on a rear-loaded, 125' x 125'-130' lot. 10-11 units share a large central courtyard.

Above: Design for a multi-family courtyard building on a front-loaded, 125' x 125'-130' lot. 10-11 units are grouped around an intimate courtyard, with a multi-use parking court adjacent.

Right: Courtyard housing project recently built in King City, California similar to courtyard types proposed for Arvin. In King City, the project was constructed on a multi-unit condominium for entry-level, first-time homeowners.
East Downtown Neighborhood

Estimated Potential Program Summary

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Downtown Arvin provides a cluster of small businesses. Continued street and public realm improvements in this area can help to stimulate increased retail activity and private investment. Vacant parcels located around the intersection of Bear Mountain Boulevard and C Street could be restructured into a central public plaza that would provide a destination for visitors and residents and a focal point for the historic downtown. Additional improvements to sidewalks could incorporate outdoor eating areas for restaurants facing the plaza.

Left: Illustrative plan showing outdoor plaza and infill buildings around the Bear Mountain Boulevard/C Street intersection. The existing "Las Fiestas" restaurant could have frontage facing the plaza for outdoor seating. Existing public parking for the downtown (at the transit center) would be easily accessible to new uses fronting the plaza. Commercial properties along C Street and Arvin Avenue would have increased visibility and access from Bear Mountain via the new plaza.
General Circulation Recommendations

The City of Arvin prepared a draft Circulation Element in 2008 which has not been finalized nor adopted. The design team had the opportunity to review the draft in the context of this plan and prepared the following recommendations in order to appropriately implement the vision for each of the infill sites and to facilitate good pedestrian and bicycle connections between them. At work on different components of the General Plan continues it will be important to ensure that policies reflect the community’s desires for high-quality pedestrian and bicycle access and facilities.

Circulation Element Recommendations

1. There are potential pitfalls of using planning level LOS (Level of Service) analysis as described starting on page 6. Arterial LOS is based on average travel speed, and as indicated in the document, several facility types cannot achieve a level of service of A or B, based on these definitions. This planning level LOS analysis does not directly consider the effects of cross traffic or the benefits of new intersection types such as roundabouts. Additionally, the Florida Department of Transportation LOS table used (Table 1-1) doesn’t adequately estimate the level of service of a 2-lane road with left turn lanes and well-adjusted signal timing or a roundabout at each intersection. It is recommended that the thresholds be calibrated based on actual typical intersection analyses, in order to provide a realistic estimate of the level of service for a 2-lane road with good intersection operational characteristics.

2. Recommendations related to Table 4-4: Goals and Policies:
   a. Mitigating policy 8 for streets and highways (page 44) states, “Provide adequate parking facilities for new development so as not to impact adjacent roadways.” This policy should be modified to suggest that parking may not always be necessary in some areas where adequate on-street parking exists and lots are small.
   b. Mitigating policy 9 for streets and highways (page 45) states, “Traffic signals shall be placed at arterial and collector intersections as warranted.” Research has shown that roundabouts are often a preferred alternative to signalized intersections, for safety of all users, capacity for vehicles, and usability by non-motorized users. This policy should be rewritten to be something similar to the following: “At intersections of two collector or arterial streets, roundabouts should be considered as the first choice to manage the volume of traffic at intersections; if roundabouts are not feasible, then traffic signals may be considered if warranted.”
   c. Mitigating policy 10 for streets and highways (page 45) states, “The city shall encourage developers to design local streets to discourage use as alternatives to collectors and arterials.” This is an important consideration, but could be interpreted to indicate that cul-de-sacs and loop streets are preferred over a connected street system. This policy should be changed as follows: “The city shall encourage developers to design local streets to

68-Foot ROW Collector (Option I): This configuration includes one vehicular travel lane and one bicycle lane in each direction, with a central turning lane to improve efficiency of the travel lanes. A five-foot planting strip runs along the edge of the curb, buffering a five-foot sidewalk.

68-Foot ROW Collector (Option II): This alternative configuration accommodates parking lanes on either side of the street; one vehicular travel lane runs in each direction, as well as slightly larger bicycle lanes on both sides, giving their priority to door-swing of parked cars. A five-foot planting strip along the curb edge provides space for landscaping and street trees, next to a five-foot sidewalk.
provide adequate connectivity within the city's street network but discourage use as alternatives to collectors and arterials; a modified grid pattern of streets is preferred over cul-de-sac and loop street patterns.

d. For "Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails" (pages 45–46), the constraint refers only to bicycle facilities, but should be changed to read "Limited pedestrian and bicycle facilities."

e. All of the existing mitigating policies for "Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails" relate to linear facilities, without discussion of crossings and intersections. Here are two additional recommended mitigating policies:

i. "Streets within the city should not be widened unnecessarily, as wide streets are barriers to nonmotorized travel and create complicated pedestrian crossings"

ii. "Improved pedestrian crossings should be spaced no more than 600 feet for all arterial and collector streets; the specific design treatments would vary depending on the street width, vehicle speeds, and vehicle volumes, but could include raised medians or islands, curb extensions, signing and marking enhancements, etc."

iii. "Prohibit projects that impede or make difficult bicycle and pedestrian access or that block through access on existing or potential bicycle and pedestrian routes." (This policy is included for "Greenhouse Gas Reduction" but should be added to this bicycle and pedestrian portion of the table.)

f. For "Air Quality" on page 51, mitigating policy number 6 about parking is redundant with an earlier policy about parking and should simply be removed.

3. Table 3-1 (referred to incorrectly as Table 2-1 on page 55) is based on the roadway improvements shown starting on page 60. As indicated below, these roadway improvements are recommended to be modified significantly.

4. The Future Classified System Pattern shown on page 58 recommends roadway widths that are much larger than necessary for the city of Arvin. It is our understanding that these cross sectional recommendations are based on the city's roadway design standards, which are in turn based on Kern County's design standards for each functional class. The problem with this approach is that Kern County's design standards for each functional class of roadway recommend wide roads for the context of metro Bakersfield. These road widths simply aren't necessary for these functional classifications in Arvin. Recommendations for each of the functional classifications are provided below.

a. Principal Arterials: The Draft Circulation Element suggests that principal arterials should have 4 through lanes and 110 to 146 feet of right-of-way. Bear Mountain Boulevard is the only principal arterial in the city, and it currently has a right-of-way of about 115 feet. Our recommendation is for principal arterials to have right-of-way widths of 110 feet to 120 feet, to be consistent with the existing roadway.

b. Minor Arterials: The Draft Circulation Element suggests that minor arterials should have 4 through lanes and right-of-way widths of 110 to 146 feet. Based on the projected year 2030 future daily traffic volumes in Figure 5-1, none of the minor arterials will have more traffic volume in the foreseeable future than can be handled by a well-designed two-lane roadway. Our recommendation is that minor arterials be designed as two-lane roads with medians and/or two-way left turn lanes, with roundabouts to control traffic at intersections with other minor arterial streets or collector streets. The recommended cross section for minor arterial streets, including the right-of-way width, should be as developed during the charrette.

c. Collectors: The Draft Circulation Element suggests that collectors should have 2 through lanes of travel, and right-of-way of 90 feet. Our recommendation is that minor arterials be designed as two-lane roads with left turn lanes or roundabouts at intersections with arterials or other collectors. Three recommended cross sections for collector streets were developed during the community workshop.

5. The Roadway Improvements in the Projects List on page 60 includes recommendations for several widening and reconstruction projects. Many of these are not necessary based on the future traffic volumes in Figure 5-1. The roadway improvements from the draft circulation element are shown below, with our recommended changes shown in italics.

a. "Sunset Boulevard between Malaga Road and Tower Line Road – modify from a 2 lane undivided roadway to a 4 lane undivided arterial standard." Sunset Boulevard should remain a rural road with no changes recommended, or perhaps it could be reconstructed to provide paved shoulders.

b. "Varsity Road/Richardson Road between Hill Street and Tower Line Road – improve/construct a 2 lane undivided collector standard." This is appropriate on varsity Road between Campus Drive and Tejon Highway. Further changes to Richardson Road east of Tejon Highway are not recommended, with no anticipated development in that area.

c. "SR 223/Bear Mountain Boulevard between Malaga Road and Comanche Drive – modify from a 2 lane undivided roadway to a 4 lane divided arterial standard." There is no reason to widen this section of roadway beyond what has already been done at the recently constructed signalized intersection at Comanche Drive.

d. "SR 223/Bear Mountain Boulevard between Tejon Highway/Derby Street and Tower Line Road – modify from a 2 lane undivided roadway to a 4 lane divided arterial standard." There is no reason to widen this section of roadway, based on anticipated future traffic volumes.

e. "Hood Street – Comanche Drive to Meyer Street – improve 2 undivided lane collector/local road standard." This recommendation is unnecessary; the existing cross section can serve as a collector street, and there is no available right-of-way.
f. Franklin Street between Tejon Highway/Derby Street and Tower Line Road – construct a 2 lane undivided collector standard. There is an active rail line in this corridor, so it will be difficult to fit in a new roadway here, including one or more railroad crossings. Given this and the fact that there will be minimal additional traffic demand in this area, this recommendation is unnecessary.

g. "Sycamore Road between Rancho Drive and Tower Line Road – modify/ improve from a 2 lane undivided roadway to a 4 lane divided arterial standard." This recommendation should be changed to refer to our recommended cross section for 2-lane minor arterial streets, not 4-lane divided.

h. "El Camino Real between Rancho Drive and Comanche Drive – construct a 2 lane undivided collector standard." No changes to this recommendation; this is an important part of the street network that should be built as the southwest portion of the city develops.

i. "El Camino Real between Tejon Highway/Derby Street and Tower Line Road – construct a 2 lane undivided collector standard." No changes to this recommendation; this is part of the street network that should be built as the southeast corner of the city develops.

j. "Millux Road between Rancho Drive and Tejon Highway/Derby Street – modify from a 2 lane undivided roadway to a 4 lane divided arterial standard." This recommendation should be changed to refer to our recommended cross section for 2-lane minor arterial streets, not 4-lane divided.

k. "Millux Road between Tejon Highway/Derby Street and Tower Line Road – construct a 4 lane divided arterial standard." This recommendation should be changed to refer to our recommended cross section for 2-lane minor arterial streets, not 4-lane divided.

l. Burkett Boulevard between Comanche Drive and Tejon Highway/Derby Street – construct a 2 lane undivided collector standard." No changes to this recommendation; this is part of the street network that should be built as the southern end of the city develops.

m. "Rancho Drive between Millux Road and Sycamore Road – improve to a 2 lane undivided collector standard." No changes to this recommendation; this is an important part of the street network that should be built as the southwest portion of the city develops.

n. "Comanche Drive – between Burkett Boulevard and Sunset Boulevard – improve from a 2 lane undivided roadway to a 4 lane divided arterial standard." This recommendation should be changed to refer to our recommended cross section for 2-lane minor arterial streets, not 4-lane divided.

o. "Campus Drive/Meyer Street between Burkett Boulevard and Sycamore Road – construct a 2 lane undivided collector standard." No changes to this recommendation; this is part of the street network that should be built as the southern end of the city develops.

p. "Campus Drive/Meyer Street between Varsity Road and Sunset Boulevard – construct a 2 lane undivided collector standard." No changes to this recommendation; this short connection is important to enhance connectivity in the northern part of the city near the high school.

q. "Tejon Highway/Derby Street between Burkett Boulevard and Sunset Boulevard – improve the 2 lane undivided roadway to a 4 lane divided arterial standard." This recommendation should be changed to refer to our recommended cross section for 2-lane minor arterial streets, not 4-lane divided.

r. "Mc_love_ch Road between Millux Road and Sycamore Road – construct a 2 lane divided collector standard." Due to railroad conflicts and the lack of potential development north of Bear Mountain Blvd., this recommendation should be changed to extend only from Millux Road to Sycamore Road.

s. "Tower Line Road between Millux Road and Sycamore Road – modify/ construct a 4 lane divided arterial standard." This recommendation should be changed to refer to our recommended cross section for 2-lane minor arterial streets, not 4-lane divided.

t. "Tower Line Road between SR 223/Bear Mountain Boulevard and Sunset Boulevard – modify a 2 lane undivided roadway to a 4 lane divided arterial standard." This recommendation should be changed to refer to our recommended cross section for 2-lane minor arterial streets, not 4-lane divided.

6. The intersections improvements list on page 61 includes the following recommendations, which we recommend be changed as discussed below:

a. "SR 223/Bear Mountain Boulevard at Tejon Highway/Derby Street – potential installation of a traffic signal." Change to "SR 223/Bear Mountain Boulevard at Tejon Highway/Derby Street – potential installation of a roundabout, or a traffic signal if a roundabout is found to be not feasible, which is possible due to the proximity of the railroad crossing."

b. "Existing and future arterial-arterial intersections should be monitored for installation of traffic signals." Change to "Existing and future arterial-arterial arterial collector-collector intersections should be monitored for installation of roundabouts, or traffic signals where roundabouts are determined to be not feasible."

7. The Improvement Limitations section on page 61 should be changed to match the changes in the projects list as described above. In addition, it should be edited to recognize that removing existing development may be counter-productive and in most cases a modified narrower cross section could be built and still serve the circulation needs within the city.

8. On page 63, there is a paragraph that discusses the potential for road diets. This is good, but we recommend that this paragraph be moved to the Projects List section, and specifically recommend the following road diets:

a. Campus Drive between Bear Mountain Boulevard and Varsity Road – Restripe this 4 lane undivided road to a 2-lane road with a center turn lane.
Bear Mountain Boulevard Recommendations

Following are recommendations for pedestrian crossings across Bear Mountain Boulevard between Comanche Drive and Tejon Highway. In general, unsignalized marked pedestrian crosswalks on Bear Mountain Boulevard should have a median refuge wherever possible, advance yield lines with accompanying signs, and high visibility crosswalk markings. If the proposed streetscape project is implemented, curb extensions should be placed at all marked crosswalk and unmarked crosswalk locations, as part of this project. At several T-intersections on the corridor, the conceptual streetscape plan shows a continuous raised median placed across the T-intersection, sometimes with median cuts, and sometimes not. Because there are unmarked crosswalks at these intersections, median cuts and ramps should be provided. It is reasonable to provide median cuts and ramps on only one side at T-intersections, effectively closing the other crosswalk. In general, the crosswalks should be placed on the side of the street where there is no conflict with right turn movements from the side street.

These recommendations are in addition to the known improvements described in the Phases 1 and 2 Bear Mountain Boulevard Streetscapes project that went to bid in October of 2012.

The numbered items below list specific recommendations at different locations on Bear Mountain Boulevard, from west to east.

1. The relatively new signalized intersection at Comanche Drive serves pedestrians in this immediate vicinity.
2. Comanche Drive and Walnut Drive are ¾ mile apart, and there are currently no intersections or median openings in this location. The apartment complex and the Arvin Community Health Center are destinations on the south side of the road, but with no current development on the north side, pedestrian crossing demand is limited in this area. As development occurs on the north side of Bear Mountain Boulevard, there will be crossing demand in this area, which could be served by a new midblock pedestrian crosswalk, placed just west of the apartment driveway or midway between the apartment driveway and the health center driveway.
3. A signalized intersection is proposed at Walnut Drive, serving pedestrians in this area.
4. A new unsignalized pedestrian crossing is recommended between Walnut Drive and Campus Drive/Meyer Street, as the Jewett Square area develops. The best location appears to be midway between Monroe Street and Morton Place, where the raised median can be modified to provide a pedestrian refuge.
5. The existing signalized intersection at Campus Drive/Meyer Street serves pedestrians in this area.
6. There is no existing marked crosswalk at Pinnate Drive, but the businesses in the area generate pedestrian crossing demand. A marked crosswalk can be provided on the east side of the intersection, and a median refuge can be provided by closing the westbound U-turn lane at this location. This would also allow for more area for landscape features. The conceptual streetscape plan shows a continuous raised median across this intersection, and no crosswalk. It is fine to provide this continuous median, but a crosswalk is still recommended on the east side of this intersection.
7. The existing signalized intersection at Hill Street serves pedestrians in this area.
8. At Acacia Street, there is an existing marked crosswalk on the west side of the intersection, with no enhancements. If this marked crosswalk is moved to the east side of the intersection, a median refuge can be provided by closing the westbound U-turn lane at this location. This would also allow for more area for landscape features. The conceptual streetscape plan shows a continuous raised median across this intersection, and no crosswalk. It is fine to provide this continuous median, but a crosswalk is still recommended on the east side of this intersection.
9. There is an existing marked crosswalk on the east side of the intersection with A Street, with no enhancements. Advanced yield lines and signs should be added to this crosswalk, and high-visibility markings should be used.
10. B Street, C Street, and Stockton Avenue form a series of T-intersections near the east end of the corridor, and there is currently a marked crosswalk at the intersection with Stockton Avenue. The conceptual streetscape plans drawn by Finsdale Engineering shows this crosswalk removed and crosswalks instead added at B Street and C Street. Since there are unmarked crosswalks at all of these intersections, it is recommended that median cuts and curb ramps be placed at each of these intersections, on the east side of B Street and C Street and on the west side of Stockton Avenue. It is also recommended that these crosswalks have high-visibility markings and advanced yield lines, to highlight to pedestrians that these are the preferred places to cross in this vicinity.
11. There is a marked crosswalk on the west side of the intersection with Tejon Highway. This crosswalk should remain, but have high visibility markings and advanced yield lines added. It is anticipated that this intersection will be the next to have a roundabout or signal installed; either of these treatments will make it easier for pedestrians to cross the street.
## Projects Summary

### Arvin Projects Implementation Funding Matrix

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### Potential Funding Sources

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### Notes

The projects summarized in this chapter have been consolidated into a table that itemizes initiatives and identifies priorities. Projects have been identified as either Near-Term (0-2 years), Mid-Term (2-5 years), and Long-Term (beyond 5 years), and matched with both potential funding sources and lead agencies and organizations who may be involved with implementation. Links to funding programs listed above can be found in the Appendix. Keep in mind that these resources are often in flux.

The City can best position itself for future funding by making sure the projects are listed in the Regional Plan and that those aspects involving State Route 223 (Bear Mountain Boulevard) have been discussed with Caltrans.

*Improving Safety and Mobility in South Kern County*

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Plan Implementation Committee

During the planning process it became apparent that the City of Arvin had suffered from a loss of institutional knowledge and momentum after its planning department and staff had been restructured in 2010. In order to achieve many of the concepts discussed by the community, the City should consider convening a Plan Implementation Committee that can assist in identifying and maintaining stakeholders with an active and ongoing interest in making improvements. This would also provide an opportunity for different organizations interested in Arvin’s revitalization to pool their resources and build upon shared goals.

General Plan Updates

At the time of writing the City of Arvin was in the process of updating its General Plan, including recent adoption of a Land Use, Conservation, and Open Space Element in July 2012, and planned work on Air Quality and Community Health elements. The two infill sites have been designated “Planned Unit Development” which allows for mixed-use development with a maximum density of 24 units per acre and up to 3 FAR. Uses include on-site recreation facilities combined with residential and commercial uses in a format that encourages open space and pedestrian circulation. These sites will be implemented with the “Planned Unit Development (PUD) Overlay” Zoning designation.

Many of the concepts discussed in this plan can provide a basis for further discussion in the City’s evolving General Plan, including the Community Health element which can establish goals and policies that tie community health to urban form and land use. A next logical step would be to initiate an update of the Circulation Element, starting with the work begun in 2010 and using this plan to guide its refinement.

Local Area Plans or Specific Plans

The City may benefit from creating Local Area or Specific Plans for each of the two infill sites discussed in this plan. These plans can define with greater specificity the concept of “mixed-use” at each location, incorporate standards, guidelines, and procedures for development, and provide programs and mechanisms for implementation. Specific Plans can also assist with streamlining future development, making each site more attractive to potential investors and developers.

Zoning Amendments/Permit Streamlining

The City can also benefit from amending the Zoning Ordinance to promote more pedestrian-friendly environments. This might include minimizing or eliminating parking requirements for small commercial projects in order to allow more efficient use of open space, encouraging build-to lines rather than building setbacks, and adding graphically-oriented standards for freestage, with particular attention to the PUD district. Projects adhering to more prescriptive standards might benefit from streamlined permitting and review. While an Area Plan might accompany a series of amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, a Specific Plan has an additional advantage of integrating development standards that would supplant the Zoning Ordinance. In either case, necessary zoning amendments could be packaged as a “Form-Based Code.”

The non-profit Form-Based Codes Institute offers the following definition for Form-Based Codes:

Form-based codes address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks. The regulations and standards in form-based codes, presented in both diagrams and words, are keyed to a regulating plan that designates the appropriate form and scale (and therefore, character) of development rather than only restrictions in land-use types.

This is in contrast to conventional zoning’s focus on the segregation of land-use types, permissible property uses, and the control of development intensity through simple numerical parameters (e.g., FAR, dwellings per acre, height limits, setbacks, parking ratios).

Form-based codes are often based on the concept of the “Transsect,” which suggests that places can be organized in varying degrees of intensity, from least urban at the rural edge to most urban at the center. In the case of Arvin, the transit is very apparent and visible in a very short distance moving from the edge of town to downtown. The introduction of a few transect-based zone districts could make a dramatic impact on the successful implementation of the City's mixed-use centers.

Form Based Codes are typically organized into a series of common sections, including: *Regulating Plans* (which indicates where different standards apply), *Public Space Standards* (that regulate streets and other public space types), *Building Form Standards* (that regulate the configuration, features, and buildings as they address the public realm), *Administration* (that defines the application and review process), and *Definitions*. FBCs may also include additional Architectural Standards, Landscaping Standards, Signage Standards, and Environmental Resource Standards.

For additional information on form-based codes, please consult the following resources:

- The Form-Based Codes Institute’s website at www.formbasedcodes.org
- The Smart Code website at www.smartcodetoolkit.org
Help Improve the Safety of Weedpatch Highway / Main Street!

Community Events!
Wednesday, September 12th
Kick-Off Community Event
6:00 - 8:30 p.m.
David Head Center
10300 San Diego Street, Lamont

Saturday, September 15th
Community Design Workshop
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Lamont School District, Boardroom
7915 Burgundy Avenue, Lamont

Tuesday, September 18th
Presentation of Design Ideas for Weedpatch Highway
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Lamont School District, Boardroom
7915 Burgundy Avenue, Lamont

Refreshments and childcare will be provided!
Call 1-800-881-5787 for free Dial-a-Ride to the events!

Ayude a mejorar la seguridad de la Autopista Weedpatch / Calle Main!

¿Eventos de la Comunidad!
Miércoles 12 de septiembre
Evento de Apertura
6 a 8:30 de la noche
Centro David Head
Calle San Diego 10300, Lamont

Sábado 15 de septiembre
Taller de Diseño
9 de la mañana a 1 de la tarde
Sala de la Junta Directiva,
Distrito Escolar de Lamont
Avenida Burgundy 7915, Lamont

Martes 18 de septiembre
Presentación de Recomendaciones para la Carretera Weedpatch
6 a 8 de la noche
Sala de la Junta Directiva,
Distrito Escolar de Lamont
Avenida Burgundy 7915, Lamont

Refrigerio y guardería para los niños en todos los eventos

¡Llame al 1-800-881-5787 para pedir transporte gratis a los eventos!
Arvin General Plan
Community Workshop

Please Join Us!

Tuesday,
January 24, 2012
5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Location:
Arvin Veterans Hall
414 Fourth Street, Arvin

Child care and food will be provided. The workshop will be conducted in both English and Spanish.

For more information about the Community Workshop or the Arvin General Plan, please contact the City Hall at (661) 854-3130. Information is also on the City’s website at www.arvin.org

Organized by the City of Arvin, the Doherty Haerta Foundation and the Committee for a Better Arvin

Funded by the California Department of Conservation, Sustainable Communities Planning Grant and the California Endowment

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Plan General de Arvin
Taller de la Comunidad

Por Favor Unase
Con Nosotros!

Martes
Enero 24, 2012
5:00 p.m. a las 8:00 p.m.

Lugar:
Arvin Veterans Hall
414 Fourth Street, Arvin

La Ciudad de Arvin invita a los residentes interesados, dueños de negocios y líderes de organizaciones de la comunidad para discutir el presente y futuro de usos de terrenos de la ciudad, la calidad del aire y la salud de la comunidad un taller abierto a todos. Los participantes tendrán la oportunidad de ayudar a configurar el futuro desarrollo de la ciudad y aportar ideas sobre lo que es un lugar prospere y saludable para vivir y trabajar.

Sus respuestas serán utilizadas en la elaboración del Plan General de Arvin – el “Plan” para el desarrollo de la ciudad.

En la tarde del martes, 24 de enero del 2012, personal de la ciudad discutirá el Plan General e identificar los temas clave, por ejemplo:

❖ Aire limpio
❖ Seguridad de andar en bicicleta y caminar
❖ Acceso a alimentos saludables
❖ Lugares para la actividad física
❖ Otras preocupaciones que pueda tener

Organizado por la Ciudad de Arvin, la Doherty Haerta Foundation y el Comité para Arvin

Fomentado por el Departamento de Conservación de California, el Programa de Planificación de Comunidades Sostenibles y la Fundación California Endowment

55
Share Your Vision for Future Development in Arvin!

Please Join Us!

Monday, May 7th
KICK-OFF COMMUNITY EVENT
5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 10th
PRESENTATION OF DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Both events will be held at:
Haven Drive Middle School Gym
341 Haven Drive, Arvin

Food and entertainment will be provided!

¿Comparta su visión para el futuro desarrollo urbano en Arvin!

Por favor participe

Lunes, 7 de mayo
EVENTO DE APERTURA
5:30 a 8:30 de la noche

Jueves, 10 de mayo
PRESENTACIÓN DE RECOMENDACIONES
6:00 a 8:00 de la noche

Los dos eventos se celebrarán en el Gimnasio de la Escuela Intermedia Haven Drive
341 Haven Drive, Arvin

Comida y entretenimiento en ambos eventos

What is your vision for future development in Arvin?

►Join your friends and neighbors at two workshops to share your ideas and create a community vision for two sites in Arvin: Jewett Square and the Sycamore Dr./Meyers St. site.

►A professional design team will be present to learn more about your ideas and translate them into a vision and conceptual plan that will help guide the design of future development in your city.

►For more information, please contact Shani Alford with the Local Government at (916) 448 - 1198 x330 or salford@lgc.org.

Organized by the Local Government Commission in partnership with the City of Arvin. Funded by a California Department of Transportation Environmental Justice Planning Grant and Building Healthy Communities.

Organizada por la Local Government Commission en colaboración con la Ciudad de Arvin. Financiada con una subvención para Planificación y Justicia Ambiental del Departamento de Transporte y por Construyendo Comunidades Saludables - Building Healthy Communities.
What is Your Vision for the Future of Arvin?

Please Join Us!

Wednesday, May 9th
3:30 - 5:00 p.m.
Arvin Library
201 Campus Dr., Arvin

Snacks and refreshments will be provided!

The City of Arvin is working with a professional design team to create a vision for future development for two vacant sites in the City and need your input! The two sites are Jewett Square and the vacant site at Sycamore Road and Meyer Street.

We are setting up a special meeting on Wednesday, May 9th from 3:30pm - 5:00pm at the Arvin Library so that the design team can meet with youth leaders from Arvin to talk about these two sites; gather ideas on what future development might look like; and learn more about how these two sites fit into the larger vision of the community.

We will also walk around the Jewett Square site with the design team and have a conversation on the challenges and opportunities with this site.

For more information, please contact Amerika Niño with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Kern County at (661) 205-3866 or bgsyouth@yahoo.com.

Your voice matters so we hope to see you there!

Lamont and Weedpatch Meeting Notes

EDUCATOR FOCUS GROUP
Thursday, September 13, 2012 / 9:00am – 10:30am
Lamont School Computer Lab

IN ATTENDANCE: Brandy Charles – Principal, Lamont Elementary School District; Eduardo Guerrero – Opticos Design Inc.; Maria Guiner – Principal, Myrtle School; Fred Molina – Principal, Alicante Elementary School; Rocio Muñoz – Principal, Sunset Middle School; Stefan Pellegrini – Opticos Design Inc.; Laura Podosky – Local Government Commission; Rick Robles – Superintendent, Lamont Elementary School District; Alexis Sanchez – Lamont Chamber of Commerce; and Paul Zykofofsky – Local Government Commission

MEETING PURPOSE: Leaders from local school districts met with design team to discuss and share opportunities and challenges along Weedpatch Highway in Lamont and Weedpatch related to student and school transportation issues.

Alicante Elementary School (approx. 1,200 students)
- Paint red zone in back of school where parents drop-off and pick-up kids. Need CHP enforcement during pick-up to cite double parking.
- There is a visibility issue in the back of the school on San Diego and traffic needs to be slowed on this street.
- Raised crosswalks will help make students more visible and help slow down traffic.
- There is a lot of congestion right behind McDonald’s on Stobaugh St. and Alicante Ave. There is bus drop-off and pick-up. Parents also drop off/pick up kids here. Stobaugh is a one-way street.
- There are 3 main entrances to school: one bus/car drop/pick up, one by McDonalds and one on north side near intersection of Burgundy Ave. and Stobaugh.

Mountain View
- There is a new path connecting Lamont proper to school but there are issues with flooding and fog in the winter and there currently is no buffer from roadway.

Myrtle Avenue Elementary (approx. 480 students)
- There are three entrances to school: two in front and a third at the bus drop-off.
- A lot of students walk.
- Traffic is very fast on Hall Rd. on the south side of school.
- There needs to be a crosswalk along Copper Ave. at Myrtle Ave.
- There is a clinic on south side of school that generates some traffic.

Lamont Elementary School (approx. 680 students)
- The parking lot off of Main Street is staff parking.
- Drop off and pick up is on Palm Ave. and traffic is horrendous here.
- Two main entrances to school: one on north side on Palm and one on south side on Segue.
- Students use alleys to walk to school, especially the one parallel to Main Street that is located behind commercial buildings.

OTHER:
- There are several locations along Main Street for high school pick-up and one near Lamont Park.
- Currently, there are no plans to build a high school in Lamont. Students are bussed to Arvin.
- Lamont Elementary School District is looking to purchase land for a new school (probably K – 6).
- Looking at Carnation and Panama as new location.
- Lamont Elementary School District has 4 schools in it.
- Schools are pressured to cut back transportation expenses at funds are tighter at State.

Sunset Middle School (approx. 354 students)
- Teacher died last year crossing Main Street at Sunset Blvd. CHP has been more active around this area.
- Migrant camp and low-income housing is near school so a lot of kids walk to school. There are no sidewalks.
- Some kids walk to school from south side of Lamont on east side of Main Street where the fields are.
- Resources are very limited. Park in Vineland at Weedpatch community is very small. Primarily males who are drinking alcoholic beverages use the park.

Vineland Elementary School (approx. 400+ students)
- A lot of accidents near this school.
- Transportation is a huge issue between Weedpatch and Lamont. Vineland has to provide transportation if they have any events.

Chamber/Business – comments from Alexis Sanchez
- Too many curb cuts/driveways in front of Country Fair. Cars coming out can not see pedestrians.
- No through way across Main Street on Wharton. Broken connectivity.
- Businesses are not as active between Segue and Wharton on east side of Main Street.
- Need bigger turning lane for trucks on Main Street near De Giorgio. Most of the trucks are going to Kern Ridge (packing plant). Trucks turn right on De Giorgio and then turn right on San Diego and right on Wharton just to get to Kern Ridge.
- Businesses want downtown lights, trees, and benches.
- Need brighter pedestrian-scale lights along Main Street, especially in front of Country Fair.
- Huge shrubs on medians that are not maintained are an issue for safety.
- A lot of people cross Main Street where McDonald’s is located and at intersection of Palm and Main Street.
- Lamont has a Christmas parade on Main Street from Wharton to Panama.

OTHER NOTES:
- Include information on Safe Routes to School Programs (SRTP) in report. Can LGC provide SRTP workshop in Kern County?
- Speed on highway should drop to 25 mph.
- How can we incent trucks to use Hayborough? Maybe work with packing companies to encourage and educate their drivers to use different routes and not come through the middle of town.

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of Lamont and Weedpatch. Have company prepare a map/flier showing preferred route to reach their facilities. Another option is for Caltrans to relinquish highway to County.
- Drainage needed on Panama Road
- There was a moratorium in Lamont on new buildings due to sewer capacity. Present recommendations that the Building Healthy Communities Initiative can take on.
- But drivers have concerns over safety. Cars go around stopped buses before buses are loaded.
- Parent Partners in Health and Education (the group is a part of BHC) is a volunteer group that identifies issues and then researches how to address it. They might be able to take on issues included in the Plan being created through this Caltrans-funded grant.
- Visibility needs to be improved at crosswalk at north-east corner of Main Street and Panama Road.

SOUTH VALLEY NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERSHIP FOCUS GROUP
Thursday, September 13, 2012, 12:00pm – 1:30pm
Lamont Elementary School Computer Lab

IN ATTENDANCE: Magnus Barber – Nelson/Nygaard; Eduardo Guerrero – Opticos Design Inc.; Chris Lopez – Ag Outreach Representative (EDD); Isabel Mireles – Lamont Weedpatch Family Resource Center; Mercedes Muñoz Wilson – Family Resource Center; Stefan Pellegrini – Opticos Design Inc.; Laura Podolosky – Local Government Commission; Aroely Ramirez – Family Resource Center; Yolanda Ramirez – Lamont Elementary School District; Rick Robles – Superintendent, Lamont Elementary School District; Miguel Sanchez – Local Business Owner; Jennifer Woods-Stalton – Lamont Family Resource Center; Frank and Melba Sloan – Lamont Chamber of Commerce; and Paul Zytkofsky – Local Government Commission.

MEETING PURPOSE: Leaders from the South Valley Neighborhood Partnership met with design team to discuss and share opportunities and challenges along Weedpatch Highway in Lamont and Weedpatch.

CHALLENGES:
- Stigma of walking in Lamont. Need to create a positive physical as well as social environment where people want to walk.
- Not a lot of stop signs on smaller streets off of Main Street
- Need better lighting to see pedestrians. It is unsafe to drive in Lamont after the sun goes down.
- Shrubs located in the medians make it hard to see pedestrians, are not maintained regularly, water used to irrigate median leak all over road.
- Flooding along highway between Weedpatch and Lamont is an issue.
- Need safe path between Lamont and Weedpatch.
- Buses at Alicante come out at the McDonalds intersection and this is the same crosswalk that all kids use to go to school. After Alicante Buses drop off kids then they go to the bus barn and the route to the bus barn adds to the congestion.
- Intersection at Panama and Main Street is awful. Huge utility pole, flooding, etc.
- Stretch of Main Street near Mt. View School is a huge concern. A lot of students are walking.
- Issues with two lanes of traffic and crossing. One car stops, motions for pedestrian to cross, and the cars in the other lane does not stop and in the past have harmed pedestrians.
- Need signs for where pedestrians cross.
- Distance between crosswalks on Main Street is too great so residents cross where ever and when ever along Main Street.
- Railroad crossing on Main Street at Panama Road
- Residents avoid San Diego Street (near De Giorgio) because it is bumpy
- Hall Street is very narrow (near Lamont School) and there is no sidewalks
- Homes are not numbered in Lamont/Weedpatch (solution discussed: kid fundraising to paint addresses on curbs)
- Incomplete sidewalks along highway
- Dust from agriculture
OPPORTUNITIES:
- Increase trashcans, provide benches, plant trees along highway, etc.
- Divert big rigs to other roads and get them off of Main Street. How will Habecker Road be affected if Main Street changes and creates it more difficult for big rigs to use Main Street?
- Add high visibility crosswalks.
- Most important issues to address are: remove shrubs and add crossing in front of McDonalds.
- Create a gateway to the community – Have signage to mark a gateway and to signal to motorists to slow down. Locate something (i.e., signage) on median of highway to alert motorists that they are entering Lamont. Caltrans would not allow community to place sign in right away. There were less issues using the school site to locate sign vs. working with Caltrans to locate sign in right of way. Shafter has a great entrance where they have located trees in the median and a welcome sign.
- County Fair is the community center.
- Support for round-a-bouts at entrances to town.
- Between Hall Road and Gail Marie Street - work with properties owners to use a portion of the parking lot to create a pedestrian/community space.

PUBLIC AGENCY FOCUS GROUP
Friday, September 14, 2012 / 2:00pm – 3:30pm
Conference Room at Supervisor Goh’s Lamont Office

IN ATTENDANCE: Juan Avila – Field Representative for Supervisor Karen Goh; Pat Ebel – Kern County Roads Department; John George – Kern County Planning and Community Development Department; Kern County Supervisor Karen Goh; Dave Liggett – Kern County Sheriff’s Office; Brian Marshall – Kern County Fire Department; Mike Miller – Deputy Fire Chief Kern County Sheriff Department; Michael Moule – Nelson/Nygaard; Stefan Pellegrini – Opticos Design; Larry Pennell – Lamont Public Utility District; Laura Podolsky – Local Government Commission; Avtar Nijjer Sirdhu – Kern County Public Health Department; Jeff Sorensen – Caltrans, District 6; Paul Zykofsky – Local Government Commission.

MEETING PURPOSE: Public agency leaders met with design team to discuss and share opportunities and challenges along Weedpatch Highway in Lamont and Weedpatch; and how the Weedpatch Highway Corridor Plan can address these challenges and build upon opportunities.

OPPORTUNITIES:
- Create a trail connection between Weedpatch and Lamont.
- Sheriff is working with residents to elevate them on how to safely cross the Main Street.
- Lighting is important – this is important for safety, crime, etc. (Follow-up to this issue provided by Caltrans: The concerns for 184/Buena Vista (Lighting) and 184/Panama Lane (Lighting) will be reviewed by our Safety unit. The ambient lighting along main street does not belong to the State. It may belong to the County or a utility company. The State owns/operates safety lighting typically located at intersections. If the ambient lighting is within the State right-of-way, it was installed under an encroachment permit.)
- Bike Bakersfield is key organization in town. Can provide helmets possibly.
- Fire Station is located in north Lamont. Create a controlled intersection where Lamont fire station comes out.
- Controlled intersection on Sunset and Weedpatch (Caltrans is currently analyzing this intersection).
- Caltrans supports round-a-bouts.
- Create awareness that motorists are entering an urban city. Add gateway signage.
- CA Fresh Funds Works – are low interest loans, can fund facade improvements, murals, shelving, etc., Veronica Saldonna is the contact for this program.
- Provide three alternatives for different street cross sections and Caltrans can take a look at what is acceptable.
- Fairfax is a good alternative route for trucks but there are several schools located along the road. Camanche is a good road that goes directly to the 99. (Follow-up from Caltrans:
  eliminating 184 as a truck route in lieu of using Fairfax or Comanche would require justifications and approval as outlined at http://www.dot.ca.gov/hr/traffics/trucks/routes/restrict_process.htm)
- Place red beacon light on Bueno Vista and Weedpatch.
- Narrow lane width on the Highway to decrease traffic speeds. [Follow-up provided by Caltrans: Lane widths can be reduced to 11 feet where the posted speed is 40mph or less and AADTT (truck volume) is less than 250 trucks per lane (see HDM Chapter 300, Index 301.1).]
- County is doing a road diets in Kernville. [Follow-up provided by Caltrans: Given the traffic volume’s and truck percentages, a Road Diet would not be supported.]
- Locate round-a-bouts at Panama, Mt. View, Hall, and Sunset.
- Sheriff works with public health department and every quarter focuses on a code enforcement effort. Sheriff Ligget works with youth and can do small projects to help with the plan.

CHALLENGES:
- Code enforcement issues – deteriorating buildings, trash, etc. What can the County do about deteriorating buildings? Is there a façade improvement grant program?
- Need for community open space. Is there room to build plazas? Spray park?
- High number of pedestrian accidents in Lamont. Not enough pedestrian crossing points across Main Street so residents cross anywhere and everywhere between De Giorgio and Panama. Traffic calming is a better option for improving safety than putting crossings at every intersection.
- Flooding and fog in winter along trail located along highway to Mt. View Middle School.
- There are breaks in the sidewalk.
- No Opticom signals in Lamont. [Follow-up provided by Caltrans: The State does not install the Opticom systems at our signals. The systems can be installed by encroachment permit.]
- Street signs need hundred blocks/addresses.
- Lamont station runs 1,200 calls annually.
- By Arco there is a big divot in the road on the lane travelling northbound. At night time there are a lot of drunk drivers and they lose control at this point. This is where the road is going from two to one lanes. [This will be reviewed by Caltrans Safety Unit.]
- Flooding at Hilltop and Dunnsme [This will be reviewed by Caltrans maintenance staff.]

OTHER NOTES:
- There are no planned projects (rehab, overlay, etc.,) for the Lamont/Weedpatch area.
PUBLIC AGENCY FOCUS GROUP
Tuesday, May 8, 2012 / 10am – 11:30am
Adobe Plaza Suite Y – 141 A Street, Arvin

IN ATTENDANCE: Olan Armstrong – Arvin Police Department; Dan Burden – Walkable and Livable Communities Institute; Pat Ebel – Kern County Roads Department; Andy Stanley – Field Representative for Supervisor Karen Goh; Michelle McLean – Superintendent, Arvin Union School District; Michael Moule – Nelson/Bygaard; John Ohshima – GRC Associates (General Plan consultant for City of Arvin); Stefan Pellegrini – Optics Design, Toni Richardo – City of Arvin Council; Laura Podolsky – Local Government Commission; Charles Tellis – City of Arvin Building Department; and Marvin Williams – City of Arvin Transit Department.

MEETING PURPOSE: Public agency leaders met with design team to discuss and share opportunities and challenges in Arvin and the region, and how the two infill plans can address these challenges and build upon opportunities.

OPPORTUNITIES:
- Arvin received transportation enhancement grant ($1 million) to improve center island on Bear Mountain Blvd. (from Derby Rd. to C Street).
- National Cemetery 9 miles away. Arvin is the closest community to the cemetery.
- Arvin is one of the few Purple Heart Cities in the State.
- Tejon Ranch (industrial complex at base of Grapevine with many logistics companies/transportation hubs). Jobs coming in are not min. wage and need higher skill workforce.
- Jewett Square is located along Bear Mountain Blvd. at entrance to the city. Create the focal point in Jewett Square site to visually express this is the center of community.
- New automotive business locating along Bear Mountain Blvd. City’s ordinance requires suburban set back for all new development with parking lot in front of business.
- City has developed parking lots to relieve pressure of parking along Bear Mountain (City currently uses Kern County parking requirements).
- Development on 900 block – Red Rock development – It was recently sub-divided – Isaac George (former planning director) designed this site before he left.
- Three buses travel between Arvin and Tejon Ranch carrying an average 1,000 people a month. There is commitment to Tejon Ranch that no employee will be left behind (ex., if employees have to work late than Arvin would send out another bus to get them).
- Transit serves 90% of the city. Comes at 25-minute intervals. 260 riders on dial-a-ride.
- Kern County Transit serves Arvin in afternoon and evening. Target riders are students going to Bakersfield College.
- School district has a vision to work with multiple partners and create a joint use facility/center that could serve as a one-stop center for residents to receive health services, attend adult classes, receive counseling, etc. Commitment from The California Endowment to design this one-stop facility. School district as money to purchase land but needs commitment from other partners.
- School district has been a part of a Safe Routes to School grant with city.
- Circulation Element is in draft.

- Historical society is looking to locate museum in Jewett Square to display city artifacts.

CHALLENGES/CONCERNS:
- From a safety standpoint, there are concerns with the transportation network as it relates to traffic flow, traffic signals, response time and access.
- Pedestrian safety – Meyers street is a freeway for pedestrians. There is a plan for 4-lane roadway for Meyer. Intersection at Meyer and Sycamore is especially dangerous (i.e., flooding).
- The school district is going to de-centralize six pre-kindergarten classes to help with traffic congestion.
- Prevailing cul-du-sacs prevent access to transit and other civic destinations.
- Auxiliary structures are allowed but property owners must provide 2 extra parking spaces
- Common to have multiple families living in one house. People are renting their garages.
- Transportation next to salary and benefits is one of the highest costs to the school district. State has cut home-to-school transportation funds so district has huge boundary area.
- Need for healthy food options.
- There is no buffer between vineyard and El Camino School. School has been sprayed with pesticides before.
- Haven Drive (has narrow streets with residential all around it) and Bear Mountain school are the two schools that could most benefit from SRTS.
- School District received grant from Arbor Foundation to plant 50 trees.

OTHER:
- Set of design guidelines completed for the city 20 years ago. Mediterranean/mission style is current design guidelines.
- Support for façade improvement work (supported by redevelopment funds).
- Support for how Visalia’s downtown has preserved its character. Hanford and Porterville are other examples.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOCUS GROUP
Wednesday, May 9, 2012 / 10am – 11:30am
Adobe Plaza Suite Y – 141 A Street, Arvin

IN ATTENDANCE: Juan Avila – Field Representative for Supervisor Karen Goh; Dan Burden – Walkable and Livable Communities Institute; Richard Chapman – Kern County Economic Development Corporation; Karen Goh – Kern County Supervisor; Michael Moule – NelsonNygaard; Stefan Pellegrini – Opticos Design; Laura Podolsky – Local Government Commission; and Tom Weir – Small Business Development Center Cal State Bakersfield.

MEETING PURPOSE: Participants met with design team to share and discuss economic development opportunities and challenges in Arvin and the region; and how infill plans can support economic development goals.

OPPORTUNITIES:
- Enterprise zone in Arvin - these zones are 10 times more lucrative for employers than other states.
- Arvin is in workforce shed for Tejon Ranch.
- The transition from agriculture to logistics work in the area though workforce may not have skills needed for the increase in automation in agriculture and logistics.
- Companies may not locate in area if there is political instability.
- Kern County (and specifically Lorelei Dwarf) is nationally known for proactive approach to business.
- Kern County has the fastest growing GDP in the nation and largest economy in San Joaquin Valley.
- Kern County EDC runs mentoring programs for high school students in energy and medical fields.
- Linda Resnick – owner of Fuji water. They have expressed the desire to invest in another community Kern County. She invested in Lost Hills - $7 million with a $1 million match from County.
- Grimsay Farms presence in the community.
- Design Walnut Ave. as a shaded “community” boulevard that could connect civic destinations (i.e., spray park, high school, charter school, etc.).

CHALLENGES/CONCERNS:
- City Manager and economic development staff position were recently let go.
- Excess of corner stores selling beer, cigarettes, etc. Need healthy, fresh food store in Sycamore/Meyer site.
- Access to pharmaceuticals.
- Crime and safety - gang wars between Arvin and Lamont (recent gang shooting in Lamont).
- 7,500 people between 18 – 28 in age and there is a 40% unemployment rate in Arvin.
- Need for youth recreation.
- Transportation to Bakersfield College is difficult for college students. Transit service is not regular enough and students do not have cars. Long term solution is locating a satellite campus in Arvin. Dr. Jim Youn has preliminary plans for a satellite campus located across from Arvin High School. (Example: Delano Center was built in the 1970s and has been a great success as an economic development site because they were able to provide training programs specific to industry needs).
- Need traffic calming at intersection at Camanche and Varsity.

QUESTIONS:
- Are there leakage studies? [Laura Podolsky with USC will follow up with Trish Kelly (who is conducting an economic development plan and strategy for South Kern communities) and John Oshimo (who conducted a study of health related businesses in Arvin as part of Arvin General Plan).]
**Federal and State Funding Programs**

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<tr>
<td>California Freshworks Fund</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cafreshworks.com/">http://www.cafreshworks.com/</a></td>
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</table>
Health Impact Assessment

California’s SB 375 and its Impact on Kern County’s Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities and Low Income Urban Neighborhoods

Veronica Garibay and Phoebe Seaton
Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability

With technical support from:

Dana RowanGould and Alex Karner
University of California Davis, Center for Regional Change

Victor Rubin, Shireen Malekaflzali, Chione Flegal, Danielle Bergstrom
PolicyLink
Executive Summary

California’s landmark climate change law, Senate Bill 375 (SB 375), directs Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) to develop and incorporate a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) in their Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The SCS must set forth a forecasted development (housing and employment growth) pattern that, when integrated with the region’s transportation networks and other transportation measures and policies, will reduce greenhouse gas emissions generated by automobiles and light trucks to achieve the greenhouse gas emission reduction targets approved by the California Air Resources Board.¹

This Health Impact Assessment (HIA) focuses on potential impacts of SB 375 implementation in four Kern County communities – Arvin, Lamont, Weedpatch and Greenfield. Arvin, Lamont and Weedpatch are considered disadvantaged unincorporated communities while Greenfield is considered as low income urban neighborhood as it is within the boundaries of the City of Bakersfield. The project team developed the scope of the HIA analysis in partnership with community residents and partners. Through this process, we sought to identify potential impacts based on the following two questions:

1. How does the SCS change the quality and accessibility of public transit and access to destinations in disadvantaged unincorporated communities and low income urban neighborhoods?
2. Will Kern’s SCS increase the availability of community resources to residents of disadvantaged unincorporated communities and low income urban neighborhoods?

Major Findings

A person’s health and economic wellbeing is influenced by accessibility — the ease with which desired destinations can be reached within a particular land use-transportation system. The ease with which they can get from home to job, the time it takes to get from home to a health clinic, or the reliability of transportation from home to school, to suggest a few examples. Our prior work has shown that residents of disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs) in Kern County typically enjoy far less accessibility than residents positioned closer to the urban core communities of Bakersfield. This is especially problematic for residents of DUCs – as well as underserved neighborhoods in cities - that don’t have access to automobiles.

This HIA examines jobs and services located within each study community to assess bicycle and pedestrian access. We found that Kern COG’s 2040 alternative scenarios have similar outcomes with respect to jobs and services in the study communities, with almost all scenarios showing a worsening in jobs housing balance, exacerbating the current lack of jobs (relative to housing) in three of four study communities (and not one scenarios effectively addressing the severe jobs / housing imbalance in all of the communities). Relative to growth in dwelling units, our assessment showed that two study communities showed very little housing growth, while two show moderate growth.
The HIA also examines the location of transit stops in 2013 and in the 2040 Scenarios, finding that transit increases in 2040 Scenarios over the present, but the Plan, Intensified, 33% Housing Mix, and 100% Infill Scenarios provide less density of transit stops but serve locations over a larger geographic area.

Finally, the HIA analysis quantifies transit access and access to services from DUCs and low-income urban communities by measuring access to jobs by both automobile and public transit. We found that transit access and transit and auto access to services is greatest in Bakersfield and its immediate surroundings, often including Greenfield. Transit access to jobs and services is greater for much of the region (and the four study communities) in the Preferred, Intensified, 33% Housing, and 100% Infill Scenarios, although variation in transit access to jobs and services between those scenarios is limited. Auto access to services is centered on Bakersfield in the 2040 Scenarios, and access to government services decreases across the region in 2040. Variation in auto access to services between 2040 Scenarios is limited.

This HIA represents an improvement over existing research practices that, for the most part, only consider changes in accessibility at large levels of geography. Drilling down our analysis to individual DUCs and low-income urban communities allows the data to show how conditions are expected to change on the ground for small communities, given expected changes in demographics, transportation infrastructure, and land uses.

**Major Recommendations**

1. Kern COG should seek and apply for funding from sources beyond Kern COGs regional planning programs to invest in low income rural communities

2. Our analysis and public input provided to the COG indicate that DUCs and low income urban neighborhoods have particularly elevated needs. Because none of the scenarios include significant transit investments in the study communities that result in substantially improved transit outcomes, our analysis did not show substantial differences between scenarios. This limits the ability of regional partners and community members to understand the impacts of varying the transportation plans that might be adopted, and it limits differences between scenario outcomes in those areas. We recommend that future SCS/RTP efforts include transit, including active transportation, projects that target communities that have particularly elevated transit needs.

3. Kern COG should improve the jobs housing balance to ensure adequate growth and investments that will allow these communities to thrive. A balance of housing and employment and services in each community can lead to improved access to jobs and services while simultaneously reducing vehicle travel. Efforts aimed at achieving a
greater degree of jobs housing balance in the region (and in particular in areas with a substantial imbalance), have the potential to greatly increase residents’ health.

4. Finally, we recommend that Kern COG adopt the following set of policies in their 2014 RTP that will address historic need and improve land use and transit integration for years to come.
   a. Create a new classification of transit ready areas to prioritize and target investments in communities with demonstrated need — such as those studied in this analysis. Kern County residents have requested more housing options, improved public transit and opportunities for active transportation and more mixed use and compact development. Transit ready areas would be eligible to receive planning and financial assistance which will improve communities by designing more compact, less car dependent projects.
   b. Delay or eliminate the allocation of discretionary funding sources that promote and/or support new town development. Kern COG must fund needs in existing communities first, particularly in low income neighborhoods and communities.
   c. The RTP should front load pedestrian, biking, and transit projects to provide real transportation options to Kern County residents.
Acknowledgement

We sincerely thank the invaluable input that was provided by community residents throughout this process and writing of the report. Community resident participation is critical and of utmost importance in the decision making process that impacts the health and sustainability of our communities.

We also thank the following organizations for their time, contributions and participation in the Steering Committee:

Greenfield Walking Group
Committee for Better Arvin
Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment
Central California Environmental Justice Network
Dolores Huerta Foundation
Faith in Action
South Kern Building Health Communities HUB
Central Valley Air Quality Coalition
California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation

Finally, we thank our project partners and technical advisors for their guidance and expertise given to this process:

Policy Link Central Valley Health Policy Institute UCD Center for Regional Change

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Disclaimer: The views expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Resources Legacy Fund, The California Endowment, or California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc.
I. Introduction

In 2008, California passed the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act (Senate Bill 375 or SB 375), to further the statewide effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This novel policy will help California meet state climate goals by improving the integration of regional transportation spending, housing allocations and land use planning. SB 375 will support California’s goals to combat climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 as set out by Assembly Bill 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. The transportation sector is the single largest contributor to greenhouse gases of any sector: automobiles and light trucks contribute almost 30% alone. SB 375 requires the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to set greenhouse gas reductions targets for each federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organizations.

In order to meet the statewide goal of reduced greenhouse gas emissions, among other requirements, SB 375 requires Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to include a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) in their Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The SCS will serve as a set of planning strategies that can be followed to meet emissions reduction targets. Before an SCS can be adopted, MPOs must develop a series of scenarios that detail land use and transportation investments and that attempt to meet greenhouse gas targets set by the state; at the conclusion of this process, the local government will vote on their preferred scenario, which will be used and analyzed in the development of the SCS. Though an adopted SCS is not itself legally enforceable, a city or county may choose to adopt the SCS into a legally enforceable format, such as a general plan. Thus, within the SCS exists the potential to promote community equity through policy decisions throughout the region.

In each region the SCS shall:

1. Identify the general location of land uses, residential densities, and building intensities with the region;
2. Identify areas within the region sufficient to house all the population of the region, including all economic segments of the population over the course of the planning period of the RTP, taking into account net migration in the region, population growth, household formation and employment growth;
3. Identify areas within the region sufficient to house an eight year projection of the regional housing need, and;
4. Identify a transportation network to service the transportation needs of the region.³

This is the first time that MPOs in California will integrate land use and transportation planning, making implementation of SB 375 critically important for health outcomes. A strong SCS that prioritizes walking, biking, transit and infill development could see significant reductions in respiratory health impacts and costs related to traffic pollution, for example.⁴ SB 375 provides decision makers with important opportunities to grow and invest in more strategic and healthier
ways. The implications of SB 375 implementation on health will be discussed in further detail throughout this report.

This Health Impact Assessment (HIA), focused on SB 375 implementation in Kern County, will analyze potential health impacts to low income communities of color based on Kern County Council of Governments’ proposed SCS. Discussions of land use and transportation planning in Kern County rarely incorporate discussions of impacts to residents’ health and potential health outcomes despite the region’s long standing history of negative health outcomes. The HIA partners hope to engage decision makers in a regional discussion on the intersections of land use, transportation and health. Without a holistic approach to land use and transportation planning that includes discussions of health, these communities run the risk of continued neglect and disinvestment while wealthier communities reap the benefits of smart growth planning.

II. SB 375 in the San Joaquin Valley

The San Joaquin Valley (SJV) is a region that brings into stark relief the many, often conflicting, realities of California. It is a region of great wealth: it farms for our nation, it is rich in natural resources, and it is one of the most geographically varied areas in the state. Despite its tremendous assets, the region faces enormous challenges. The region has been labeled the “Appalachia of the West” and is home to some of the most concentrated poverty in the country. The SJV contains our nation’s dirtiest air. Education levels are much lower than other parts of the state, and unemployment levels are significantly higher than the rest of California. The region experiences extremely high rates of food insecurity and health outcomes for the region’s residents vary tremendously depending on race, ethnicity, income, and where you live. Poor planning practices, institutionalized racism, and entrenched agricultural, industrial and development interests have led to growth patterns that put great strain on the natural environment and have perpetuated historic patterns of disinvestment in low income communities and communities of color.

SB 375 provides a unique opportunity for this region to direct future infrastructure investments into the low income and communities of color that struggle each day to make their neighborhoods healthy, vibrant and sustainable places to live. It also provides MPOs with opportunities to invest in and revitalize communities that have been historically overlooked and excluded from the benefits of short and long term planning. However, if business as usual policies and practices predominate through implementation of SB 375, low income communities of color – already the most negatively impacted by historic planning decisions - stand to be harmed the most.

SB 375 in Kern County

Kern County is characterized by rapidly changing demographics – specifically, a fast growing Latino population. The total population is projected to grow from 840,000 residents (in 2010) to 1,540,000 residents by 2050. In Kern County, the White non-Hispanic population is expected to
decline while the Hispanic population grows by 2.4% each year. See Figure below for comparisons across race and ethnicity.

*Figure 1: Kern County—Summary of Race and Ethnicity Forecast, 2010-2050.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White alone non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Hispanic all races</th>
<th>Black or African American alone non-Hispanic</th>
<th>American Indian and Alaska Native alone non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian alone non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander alone non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Some other race or in combination non-Hispanic</th>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>323,794</td>
<td>391,144</td>
<td>45,377</td>
<td>5,893</td>
<td>33,100</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>39,328</td>
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<tr>
<td>2050</td>
<td>227,955</td>
<td>1,027,764</td>
<td>81,180</td>
<td>4,578</td>
<td>98,741</td>
<td>2406</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase</td>
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<td>636,620</td>
<td>35,803</td>
<td>-1,315</td>
<td>65,641</td>
<td>1411</td>
<td>58,045</td>
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<td>Annual Rate</td>
<td>-0.9%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>-0.6%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
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</table>

Source: The Planning Center/DC&E, San Joaquin Valley Demographic Forecasts, 2010-2050.

The Kern Council of Governments (KCOG) is tasked with creating the region’s first SCS in its 2014 RTP. KCOG will accommodate population growth 1,077,300 and employment growth of 577,100 through the year 2040, in its 2014 RTP. 

As discussed in the introduction, thousands of residents in low income communities stand to be negatively impacted if KCOG does not implement SB 375 in a way that equitably distributes the benefits of smart growth planning. Through a series of community education workshops residents identified experiencing systematic neglect via historic planning and investment policies that have resulted in inadequate access to public transit, lack of sidewalks and paved roads, unsafe drinking water and dilapidated septic systems, and little to no access to basic services and affordable housing by residents from low income communities.

A growing body of research indicates that land use and transportation decisions can promote an active lifestyle and improve overall health. Communities that promote public transportation, walking, and biking have been shown to improve air quality and increase access to: health care, education, social services, healthy food, and places for recreation and physical activities. Together these factors are often described as the “social determinants of health.” The World Health Organization defines social determinants of health as “the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age, including the health system.”

8
In Kern County alone, the city of Bakersfield ranks as the most polluted American city by deadly particulates, 15.6% of all county residents have been diagnosed with asthma, and 41.4% of all of its children are obese. The county also has the highest death rate due to heart disease and second highest rates of death due to Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and diabetes.9

Investment in existing communities and high quality transportation systems however, do not benefit all communities in the same way. For example, other regions in California – such as the Southern California Association of Governments region have complied with SB 375 requirements by developing land use scenarios that concentrate growth and resource allocation in areas in which physical proximity of housing to jobs, schools, health care centers, stores or high quality transportation systems already exist. This approach inevitably makes certain neighborhoods and communities an attractive investment option for fulfilling SB 375 requirements, while leaving others at a disadvantage. Low income communities, especially those in rural settings, often lack the basic features of healthy, sustainable neighborhoods – potable water, adequate sewer systems, quality and quantity of affordable housing options, adequate public transit, complete streets and essential services. Maximizing opportunities for all communities, particularly those that are most vulnerable, and addressing existing inequities will result in a healthier, more sustainable region. Investing in these communities reduces the need to sprawl as revitalization efforts focus on infill development on vacant and/or underutilized land within existing communities.

While MPOs are tasked with developing an SCS that forecasts projected land use growth, cities and counties maintain sole land use decision making authority. Key to making projected growth and investment a reality in existing low income communities will be the billions of transportation and planning dollars that will distributed via the RTP, the master planning document that houses the SCS. Kern COG estimates that a total of 11.6 billion dollars will be available through the life of the 2014 RTP.10 Existing law requires the various elements of the RTP to maintain internal consistency. As such, if the SCS directs housing and employment growth and transit investments (transit service and active transportation) to low income communities, then projected revenues in the financial element of the RTP must follow that direction. Growth and transit networks in low income communities will help reverse decades of disinvestment by directing monetary resources to support communities in becoming healthy and sustainable.

III. Overview of the Kern County HIA Project

Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability (Leadership Counsel), Central Valley Health Policy Institute (CVHPI) and UC Davis Center for Regional Change (CRC) partnered to conduct an HIA on SB 375 implementation in Kern County, with technical assistance from PolicyLink. The project is breaking new ground with respect to analyzing the impacts of SB 375 implementation by assessing its impact on more rural communities. We have observed SB 375 has an inherent assumption that the most reduction of greenhouse gas emissions would come about principally
by encouraging land use and transportation planning strategies in city neighborhoods and communities in which infrastructure already exists, where transit opportunities are already robust and where diverse land uses already exist in close proximity to one another. But small, spatially isolated, often rural communities also have a great deal at stake in this process, and, this team decided to conduct an analysis that would inform decision makers of regional impacts to the health of residents living in low income communities of color from the relatively urban to the rural.

Leadership Counsel managed this project, with financial support from CRLA. The project team developed educational materials and conducted community education workshops on SB 375 and HIAs to build and support engagement of community residents in the decision making process. The team convened the Kern HIA steering committee, composed of local community partners, to develop the scope of the HIA. Due to resource constraints and limitations, Leadership Counsel consolidated steering committee meetings with the meetings of the South Kern Building Healthy Communities Environment Action Team. CVHPI and the UCD CRC served as technical partners, conducting research and analysis, and providing technical assistance. PolicyLink advised the project partners on HIA methods, provided additional data about some of the communities, and reviewed and edited drafts of the reports.

The Kern HIA team launched this project’s full partners’ meeting in January of 2012 to begin workplan activities, assess Kern Council of Governments’ (KCOG) decision making timeline and identify community partners to form the initial steering committee. The project ended in March of 2014 in time to utilize findings and recommendations during the public review period of the 2014 Draft RTP/SCS Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

This HIA includes the following components:

- **Background**: detailed information about the demographics and characteristics of target communities.
- **Methodology**: process used to implement the HIA and description of data sources and research methods.
- **SB 375 Analysis**: describes proposed implementation and potential challenges and opportunities for target communities.
- **Assessment**: existing conditions of target communities and potential impacts relative to existing conditions.
- **Recommendations**: describes a set of policy recommendations as a result of assessment findings.
- **Monitoring Plan**: identifies strategies to monitor impacts of implementation based on priorities developed by the Environment Action Team.
IV. Background and Screening

*What is an HIA?*

A Health Impact Assessment is a “combination of procedures, methods and tools that systematically judges the potential, and sometimes unintended, effects of a policy, plan, program or project on the health of a population and the distribution of those effects within the population.”\(^1\) This allows for the thorough and thoughtful deliberation of potential impacts of proposed policies or plans before final policies or plans are adopted. HIAs tend to focus on the “social determinants of health.” The World Health Organization defines these as:

> The conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources at global, national, and local levels. The social determinants of health are responsible for a wide range of health inequities – the unfair and avoidable differences in health status seen within and between countries”.\(^2\)

Steps in a typical HIA:

- Screening involves determining whether an HIA is feasible, timely and would add value to the decision making process.
- Scoping involves creating a plan and timeline for conducting an HIA that defines priority issues, research questions and methods and participant roles.
- Assessment involves creating an existing conditions report for a geographic area and/or population in order to understand baseline conditions and to be able to predict changes in health outcomes. This step also involves evaluating potential health impacts.
- Recommendations are developed to improve the project, plan or policy and/or to mitigate any negative health impacts.
- Reporting involves communicating the results with decision makers.
- Monitoring involves tracking the impacts of the HIA on the decision making process and the decision, the implementation of the decision, and the impacts of the decision on health determinants.\(^3\)

*Importance of Health in SB 375 Implementation*

The stakes in SB 375 are very high for low income communities, and for rural communities even more so. If housing and employment growth and transit investments are equitably allocated, SB 375 creates new opportunities for improving the health of low income neighborhoods and low income rural communities. But if investments are not equitably allocated the consequences for these neighborhoods and communities could be disastrous, further exacerbating regional inequities that lead to significant health disparities. The American Lung Association in California notes in their report *Public Health Crossroads: Sustainable Growth for Healthier Kern Neighborhoods* that a future in which new growth in Kern County is 60 percent more walkable
and interconnected with existing built neighborhoods could reduce traffic-pollution health costs by $139 million in 2035 alone. The ALA report demonstrates that the following community characteristics can significantly contribute to negative health outcomes: lack of access to basic services such as grocery, medical, and employment; infrastructure deficiencies that impede walkability and physical activity; and, little to no access to public transportation.

As previously noted, SB 375 is novel in that California regional transportation planning agencies must integrate land use and transportation planning for the first time. This task can prove to be difficult yet manageable and successful if decision makers engage with the community in meaningful discussions about the intersections of land use, transportation and health. Such discussions can lead to policy developments that address the many challenges faced by low income communities of color, including land use policies that can improve the built environment and improve health outcomes.

Land use mix, street and pedestrian connectivity, pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure and parks and open spaces are neighborhood features that have all been found to be positively associated with physical activity and walkability. Though walkability has had numerous definitions in literature, it can generally be understood as a measure of an environment’s ability to promote and increase access to pedestrian oriented activity, such as walking or bicycling. Because walkability has been positively associated with physical activity, highly walkable neighborhoods have the potential to significantly improve health outcomes of neighborhood residents. Physical activity, in turn, can help reduce the risks of several adverse health conditions associated with physical inactivity, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, colon cancer, breast cancer, and mortality. The importance of physical activity is emphasized by the World Health Organization’s (WHO) decree that physical inactivity is among the top 15 risk factors for the Global Burden of Disease.

Despite the significant risks associated with physical inactivity, the majority of adults in the Western world do not perform sufficient physical activity for health benefits. By increasing neighborhood walkability, residents will have greater opportunities to engage in an active, healthy lifestyle. Thus, increasing neighborhood walkability can be a valuable opportunity to improve the health outcomes of the general population. However, because it is often the poorest of neighborhoods that lack basic features of walkability, regional planners should give special consideration to these neighborhoods if the opportunity for improved health outcomes is to be distributed equitably throughout the region.

Public transportation policies have the potential to impact health outcomes by addressing inequity in resource access across populations and granting access to transportation for populations without vehicles. Access to public transportation connects community members to employment, economic, and social opportunities as well as to essential services (such as healthcare), which are all critically linked with positive health outcomes. While vehicle ownership has been shown to be linked with improved health, public transportation has the potential to serve as its functional equivalent and offer the benefits of vehicle ownership to
those unable to afford or access vehicles. The importance of ensuring transit opportunities is underscored by findings that inadequate access to transport has been linked to a higher risk for social exclusion, particularly for the unemployed, elderly, sick, low wage workers, and women.\textsuperscript{23} In addition to providing access to opportunities and services, public transportation policies have the potential to improve air quality. Because personal vehicles significantly contribute to air pollutants,\textsuperscript{24} increasing public transportation and promoting ridership could reduce the number of vehicles on the road, reducing the volume of harmful emissions,\textsuperscript{25} and improving the air quality and health outcomes of the region.

*Does the HIA Add Value in this Process?*

To date, discussion on the impacts on community health in the development of the Kern SCS has been driven by community partners. Advocates recognized the need and importance of conducting a health impact assessment given this new mandated policy that requires multiple jurisdictions to think beyond their geographical limits and work towards creating a regional plan that provides benefits to all. The Kern SCS will seek to integrate land use and transportation planning for the first time. It is no easy feat to overcome given decades of urban sprawl, concentrated poverty, bad air quality and inadequate transit service in Kern County.

V. Development of the SCS in Kern County

The KCOG is directed by a Policy Board of Directors composed of elected representatives from Kern’s eleven cities and two county board of supervisors.\textsuperscript{26} This is ultimately the group of leaders responsible for adopting the 2014 RTP that will include the region’s first SCS. The Policy Board is expected to formally approve the 2014 RTP in June of 2014. The RTP contains a number of elements (Policy, Action and Financial) in addition to the SCS that guides transportation planning and investment throughout Kern County.

Efforts to implement SB 375 in the county began with the establishment of the Kern Climate Change Task Force in 2009 to help KCOG meet the goals and objectives of SB 375.\textsuperscript{27} This task force was folded into the KCOG Transportation Modeling Committee in 2010 to help create the necessary parameters to forecast a pattern of development that would meet the GHG reduction targets.\textsuperscript{28} In 2012, the Regional Policy Advisory Council - composed of planners from member agencies, one public member, and other interested stakeholders – began to oversee the development of draft SCS scenarios to be carried into the draft Environmental Impact Report for further analysis.\textsuperscript{29}

Two cycles of public workshops were held across Kern County to gather input from residents. Public engagement efforts during the first cycle included sixteen community workshops and two meetings with interested stakeholders between March and June of 2012.\textsuperscript{30} Efforts to gather public input in the second cycle took place from August 2012 through October of 2013. These efforts included community festivals, community workshops, presentations to city councils and county board of supervisors.
Following the two cycles of public outreach, the RPAC approved four preliminary scenarios, including a no project alternative, to be reviewed in the EIR. All preliminary scenarios met the 5 and 10% GHG reduction targets. Two additional scenarios were then added during the writing of the draft EIR. The six draft SCS scenarios are described below.

- **No Project Alternative**: Includes only those transportation projects that are included in the first of the previously conforming transportation plan or have completed environmental review by January 2014. The growth scenario included is based on local general plans.
- **Old Plan Alternative**: Includes those transportation projects in the 2011 RTP. Land use assumptions include any updated growth information and planning assumptions from 2011. This includes significantly less funding for maintenance, transit, and alternative transportation projects.
- **Preferred Alternative**: Transportation projects include many from the 2011 RTP in addition to the new projects that close gaps and expand the transportation system. Land use assumptions are more aggressive in terms of infill, multifamily housing, and smaller lot single family homes.
- **Intensified Alternative**: Transportation projects are similar to the preferred scenario except that transit, bike, and pedestrian projects are implemented sooner. Land use assumptions are based on the preferred scenario except that the land use scenario is more aggressive in that urban development occurs sooner and large lot single-family housing is limited to 47% of new growth.
- **33 Percent Housing Mix Alternative**: Transportation projects are the same as in the Intensified Alternative. Land use assumptions are based on the Intensified Alternative, except that new housing in the metro area is 33% high density, 33% medium density, and 33% low density.
- **100 Percent Infill Alternative**: Transportation projects are the same as in the Intensified Alternative. Land use assumptions are more aggressive than the Intensified and 33 Percent Housing Mix Alternatives, as 100% of new growth is infill, and new countywide housing would be about two thirds high or medium density.

Appendix B includes detailed information on the decision making timeline and process used to create Kern's first SCS.

VI. Goals and Determining Scope

Through a series of meetings, the steering committee identified project goals to guide the implementation of the HIA. The goals of this project were to:

1. Ensure consideration of community values (maintaining community history, culture, and beliefs intact).
2. Ensure consideration of environmental justice issues, as they related to community health, within the SCS process.
3. Ensure that the final SCS adequately considers and addresses the concerns and aspirations of disadvantaged, unincorporated communities.
4. Ensure disadvantaged unincorporated communities can meaningfully participate in the SCS planning process.

Developing the Steering Committee

The project team met in January of 2012 to identify partners to help guide the development and ultimate implementation of this HIA. Partners were identified based on their expertise on issues impacting low income communities of color and level of engagement and organizing activities in these communities.

The first steering committee meeting convened on February 22nd, 2012 to introduce the HIA project, review the steps in an HIA, build a shared understanding of SB 375 and implementation timeline, and to discuss the role of the committee. Representatives from eight community based organizations and community groups participated in this initial meeting. Participation in this process was voluntary throughout the implementation of the HIA.

During this first meeting the steering committee identified the following values to help guide the implementation of the Kern HIA project:

- Equity
- Community Empowerment
- Collaboration
- Accountability
- Scientific Integrity
- Dignity and Respect towards community residents

Developing the Scope for the Kern HIA Project

The project partners facilitated a series of visioning exercises to identify possible areas of focus for this HIA. At the initial steering committee meeting, the project partners engaged participants in a discussion on the intent and goals of SB 375 as some members were not familiar with this new mandate. Upon building a shared understanding of SB 375 mandates, steering committee members were asked to share aspects of their advocacy efforts that had some relation to the goals of this new policy. Finally, the steering committee was asked to identify broad issue areas that have health and equity implications related to SB 375. This resulted in the identification of five broad issue areas and a number of sub categories that could potentially impact health outcomes in low income communities:

Figure 2: Steering Committee Priorities I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad Issue Area</th>
<th>Sub Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>• Transit connectivity from home to employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Access to transit for school, services, jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Use/Infrastructure</td>
<td>• Zoning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Priority Areas for HIA Analysis and Advocacy

The steering committee reconvened on March 22nd of 2012 to finalize the scoping process. The committee convened to a) identify the top two priority areas for the HIA, and b) prioritize two objectives within each priority area based on initial visioning exercises. The project partners then facilitated a priority setting discussion with the coalition. Participants were reminded to use the following set of criteria, among others, in their prioritization a) relevance to SB 375 implementation, b) impacts on health and equity, and c) whether, absent this groups’ attention, the issue would be considered in the debate.

Through this exercise the committee agreed that the air quality and health topic areas identified in the initial scoping process would be outcomes of all that is studied as part of this HIA. The committee then tentatively agreed to focus this HIA on the following priorities:

Priority #1: Land Use/Infrastructure
- Objective 1: Access to basic infrastructure (drinking water and wastewater) and services in disadvantaged unincorporated communities
- Objective 2: Polluting and toxic sources (industry, agriculture, pesticide application)

Priority #2: Transportation
- Objective 1: Access to improved public transportation to access schools, jobs, and services in disadvantaged unincorporated communities
- Objective 2: Diesel Triangle: reduce highway pollution from goods movement which creates hot spots for toxic pollution in Kern County

While the project partners aspired to analyze as many community objectives as possible, resources, time and staff capacity placed constraints on the ability to analyze all objectives identified by the steering committee. Project partners informed steering committee members that the selected priorities for the HIA were tentative while internal capacity was assessed.
Geographic Area of Focus

While SB 375 implementation will impact all of Kern County residents, the steering committee decided to focus on those most vulnerable to implementation. The committee identified target communities based on existing relationships with community residents and engagement in advocacy efforts by related to SB 375. The communities identified, predominantly Latino and low income, have long been neglected by elected officials, county and city staff and other powerful interests and as a result lack some or many of the basic features of healthy, sustainable neighborhoods – potable water, sewer systems, quality and quantity of affordable housing, adequate public transit, complete streets and essential services.

The target disadvantaged unincorporated communities include Arvin, Lamont and Weedpatch – all located in southeast Kern County. The HIA will also focus on the Greenfield neighborhood located in part in the City of Bakersfield.

Demographics for the study areas, Kern County, and the state of California are summarized in the table below, which is excerpted from Karner and London (in press)\textsuperscript{31}. From the table, the share of linguistically isolated households, households living in poverty and minority households are much more greater in Arvin, Lamont, and Weedpatch than the county as a whole, while Greenfield has lower poverty rates and a slightly higher minority and linguistically isolated population than the county. The share of residents commuting using a mode other than a single occupancy vehicle is much greater in Arvin and Lamont (the two study areas with available data) than the county or the state, indicating a greater reliance on transit, carpooling, biking or walking.

Figure 3: Key Demographics of Study Communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Population\textsuperscript{a}</th>
<th>Poverty (%)\textsuperscript{b}</th>
<th>Per capita HH income (2011$)\textsuperscript{b}</th>
<th>People of color (%)\textsuperscript{a}</th>
<th>Non-SOV commute mode share (%)\textsuperscript{b}</th>
<th>Linguistic isolation (%)\textsuperscript{b,c}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arvin city</td>
<td>19,304</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>9,241</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamont CDP</td>
<td>15,120</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>10,332</td>
<td>95.4</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenfield CDP</td>
<td>3,991</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>24,126</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weedpatch CDP</td>
<td>2,658</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>8,620</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>57.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kern county</td>
<td>839,631</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>20,167</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>36,995,499</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>29,634</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missing data indicate a margin of error greater than or equal to 50\% of the estimate.

\textsuperscript{a}Source: Census 2010, Summary File 1.

\textsuperscript{b}Source: American Community Survey, 2007 – 2011 five year estimates.

\textsuperscript{c}Defined as those speaking English less than “very well.”
Residents of DUCs and low income urban neighborhoods have limited means of transportation to reach basic daily necessities including employment, healthy food providers, healthcare services, etc. The Coalition's priorities are based on a recognition that in our region a disproportionate amount of people of color, recent immigrants, and low income people live in rural and urban fringe unincorporated and/or severely under resourced communities that lack basic infrastructure and essential services, and demonstrate worse health outcomes than more developed and better resourced urban and suburban communities in the region. Flowing from this perspective, the coalition’s vision, goals, and priorities emphasized a desire for the adoption of SCS elements that explicitly address and plan for transportation investments and land use...
choices that will improve health outcomes in traditionally excluded and under-served communities.

VII. HIA Research Questions & Description of Health Pathways

Following the March 2012 steering committee meeting, the project team met to develop a proposed research agenda based on priorities identified by the coalition. After discussing availability of resources, organizational capacity, relevance to SB 375 and data availability, the project team narrowed the priority areas and objectives to include:

Priority 1: Transportation
- Objective 1: Increased access to public transportation in disadvantaged unincorporated communities and low income urban communities

Priority 2: Land Use
- Objective 1: Increased access to basic community resources in disadvantaged unincorporated communities and low income urban communities

While the steering committee was particularly interested in analyzing changes in access to basic infrastructure such as drinking water and wastewater, sitting of toxic and polluting land uses and the reduction of highway pollution from goods movement, the project partners felt that these priorities would not be directly addressed by the implementation of SB 375. The SCS would not directly address drinking water quality and access to wastewater, pollution from goods movement, and would not look at siting of toxic sites because of lack of land use authority.

The project partners met with the steering committee in May of 2012 to discuss and explain modification to HIA priorities. The committee agreed to continue to develop the scope of the HIA based the project team recommendations.

SB 375 and Transit Access and Access to Resources

The RTP has long provided an opportunity to influence the transportation infrastructure in a region, which leads directly to transit access and access to resources. The other side of the access equation is land use. Though the specifics of land use decisions are enforceable only through other means, such as zoning ordinances or county general plans, the SCS still presents an important opportunity for local governments to influence future planning decisions, as decisions outlined in the SCS have the potential to serve as the foundation for or be directly incorporated into a future enforceable format. Thus, it is of great importance for the SCS to encompass land use decisions that promote health in all communities in particular those who have experienced historical disinvestment such as DUCs and low income urban neighborhoods. It is important to note, however, that despite a shared history of historic disinvestment, DUCs and low income urban neighborhoods face a different set of land use issues in the
implementation of SB 375. For this reason, DUCs and low income urban communities will be the focus of this analysis.

**Improved Access to Public Transportation**

Accessibility – the ease with which an individual can reach opportunities, goods and services - affects a person’s health, economic wellbeing and quality of life. The quality of a transit system can directly affect residents’ access, in particular for households without a personal vehicle. While the quality of the transit system is a primary determinant, changes in land use can also affect the types of destinations that residents can access through public transport.

Transit accessibility and neighborhood design can also play an important role in facilitating walking and bicycling. Many studies have found a correlation between walkability and walking for transportation. These effects of the built environment are likely to persist even when controlling for individual preferences and particular types of neighborhoods. Creating neighborhoods that support the use of non-motorized modes can therefore work to facilitate physical activity resulting health benefits.

To meet the priorities of the community advisory team, the HIA team suggested exploring this area of focus using the following research question:

- Will the SCS increase access to public transit in DUCs and low income urban neighborhoods? To what extent will transit access change under the SCS scenarios?

**Objective 1: Increased Access to Public Transit in rural DUCs and low income urban communities**

For this objective, we first characterized the existing public transit systems serving DUCs and low income urban communities by examining survey data, the location of existing transit services, and the proximity of residents to transit stops. This descriptive analysis will illustrate the extent to which transit currently meets (or does not meet) the needs or residents of these communities.

We will then quantify transit access in terms of travel times to destinations for current conditions and in 2040 under each SCS scenario. The analysis of existing conditions relies on travel demand model outputs for 2013 conditions and for 2040 conditions under each SCS Scenario. In order to provide an overall estimate of destinations that are available by transit, we use access to jobs (of all types) as a proxy for destinations. Jobs represent economic opportunities as well as amenities, goods and services, and the greater the number of jobs accessible by transit, the greater the accessibility. Specifically, we estimate transit access as the number of jobs that can be reached from particular communities within a 45 minute transit trip during the peak morning commute. The transit travel time estimate includes in-vehicle travel time, walk access times (at origins and destinations and at transfers), and wait times (at the origin and at transfers). Job locations and transit travel times are available at the
transportation analysis zone (TAZ) level using data provided by KCOG; these values are combined in order to provide an estimate of accessible jobs at each travel time interval for each origin TAZ.

The process of combining travel times and job locations is illustrated in the hypothetical figure below. For the particular origin TAZ shown, three destination TAZs are available within a 45 minute transit trip. Summing over all of the available jobs in the three destination zones results in 263 total jobs accessible in 45 minutes. This result gets associated with the origin TAZ. Ultimately, TAZs are aggregated to the corresponding DUCs and low income urban communities in order to obtain accessibility estimates for those areas.

*Figure 5: Process of Combining Travel Times and Job Locations*

To more closely examine the localized access impacts of the SCS in each community, we also examine the growth in jobs allocated to DUCs and low income urban communities in each KCOG SCS scenario and compare it to existing conditions.

**Existing Conditions:**

- What is the overall quality and accessibility of existing public transit in DUCs, low income urban communities, and the county as a whole?
- Does public transit adequately connect people living in DUCs and low income urban communities to destinations?

**Forecasting question:**

- How does each scenario change the quality and accessibility of public transit and access to destinations in DUCs and low income urban communities?

**Indicators**

1. Location of transit stops serving target areas (existing and forecasting conditions)
2. Number of jobs that can be accessed by transit trips of 45 minutes or less during the peak morning commute period (existing conditions and forecasting)
3. Number of jobs that are located in each community (existing conditions and forecasting)
Land Use: Improved Access to Basic Resources

Land use decisions made at regional levels have the capacity to promote health in a number of ways, including through allocating investment into development of basic resources, such as employment, affordable housing, healthy food and healthcare facilities and services. Access to these resources have a strong influence on the health outcomes of communities. In other regions, proximity and the ease of traveling to health care services has been found to influence health care decisions, where high travel times and distances can be a hindrance to the effective use of health services. Similarly, rurality has been associated with increased travel distances, times and decreased frequency of medical visits overall and to specialists relative to urban areas. Furthermore, licensed drivers and those with access to rides through their families made significantly more health-service related trips. These studies of other regions illustrate the importance of considering rural access to health care during the transportation planning process.

Because DUCs and low income urban communities often do not offer these resources, the SCS can initiate and encourage the development of these communities into livable, sustainable neighborhoods by including policies that allocate appropriate development in DUCs and low income urban communities that will include and support these resources.

At the same time, this development has the potential to reduce VMT and improve air quality; residents of these communities will have the option to decrease or eliminate vehicle trips into neighboring communities to obtain these basic resources, if these resources are available in their communities. Simultaneously residents will be exposed to fewer of the effects of vehicle travel, including emissions and accidents. Thus, the SCS can potentially further the mission of SB 375 of reducing VMT, while at the same time promoting a vision of community equity, improving the health of DUCs and low income urban communities, and the region as a whole.

Greater walkability and access to resources has been associated with decreased use of cars and thus lower greenhouse gas emissions. Walkability and pedestrian mobility in DUCs and low income urban neighborhoods is often hindered by inadequate pedestrian infrastructure, including unmaintained sidewalks and bike lanes (or an absence of either or both from the community), single-use housing, and lack of curb cuts. Without adequate pedestrian infrastructure, residents may choose to decrease or eliminate pedestrian trips to access basic community resources. Further, because several residents of these communities are unable to afford a personal vehicle, adequate pedestrian infrastructure may be necessary for them to access resources that promote health. Also, inadequate pedestrian infrastructure may cause decreased pedestrian activity within the community, which can then contribute to negative health outcomes, such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

Though neighborhood walkability and access to resources can be key promoters of community health and an opportunity for community equity through investment in historically overlooked neighborhoods, they also have the potential to further the mission of SB 375. Increasing
Walkability promotes pedestrian mobility; when residents feel they do not have to use a vehicle in their neighborhoods, they may choose not to, leading to a decrease in county wide VMT. Thus, in this section we focus on analyzing the potential for increased access to services and walkability in low income urban neighborhoods.

To meet the priorities of the coalition, the HIA project team suggests exploring this area of focus using the following research questions:

- Will the SCS increase access to basic community necessities in DUCs and low income urban communities? To what extent will the SCS change basic access to resources in DUCs and low income urban communities?

**Objective 1: Increased Access to Basic Community Resources in DUCs**

For this objective, we first characterized the availability of basic resources in DUCs and low income urban communities. Basic resources are defined as including stores offering healthy, fresh foods, healthcare facilities and services and early education child care centers. We profiled the community in terms of basic resources available.

We then evaluated existing access to educational, governmental, and health care services by using the methods similar to those used for transit access above. In other words, we used travel demand model data available for 2005 and in each scenario in 2040 to evaluate access to services using access to jobs of three types: educational, medical, and government as a proxy for access to specific facility locations (which are unavailable for future years). Unfortunately, data about stores offering healthy food were unavailable for this part of the evaluation. We used the same method described above to estimate jobs of each type accessible within a 45 minute trip by transit during the peak morning commute period, except that we split the analysis by job type rather than estimating access to all jobs. We also conducted the analysis for automobile access for a 45 minute trip to provide a point of comparison and to glean accessibility for those with access to a car, but we note that residents without access to vehicles don’t benefit from auto access.

To more closely examine the localized impact of the SCS in each community, we also examined the growth in educational, governmental, and health care jobs allocated to DUCs and low income urban communities in each KCOG SCS scenario and compared it to existing conditions.

**Existing Conditions:**

- To what extent are basic community resources available in DUCs and low income urban communities?

**Forecasting Question:**

- Will Kern’s SCS increase the availability of community resource to residents of disadvantaged unincorporated communities and low income urban communities?
Indicators

1. Number of places offering fresh food within DUCs and low income urban communities (existing conditions)
2. Number of government, health care, or educational jobs that can be accessed by transit or auto trips of 45 minutes or less during the peak morning commute period (existing conditions and forecasting)
3. Number of government, health care, or educational jobs that are located in each community (existing conditions and forecasting)

Geographic Boundaries, Data Sources and Limitations in Available Data

The forecasted analyses of active transportation and accessibility both rely directly on travel demand model outputs, so are limited by the precision and accuracy of those models. Travel demand models are complex and data intensive, and it takes time to update them to reflect the contemporary challenges addressed under SB375. Performing an independent verification of the model precision and accuracy in different areas and for different types of trips is beyond the scope of this work; however, where known or suspected issues arise we note it in our discussion.

VIII. Assessment of Existing Conditions and SCS Outcomes

Priority 1 Objective 1: Access to Public Transportation in Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities and Low Income Urban Neighborhoods

Indicator: Location of transit stops serving target areas (existing and forecasting conditions)

The table below shows the share of the population within ¼ and ½ mile of bus stops within each target area. Additionally, the map below shows the location of transit stops in the target areas. A substantial share of the population lives close to bus stops in Arvin, Lamont, and Weedpatch while Greenfield has more moderate shares. While the figure below indicates close proximity to bus stops this does indicate frequency, reliability and affordability. Residents from these neighborhoods have identified the need for more frequent transit service to better meet their needs.
Figure 6: Population within $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{3}$ mile of Bus Stop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Blocks</th>
<th>Pop (2010)</th>
<th>Population within 1/4 mi of bus stop from ppl/parc</th>
<th>% population within 1/4 mi of bus stop</th>
<th>Population within 1/2 mi of bus stop from ppl/parc</th>
<th>% population within 1/2 mi of bus stop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arvin</td>
<td>CDP</td>
<td>19,30</td>
<td>18,028</td>
<td>93.4%</td>
<td>19,270</td>
<td>99.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>CDP</td>
<td>3,991</td>
<td>948</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>3,073</td>
<td>77.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamont</td>
<td>CDP</td>
<td>15,12</td>
<td>9,085</td>
<td>60.1%</td>
<td>13,532</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weedpatch</td>
<td>CDP</td>
<td>2,658</td>
<td>2,029</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
<td>2,586</td>
<td>97.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: PolicyLink, 2013

Figure 7: Location of Transit Stops in Study Communities


The location of transit stops in the travel demand model under 2013 current conditions and in 2040 for each Scenario is shown in maps in Appendix A of the Health Impact Assessment Results: Accessibility under Kern COG SCS Scenarios (Accessibility Analysis, Appendix C). Maps do not include the No Project Scenario for which transit stop data was unavailable at the time of
writing. From those maps, the 2040 Old Plan Scenario adds a substantial number of transit stops, in particular in and around Bakersfield (including Greenfield). In 2040 the Preferred Plan, Intensified, 33% Housing Mix, and 100% Infill Scenarios all have the same transit stops, which are more numerous than 2013 conditions. When compared to the Old Plan Scenario, the transit stops in these four Scenarios are distributed over a larger area (and with less density) in the Bakersfield area. Stop locations in Lamont, Weedpatch and Arvin appear unchanged from 2013 to any of the 2040 Scenarios.

Indicator: Number of jobs that can be accessed by transit trips of 45 minutes or less during the peak morning commute period (existing conditions and forecasting)

Our evaluation of transit accessibility, which uses the number of jobs accessible by transit within 15, 30, and 45 minutes, provides an indication of the effects of both changes in transit service and changes in the location of destinations. The table below shows transit access for each of the analysis areas and for the region as a whole, for 2013, 2040 No Project Scenarios, and the Old Plan, Plan, Intensified, 33% Housing Mix, and 100% Infill Scenarios in 2040. Transit access values are represented as the number of jobs accessible within 15, 30, and 45 minutes and are estimated at the TAZ level. Because each area includes more than one TAZ, the median and range (minimum to maximum values) are shown.

From the table, the median values in Arvin, Lamont, and Weedpatch are zero (indicating no transit access to jobs) for trips of 15, 30, and 45 minutes. However, a subset of these areas do have access to jobs (as indicated by the maximum values in the range.) The maximum is non-zero in Arvin in the 45 minute range (indicating some areas with transit access to jobs) for the Plan, Intensified, 33% Housing Mix, and 100% Infill Scenarios. Lamont and Weedpatch experience non-zero maximums (some areas with transit access to jobs) within 30 and 45 minutes. Lamont experiences its highest maximum values in the Plan, Intensified, 33% Housing Mix, and 100% Infill, while Weedpatch experiences its highest maximum values in the Plan, Intensified, and 33% Housing Mix Scenarios.

In contrast to Arvin, Lamont, and Weedpatch, the median number of jobs accessible by transit in Greenfield is non-zero for all Scenarios in the 30 and 45-minute timeframe. The Greenfield medians are greatest in the Plan, Intensified, 33% Housing Mix, and 100% Infill Scenarios, indicating that there is moderate transit access to jobs in those Scenarios, in particular within a 45 minute timeframe.
### Transit Access (jobs accessibility for 15, 30, and 45 minute trips)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Travel Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>2018 Current Conditions</th>
<th>2040</th>
<th>2040</th>
<th>2040</th>
<th>2040</th>
<th>2040</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No Project</td>
<td>Old Plan</td>
<td>Preferred Plan</td>
<td>Intensified</td>
<td>33% Housing Mix</td>
<td>100% Infill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 min</td>
<td>Arvin</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lamont</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weedpatch</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Region</td>
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<td>0 [0 - 6.745]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 9.984]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 24.224]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 31.551]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 32.939]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 min</td>
<td>Arvin</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lamont</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weedpatch</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>0 [0 - 35.529]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 70.291]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 83.070]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 144.863]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 143.640]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 149.657]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 min</td>
<td>Arvin</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lamont</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 0]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weedpatch</td>
<td>0 [0 - 45]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 2,267]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 143.513]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 217.453]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 229.293]</td>
<td>0 [0 - 236.847]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* MinMax and range (min to max) of 140 Travel Analysis Zones (TAZ, the unit of analysis modeled) are shown for each area.

Source: Estimated by the CRC using travel model data provided by KCOG. See Accessibility Analysis, Appendix C for detail

Transit access estimates can also be visualized using maps of region. Appendix B of the Accessibility Analysis includes seven maps of transit accessibility (measured as jobs available within 45 minutes) in Kern County, including 2013 current conditions and the six 2040 Scenarios. From these maps we see that under current conditions the greatest transit access occurs in Bakersfield, with some access in other communities in the area (including Greenfield, Lamont, Weedpatch, Oildale, Taft, Tehachapi, McFarland, and a few other patches.) Transit access increases in the 2040 No Project scenario, primarily in and around Bakersfield. Under the Old Plan, transit access increases a bit more than the No Project Scenario, encompassing a slightly greater range of Bakersfield, but reduced transit access in Lamont and Weedpatch. Under the Preferred Plan, transit access increases in patches across Bakersfield and the surrounding areas, leaving some gaps in the center but broadening the expanse of transit access.

Greenfield fares much better than under the Old Plan, and Lamont, Weedpatch, and Arvin have a small amount of transit access (a small improvement over the Old Plan). Transit access under the 33% Housing Mix and the 100% Infill Scenarios is similar to the Preferred Plan, although in the 100% Infill Scenario, central Bakersfield experiences higher levels of access. Note that the small differences observed in the 33% Housing Mix and 100% Infill Scenarios are because these Scenarios do not vary from the Preferred Plan in terms of the transit or job projections, but they likely increase the share of the population with better transit access (which is not reflected in our measurement) due to the shift in location of housing.

**Indicator: Number of jobs that are located in each community (existing conditions and forecasting)**

In this section we look at the projected growth in Kern County under each SCS scenario. Greater job growth within a community indicates more easy access to jobs and services in a community (e.g. some of these jobs and services may be accessed by walking or biking). Greater population growth (which is indicated by greater dwelling units) may indicate a future with a larger tax base (which brings a number of opportunities for community enhancement and economic development) and these may benefit a community if growth is desired and if appropriate protections are in place to prevent displacement of existing residents. Although not all jobs are available to all residents, the ratio of jobs per dwelling unit provides an indication of the accessibility of work opportunities. Note that this analysis presents jobs/housing ratios at the community level; interpretation is limited because this is a very small spatial...
scale, and it does not include jobs and housing in the area just outside of a community. However, for isolated communities with poor transit service, a community level analysis still provides important insights about job access of residents without access to vehicles.

Currently, the countywide average value is 1.2 jobs per dwelling unit. This value provides an indication of jobs-housing balance for this region (although some residents may commute outside of the county for work and some workers may commute from outside the county, so while this value provides a baseline value, true balance may differ.) Lower values for jobs per dwelling unit in a community indicate that residents are more likely to need to travel outside of the community to get to work. For residents without vehicle access or access to high quality transit, it can be difficult to travel outside of the community for work.

The table below summarizes the land use characteristics of each SCS scenario, and illustrates how each scenario performs, both in absolute and relative terms, with respect to growth generally and with respect to jobs housing balance. The green and red shading indicate deviations from the 2040 No Project (and Old Plan) land use values for each of the other 2040 scenario (green indicates more dwelling units or jobs than the No Project Scenario, while red indicates fewer dwelling units or jobs). The dwelling unit and job projections provide an indication of growth directed to each area, and the jobs per dwelling unit for each study area provides an indication of the balance of jobs and housing in each study area. The jobs per dwelling unit ratio relates to residents’ access to jobs and the need for traveling long distances to get to work. In small areas such as the target areas, the jobs within the area are an indication of jobs (and goods, services, etc) that some residents may be able to access by walking or biking.

From the table we see that for the four primary scenarios – Plan, Intensified, 33% Housing Mix, 100% Infill – Arvin experiences less growth in dwelling units and jobs than the No Project Scenario (and the Old Plan Scenario). Compared with current conditions, Arvin’s population grows while employment changes only slightly in each of the four aforementioned scenarios. Currently, Arvin’s jobs/dwelling unit ratio is much lower than the County average, and will fall further under the Plan, Intensified, 33% Housing Mix, and 100% Infill Scenarios, although it would rise under the No Project (and Old Plan) Scenario. In summary, Arvin’s jobs housing balance worsens under each of the four primary proposed scenarios.

In contrast, Greenfield is slated for far more dwelling units and slightly more jobs under the four primary Project Scenarios than the No Project (and Old Plan) Scenario. When compared with current conditions, all 2040 Scenarios show substantial growth in dwelling units and only slight changes in job growth in Greenfield. Greenfield currently experiences a low jobs/dwelling unit ratio, and that ratio falls further under all 2040 Scenarios. That is to say, in Greenfield, jobs housing balance worsens under any scenario.

In Lamont, changes in dwelling units in the alternative scenarios as compared with the No Project Scenario are very slight, with slight decreases under all 2040 Project Scenarios except for 100% Infill which shows slight increases. These changes are modest when compared with current conditions, reflecting slight contraction in growth in the No Project/Old Plan, Plan, Intensified, and 33% Housing Mix Scenarios, and slight increased growth in the 100% Infill Scenario. Employment opportunities in Lamont is much higher than current conditions in the No Project (and Old Plan) Scenario, but reflects only slight
increases from current conditions in the Plan, Intensified, 33% Housing Mix, and 100% Infill Scenarios. Similarly, the jobs/dwelling unit ratio is lower than the County average under current conditions and all 2040 Scenarios; the No Project/old Plan Scenario reflects the greatest improvement in jobs housing balance over current conditions while still falling short of the County average.

In all 2040 Scenarios, the number of dwelling units in Weedpatch is forecast to drop slightly (and nearly evenly) when compared to current conditions, while the number of jobs raise slightly (and evenly) in all 2040 Scenarios except for 100% Infill which shows a slight drop from current conditions. The ratio of jobs / dwelling units is slightly higher than current conditions in all 2040 Scenarios, but in each case fails to reach levels near the County average.

Overall, while the county experiences dramatic growth in dwelling units and jobs, growth in Lamont and Weedpatch is very slight in the 2040 Plan, Intensified, 33% Housing Mix, and 100% Infill Scenarios. Greenfield experiences substantial growth in dwelling units, while Arvin experiences moderate growth in dwelling units in those primary proposed Scenarios. All study communities experience only slight changes in jobs in the 2040 Scenarios. This is problematic for isolated communities with poor transit access that currently experience a ratio of jobs to dwelling unit that is far lower than the rest of the County, indicating that residents must travel elsewhere to get to work. Note that the variation in dwelling units and jobs projected in the study communities does not vary much among the 2040 Plan, Intensified, 33% Housing Mix, and 100% Infill Scenarios Project Scenarios.

Figure 9: Land Use Characteristics of Each SCS Scenario

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2013 Current Conditions</th>
<th>2040 Scenarios</th>
<th>33 % Housing Mix</th>
<th>100% Infill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Project / Old Plan</td>
<td>Plan</td>
<td>Intensified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dwelling units</strong></td>
<td>4,624</td>
<td>5,821</td>
<td>5,784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arvin</td>
<td>1,697</td>
<td>2,921</td>
<td>4,418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>3,609</td>
<td>3,428</td>
<td>3,426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamont</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weedpatch</td>
<td>262,913</td>
<td>403,096</td>
<td>442,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The rest of Kern County</td>
<td>1,701</td>
<td>8,695</td>
<td>1,708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment (all jobs)</strong></td>
<td>578</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arvin</td>
<td>1,884</td>
<td>1,991</td>
<td>1,881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamont</td>
<td>320,029</td>
<td>483,445</td>
<td>495,961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weedpatch</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The rest of Kern County</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jobs per dwelling unit</strong></td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arvin</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Calculated by the CRC using scenario land use assumptions provided by KCOCG. See Accessibility Analysis, Appendix C for details.
Priority 2 Objective 1: Access to Basic Resources in Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities and Low Income Urban Neighborhoods

Indicator: Number of residents living in close proximity to places offering fresh food within DUCs and low income urban communities (existing conditions)

The table below shows the share of the population within ¼ and ½ mile of grocery stores within each target area. A moderate share of the population lives close to grocery stores in the study communities.

Figure 10: Population within ¼ and ½ mile of Grocery Stores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geography</th>
<th>Population (2010)</th>
<th>Population within 1/4 mi of store</th>
<th>% population within 1/4 mi of store</th>
<th>Population within 1/2 mi of store</th>
<th>% population within 1/2 mi of store</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arvin CDP</td>
<td>19,304</td>
<td>2,767</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>8,027</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenfield CDP</td>
<td>3,991</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>1,493</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamont CDP</td>
<td>15,120</td>
<td>2,290</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>5,424</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weedpatch CDP</td>
<td>2,658</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Indicator: Number of government, health care, or educational jobs that can be accessed by transit or auto trips of 45 minutes or less during the peak morning commute period (existing conditions and forecasting)

Medical services

Estimates of access to medical services can be visualized using maps of the region. Appendix C of Accessibility Analysis includes seven maps showing transit access to services in Kern County in the 2013 baseline and the 2040 Scenarios. Appendix D of the Accessibility Analysis shows seven maps of the same, but using auto access to services (and using a slightly different scale).

Looking at transit access to medical services, the trends for medical jobs look the same as the trends for all jobs. Under current conditions, the greatest transit access occurs in Bakersfield, with some access in surrounding communities in the area (including Greenfield, Lamont, and Weedpatch). Transit access increases in the 2040 No Project scenario, primarily in and around Bakersfield. Under the Old Plan, transit access increases a bit more than the No Project Scenario, encompassing a slightly greater range within Bakersfield, but reduced transit access in Lamont and Weedpatch. Under the Preferred Plan, transit access increases in patches across Bakersfield and the surrounding areas, leaving some gaps in the center of Bakersfield but broadening the expanse of transit access. Greenfield fares much better than under the Old Plan, and Lamont, Weedpatch, and Arvin have a small amount of increased transit access (a small improvement over the Old Plan). Transit access under the 33% Housing Mix and the 100% Infill Scenarios is similar to the Preferred Plan, although in the 100% Infill Scenario, central Bakersfield experiences higher levels of access.
Looking at auto access to medical services, we see that access is currently centered on Bakersfield and areas to the northeast and includes Greenfield. In all 2040 Scenarios, auto access to medical services increases in and around Bakersfield, including for all four study communities. Note that the scale shown in the auto maps is greater than the scale shown in the transit maps, reflecting the greater access to services by car.

*Educational services*

Estimates of access to educational services can be visualized using maps of the region. Appendix E of Accessibility Analysis includes seven maps showing transit access to services in Kern County in the 2013 baseline and the 2040 Scenarios. Appendix F of the Accessibility Analysis shows seven maps of the same, but using auto access to services.

Looking at transit access to educational services, the trends look the same as for all jobs and medical services. Under current conditions, the greatest transit access occurs in Bakersfield, with some access in surrounding communities in the area (including Greenfield, Lamont, and Weedpatch). Transit access increases in the 2040 No Project scenario, primarily in and around Bakersfield. Under the Old Plan, transit access increases a bit more than the No Project Scenario, encompassing a slightly greater range of Bakersfield, but reduced transit access in Lamont and Weedpatch. Under the Preferred Plan, transit access increases in patches across Bakersfield and the surrounding areas, leaving some gaps in the center but broadening the expanse of transit access. Greenfield fares much better than under the Old Plan, and Lamont, Weedpatch, and Arvin have a small amount of transit access (a small improvement over the Old Plan). Transit access under the 33% Housing Mix and the 100% Infill Scenarios is similar to the Preferred Plan, although in the 100% Infill Scenario, central Bakersfield experiences higher levels of access.

Looking at auto access to educational services, we see that access is currently centered on Bakersfield and areas to the northeast and includes Greenfield. In all 2040 Scenarios, auto access to educational services increases in and around Bakersfield, including for all four study communities. Note that the scale shown in the auto maps is greater than the scale shown in the transit maps, reflecting the greater access to services by car.

*Government services*

Estimates of access to government services can be visualized using maps of the region. Appendix G of the Accessibility Analysis includes seven maps showing transit access to services in Kern County in the 2013 baseline and the 2040 Scenarios. Appendix H of the Accessibility Analysis shows seven maps of the same, but using auto access to services.

Looking at transit access to government services, the trends look very similar as for all jobs and medical services. Under current conditions the greatest transit access occurs in Bakersfield, with some access in surrounding communities in the area (including Greenfield and Lamont but not Weedpatch). Transit access increases in the 2040 No Project scenario, primarily in and around Bakersfield. Under the Old Plan, transit access increases a bit more than the No Project Scenario, encompassing a slightly greater
range of Bakersfield, but reduced transit access in Lamont and Weedpatch. Under the Preferred Plan, transit access increases in patches across Bakersfield and the surrounding areas, leaving some gaps in the center but broadening the expanse of transit access. Greenfield fares much better than under the Old Plan, and Lamont, Weedpatch, and Arvin have a small amount of transit access (a small improvement over the Old Plan). Transit access under the 33% Housing Mix and the 100% Infill Scenarios is similar to the Preferred Plan, although in the 100% Infill Scenario, central Bakersfield experiences higher levels of access.

Looking at auto access to government services, we see that access is currently centered on Bakersfield and areas to the northeast. In all 2040 Scenarios, auto access to educational services across the region decreases while areas of elevated access become more central (rather than oriented to the northeast) and access improves in Lamont, Weedpatch, and Arvin. Note that the scale shown in the auto maps is greater than the scale shown in the transit maps, reflecting the greater access to services by car. Furthermore, the scale for auto access to government services is greater than for auto access to educational and medical services, reflecting the greater access to government services by car in 2013 (by 2040 values drop to the scale used for educational and medical services.)

**Indicator: Number of government, health care, or educational jobs that are located in each community (existing conditions and forecasting)**

In the table below we examine the projections of job classifications for job types that are related to access to services: medical, educational, and government. These job estimates may be the best proxy for access to amenities and services by foot or bike in the study communities. In terms of medical, educational, and government services located in the study communities, we see from the table below that government and medical jobs are expected to grow similarly (and substantially) in the study communities across all 2040 Scenarios, with the exception of Arvin’s No Project levels, which are greater. Educational jobs are also projected to grow similarly across all 2040 Scenarios, with more modest growth in Greenfield and Weedpatch than in the other study areas.

Overall, educational services are expected to increase moderately in all study areas, while government and medical services will increase greatly in all study communities. These forecasts are uniform across the Plan, Intensified, 33% Housing Mix, and 100% Infill Scenarios. Greater levels of these jobs in each study community will likely increase residents’ access to these services by foot or bike.

*Figure 11: Job Classification for Job Types Related to Access to Service*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013 Current Conditions</th>
<th>2040 Scenarios</th>
<th>33 % Housing Mix</th>
<th>100% Infill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Government Jobs</td>
<td>Old Plan</td>
<td>Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arvin</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamont</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weedpatch</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The rest of Kern County</td>
<td>33,896</td>
<td>38,714</td>
<td>38,924</td>
<td>38,907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medical Jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arvin</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>1,438</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamont</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weedpatch</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The rest of Kern County</td>
<td>15,811</td>
<td>32,153</td>
<td>33,206</td>
<td>33,224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educational Jobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arvin</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenfield</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamont</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weedpatch</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The rest of Kern County</td>
<td>11109</td>
<td>38,495</td>
<td>38,301</td>
<td>38,270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Calculated by the CRC using scenario land use assumptions provided by KCOG. See Accessibility Analysis, Appendix C for details.

**Accessibility Summary and Discussion**

We conducted our analysis of transit access and access to services in several parts. Note that changes in transit access to services in 2040 (when compared to 2013) is a function of changes in transit service and changes in land use (which may affect traffic and therefore transit travel times) and the locations of jobs in 2040.

We first examined the location of transit stops in 2013 and in the 2040 Scenarios, finding that transit increases in 2040 Scenarios over the present, but the 2040 Plan, Intensified, 33% Housing Mix, and 100% Infill Scenarios provide less density of transit stops but serve locations over a larger area.

We then evaluated transit access and transit and auto access to services using travel model outputs to estimate the number of jobs within 45 minutes of residents. Overall, transit access and transit and auto access to services is greatest in Bakersfield and its immediate surroundings, often including Greenfield. Transit access to jobs and services is greater for much of the region (and the four study areas) in the Preferred, Intensified, 33% Housing, and 100% Infill Scenarios, although variation in transit access to jobs and services between those scenarios is limited. Auto access to services is centered around Bakersfield in the 2040 Scenarios, and access to government services decreases across the region in 2040. Variation in auto access to services between 2040 Scenarios is limited. Note that the scale of access to services for residents with a car is greater than that transit access to services across the region, especially in rural areas. However, for residents that do not have access to a car, transit access may be
the only option. Last, the 45 minute trip duration leads to a somewhat dramatic drop off in modeled auto access to services; a gravity model would provide a more nuanced result, however no gravity model is available for this region at this time.

Finally, we looked at jobs and services located within each study community (which provides an indication of bike/pedestrian access to jobs and services), finding that the 2040 Project Scenarios have similar outcomes, showing a lack of growth in dwelling units in Lamont and Weedpatch, while Greenfield and to some extent Arvin experience growth in dwelling units. At the same time, jobs do not change substantially in the 2040 Scenarios in the study communities, exacerbating the current lack of jobs (relative to housing) in all four study communities.

IX. Recommendations and Next Steps

In this section, we first summarize general land use and transportation planning concepts as they relate to the Kern County context as well as those drawn from the findings from this HIA. We then draw from those principles and findings to present recommendations related to KCOG activities that might be used to implement land use and planning principles in the regional planning context. Finally, we present two lessons learned from the HIA of the 2014 SCS/RTP process, which might inform future SCS/RTP processes in Kern County.

Land use and transportation planning concepts:

A number of resources provide land use and transportation planning principles, but few provide insights applicable to rural areas in particular. Kern COG and its member jurisdictions should consider and incorporate these concepts in regional and local land use planning process to improve the overall health and sustainability of small low income communities – such as those studied in this analysis. Livability principles are discussed in the context of rural communities in the 2011 Partnership for Sustainable Communities report, “Supporting Sustainable Rural Communities”

To summarize that discussion:

- Provide non-auto oriented transportation choices and community design. Providing bike, pedestrian, and transit facilities, and compact, mixed use communities can improve residents’ quality of life, access to resources and opportunities, and economic growth. Town centers are good locations for transit services that provide access to other cities and the rest of the region.

- Promote equitable, affordable housing in proximity to jobs, goods and services. Communities with a variety of housing options (include single family and multifamily units at a range of price points) in locations that are proximate to jobs, businesses, and services, can fill residents’ needs for all life phases and reduce residents’ housing and transportation costs.

- Foster economic opportunities. Communities need strong employment opportunities to thrive. Rural communities have unique economic opportunities that may stem from agricultural, energy production, recreational, or other resources. Community specific planning and investment can enhance economic competitiveness of rural communities and small towns.
- **Enhance existing communities.** Conserving working and natural lands and channeling development in small towns should enhance communities without eroding the landscape, e.g. by investing in existing main streets in rural communities or improving water and wastewater systems outside of towns.

- **Leverage Federal opportunities.** Federal investments and policies can help support communities’ efforts to achieve economic, community environmental, housing, and transportation goals. Projects or plans that coordinate or address multiple objectives can bring better outcomes to communities.

- **Value each community.** Rural communities and towns have unique characteristics, resources, and histories. Thoughtful plans and projects that value this character can strengthen communities while helping to revitalize them.

In addition to the rural planning concepts reviewed above, we draw from the results of this HIA to highlight two planning principles that are particularly relevant to the SCS process in Kern County:

- **Climate, health, and equity objectives are interrelated.** Increasing transit, walking, and biking mode shares and increasing access to jobs and services in communities across the region can increase active travel, reduce VMT and improve health and quality of life. Investments in transit (more bus service, vanpools, etc.) and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements can increase those mode shares. Similarly, balancing growth in affordable housing, employment, and services in communities can improve access to economic opportunities and resources, improving health and quality of life. Low income urban communities and unincorporated communities often have a greater need for these improvements but lack the resources needed to plan or build them.

- **Invest in existing communities.** This principle is also mentioned in the Partnership for Sustainable Communities report summarized above, but we reiterate it because the HIA results indicate that it is particularly important in the Kern County RTP/SCS planning context. Existing communities can be strengthened with thoughtful channeling of transportation investments, planning efforts, and balanced growth in those communities. As described in "Smart Growth in Rural California: a working paper outlining A Land Use and Investment Plan For all California"xxxiv, SB 375’s emphasis on developing areas in proximity to urban centers and high frequency transit routes may make sense in an urban context, but it largely leaves existing rural communities out of regional growth plans. When paired with Greenfield development that planned for areas outside of existing communities, there is seemingly little future for existing communities. Instead of focusing growth exclusively on existing urban centers and new suburban or exurban areas, channeling growth into existing urban and rural communities can improve environmental, health, and economic outcomes across the region.

**Recommendations: Implementation in the Kern COG Regional Planning Context**

In light of the principles highlighted by Partnership for Sustainable Communities and the HIA analysis (described above), in this section we present specific recommendations to be incorporated in Kern County planning processes. While the RTP planning process centers on regional planning led by the MPO, in reality many funding streams may be determined by other agencies or in other venues that are outside of the MPO’s control. Similarly, the land use designations that are the focus of the SCS
ultimately fall under the authority of city and county. However, in many cases the MPO plays an important role in analyzing the outcomes of potential projects and plans and informing the community about those outcomes, potentially shifting the conversation about those projects and plans in relevant venues. While we recognize that Kern COG does not have land use authority, it does have complete control over an 11 billion dollar budget that can be used to incentivize land use planning that supports investments in existing communities.

1. **Support efforts to fund investments and planning in rural communities:**

While the lack of flexibility of funding streams may appear to be a potential challenge to channeling funding to specific areas or projects, Local governments (cities, counties, or MPOs) with identified planning needs or project proposal in rural areas may seek funding from state, federal, and NGO sources. The following three reports provide comprehensive lists of programs that provide support for sustainable and healthy community plans and projects:

- The 2011 report “Supporting Sustainable Rural Communities” describes a number of sources of Federal programs and funds available to rural communities through USDA, HUD, DOT, and EPA.

- A 2012 report issued by US DOT provides a list of Federal programs and funding sources available to communities wishing to engage in healthy transportation planning (including those provided by US DOT, US DOT partners, the US Department of Health and Human Services, the US Department of the Interior, USDA, USEPA, and several others).

- The Local Government Commission’s report also lists a number of potential programs and funds, that can be used to implement healthy communities in the San Joaquin Valley, including Safe Routes to Schools, FHWA funding sources, Caltrans funds, California Department of Public Health funds, and foundation funds (e.g. from the California Endowment and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation).

Emerging state funding programs, such as the Active Transportation Program and funding through the cap-and-trade program also provide opportunities for increased investment in low income, rural communities. Kern COG and its member jurisdictions should actively pursue state level funding sources to help close infrastructure and housing gaps in low income areas.

Finally, the Kern COG Board of Directors has approved the existence of a planning and technical assistance program to support small cities and communities to engage in smart growth planning efforts but has yet to identify and commit secured revenue to support such a program. While Kern COG allocates funding from a number of constrained regional, state and federal sources, there are flexible sources of funding that can be used to support this program. This would allow small cities and small low income communities –such as those in this study – to draw much needed funding to support healthy growth. In addition, the capacity and resources of small cities, towns, and unincorporated communities wishing to apply for such funds is often limited. KCOCG’s expertise and knowledge might be a powerful means to assist smaller communities in harnessing these funds, either through this program or through technical assistance for community planners.
2. **Explore the impact of different transportation investments:**

The SCS/RTP process provides a unique opportunity to coordinate land use and transportation plans across the region. While the SCS component provides a new avenue to tie land use to transportation, the RTP continues to provide a powerful opportunity to thoughtfully plan regional transportation investments. A crucial part of the SCS/RTP process is evaluating the outcomes of various land use and transportation planning strategies in order to inform the selection of a preferred land use and transportation scenario and the list of transportation projects that will be funded.

The Kern SCS/RTP scenarios do vary in terms of the transportation projects included (and the timing of those projects). However, the transit outcomes in the study areas do not appear to vary much by scenario. This limits the ability of regional partners and community members to understand the impacts of varying the transportation plans that might be adopted, and it limits differences between scenario outcomes in those areas.

While it may be too late to alter the transportation projects included in each scenario for the 2014 RTP, we recommend that future SCS/RTP efforts include transit projects that target communities that have particularly elevated transit needs. The same is likely true of bicycle and pedestrian projects; however they were not included in this analysis.

3. **Explore scenarios that balance jobs and housing:**

In order to address the environmental and health impacts of land use and transportation plans in Kern County, it is important to explore a full range of land use scenarios. In the analysis of the health impacts of accessibility under each KCOG SCS scenario, we found little variation in the job growth in study communities in each 2040 scenario, and the Project scenarios did not improve the current mismatch in jobs and housing in study communities.

A balance of housing and employment and services in each community can lead to improved access to jobs and services and reduced vehicle travel. We recommend that Kern COG alter the transportation and land use plan included in each scenario for the 2014 RTP to include a range of land use scenarios with at least some aimed at achieving a greater degree of jobs housing balance in the region (and in particular in areas with a substantial imbalance), which has the potential to greatly increase residents' health. Evaluations of a wider range of scenarios will provide more information to decision makers and community members working to achieve substantial quality of life improvements in the region.

4. **Adopt a set of policies that prioritize existing communities first.**

Kern County residents, those residing in study communities and in other neighborhoods, report experiences of historic neglect and participated in the many public workshops held throughout this process to have their voices heard. Community residents have repeatedly asked for a range of affordable housing choices, real transit and active transportation options, access to basic resources and more compact development. We recommend that Kern COG incorporate the following policies in the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan to address historic need:
1) Create a new classification of transit ready areas (TRA). As this study indicates the jobs/housing balance growth in small communities such as Arvin, Lamont and Weedpatch decreases. SB 375 carries an inherent bias towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions by allocating housing and employment growth in heavily urbanized areas. This creates a fundamental problem for small low income communities that are in dire need of investment. If these communities are left out of projected housing and employment growth patterns, the possibility for future funding from local, regional and state funding sources for such projects will be severely restricted pushing these areas even further behind. TRA’s will be eligible to receive planning and financial assistance which will improve communities by designing more compact, less car dependent projects.

2) Incorporate a policy that RTP investments must first serve the needs of existing neighborhoods and communities before any discretionary funding is used to support and/or serve new town development. Funding should first be spent in neighborhoods and communities with the highest demonstrated needs. To identify needs, Kern COG should catalogue existing conditions (transit service, opportunities for walking and biking, housing quantity and quality, and key demographic indicators) and develop an action plan to meet those needs. Kern COG should work with community stakeholders to identify specific action steps to implement this policy.

3) The RTP should front load walking, biking, and transit projects to provide real transportation choices to Kern County residents. This will reduce vehicle miles traveled, vehicle pollution, and improve health outcomes for all communities.

Adding these policies to the Draft RTP or to any of the alternatives included in the Draft EIR will ensure that Kern COG meets is SB 375 targets, sets a foundation for improving existing communities in Kern County, and provides Kern County residents with the type of growth and development they have been requesting for years.

X. Conclusion

We recognize and commend the tremendous amount of effort of Kern COG staff to develop the regions first SCS. This process has proven to be a challenging, yet exciting, experience that we have all learned from. We hope to partner with KCOG, its member jurisdictions, community residents, community partners and decision makers to both implement this plan and prepare for its next iteration in 2018. Our hope is to work with KCOG staff and decision makers to further improve the draft RTP to ensure that the needs of our most vulnerable communities are adequately met. We will continue to meet with community residents and decision makers during this public review period and leading up to the June 26, 2014 vote to adopt the final plan. Land use and transportation planning are inextricably tied to community health outcomes and our goal is to help improve short and long term planning documents to build a healthy and sustainable Kern region.
1 California Government Code Section 1(a)
2 California Government Code Section 1(a)
3 California Government Code Section 65080 et seq
4 American Lung Association – Public Health Crossroads: Sustainable Growth for Healthier Fresno Neighborhoods
5 Alan Berube and Bruce Katz, "Katrina’s Window: Confronting Concentrated Poverty Across America,”
   Washington: The Brookings Institution, October 2005
6 The Planning Center DC&E, 2012
7 KCOG Draft RTP 2014
8 WHO
9 ALAC – Public Health Crossroads –Sustainable Growth for Healthier Kern Neighborhoods
10 Kern COG Draft 2014 RTP


http://www.kerncog.org/kern-cog-board-of-directors
http://www.kerncog.org/climate-change
http://www.kerncog.org/transportation-modeling-committee
http://www.kerncog.org/regional-planning-advisory-committee

http://www.directions2050.com/images/results/Directions%20to%202050_Community%20Outreach%20Results_Executive%20Summary_12.31.13_FINAL.pdf

Alex Karner and Jonathan London (in press). Rural communities and transportation equity in California’s San Joaquin Valley. Transportation Research Record.


Originally the analysis included 15 and 30 minute transit accessibilities, but for the purposes of simplifying comparisons, capturing a reasonable one-way travel time, and capturing variation for the analysis areas, the 45 minute distance is most suitable and is the focus of this analysis (although some data are reported at 15 and 30 minute intervals). A longer transit commute time would capture more jobs and potentially more variation, but a transit commute time that is too long would fail to indicate reasonable accessibility. A spot check of the model reveals that modeled transit times from Riverdale to downtown Fresno are approximately 90 minutes, however using 90 minutes as a one-way travel time does not represent an ease of access, so this travel time is not used. We did not estimate accessibility using a gravity model (which uses a calibrated algorithm to discount access at increasingly long travel times to provide one metric for access at various trip durations), as region-specific calibrated coefficients would be needed, and one is not known to have been previously specified for the Fresno COG travel model (email. comm., 2/19/2014, Kai Han).

Where a target area contains more than one TAZ, TAZ level data are aggregated.


The model outputs provide the locations of nine job categories: industrial, retail, office, educational, medical, services, food, government, and other. All job types listed represent access to economic opportunities. However in terms of access to resources and services, some of these job types have explicit value (e.g. medical and educational facilities clearly fill a need), while others have value that is obscured by the aggregate nature of the data (‘retail’ indicates grocery stores as well all other retail opportunities), and still others may indicate potential disbenefits (e.g.
industrial facilities that are in very close proximity may correlate to undesirable environmental exposures, even while they may provide economic opportunities. We focus medical, educational, and government jobs but can provide information about other job categories upon request. See Appendix A for a full description of what each job category includes.

The mapped auto accessibilities in 2013 are somewhat counterintuitive in light of the other auto accessibility maps (for 2040 Scenarios), seeming overly skewed to the northeast. We rechecked our data processing steps and were unable to find an error in our processing of travel demand outputs provided by Kern COG. If the maps reflect actual auto accessibilities, it may be that the northeast side of town is currently less congested or has more jobs than it will in future years (relative to the rest of the areas around Bakersfield).

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For example, the role of MPOs in equitable transportation planning is discussed in Lowe, Kate. “Bypassing Equity? Transit Investment and Regional Transportation Planning.” Journal of Planning Education and Research 2014 34: 30


Available at http://www.lgc.org/healthy-communities-design-toolkit.
March 18, 2017

Ryan Alsop
County Administrative Officer
County of Kern
1115 Truxtun Avenue, Fifth Floor
Bakersfield, CA. 93301

Dear Mr. Alsop:

The Kern-Kaweah Chapter (Buena Vista Group) of the Sierra Club greatly appreciates your involvement in the issues surrounding the proposed parking fee at Hart Park. We value your time meeting with the Hart Park Ad Hoc Working Group on February 16--after the Kern County Board of Supervisors agreed to postpone action on a proposed fee.

We take this opportunity to review issues of most concern to us:

1. Preserving public access to this superb natural gem--a jewel with year-round access to the Kern River.

2. Public/user input concerning the future of Hart Park. We have several ideas regarding this topic:

   - First, conduct a survey of park users to determine how often they visit the park and what ideas and suggestions they have following their visit. It may be useful to know whether Hart Park users frequent other Kern County-owned leisure and recreational facilities--such as tennis courts and the three public golf courses. Please note that there was extensive survey work conducted by the County Administrative Office in 2016 regarding the future of Kern County libraries.

   - Second, as community meetings about Hart Park issues are scheduled, we suggest that there be specific outreach to the Latino community. We suggest community engagement via Spanish language television, radio, the newspapers El Popular and So Kern Sol, and church bulletins that reach a broad and diverse population of potential park users.

   - Third, we would suggest one of your planned community meetings be scheduled in conjunction with the East Bakersfield Senior Center Congregate Nutrition Program. This would engage long-time residents and offer them an opportunity to be a part of this process.
3. Trash bins. As previously noted, there are proportionally more trash bins in the nearby Kern River Campground and the park adjacent to Ming Lake than at Hart Park. People use trash bins—when they are available. How are trash bins allocated to parks? (An aside: when visiting the park this past Monday some trash bins were overflowing and it appeared as if raccoons or other animals had spread trash around a couple of the bins.)

4. Collaborative Efforts. We hope to generate additional comments and ideas to improve Hart Park. A partial list of ideas already "on the table" include your suggestion of a bond issue for capital improvements (our thanks for raising this possibility), re-instituting concessions, the development of “Friends of Hart Park” or Hart Park Foundation, seeking public-private partnerships/sponsorships for various capital improvements, and/or a collaboration with CALM for programs or events.

It would also be helpful to have a detailed operational budget from which to work since the cost of maintaining Hart Park is unclear at this point.

Again, we appreciate your willingness to engage in the many issues related to the future of Hart Park. And, we look forward to a continuing dialogue. I can be reached at (661) 322-4891.

Sincerely,

Margie Bell, Chair
Buena Vista Group
Kern-Kaweah Chapter, Sierra Club

cc: Kern County Board of Supervisors
    Clerk of the Board, Kern County Board of Supervisors
    Hart Park Ad Hoc Working Group
March 23, 2017

Ms. Lorelei H. Oviatt
AICP, Director
2700 “M” Street, Suite 100
Bakersfield, CA 93301-2323

Re: Comment Letter in response to the General Plan Update Workshop #3 Staff Report – Land Use, Circulation, Open Space, and Conservation Element

Thank you for the opportunity to submit recommendations to Kern’s County General Plan Update staff report (“Draft,” “staff report”). Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability is a nonprofit working with some of the most impacted disadvantaged communities in the Central and Coachella Valleys. Our goal is to eradicate injustices predominantly seen in these neglected communities that are impeding residents from having an equally safe and healthy lifestyle. In preparing these recommendations, we drew from our knowledge and experience gained through direct collaboration with residents.

We would like to acknowledge Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department’s efforts to incorporate community workshops. We hope to continue this partnership as the General Plan Update develops, and during the Environmental Impact Report and implementation phases as well.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element included in the February General Plan Update must comply with the requirements of SB1000 (Government Code Section 65302(h)(1)) which require the County to analyze the environmental justice issues impacting disadvantaged communities and adopt strategies to address those issues. As directed by the law, the County should use CalEnviroScreen tool, which is used to identify CA communities that are disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution. Environmental justice is the heart of the General Plan and reflects environmental conditions and population vulnerability to pollution.

Kern County is home to some of the most polluted communities throughout California. It is critical as we approach the Land Use element to incorporate strong zoning policy that will protect disadvantaged communities from health hazards due to oil refinery and dairies. Residents want land use policies and zoning regulations to promote infill and mix used development with affordable and reliable housing opportunities in existing communities.

We recommend that the General Plan include policies, programs, and specific action steps to advance the following aims:

1. Prevent development of new towns that drain County resources away from existing communities;
2. Prioritize road repair and maintenance for existing roads, especially in disadvantaged communities with the greatest need, before expansion into new areas;

3. Pursue all sources of funding for and prioritize investment and basic infrastructure improvements in disadvantaged unincorporated communities and established a system to track and share with the public infrastructure and service spending throughout the County.

4. Establish at least a one mile buffer zone between pesticide application and sensitive receptors such as schools and residences;

5. Establish a minimum mile and a half buffer zone between oil and gas extraction operations and sensitive receptors such as schools and residences and create a plan to address and mitigate health impacts of existing operations;

6. Apply air pollution standards to dairies that protect human health;

7. Extensive analysis to determine gaps in service that impair access to critical services and amenities (jobs, education, parks, grocery stores, etc.) and identify locations throughout Kern County for affordable housing may be located and low-income residents’ ability to live in any area of the county they choose

As your staff also looks into updating the map code designations, we request that these maps are map friendly, easy to read and understand for the general public.

**Circulation:**

As the main goal for the Circulation Element is to have a Transportation System Plan that identifies what is needed to accommodate existing and future development for Kern County, policy that prioritizes the development of efficient, safe and accessible transportation to serve disadvantaged unincorporated communities should be included. It is these communities that lack these services and access to basic amenities everyday. Since one of the main targets statewide is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we would like to see investment going into zero emission busses and explore alternative modes of transportation that are accessible to community. As well, to have efficient bus routes to and from Bakersfield and the unincorporated areas in Rexland Acres, Lamont, Weedpatch and the City of Arvin. Moreover, because there are state highways that lack appropriate and safe infrastructure such as sidewalks and safe crosswalks, there is a need to seek a solution that ensures county works with California Department of Transportation to address issues. State highways such as Lamont 184 and Union Ave are some of the state highways that lack infrastructure.

**Open Space:**

The element in regards to open space was not addressed in the staff report. We request that open space is explored in further detail in the April Staff Report. Some recommendations to include are:

1. Identify areas in need of park and open space
2. Create policies that allow for joint use agreements between communities and school to fill gaps in park services.
3. Seek funding to address lack of recreational facilities
4. Support disadvantaged unincorporated communities in obtaining park space, including by providing County support for operations, improvement, expansion and maintenance.
SB244

We appreciate the staff report’s commitment to implementing the goals and requirements established by Senate Bill SB 244. We would like to have a clear understanding of the approach you took to identify the 22 disadvantaged unincorporated communities. We also request clarification with respect to how the County plans to work with the cities, including Bakersfield, to ensure that surrounding unincorporated communities’ needs of infrastructure are analysed and develop policies and programs that ensures sufficient services as well as identify financial funding.

Overall, we look for comments to be considered. Draft plan should specify in a policy and corresponding implementation action that the report will incorporate quantifiable indicators that will allow the County to measure the success or lack thereof of the implementation of the Final Plan policies in achieving the Final Plan’s goals.

Thank you. We look forward to working with you.

Best,

Patricia Leal
Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability
Policy Advocate
Evidence for Sidewalks in the Woods Addition Area

Fernando Miranda
March 23, 2017
The dotted line denotes how far the water reaches during the rainy season. When we had the rainfall this past winter, the water well covered the Wood St.-Center St. intersection entirely.
This is what Center St. looks like within the rain fall we had at approximately 12:15 am this morning.

During wet seasons the water covered almost half of the street.
This area is a bus stop for the Vineland School District. With the intense rain fall we had this winter, this area got severely flooded and muddy.
A COMMUNITY VISION FOR REXLAND ACRES PARK

A report from the February 19, 2011 workshop on revitalizing Rexland Acres Park

March 2011

Prepared by:
Local Government Commission
Sierra Designs, Inc.
A Community Vision for Rexland Acres Park
March 2011

Acknowledgements

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Support provided by The California Endowment, the Greenfield Family Resource Center, and the County of Kern.

Views and opinions presented in this report do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of The California Endowment, the Greenfield Family Resource Center, or the County of Kern.
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A Community Vision for Rexland Acres Park

On February 19, 2011, the Local Government Commission (LGC) partnered with Kern County Environmental Health and the Greenfield Family Resource Center to hold an interactive community workshop at Rexland Acres Park, located in the County of Kern and near the City of Bakersfield. The goal of the workshop was to develop a community vision for how the park could be improved, and to identify next steps and priorities that the County and community can focus on for the future. The LGC facilitated a day’s worth of discussion and visioning in English and Spanish, and the landscape architecture firm Sierra Designs Inc. provided design expertise. Funding from The California Endowment made the event possible. This report documents the day’s activities and shares the conceptual vision developed at the workshop.

The Workshop

The workshop drew 30 diverse participants (see attendance list in Appendix A), which included local residents, school district staff, and Kern County representatives. Paper and electronic copies of English and Spanish flyers were distributed in advance at neighborhood events by local leaders and staff, and through Fairview Elementary School, which is adjacent to the park.

The day featured a welcome and encouragement from Kern County Supervisor Karen Goh, who talked about the importance of working together. Neighborhood leader Esther Stenger spoke about her growing group of parents, Junta Comunitaria de Padres de Greenfield, who want to improve educational opportunities and support families. Gema Perez, another local leader, shared the inspirational story of how a group of women successfully organized into the Greenfield Walking Group to transform nearby Sticern Park into a more family-friendly space.

Paul Zykofsky from the LGC reviewed vision statements that had been collected at a previous discussion about the park at a January 19 meeting of Junta Comunitaria de Padres de Greenfield (see vision statements in Appendix B). He also
A Community Vision for Rexland Acres Park

asked for additional comments and thoughts about the future of the park. Common themes from the vision statements and discussion included:

- A positive place for families to gather;
- Indoor and outdoor facilities and activities;
- Safety and security;
- Trees and shade; and
- Cleanliness and no graffiti.

Based on these themes, Dan Veyna from Sierra Designs, Inc., gave a presentation on how these aspects could be addressed and shared images of potential improvements, including examples of playing fields, outdoor spaces, equipment, lighting, and structures from other similar parks. A key point made by Dan was that when families regularly use a park, that activity goes a long way towards discouraging criminal activity. Creating a space that is attractive to families is key to addressing some of the community’s concerns about safety and security. There are a number of examples where increased use of a park has led to an improved park, including the nearby Stiern Park.

The community then took a walk through the park to talk more about what was and was not working and to explore their ideas further. Observations and comments included the following:

- Students at Fairview Elementary can see and hear bad behavior in the park, particularly activity that is close to their shared property line. The school is trying to determine what to do about it.
- Fairview Elementary allows community access to their adjacent fields by organized groups. While there is a gate along the property line shared with the park, the primary access is on Malibar Avenue. Community members must request use of this space, but participants mentioned that residents were not generally aware of this opportunity.
- There are challenges for children trying to get to and from Fairview Elementary School along Fairview Road, including gaps in the sidewalk network and difficulty crossing the street. A representative from Kern County Roads mentioned that a Safe Routes to School grant could be sought to make infrastructure improvements at this location.
- Graffiti is an issue. A representative from Parks and Recreation mentioned that the group Keep Bakersfield Beautiful might be able to help with this problem.
- There is a hiding spot for criminal activity behind the Rexland Acres Park sign that is adjacent to the community center.
- There is a school bus stop at the north end of the park, but children waiting, particularly high school students, are not supervised and sometimes there are conflicts.
- The Community Center has a kitchen but it is not in use and so cannot be fully utilized. The building’s heating and cooling system is also not functional, which discourages use by community organizations or the school district. The Community Center is owned by Kern County Parks, but leased to the school district at a minimal fee. The school district is responsible for maintenance of the building.
- There is an existing storage building on the site, but the Parks Department representative indicated that the building is barely used and that the Parks Department would not object to its removal. The driveway serving the storage building is similarly under-used and could be removed.

The participants then returned to the community center to put some of their ideas on maps, as shown in the images. Participants shared their ideas with each other and the group created a list of potential improvements.
based on the maps and the day’s discussion. The group then voted to determine their priorities, and the results are shown on this page.

The team then worked intensely to take the community’s maps and priorities to develop a quick illustration that showed the concepts. The draft plan was presented back to the community a few hours later for further feedback. The bulk of the community member participants returned to see the draft vision, asked questions, and voiced general support. The team continued to work on clarifying the design concepts in the following weeks.

### Prioritized list of improvements from community drawn maps

All of the elements below were reported as aspects the community would like to see, and this is the participant’s prioritized list followed by the number of votes each item received.

- Water play area – 15
- More lighting – 12
- Sidewalk around park – 11
- Soccer field – 8
- Pavilion – 7
- Move basketball court – 6
- More benches – 5
- Bus shelter – 5
- Shade – 5
- Picnic areas – 5
- Fix holes in ground – 4

- Close side driveway – 4
- Community center improvements – 4
- Volleyball – 3
- Move park sign – 1
- Increased police presence – 1
- Fenced tot lot – 1
- Buffer hedge along school fence – 0
- Move picnic tables near school fence – 0
- Open space for many activities, like
  - bounce house – 0
  - Bandstand – 0

---

*Details from community maps*
A Community Vision for Rexland Acres Park

Conceptual Park Improvements

A conceptual illustration of how to incorporate the community’s vision is seen on the next page and described below.

The plan shows a sidewalk loop around the park, which would provide a paved space to travel through the park and serve as an exercise path. It would also allow those in wheelchairs to travel across and throughout the park. A sidewalk minimum width of 6 feet is recommended, as this allows groups to walk together, and permits people with strollers to pass each other when going in opposite directions. The paved path could expand to 10 feet west of the community center and near a new large pavilion, replacing what is currently a driveway to the rear of the community center. It would provide pedestrian and hand-cart access to the rear doors of the community center. On the north end of the park, the path offers an alternative to the street-side sidewalk by creating a walk along the south edge of the parking lot, so that pedestrians do not have to mix with any moving cars. Where the sidewalk travels adjacent to Fairview Road and Malibar Avenue, it should be separated from traffic by a landscape buffer.

The plan shows a low hedge buffer along the school property line fence to provide some additional separation from the park. The hedge buffer would not be so tall that it would obstruct views into the park, so that the existing security benefits of “eyes on the park” could continue, but would instead include low, dense vegetation that makes it difficult to be near the fence. There could be an access point to the school property at an existing gate, preserving the opportunity for connectivity in the future (this gate has been open in the past subject to the principal’s discretion). A similar, narrow hedge treatment could also be used along the west side of the park along the Buddhist temple fence line to provide visual separation and buffering.

There could be a water play area, such as a spray park (but not a pool), east of the existing community center building with adjacent seating. This location would allow parents to sit in the shade next to the building on hot summer afternoons and closely observe as their children cool off here and play in the adjacent playground. The surface of the spray park could be crowned slightly to provide constant rinsing of sand and other debris into an encircling drain around the perimeter of the spray park. Foot washes and an exterior shower could also be located outside of the existing restroom structure. The existing play spaces should be preserved and could be expanded by transforming the area between the two playgrounds into additional play space.

The basketball courts could be relocated within the park, to provide space for other activities in its current location, to distance it from the school, and to orient it North-South to reduce glare in the players’ eyes. The plan shows a new location for two half courts with their hoops in the center. Since courts are lost in the move to this smaller location, the hoops in the center approach encourages sharing, allowing for a maximum of 20 players in two half-court games, and preventing one group of 10 players from dominating the entire space. However, a more traditional design with the hoops at the ends, to allow for either two half-court or one full court game could also be installed in this space. A tree on the east side of the courts might be lost to provide enough space. Slightly raised landscaping on the south end of the park could help prevent balls from rolling into the street. The location at the center of the park places the court at the extension of Don Street, providing maximum distance from residences across Malibar Street. Lights are proposed near the court to encourage play in the cooler evening hours.
EL PARQUE REXLAND ACRES
REXLAND ACRES PARK

A Community Vision for Rexland Acres Park
A Community Vision for Rexland Acres Park

If the basketball courts are moved, the current cement courts could be removed. Removing the basketball slab provides for a wide-open grassy area appropriate for soccer and other field sports, and is large enough to be used flexibly for many users. The tree in the northeast corner of this space might be lost to provide additional space for soccer. The space would be sized to allow a mix of games and of field sizes as the community was primarily interested in informal sports for youth play.

Three pavilions could be added, with two towards the south end and one near the existing play areas. These covered spaces could hold about 10-20 people each and include barbecue grills.

Uncovered picnic tables could be added, being mindful of how to locate them to maximize the benefit of the trees’ shade. Existing tables are preserved and a few new ones have been added in the plan. Tables near the school, which school representatives report attract loitering adults during school hours, would be removed and new tables would be located keeping the separation from the school in mind.

A large pavilion could be located south of the community center. It could be covered and without walls, roughly 30 by 60 feet with enough space for approximately 120 people. The south end of the pavilion could include a raised section to serve as a bandstand. The north end could include a large paved patio space. The BBQ space is located so that the prevailing northwest winds would not blow smoke into the pavilion. The space is located away from school and near the temple’s parking lot to minimize noise impacts to the neighbors. The proposed location also takes advantage of the proximity to the community center’s kitchen and other facilities for joint use. In this location the pavilion also has a view of the park but is separated from it, allowing unrelated events to happen in the pavilion and in the park without negative impact on either.

The bus stop on Fairview should be located so those waiting can benefit from the existing shade trees or installation of a shade structure could be considered. Adding benches is recommended.

Low berms could be created along the west, south and east sides of the park so that families could sit in these areas and get a better view of activities, such as a soccer or basketball game.

Existing lighting should be preserved where functional, but additional lighting is important. The bulk of the new lighting recommended is along the walking path, but as any improvements happen, lighting for those features should be added in tandem. Infrastructure changes in the park should be made with consideration to the capacity required for full build-out of the park’s improvements.

Additional trees could provide more shade and are shown throughout the park.

A new play space that supports the daycare area in the community center could be located in the space that currently serves as a hiding space behind the park sign. The sign could be relocated and the play area could be set up with a low fence and access from the community center only.

The existing storage building could be removed. From a safety and security standpoint, the structure currently obstructs views. It is reportedly not serving much of a purpose, and in its current location would crowd other recommended improvements.
Improvements to the community center structure are not shown in the illustration, but the primary concern raised by Greenfield Family Resource Center staff that regularly use the building was the lack of air conditioning and heat.

**Conceptual Street Improvements**

There were noted concerns about safety of children walking and bicycling to Fairview Elementary and an identified opportunity to pursue a Safe Routes to School grant for street improvements. In response to this issue, conceptual improvements to Fairview Road are shown on this page.

Fairview Road is a very wide two-lane street. There is enough space curb-to-curb to provide a 7-foot parking and a 6-foot bicycle lane on both sides of the street, and add a two-way center-turn lane or landscaped median (with turning pockets at intersections). On-street parking and bicycle lanes serve as sidewalk buffers by distancing moving vehicles from the sidewalk. In addition to moving turning cars out of the way of through traffic, a center-turn lane or median in combination with the parking and bicycling lanes creates a narrower space for drivers. Wide streets with little indication of potential pedestrian or bicyclist activity encourage excessive speeds, so by creating a narrower travel lane, the design invites more appropriate driver behavior. High visibility crosswalks on all legs of the T-intersection as motorists approach the school are also recommended.

**Implementation**

Based on community priorities, the water play area, the walking path, and additional lighting are seen as having the most potential impact on making the park more family-friendly and attracting more legitimate users. From this point, there are some options in terms of next steps. Additional input from more community members to further refine the vision could be sought. If done, it is wise to document any additional community engagement, as the more buy-in from residents is shown, the more attractive of an investment it will be for funders.

A common next step in park revitalization projects is to follow visioning with developing an estimated cost for improvements,
A Community Vision for Rexland Acres Park

which can serve as a shopping list to seek funding for individual plan components. Documented costs are often needed for grant applications and can also help determine fundraising goals.

In terms of the timing of implementing various components of the plan, it makes sense to begin with the priority list, start at the top and work down — with a few considerations in mind. First, if an opportunity presents itself to accomplish something further down the list, then it makes sense to take advantage of that. Second, when a feature has been identified as needing to be relocated — for example the basketball courts — the replacement facility should be constructed before the existing court is removed, so that the amenity is preserved.

Third, an important consideration is to include the possibility of additional improvements when any change is made. For example, if a spray park will be installed, electrical improvements would likely be needed, so while working on the main electrical panel, future capacity can be installed to handle all of the future improvements. If implementing all of the improvements means a large electrical panel is needed, but the spray park alone only needs a medium size panel, the large panel (but not necessarily all the circuit breakers) should to be installed. Another example would be if a conduit for wires needs to be installed below ground, provide space for future additional wiring to run through it as well, so that portion of the park does not need to be torn up again to install that future improvement.

One way to make an immediate difference in the park while waiting for funding is to increase the use of Rexland Acres Park with the help of nearby supportive organizations. Partnering with the nearby churches, the Buddhist temple, and community groups like the Greenfield Walking Group to schedule events and activities in Rexland Acres will help people become familiar with what the park has to offer, and every legitimate use further decreases opportunities for bad behavior.

As mentioned by participants, there are existing efforts in the area that could provide assistance in the short-term. One of the participants at the workshop was the Chair of the non-profit Keep Bakersfield Beautiful, and he talked about how this group might be able to provide some help with the graffiti (www.keepbakersfieldbeautiful.us). The Tree Foundation of Kern was also mentioned and may be able to assist with the selection and planting of shade-bearing trees in the park (www.urbanforest.org).

There are some specific funding opportunities to consider, including, but not limited to, Community Development Block Grants, Proposition 84 Grants, and State and Federal Safe Routes to School grants. The Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) commits federal funds to local governments to provide decent housing, provide a suitable living environment, and to expand economic opportunities. Kern County receives funds in amounts determined by applying a formula to the total amount of CDBG funds appropriated by Congress. The distribution, or grants, are made after the Grantee has submitted their Consolidated Community Development Plan. The Board of Supervisors has appointed the Planning and Community Development Department as their staff to plan for and implement projects and programs approved by the Board for use of these funds. Improvements to the community center in Rexland Acres Park were discussed previously by the County, and community members may want to advocate for their consideration again.
Two Proposition 84 bond-funded grant programs will be accepting proposals soon. For both programs, documented community engagement is critical. A call for concept proposals is expected in May for Urban Greening Projects, administered by the Strategic Growth Council, with full proposals expected to be due in the late summer or early fall. Reportedly, few proposals came in from the San Joaquin Valley in the previous round of funding, so even a less than ideal match from this region may get funded in the next round. [http://resources.ca.gov/bond/February_2011_Urban_Greening_Project_Guidelines_Round_2.Final.pdf](http://resources.ca.gov/bond/February_2011_Urban_Greening_Project_Guidelines_Round_2.Final.pdf)

Administered by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Statewide Park Program proposals are due July 1, 2011. Rexland Acres Park appears to qualify under the “significant poverty” criteria. A park profile that provides related data is found in Appendix C. [www.parks.ca.gov/?Page_id=26500](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?Page_id=26500)

State or federal Safe Routes to School grants could be sought for improvements along Fairview Road leading to Fairview Elementary. Sidewalk improvements along the park, and improved pedestrian crossings of Fairview Road would have the dual impact of making it safer for children to walk and bike to school, as well as increase pedestrian access to the park. Caltrans manages both state and federal grant funds, and recently announced that they expect a call for federally funded proposals in April and state funded proposals in the fall. The state and federal programs have some differences in what they can fund, but both are opportunities for constructing infrastructure ([www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/saferoutes/saferoutes.htm](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/saferoutes/saferoutes.htm)). The California Department of Public Health can help support a proposal through their Safe Routes to School Technical Assistance Resource Center ([www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/saferoutes/documents/TARCcontactInfoWithDist2010Aug%5b1%5d.pdf](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/saferoutes/documents/TARCcontactInfoWithDist2010Aug%5b1%5d.pdf)). Kern County would need to be the applicant agency.

There is also the opportunity to fundraise from individuals, organizations, and businesses, and use volunteer labor to make some improvements. The Greenfield Walking Group used this approach successfully to get a sidewalk installed in Stier Park. In another example from the City of Visalia, local Rotary Clubs funded the installation of two water play features. The City provided the location and power, and waived permit fees. The cost of construction materials was covered by Rotary donations, and they also provided volunteer labor. The City assumed the ongoing maintenance expenses.

**Acknowledgements**

The Local Government Commission and Sierra Designs, Inc. would like to sincerely thank the staff at the Greenfield Family Resource Center who helped promote and organize the workshop, Supervisor Goh and County staff for making a strong showing on a holiday weekend, and most of all, the community members who worked hard to develop their vision.
Appendix A: Workshop Participants

Adrian Galaz, resident
Andy Stanley, Kern County Supervisor Karen Goh's office
Ashley Dawson, Greenfield After School
Artar N Sidhu, Kern County Environmental Health/CCROPP
Barry Nienke, Kern County Roads
Bob Lerude, Kern County Parks & Recreation
Daisy Martinez, resident
Dalyfloe Loya, resident
Esperanza Mesa, resident
Esther Stenger
Evelyn Loya, resident
Frederick Gonzalez, Greenfield After School
Gema Perez, resident
Gloria Cisneros, resident
Guadalupe Martinez, resident
Ismael Hernandez, resident
Itzel Martinez, resident
Jennifer Valdivinos, resident
Juana Perez, resident
Julian Galaz, resident
Karen Goh, Kern County Supervisor
Ken Chichester, Greenfield School District
Kimberly Shipp, Greenfield School District, Family Resource Center
Nemesio Martinez, resident
Nicolas Cisneros, resident
Oscar Cruz, resident
Otoniel Valdivinos, resident
Rodrigo Cisneros, resident
Rosa Rosas, resident
Sandra Hernandez, Greenfield Family Resource Center
Appendix B: Vision Statements

The following vision statements were collected at a meeting of Junta Comunitaria de Padres de Greenfield on January 19, 2011, and were translated from Spanish.

I imagine a park where parents can continue to motivate their children to continue their education. I imagine a park that has a set of offices and a gymnasium (something similar to a Boys & Girls Club). I imagine an education center that can offer basic and advanced ESL classes to the community.

I see a secure future. I would like to see clean restrooms, grass, flowers, playgrounds, and trees in the park. It should also always be kept clean. There should be a police station in the park. I imagine basketball courts for kids, a gym, a skating rink, a garden, a swimming pool, and a restaurant or snack bar.

My vision for the Rexland Park involves secure sidewalks and a playground. I envision a recreational center for families.

I envision a large hall with rooms for activities such as dance, music, a gym, a self-defense class, a class for parents, community meetings, basketball courts, hallways, playrooms for kids, and a large fountain. I also envision activities such as Bingo, cooking lessons for seniors, and a day care to be held in these rooms.

First of all, I envision security in the future. I also envision restrooms, green areas, trees, flowers, and swimming pools for kids. A hall with rooms for activities such as basketball, karate, and skating for the kids.

A safe and very green park.

In the future, I envision the Rexland Park to be a safe and secure place for kids to carry on their activities in. I also envision lighting, soccer fields, basketball courts, and a tennis court. The sidewalks should be walk able. There should also be a play and picnic area.

1. Water fountain
2. Playground for kids
3. A lot of lighting
4. Trees
5. Security + Safety

To carry on the project, cleanliness, water fountains, lights, safe playgrounds, and community participation is essential. Trees, grass, flowers, a tennis court, basketball court, bike paths, and restrooms are also important.

I foresee that within 10 years there will be a large park with playgrounds, trees, a recreational center for the community, sidewalks, bike paths, and much more.

(5-10 years vision) A park where community events can be held in a large hall. Classes should be held for parents, an afterschool program for kids with mentors, educational and recreational activities should be held, and snacks should be available for the kids that attend.
Appendix C: Park Statistics from Community Fact Finder
AUTOPAY SUCCESSFULLY SUBMITTED

CONFIRMATION NUMBER
1349575

TOTAL PAYMENT
$816.67

START DATE
04/01/2017

END DATE
UNTIL I CANCEL

ACCOUNT
****8798
Checking
Bank Of America,
National Association

The details of your payment were sent to your email: aguigustavo@gmail.com
If you need any assistance, call us 888-480-2432.

PAYMENT AMOUNT BREAKDOWN

MONTHLY PAYMENT
$716.67

ADDITIONAL PRINCIPAL
$100.00

TOTAL PAYMENT
$816.67

WILL MY AUTOPAY EVER CHANGE?

Things like a change in your rate, an escrow analysis or a loan modification can alter your payment amount. When this happens, we'll make the change automatically. You'll receive a letter notifying you about the changes to your account and we will update the payment amount before the first automatic payment is made with the new amount.

Please print and retain a copy of this confirmation for your records.
Please be advised that if your account is delinquent or if there are fees and charges due, your account may not be paid ahead nor may principal reduction payments be applied. When we receive a remittance that is in excess of a payment amount, that excess is applied to your account in accordance with a predetermined sequence as provided for in your Mortgage or Deed of Trust. This sequence is applied in this order: principal amounts that are due, escrow, and then to fees and charges that have been assessed to your account. Once this sequence has been satisfied, we will apply the amount to your account as you requested on the previous page.

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Cut down on clutter with electronic bills and statements. It's faster, easier, and more secure.

SIGN UP NOW (/SER)
Thank you for your online payment.

Date 3/16/2017, 6:22 PM
Payment Confirmation # 60030625991
Account 53050003.005
Name AGUIRRE, GUSTAVO ARREGUIN
Total Pending Payment Amount $35.18

Please retain a copy of this information for your records.

Print this page

Online payments will not be processed until end of next District business day.

On line payments are for water billing charges only. No refunds are provided.

Bakersfield, California
Online VISA or MASTERCARD Credit or Debit Card Payments for your ENCSD Utility Bill

Questions about your bill or online payment:
Call (661) 871-2011 anytime during our Office Hours Monday - Friday, 8:30am - 5:00pm

All transactions and amounts are shown in U.S. Dollars
Organizations' Description:

Under the direction of the Kern County Board of Supervisors, the General Services Division manages regional and community/neighborhood parks, as well as community and recreation buildings throughout Kern County. The General Services Division and the Parks and Recreation Department merged in December 2016. In this proposal any activities prior to December 2016 will be referenced to the Parks and Recreation Department.

The mission of the Kern County General Services Division is to develop and maintain a safe, accessible, high quality regional system of parks, open spaces, landscapes, and recreational facilities to support and enhance the quality of life for their residents and visitors.

For the past six years through collaboration the Parks Department, the Rexland/Greenfield community, the Recreation Action Team, an affiliate of Building Healthy Communities, have been working to improve and redevelop the Rexland Acres Park. There have been many improvements made to the community, through block grant funds improving the walking paths, lighting and other features in the park.

The Greenfield Community is known to be one of the underserved communities in Kern County. 92.4 per cent of the residents are below the poverty level. The Greenfield community has organized and worked closely with the Parks and Recreation Department and the Sheriff's Department, to take back their community park. The Greenfield Community groups have addressed several health and safety issues to improve community/residential participation in the park. Through this community effort they were successful in passing a county ordinance to limit or end alcohol and tobacco use at Rexland Park.
Organization Experience:

The Kern County Parks and Recreation developed a master park plan to revitalize all county parks. Kern County has been actively seeking and using grant funds to improve parks for the last twenty years. The Greenfield Community and Kern County have very limited funds to improve park facilities at this time; therefore the improvement projects are funded by grants or private funds.

Project Title

Rexland Acres Park Soccer Facility, Bakersfield, California

Project Description:

The community is approximately 91.2 percent Hispanic and soccer is their recreational activity of choice. The proposed project is an enclosed hard surface field that would require little maintenance and provide a surface for soccer and other activities.

The facility will have a 10’ chain link fence on a 100’ x 50’ concrete slab. There would be 4’ boards placed along the inside of the chain link fence for the soccer ball to bounce off of. Two goals would be placed inside the facility to complete the enclosed soccer court. This facility will allow many of the youth and young adults in the Rexland Acres/Greenfield area to play soccer at their local park without having to travel outside their neighborhood.

When the court is not being used by the soccer teams, it can be used for other activities. The Greenfield Community Walking Group can hold their Zumba classes on the court and local volleyball teams will have a place to play. Rexland Acres Park is adjacent to homes and the local elementary school; the facility can be a central community meeting location for community events such as health and safety fairs.

Project Location(s):
Rexland Acres Park, 325 E. Fair View Rd, Bakersfield, CA 93307

Emission Benefits:
The project would effect change through local action, by assisting residents and students to lower emissions, by not driving to other facilities to participate in recreational activities. It can encourage discussions of the toxic air chemicals, by reducing the emissions that could potentially impact the health of individuals who live, work, or attend schools in the Rexland/Greenfield community.
This would be the only free enclosed soccer field in the Bakersfield area. There are several grass fields and one enclosed field that require registration or rental fees. This community does not have the monetary means to participate in these facilities. The requirement to be a soccer league member is the registration fee of $60.00 per adult or $70.00 per youth per season. This does not include the cost to travel to this facility.

If the enclosed field is made available at Rexland Park, the community anticipates two evening games daily, with 40 participants and additional community participation by team supporters. It is estimated as few as 10 cars per games or as many as 20 cars per weekday per game. The weekend would have 5 games daily, 200 participants with community supporters per day. A minimum of 40 cars per day to as many as 400 cars per day

**Project Timeline:**
13 months from start date

Proposed Timeline

April - September 2017
Design project and receive bids
Kern County will report progress to ARB

October - April 2018
Approve Bid - Project construction
Kern County will report progress and expenditures to ARB

May 2018
Project Completed Greenfield Community can begin using the facility
Kern County will create media releases highlighting the work.
Kern County ARB Fund Request

Itemized Budget
Field Preparation: $25,000
Fence: $15,000
Concrete Slab: $33,000
Boards: $6,500
Irrigation modification: $10,000
ADA upgrades and walkway: $30,000
General Cond, Insurance and Bonds: $18,000
Contingency 20%: $27,500
Design, Contract Admin, Inspection: $38,900
Permit fees and advertising bid: $8,000
One year escalation $4,000

Total $215,900

Funds
$9,500.00 (Quimby In-Lieu funds)
$5,000.00 (Community Fundraisers)
$50,000.00 (ARB SEP)

Total: $64,500.00
Supplemental Environmental Project Idea Form

Directions: Use this form to submit supplemental environmental project (SEP) ideas. For detailed SEP proposals, you will need to use the Proposal Form. Questions may be directed to SEP@arb.ca.gov.

Project idea submissions shall be directed to either SEP@arb.ca.gov or mailed to:

Air Resources Board
Enforcement Division
ATTN: SEP Proposal
P.O. Box 2815
Sacramento, CA 95812-2815

Date: 9-1-16

Contact Name: Caroline Fairle
Title: E.D.
Address: 1012 Jefferson St
City: Deland
Phone: 661-780-9140

State: CA
Email: Cfairle2@life-91.org
ZIP:

Project Title: Indoor Soccer Field

Project Description: Briefly describe the proposed project concept. Explain how the proposed project will benefit the environment and air quality. If applicable, explain how the project benefits disadvantaged communities. Please include an explanation of the air quality benefits that will be gained (this could include, but is not limited to reducing ozone, particulate pollution, toxic air pollutants, greenhouse gases, and visibility). 100 words maximum.

The community of ReLand is in the process of building an indoor soccer field but need resources to complete the project. It will help reduce youth driving since they will be doing exercise in the facility.
Supplemental Environmental Project Proposal Form

Directions: Use this form to submit detailed supplemental environmental project (SEP) proposals. Complete this SEP proposal form cover page, and attach the supplementary proposal documents as requested below. Questions may be directed to SEP@arb.ca.gov.

Project proposal submissions shall be directed to either SEP@arb.ca.gov or mailed to:

Air Resources Board
Enforcement Division
ATTN: SEP Proposal
P.O. Box 2815
Sacramento, CA 95812-2815

Organization Contact Information

Organization Name: Kern County Parks and Recreation Department
Contact Name: Bob Lerude
Contact Title: Director
Address: 2820 M Street
City: Bakersfield
Phone: 661-968-7003

State: CA ZIP: 93301 Email: lerudeb@co.kern.ca.us

- Organization Description: Provide an attachment with a brief history of the organization (mission, vision, and goals). Indicate whether you are a nonprofit 501(C)(3), government or local agency, tribal government, small business, etc.
- Organization Experience: Provide an attachment with information on the organization's ability and capacity to complete the proposed project. Describe previous project management experience, including a list of completed projects/dates and who funded the project.

Additional Project Information – Attachment Checklist

- Project Name: Provide the project name on the submission attachments.
- Project Description: Provide a scope of work for the project and explain how the proposed project will benefit air quality. If applicable, explain how the project benefits disadvantaged communities.
- Project Location(s): Provide the address(es) or GPS coordinates of where the proposed project will take place.
- Emission Benefits: For projects with a direct emissions benefit, provide an analysis of the emissions prevention/reduction which results from the proposed SEP project.
- Project Timeline: Include a timeline for project implementation. Provide a breakdown of the major milestones required to implement the project, including completion dates.
- Itemized Budget: Provide a detailed list of what is needed to complete the project and the funding needed for each item. Cost breakdown should include capital, operational, and administrative costs.

Acknowledgment. By checking this box, you verify that all information given to ARB about your organization and your proposed project is factual.

Submitter Name: Bob Lerude
Submitter Title: Director
Date: 09/29/2016
Title: Rexland Acres Park Soccer Facility

Requesting Agency: Kern County Parks and Recreation Department
Bob Lerude, Director
2820 M Street
Bakersfield, CA 93301
661-331-2070

Funds requested: $43,250

*Project Total Cost: $55,750 (estimate – prevailing wage)
$15,000 (10' fence)
$40,750 (100'x50' 4" concrete slab)

Funds available: $9,500 (Quimby In-Lieu funds)
$3,000 (Fundraisers)

Deficit: $43,250

Expected timeline: 90 working days from start to finish (estimate)

Description of Organization:
The Kern County Parks and Recreation Department manages twenty-one Senior, Veterans, Community and Recreation buildings, as well as eight-Regional, and thirty-four-Community/Neighborhood Parks throughout Kern County. Our facilities include fishing and boating lakes, campgrounds, soccer and baseball fields, a large soccer park with over twenty fields, museums and three-golf courses.

The department has been working with the Recreation Action Team through Building Healthy Communities in South Kern for the past six years. Through this collaboration, master plans were completed at all the parks in south Kern. Subsequently, grants for a new playground and another grant for a walking path and exercise equipment at Lamont Park were secured. Community development block grant funding was also secured for a walking path with lighting and benches after the master plan was completed at Rexland Acres Park. These three projects were completed in the last four years.

Funds will support the following:

The project is a soccer facility outdoors played as indoor-soccer court. The facility will have 10’ chain link fence on a 100’ x 50’ concrete slab. There would be 4’ boards placed along the inside of the chain link fence so the ball bounces off the boards. Two goals would be placed inside the facility to complete the indoor soccer court. This facility will allow many of the youth and young adults in the Rexland Acres/Greenfield area to play soccer at a local park without having to travel outside the area.

Air Quality benefits:
Soccer is and continues to be a sport in Kern County that is extremely popular. Having this soccer facility in the Rexland Acres/Greenfield area allows for youth and young adults to participate without having to depend upon transportation. Consequently, less miles are driven by parents of youth and additionally the young adults would be able to walk to the facility rather than drive. This benefits all the Rexland Acres/Greenfield residents as it would reduce the number of miles driven by vehicles to transport people to local soccer complex's which are miles away from the area. Currently youth and residents from that neighborhood have to drive from 20 to 40 miles round trip to get to similar facilities. One example can be going to “Hart Park” here are soccer fields but youth and residents have to drive from one side of the City to the other side of the City. We expect to have an average of 20 youth and young adults using the Rexland Acres Park soccer facility during weekdays and up to 100 youth and young adults on weekends. On one week up to 300 youth and young adults may use the facility. (not sure how to quantify mileage reduction and or benefit)

Another benefit is that youth will be playing soccer and not driving in the neighborhood or to other places because they don’t have now a place to do exercise. It will also reduce pollution because youth will drive less mileage

Health Benefits
Youth and residents will improve their health by doing more exercise and being in a park where there are trees and the air can cleaner than other areas of the community, residents will also improve on the issue of obesity since they will be doing more exercise. The park will be more safe and more families will go and use the park and will improve their health by being more active. It will also improve the mental health of the neighborhood since they will be doing exercise and will feel that they are doing something good.
Troubled waters: Solutions sought for man-made flooding in Lamont

BY JAMES BURGER jburger@bakersfield.com  Feb 25, 2017 Updated 2 hrs ago

Renato Soto walks through floodwater on Weedpatch Highway just north of Lamont. It is the third time this year the church attends, New Life Church of God, has had to deal with flooding. Soto is trying to figure a way to divert the water from the property.

Senior Pastor Graham Bell stood, resigned, in the muddy brown water that had turned his New Life Church of God on Weedpatch Highway into an island.
“This is the third time this year,” he said.

Nearby, parishioners shuttled sandbags from the back of a truck to the church’s gates, working to block more water from entering the flooded parking lot.

The midday Saturday sun was warm and the sky was robin’s-egg blue, filled with fluffy clouds.

But the 4 inches of water that fell the night before on the mountains northwest of Tehachapi were now flowing around Bell’s church.

“I don’t think we’ll be able to have services tomorrow,” he said.
UNSOLVED

Lamont floods.

Even a moderate storm can send floodwaters from the 470 square miles of mountain range between Walker Basin and Tehachapi down Caliente Creek into Lamont.

This isn't a natural problem.

It's a problem that has been systematically built, over decades, by farmers seeking to protect their land, crops and investments from flooding.

They've pushed the problem onto county roadways and into Lamont, a small unincorporated community of largely Hispanic agricultural workers with a median annual household income of $33,351.

A large-scale solution to the problem has eluded county leaders for decades, though a hodgepodge of multimillion-dollar projects has been able to protect some parts of Lamont from small to moderate storms.
But relatively minor storms, in January, did $2 million in damage to county roads and took the life of Vivian Mary Robinson.

Robinson, 81, reportedly drove around flood-warning signs in an attempt to get to her home. She got stuck in the water flooding the county road and made the decision to leave her car.

Her body was found a mile away.

Now there is renewed interest in protecting Lamont from all but the most epic “100-year” floods.

**FLOOD GUN**

A century ago, the water that flooded Lamont this year would have never gotten close to the community.

North of Highway 58 lies the wide alluvial valley where Caliente Creek has, over the centuries, cut its way out of the mountains into the wide plain of the San Joaquin Valley.

“Historically when the water reached the valley floor, it spread out across a wide expanse of land and had a chance to be absorbed into the soil, which is very sandy,” said Greg Fenton, director of the Kern County Engineering, Surveying and Permit Services Department.

But decades ago, farmers in the area cut channels through their mile-wide swath of land and tamed the creek, restricting it, speeding it up and sending it downstream to become the next guy’s problem.

Then the next guy did the same.

When floods hit farmers north of Arvin in the 1930s and ‘40s, they built the Tamarisk Tree Line, a massive east-west berm of earth and broken concrete topped with tamarisk trees.

That protected Arvin.
But it collected all the water of Caliente Creek — which flowed in a 1.5-mile-wide fan at that point — into a narrow creek channel.

And it aimed it like a hose at Lamont.
Retired Kern County engineer Clark Farr was responsible for battling Caliente Creek for years, and designed many of the current control systems.

Once the tamarisk line was built, he said, other farmers got hit with flooding every time Caliente Creek ran strong.

So they, too, built berms.

Ultimately the tree line become a canal.

That canal now ends at Malaga Road.

When Caliente Creek is "ripping," all the water dumps out onto Malaga.

The road becomes an asphalt-lined river that shoots the water onto westbound Panama Road and Mountain View Road.

And those major roads take it, fast and furious, into Lamont.
IMPACT

Lamont School District Superintendent Ricardo Robles stood in the center of Weedpatch Highway with floodwaters flowing around his rubber boots.

Behind him, gas-powered pumps roared away at full blast, sucking the floodwaters of Caliente Creek away from the tan block wall that protects Mountain View Middle School and pushing them into a nearby field.

The school was surrounded by water. Again.

His work crews are so used to it they don’t even wait for the emergency call, Robles said.

On Feb. 18 they just showed up at 6 a.m. and started pumping.

The school sits at the spot where Mountain View Road meets Weedpatch. The system of canals and berms built up by farmers over the decades sends Caliente Creek roaring right at the school.

The middle school has had to close for two days this year, Robles said, wreaking havoc on
working families who have to find a way to care for their children.

If the weather stays wet, it will happen again.

“We’re concerned about our school and our community,” Robles said.

**JUSTICE**

Farr, the former county engineer, has taken Caliente Creek on as something of a retirement mission.

He says farmers’ berms and levees are illegal under county ordinance and state law and need to be declared a public nuisances by the county and eliminated.

Someone, he said, has to stand up for the people of Lamont.

“Human beings are being flooded now. They don’t have a voice in this. The main job creator in the area is Grimmway Farms,” he said. “Do you sue your employer over the fact they’re flooding your home? No person should have to choose between the safety of your family or food on the table.”

In the past few years, Farr has filed a series of complaints against farmers in the area for violating county ordinances by failing to get permits before building berms and levees and for pushing floodwaters onto other people’s land.

The county has, largely, ignored them.

Fenton said most of those complaints are filed against property owners who are closer to Lamont.

He struggles, he said, with punishing someone for a systematic problem that has been created by other farmers who work land closer to the mountains.

“There’s a hundred other violations upstream,” Fenton said. “I’m trying to be fair.”
Beatris Espericueta Sanders, of the Kern County Farm Bureau, said farmers are forced to build the berms by state legislation that can fine them if they let water from their property flow onto other property.

So they keep the water off their property in the first place.

“A lot of the flooding is created by the berms that farmers are required to put on their acreage,” she said. “We cannot, as growers, have any water leave our acreage.”

Farr calls that argument a red herring.

The Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program is designed to keep polluted water from traveling and contaminating surface and groundwater supplies.

And, by his reading, it doesn't apply to floodwaters like those from Caliente Creek, Farr said.

And the program was created in 2003 — well after farmers constructed many of the major berms and levees.

Fenton said while the county understands and respects the farmers and the critical economic role they play in Kern County, their actions are making the problem worse.

“By berming (Caliente Creek) and channelizing the water and sending it on downstream, it's creating some negative impacts and jeopardizing the safety and the livelihood of the community,” he told Kern County supervisors.

And it could have a negative impact on thousands of residents across Kern County who live in a designated flood plain.

“Many of these diversions are a violation of the flood plain, which could also jeopardize the county’s standing in the National Flood Insurance Program,” Fenton said. “That could result in significant increases for flood insurance premiums for the flood insurance payers of the county.”
If the county doesn’t solve the problem, Farr said, anyone who is required to have flood insurance could lose a 15 percent discount they currently receive.

**SOLUTIONS**

On Jan. 31, Kern County Public Works Director Craig Pope outlined plans to create a flood mitigation plan that would keep all but the largest floods away from Lamont.

The county intends to work in cooperation with farmers in the area to make the plan happen.

Pope points, for a solution, back to the beginning of the problem.

If Caliente Creek could, once again, be allowed to spread out across its historical alluvial fan north of Highway 58, Arvin, Lamont and all the downstream farms could be protected, he said.

That would require farmers’ cooperation.

On Feb. 18, as Caliente Creek roared through the channels on their land, three of those farmers stood surveying their property from the overlook where Bena Road drops down into their valley.

They complained about the damage the water does to their land, the lack of a solution from the county and the need to pay taxes even when their crops are underwater.

They wouldn’t share their names.

Sanders, of the Farm Bureau, said Vivian Robinson’s death in floodwaters on Edison Road has brought an urgency to the discussion.

And farmers, she said, are committed to the talks.
"Nobody has asked these farmers to come to the table and be a part of the solution — until now," she said. "The farms that are out there have been out there farming for 50 years or more. Their ideas for solutions were things that the county hadn't thought of yet."

But now the talks are happening, she said, and "it's been a great dialogue."

Farr said the farmers aren't evil.

"Grimmway has done great things for Kern County. They have done great things in the county without accolade. They are good people," Farr said.

But once every seven years — when the rains land heavy in the mountains — the carrot giant and a host of farmers in the area are not good neighbors for Lamont to have, he said.

Joel Sherman, director of safety, workers' compensation and regulatory compliance for Grimmway, said the company is committed to helping the community find long-term solutions to mitigate chronic flooding in the Lamont area. Many of the berms in question, he said in a statement, have been in place for more than three decades, long before Grimmway acquired the properties.

He reiterated that many of the berms are required by law to prevent irrigation water from leaving Grimmway land.

"The berms are an important land management tool, and cannot merely be removed," Sherman said in the statement. "However, we are committed to working alongside our partners and regulatory agencies to find solutions or modifications that address the needs of landowners and residents alike."

Farr and Sanders agree on one thing: Progress toward a solution cannot fade away this year when the rain stops falling and the sun comes out.

"The county loses focus on the problem because it only happens every seven years," Farr said.
Attention dries up. Money goes to different priorities.

Nothing happens until the floodwaters come back, he said.

That's not the way the Farm Bureau wants this to go, Sanders said.

"We (can't) just enter another dry season and forget about it for another 10 years," she said. "There are solutions out there."
EL NIÑO SEASON

MUD AND WATER CLOSE ROADS
SOUTH VALLEY ROADS CLOSED DUE TO FLOODING
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Orange County Transportation Authority’s (OCTA) Mitigation and Resource Protection Program (Mitigation Program) provides for comprehensive environmental mitigation for the impacts from freeway improvements. A master agreement between OCTA, Caltrans and state and federal resource agencies was executed in January 2010. This offers higher-value environmental benefits such as habitat protection, connectivity and resource preservation in exchange for streamlined project approvals for the 13 Measure M2 freeway projects.

ENVIRONMENTAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

The Environmental Oversight Committee (EOC) is comprised of 12 members. The EOC is responsible for making recommendations to the OCTA Board of Directors on the allocation of funds to monitor the implementation of the Mitigation Program.

LAND PRESERVATION

The Mitigation Program allocates funds to acquire land and fund habitat restoration projects. Acquired properties are purchased and permanently preserved as open space. Funded restoration projects restore preserved open space lands to their native habitat and include the removal of invasive plant species.

In November 2010, the Board allocated $42 million to purchase open space in Orange County during the first round of funding. To date, OCTA has acquired more than 1300 acres in Brea, Laguna Beach, Silverado Canyon, and Trabuco Canyon. Approximately $2 million remains for additional acquisitions during this current round of funding.

Since 2010, a total of 11 restoration projects have been funded throughout Orange County. Approximately $10 million has been allocated to restore about 400 acres of open space land.

CONSERVATION PLAN

In 2016, OCTA completed the Final Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP), which is a state and federal process to protect threatened and endangered species. The Conservation Plan ensures OCTA’s wilderness preserves will remain forever protected from development. It also requires OCTA to provide funding for the long term management of the properties.

In conjunction with the NCCP/HCP, Resource Management Plans (RMP) are being developed for each acquired Preserve. These plans will outline how the Preserves are protected, how they will be managed, and also will address public access. The Trabuco Canyon and Silverado Canyon RMPs will be finalized by late 2017, and the RMPs for the Hayashi and Aliso Canyon Preserves are anticipated to be released for a 90-day public review period in 2017.
Overview

Land Preservation in Orange County

The Measure M2 Freeway Environmental Mitigation Program allocates funds to acquire land and fund habitat restoration projects in exchange for streamlined project approvals for the 13 M2 freeway improvement projects. Acquired properties are purchased and permanently preserved as open space. Funded restoration projects restore preserved open space lands to their native habitat and include the removal of invasive plant species.

In November 2010, the Board allocated $42 million to purchase open space in Orange County during the first round of funding. To date, OCTA has acquired more than 1150 acres in the Trabuco Canyon and Brea areas. Approximately $4.5 million remains for additional acquisitions during this first round of funding.

Since 2010, a total of 11 restoration projects have been funded throughout Orange County. Approximately $10 million has been allocated to restore about 400 acres of open space land.

Additional funds for acquisitions and restoration will be
available subsequent to the completion of the current expenditure. Available funds will be dependent on the sales tax revenue stream in the future.

**Conservation Plan**

OCTA is currently preparing the Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP), which is a state and federal process to protect threatened and endangered species. It also requires OCTA to provide funding for the long term management of the properties. In conjunction with the NCCP/HCP, Resources Management Plans (RMP) are being developed for each acquired Preserve. These plans will outline how the Preserves are protected, how they will be managed, and also will address public access. RMPs for Ferber Ranch, O'Neill Oaks, Saddle Creek South, and Hafen are expected to be available for public review this spring following the release of the NCCP/HCP.

**Fact Sheets**

Ferber Ranch Fact Sheet
Hafen Fact Sheet
Hayashi Fact Sheet
Macpherson Preserve Fact Sheet
O'Neill Oaks Fact Sheet
Saddle Creek South Fact Sheet
Freeway Mitigation Program Fact Sheet
Restoration Project Fact Sheets Coming Soon
Overall Goal

To mitigate environmental impacts of regional and local transportation projects while helping to implement the region’s Habitat Conservation Plans.
"Economic Benefit" based on:

- Determining mitigation ratios in advance by including transportation projects in habitat conservation plans, and
- Purchasing mitigation land in advance of need in larger blocks at a lower cost.
Transportation Project Mitigation Fund

- $650 million - To be applied to direct mitigation costs for regional and local transportation projects
  - $450 million for regional projects
  - $200 million for local projects
Total Program
$850 Million

Plus up to $30m in financing costs
For advanced habitat acquisition

Transportation
Project
Mitigation
Fund
$650m

Major
Transit Project
Mitigation
$450

Local
Transportation
Project
Mitigation
$200

Regional Habitat
Conservation Fund
$200m

Environmental Mitigation Program Costs
(In Millions, 2002 Dollars)
Total Program $14 Billion

- $0.28 Pedestrian
- $0.14 Administration
- $0.14 Operations
- $0.24 Transit Services
- $4.65 Transit Projects (47)
- $3.99 Roads & Local Streets
- $0.25 Mitigation Local Environmental
- $0.6 Mitigation Environmental
- $0.28 Smart Growth
- $0.01 (Not shown) Oversight Committee
- $0.5 Financing Cost

Financing Cost

(in Billions, 2002 Dollars)

40 Year Expenditure Plan

Total Program $14 Billion

- $0.28 Pedestrian
- $0.14 Administration
- $0.14 Operations
- $0.24 Transit Services
- $4.65 Transit Projects (47)
- $3.99 Roads & Local Streets
- $0.25 Mitigation Local Environmental
- $0.6 Mitigation Environmental
- $0.28 Smart Growth
- $0.01 (Not shown) Oversight Committee
- $0.5 Financing Cost

Financing Cost

(in Billions, 2002 Dollars)

40 Year Expenditure Plan
Regional Conservation Investment Strategies Program

On September 22, 2016, the Governor signed Assembly Bill 2087 which created CDFW's Regional Conservation Investment Strategy pilot program. The Program goes into effect on January 1, 2017 and will be administered by CDFW's Habitat Conservation Planning Branch in Sacramento.

Program Overview

The new Program encourages a voluntary, non-regulatory regional planning process intended to result in higher-quality conservation outcomes and includes an advance mitigation tool. The Program uses a science-based approach to identify conservation and enhancement opportunities that, if implemented, will help California's declining and vulnerable species by protecting, creating, restoring, and reconnecting habitat and may contribute to species recovery and adaptation to climate change and resiliency.

The Program consists of three components: regional conservation assessments (RCAs), regional conservation investment strategies (RCISs), and mitigation credit agreements (MCAs).

Regional Conservation Assessments (RCAs)

An RCA is a voluntary, non-regulatory, non-binding conservation assessment that includes information and analyses of important species, ecosystems, protected areas, and habitat linkages at the USDA ecoregion scale and may include more than one ecoregion. RCAs include information supporting development of long-term conservation priorities including ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, water conservation, and preservation of agricultural lands. RCAs also support the development of RCISs that will more specifically identify areas of greatest conservation value. An RCA is not required in order to develop an RCIS.

Regional Conservation Investment Strategies (RCISs)

An RCIS is a voluntary, non-regulatory, and non-binding conservation assessment that includes information and analyses relating to the conservation of focal species, their associated habitats, and the conservation status of the RCIS land base. Any public agency may develop an RCIS. An RCIS establishes biological goals and objectives at the species level and describes conservation actions
and habitat enhancement actions that, if implemented, will contribute to those goals and objectives. Those actions will benefit the conservation of focal species, habitat, and other natural resources and they may be used as a basis to provide advance mitigation through the development of credits (see MCA section below) or to inform other conservation investments.

The development of RCISs does not create, modify, or impose regulatory requirements or standards, regulate land use, establish land use designs, or affect the land use authority of a public agency. If approved by CDFW, an RCIS may be valid for up to 10 years. CDFW may extend the duration of an approved or amended RCIS for an additional 10 years provided the RCIS is updated to include new scientific information and the RCIS continues to meet the Program's requirements outlined in Fish and Game Code (Chapter 9, Section 1850, et seq.). Under the legislation, only eight RCISs may be approved by CDFW prior to January 1, 2020.

Conservation and Enhancement Actions

Examples of potential conservation or enhancement actions include but are not limited to:

- Land acquisition and protection
- Habitat creation & restoration
- Restoration of creeks and rivers
- Restoration of habitat on public land
- Installation of wildlife crossings and fish passage barrier removal

Mitigation Credit Agreements (MCAs)

An MCA is a mitigation credit agreement developed under an approved RCIS. An MCA is developed in collaboration with CDFW to create mitigation credits by implementing the conservation or habitat enhancement actions identified in an RCIS. An RCIS must be developed and approved before an MCA can be prepared. All MCAs must be located within the boundary of an approved RCIS. Under the legislation, no MCAs may be approved on or after January 1, 2020.

MCAs create credits that may be used as compensatory mitigation for impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act, the California Endangered Species Act, and the Lake and Streambed Alteration Program. Guidelines will provide information and processes on MCA development, review, and approval.

Any person or entity may enter into an MCA with CDFW to create credits, even if the person or entity was not involved in the development of the RCIS. Persons or entities may create and use, sell, or otherwise transfer mitigation credits upon CDFWs finding that credits have been created in accordance with Program requirements. The guidelines will include information on how transferred, sold, and utilized credits will be tracked.

Additional Resources


Habitat Conservation Planning Branch (https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Explore/Organization/HCPB)
1416 Ninth Street, 12th Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 653-4875
RCIS Documents

- Fees and Fee Structure (anticipated February 2017)
- Guidelines (anticipated May 2017)

Presentations


Program Contact

Jennifer Garrison, Senior Environmental Scientist

RCIS@wildlife.ca.gov (mailto:RCIS@wildlife.ca.gov)

(916) 653-9779
Good evening my name is Zobeida Sosa and I am here representing the Dolores Huerta Foundation as the Greenfield Community Organizer and as a Greenfield resident of 25 years. I live on 4516 Gordon St.

As a resident I am here to insure the open space element and the land use element meet the needs of my community. For example there are empty dirt lots and lack of safe bicycle routes to neighborhood Greenfield parks.

One dirt lot is located around 4543 Eve St. where there is trash consisted of broken couches, buckets, clothes, and tree debris. The children from the neighborhood have no safe clean open space to play freely. This resorts them to play on the street where there is consistent car traffic coming in from Pacheco Rd. The drivers of the vehicles do not drive with caution. They go over the residency speed limit.

According to Trust for Public, Bakersfield has 14.9 park acres per 1,000 residents. Greenfield, by contrast, has 1.77 park acres per 1,000 residents. The closest one being Stein Park a mile walk away from my neighborhood there is no sign of a bike friendly accessible pathway to get to the park. With the speed limit being 40 mph on Pacheco Rd. bicyclist are resulted to using the sidewalks where the pedestrian traffic is consistent.

Bringing the circulation, open space element and conservation element would benefit my community deeply by accessing healthy safe environments to host walking group activities, after school sports groups, or even just an accessible safe park where families can travel safely to and from.

We would like to invite to a tour of the Greenfield neighborhoods to showcase the areas of concern I addressed today. The Dolores Huerta Foundation/ Cultiva la Salud will follow up in writing with the recommendations the Greenfield residents want to make to the Kern County General Update Plan.

Thank you for listening.
There is a rumor going about regarding a cell tower in the Walker Basin/Caliente area.

Has there been a public meeting regarding this (if it is true)?

If so, would you please forward a copy of the notice to me?

Mark Mutz
Havilah
Hello,

We recently received the informational letter on the County's plan to update the Kern County General Plan. I have signed up for the updates to keep abreast of developments with the workshops and update itself. The City of Tehachapi is interested in knowing if the General Plan update will be triggering a update to the Greater Tehachapi Area Specific and Community Plan from 2010?

Trevor Hawkes
Planner
City of Tehachapi
Office: 661-822-2200 ext 118
thawkes@tehachapicityhall.com
China Grade Loop to Portal Alley  
April 24, 2017  
Jan. Gary (399-9289)  
Citizens for a New Oildale, Inc.

It has come to our attention that certain areas of Oildale are being used for dumping sites.

One was behind Von’s on N. Chester Avenue, where mattresses were the main issue. It was finally fenced and closed off.

There are several alleys in the Oildale area that have to be cleaned all the time. One is the alley behind Trout’s.

The alley between China Grade Loop and Portal is not really needed and I’m requesting that it be closed off. Perhaps three trucks use it per day that could use Manor Street which is one block away from their houses.
This alley has had to be cleaned probably three times this year already due to the mass of trash each dumping.
I have found unopened mail to several addresses and given it to the Post Office and told the Sheriff’s Department. Some opened mail was probably from the perpetrators.

There are no garages opening to the alley across from the old Union Avenue chain-link fence, and the closure could follow that in length. (A chain or poles might work.)
April 27, 2017

Sent Via Email

Ms. Lorelei H. Oviatt
AICP, Director
2700 “M” Street, Suite 100
Bakersfield, CA 93301-2323

Re: Comments In Response To Staff Report On General Plan Update Workshop #4

Dear Ms. Oviatt:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments and recommendations regarding the Staff Report entitled “General Plan Update Workshop #4 – Overview of the Metropolitan Bakersfield Land Use, Metropolitan Bakersfield Habitat Conservation Plan, and Water Element” (the “Staff Report”). We support Kern County’s decision to develop a water element and welcome this opportunity to integrate water and land use planning in Kern County. We believe certain changes to the scope of the water element should be made in order to address the needs of disadvantaged communities located within the County.

We note that these comments are preliminary, and that we will supplement them as necessary as the general plan update process continues.

A. Public Process

As an initial matter, we would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department to hold community workshops. We hope that community involvement remains a priority during the general plan update, and that the Department continues its partnership with the signing organizations during the environmental study and implementation phases.

B. The Water Element

Turning to the Staff Report, the following comments are made largely in response to Attachment 2, which includes a document setting forth potential water element concepts. As this document sets forth broad concepts rather than details, our comments are similarly high level and focus on ensuring that the water element encompasses all policy areas necessary to address the drinking water and wastewater needs of disadvantaged communities within Kern County.
Environmental justice is the heart of the General Plan and reflects environmental conditions and population vulnerability to pollution. Kern County is home to some of the most contaminated communities throughout California. It is critical as the County approaches the water element that it incorporate strong policies that will protect disadvantaged communities from health hazards due to oil refineries, pesticides, dairies, and the over extraction of our shared groundwater resources. Residents want strong water policies and regulations to assure clean, reliable and affordable drinking water, wastewater and stormwater services in existing communities.

In order to properly address environmental justice issues in Kern County, several additions and changes should be made to the outline included in Attachment 2. First, as acknowledged in the Staff Report, the water element included in the April General Plan Update must comply with the requirements of SB 1000 (Government Code § 65302(h)(1)), which require the County to analyze the environmental justice issues impacting disadvantaged communities and adopt objectives and policies to address those issues. In implementing SB 1000, the County should use the CalEnviroScreen tool, which is used to identify California communities that are disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution. The County should also incorporate the Analysis of Underserved Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities contained in Chapter 7 of the 2016 Housing Element Update.

Second, in addition to compliance with SB 1000 and SB 244, the water element should include mandatory requirements ensuring that the drinking water needs of existing disadvantaged communities are met before new developments are permitted within the county. New development should not come at the expense of existing communities that do not presently have access to sustainable, clean and affordable drinking water.

The same can be said with respect to access to wastewater services, as many communities in Kern County have failing septic systems and there is very limited funding at the local or State levels to address this issue when residents cannot afford the cost of repairing or replacing the system. The water element should address both wastewater consolidation and repair or replacement of failing systems.

Third, the water element should more expressly address recycled water and stormwater policies. Many disadvantaged communities faced severe flooding and associated problems over the recent wet winter, and more flooding is expected as the Sierra Nevada snowpack melts over the spring and summer. Stormwater retention is also an effective conservation method, and grant funding for stormwater projects is available.

Finally, in the interest of brevity, the following is a list of suggestions and questions that we have after reviewing the staff report. These are presented in no particular order.

1. We support the focused inclusion of consolidation of water systems in the concept document, especially in light of SB 88, but request that promotion of consolidation be expanded to include expansion of water systems to those presently on domestic wells, and consolidation of wastewater systems.
2. Strong policies should be included to prevent the construction of new developments which cannot demonstrate that their water use will not impact existing residents in a potentially impacted shared groundwater basin or customers of existing neighboring water systems. Again, service connections can help prevent such harm, but adequate well spacing can be used as an interim measure prior to service connections.

3. There should be a ban on new non-water system wells within the service area of public water systems in order to prevent impacts to a water system’s capacity.

4. The County must evaluate whether a water system servicing a new development has an adequate supply and distribution system to meet present and future needs.

5. SB 1263 (2016) allows the State Water Board to permit or deny new water systems in order to prevent unnecessary proliferation of new water systems which may not have the economies of scale to be sustainable. In line with this goal, the General Plan should encourage service extensions for new developments from the start, rather than applying for the creation of a new system.

6. To the extent that there is limited water supply for new housing developments, priority shall be given to construction of affordable housing.

7. The water element should expressly promote and discuss groundwater recharge including its potential to benefit water quality and quantity in disadvantaged communities.

8. What "alternative uses" are contemplated by the concept document for properties that have limited access to water?

9. Does the fact that the Tehachapi Specific Plan that Kern is using as an example covers adjudicated basins affect the water element outline?

10. The Tehachapi Specific Plan includes caps for additional residential development. If Kern County is contemplating similar caps, this will likely be problematic when applied to existing communities and construction of quality affordable housing.

11. The water element should include policies relating to ongoing periodic domestic well testing to determine water quality, focused on disadvantaged communities. Additionally, when problems are identified through testing, the County should develop procedures for working with domestic well owners to solve the problem(s).

12. With respect to annexations, the water element should direct that annexations should not be permitted for purposes of new development while disadvantaged communities lack drinking water and wastewater services.

13. We believe that the water element should address and regulate the use, reinjection and/or recycling of fracking water.

14. The water element should include support for Integrated Regional Water Management activities in the county and recognize the importance of inclusive regional water planning with diverse stakeholders in developing sustainable and multi-benefit solutions to local water challenges.

15. The County should support water purveyors in developing plans for responding to droughts and the effects of global climate change, including contingency plans, and suggest the County take an active role in leading this type of planning for those small water systems and self-suppliers not covered by Urban Water Management Plans as is now required by EO B-37-16.
16. The Tulare Lake Basin Disadvantaged Community Water Study of 2014 provided a list of more than 60 recommendations to help address DAC water and wastewater needs including various recommendations to be implemented by the four Basin counties. We suggest that each of the recommendations be included in the water element. See the attached executive summary of the Study for the list of recommendations.

17. An explicit and documented goal for the water element should be ensuring the human right to safe, clean, affordable and accessible drinking water in the County.

18. Policies should be in place to require, or at a minimum encourage, metering of all groundwater use.

19. With respect to coordination with GSAs and conformity with SGMA, we suggest that the County use the water element as an opportunity to include information and guidance to GSAs to integrate drinking water as a beneficial use of groundwater in the GSP development process.

20. Also with respect to coordination with GSAs and conformity with SGMA, we suggest an express requirement in the water element that disadvantaged communities within Kern County be included in GSAs and have a voice in the process.

* * * *

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns. We look forward to working with Kern County throughout the general plan update process and with respect to the development of a water element.

Best,

Patricia Leal
Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability
Policy Advocate

Gustavo Aguirre
Center on Race Poverty & the Environment
Organizing Director

Kristin Dobbin
Community Water Center
Regional Water Management Coordinator
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

In partnership with the Department of Water Resources (DWR), the County of Tulare has undertaken the Tulare Lake Basin Disadvantaged Community Water Study (TLB Study) to develop an integrated water quality and wastewater treatment program plan to address the drinking water and wastewater needs of disadvantaged communities in the Tulare Lake Basin, as appropriated by Senate Bill SBX2 1 (California Water Code §83002(b)(3)(D)) (see Appendix A). The objectives of the TLB Study are defined within the grant agreement as follows:

- Develop a plan that provides rural, disadvantaged communities with a safe, clean and affordable potable water supply and effective and affordable wastewater treatment and disposal.

- The plan will include recommendations for planning, infrastructure, and other water management actions, as well as specific recommendations for regional drinking water facilities, regional wastewater treatment facilities, conjunctive use sites and groundwater recharge, groundwater for surface water exchanges, related infrastructure, project sustainability, and cost sharing mechanisms.

- Identify projects and programs that will create long-term reliability, while optimizing the ongoing operation and maintenance and management costs for small water and wastewater systems.

The Tulare Lake Basin Study Area encompasses most of the four-county area, including Fresno, Kern, Kings, and Tulare Counties. The Tulare Lake Basin Study Area boundary is shown in Figure 1-1. The TLB Study focused on the drinking water and wastewater needs of rural and unincorporated communities that meet the Proposition 84 definition of "disadvantaged community", which is a community whose median household income is 80 percent or less of the statewide median household income. The TLB Study includes community water systems, wastewater systems, and rural communities with private wells and septic systems. Approximately 353 of the 530 communities identified within the Tulare Lake Basin Study Area are considered to be disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged.

In order to meet the objectives of this Study, the following five tasks were performed, in accordance with the tasks outlined in the grant agreement from DWR (Appendix B):

1. Baseline Data Gathering, Mapping, and Database Creation of Disadvantaged Communities in the Tulare Lake Basin

2. Stakeholder Consultation and Community Outreach

3. Selection of Pilot Projects and Studies to Develop Representative Solutions to Priority Issues

4. Implementation of Pilot Project Stakeholder Process to Develop Studies and Representative Solutions to Priority Issues
5. Preparation of Final Report

Database

The County of Tulare and project team developed a database of all disadvantaged communities in the Tulare Lake Basin. The project team coordinated with other local, state, and federal agencies as well as appropriate organizations to collect existing data and create the database. The project team utilized Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to map the location of disadvantaged communities in the Tulare Lake Basin and other available and relevant data in order to identify regional challenges and opportunities.

The database is a collection of information from PolicyLink, CDPH, Self-Help Enterprises, County of Fresno, and County of Tulare, Carolina Balazs, Provost & Pritchard GIS data resources, as well as other sources. The database has been reviewed to evaluate the water quality and supply source issues as well as wastewater treatment and disposal issues within the Study Area. The database will continue to be maintained and updated by the County of Tulare after completion of this Study.

Based on the database collected for this Study, there are 353 disadvantaged communities (DACs) identified within the Tulare Lake Basin Study Area, of which 201 are severely disadvantaged communities (SDACs). Collectively, disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged communities are referred to as DACs. Many water and wastewater systems serving these DACs face challenges meeting drinking water and wastewater regulations. Disadvantaged communities within the Study Area are shown in Figure 1-2 through Figure 1-5.

Approximately 196 of the 353 DACs in the Study Area had water quality data available. Of those DACs with water quality data available, approximately 89 were considered to have a water quality issue, based on an exceedance of a drinking water maximum contaminant level (MCL) of a primary constituent more than one time between 2008 and 2010. While not all of these systems were in violation of a drinking water regulation, an exceedance indicates there may be a potential issue. Many communities (approximately 96) also rely on a single source of water supply, typically a single well. This puts the system at risk if that well were to fail. Communities with the various water quality and supply issues are presented in Figure 3-1 through Figure 3-4.

In addition to water supply issues facing DACs, there are also challenges related to the treatment and disposal of wastewater. Of the 353 DACs in the Study Area, 38 communities have their own wastewater treatment facility (WWTF). Some of the communities not having their own wastewater treatment facility may have their wastewater treated at a nearby WWTF operated by another community or city, or they may rely on individual septic systems. Of these 38 DACs with WWTFs, 25 are listed as having a violation of their waste discharge requirements.

Stakeholder Process

The County of Tulare established a basin-wide Stakeholder Oversight Advisory Committee (SOAC) comprised of community representatives, as well as regulatory and funding agency representatives and other organizations that work on and are familiar
with disadvantaged community water and wastewater needs. The SOAC worked with the project team to identify priority issues, potential pilot projects, and review project recommendations.

The project team also conducted outreach to community representatives, including residents and local water board members that were the subject of individual pilot projects. These community representatives assisted the project team in confirming the viability of the proposed solutions.

In order to ensure that each pilot project was developed with input from stakeholders, a separate Pilot Project Stakeholder Advisory Group (PSAG) was convened for each of the four pilot studies. Each group was comprised of members of impacted communities, regulatory and funding agencies, local water or wastewater providers, and other agencies and organizations as appropriate, in order to provide input and recommendations to the project team.

An evaluation of each stakeholder process was conducted to learn from the process and develop conclusions and recommendations for improvements to stakeholder involvement processes. A Stakeholder Involvement Report describing the stakeholder processes conducted, evaluation criteria, and lessons learned is provided in Appendix H.

Project Focus and Goals

The main goals of the Study were: (1) to provide useful information and tools that can function as a roadmap or guidelines for multiple audiences, and (2) to provide recommendations for legislation, funding opportunities, and other support that Federal, State, and local agencies can provide to address the water and wastewater issues in the Study Area.

The information presented in this study includes descriptions of actual community efforts toward solving water supply, water quality, wastewater treatment and disposal, and/or system efficiency challenges. The information may also include recommendations for other communities to consider regarding:

a) Steps toward solving remaining existing water supply and wastewater collection or treatment challenges,

b) Identifying obstacles interfering with solving remaining existing water supply and wastewater collection or treatment challenges, and

c) Steps toward minimizing or mitigating future water supply and wastewater collection or treatment issues.

Identification of Issues and Potential Solutions

In consultation with the SOAC, the project team utilized the database to identify common problems associated with providing safe, reliable water and wastewater services to disadvantaged communities. Using this list of common problems, the project team worked with the SOAC to identify priority issues facing disadvantaged communities in the Tulare Lake Basin. From the list of common issues that was
developed, five (5) priority issues were identified through the SOAC. The five priority issues included:

- Lack of funding to offset increasingly expensive operations and maintenance costs in large part due to lack of economies of scale;
- Lack of technical, managerial, and financial (TMF) capacity by water and wastewater providers;
- Poor water quality;
- Inadequate or unaffordable funding or funding constraints to make improvements; and
- Lack of informed, empowered, or engaged residents.

The project team developed a list of potential solution sets or alternatives to address each of the priority issues identified. Using the list of potential alternatives to address the identified priority issues, the SOAC selected a final roster of representative pilot projects and studies that are the focus of this Final Report. Four (4) pilot studies were selected, including:

1. Management and Non-Infrastructure Solutions to Reduce Costs and Improve Efficiency;
2. Technical Solutions to Improve Efficiency and Reduce Operation & Maintenance;
3. New Source Development; and
4. Individual Household Solutions.

**Four Pilot Projects**

The project team further developed and evaluated the possible solutions recommended under each of the four (4) pilot studies identified. Recommendations and roadmaps for each pilot study were developed in consultation with the Pilot Project Stakeholder Advisory Groups as well as pilot specific Community Review groups. Full reports of the four pilot studies are included in *Books 2-5* of this Final Report. Recommendations developed through each of the pilot studies are included in the plan recommendations described in Section 13.

Decision trees were also developed for each of the pilot studies (*Appendix J*). The decision trees are intended to be a tool or roadmap for community leaders (or private well owners in the case of the Individual Households pilot study) to use to assist them in developing appropriate solutions to their water and wastewater challenges.

Recommendations developed for each of the four pilot studies include the following:

- A description of the particular problem being addressed;
- A description of the solution(s) recommended by the pilot project;
- Funding opportunities available to implement the recommended solutions;
DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITY WATER STUDY FOR THE TULARE LAKE BASIN

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- A discussion of steps that may be taken to ensure long-term sustainability of the implemented solution;
- Identification of any obstacles or barriers to implementation of the recommended solution; and
- Recommendations for how to eliminate those obstacles or barriers.

Funding Opportunities

State regulators and funders can begin encouraging solutions to drinking water and wastewater needs by providing educational material as well as funding opportunities. Existing funding opportunities and proposed drinking water legislation are presented in this Study. Traditional drinking water funding programs include the Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (SDWSRF), Proposition 84, Department of Water Resources Integrated Regional Water Management Program (IRWM), Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development. Some wastewater funding opportunities include the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF), the Small Community Wastewater Grant program (SCWG), Community Development Block Grant Program, and United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In order to meet the objectives of this Study, baseline data was gathered, stakeholder consultation and community outreach was conducted, priority issues were identified, pilot studies were developed to address those priority issues, and this Final Report was prepared to document the process and develop recommendations for a plan to implement solutions identified through the pilot studies.

Each of the pilot studies evaluated various solution types and alternatives to help address the different water and wastewater issues identified for the Study Area. However, there were barriers identified through various stakeholder efforts that make implementation of such alternatives challenging. The purpose of the recommendations presented in this Final Report is to provide a plan to address the priority issues and barriers identified through the stakeholder processes and pilot studies. Implementation of the recommendations discussed herein would enable water and sewer service providers in rural, disadvantaged communities to provide safe, clean and affordable potable water supply and effective and affordable wastewater treatment and disposal.

Summary of Findings

Upon completion of the Study, several major successes of the project were noted:

- A comprehensive inventory of DACs has been prepared;
- A “roadmap” or set of decision trees was developed to guide communities and funding agencies through some critical steps to selecting an appropriate alternative for their specific issues and situation;
DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITY WATER STUDY FOR THE TULARE LAKE BASIN

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- Through various stakeholder outreach efforts, the interest and awareness of communities related to water and wastewater issues within the Tulare Lake Basin was expanded;
- Priority issues common to communities throughout the Study Area, and various obstacles and barriers to address those issues, have been identified and acknowledged;
- Recommendations for local service providers, various regulatory and funding agencies, as well as the Legislature were developed to help overcome those obstacles and barriers so that the priority issues afflicting DACs within the Study Area can be adequately addressed;
- A database of DACs within the Tulare Lake Basin, and their water and wastewater challenges was compiled; and
- The Tulare Lake Basin Disadvantaged Water Study Final Report was compiled and made available on the Tulare County website.

For communities that are interested in pursuing any of the alternatives presented in this Study, action is recommended in addition to the plan recommendations below. To implement an alternative, communities should work on the following:

- Prepare a Self Assessment of the existing infrastructure, capacity, demands, and items that may impact any of the items (information may be available in recent sanitary surveys and inspection reports) (see Appendix K)
- Seek funding to conduct a feasibility study to evaluate alternatives
- Prepare a Technical, Managerial, and Financial Assessment (see Appendix L)
- Consider the impact to consumers (cost per connection)
- Consider the impact to water system (revenues versus expenses)
- Confirm that the solution will satisfy regulatory requirements

Plan Recommendations

Tulare County and the project team were tasked with preparing a plan to address the drinking water and wastewater needs of disadvantaged communities in the Tulare Lake Basin. Through the SOAC process and in consultation with the database developed through this Study, several common problems were identified as the major challenges faced by disadvantaged communities in the Study Area. Of the common problems identified, five (5) priority issues were selected through the SOAC, as discussed above.

Four pilot projects were selected which sought to identify: 1) solution alternatives to address those priority issues; 2) funding opportunities that are available to implement the recommended solutions; 3) steps to insure long-term sustainability of an implemented solution; 4) identification of obstacles and barriers to implementation of a recommended solution; and 5) a proposal for how to eliminate those obstacles or barriers. Those recommendations related to funding opportunities, long-term
sustainability, and overcoming obstacles and barriers to implementing solutions to the priority issues that have been identified, are the basis for the plan to address the drinking water and wastewater needs of DACs in the Study Area. Implementation of the recommendations presented herein will set the stage to start making progress toward resolution of the priority issues that are faced by DACs in the Tulare Lake Basin. These recommendations therefore serve as steps toward improving the drinking water and wastewater challenges of disadvantaged communities in the Tulare Lake Basin, and toward reducing the instances of perpetuating the circumstances that contribute to the creation of additional challenges.

Various state, federal, and local agencies are involved directly in the provision of drinking water and wastewater services, or provide regulatory oversight of drinking water and wastewater systems. This plan describes various recommendations on how the appropriate agencies at various levels can help the communities in the region address their water and wastewater challenges.

Recommendations were developed to facilitate and encourage potential solutions aimed at addressing the five (5) priority issues that were selected through the SOAC. Additionally, through the course of the Study, several other common problems that were previously identified also emerged as important issues to be addressed. Those additional common problems included the following:

- Lack of vision and integrated planning to develop solutions (ranked 6th by the SOAC on the list of common problems, see Appendix G);
- Inadequate existing infrastructure (ranked 7th by the SOAC);
- Lack of information on DACs (ranked 8th by the SOAC);
- A changing regulatory environment (ranked 9th by the SOAC); and
- Insufficient quantity of water (ranked 10th by the SOAC).

Seven (7) main categories of recommendations were identified to address the five (5) priority issues as well as the additional common problems determined to be of high importance. The seven main categories of recommendations are as follows:

1. Improve Local Technical, Managerial and Financial Capacity
2. Improve Operation and Maintenance Funding
3. Improve Water Supply Quality and Reliability
4. Improve Funding for Disadvantaged Communities
5. Improve Disadvantaged Community Awareness and Participation
6. Improve Land Use Planning to Minimize Creation of New Water/Wastewater Issues
7. Develop and Maintain Information on DAC Water/Wastewater Needs
Complete recommendations are presented in Section 13 of this Final Report. A handout document of the recommendations is provided in Appendix N. A summary of the recommendations is provided below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Lead Agency/Entity</th>
<th>Pg #</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>13.1 Improve Local TMF Capacity</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority Issue: Lack of Technical Managerial and Financial Capacity by Water and Wastewater Providers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13.1.1 Enhance Internal Awareness</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A. Ensure that the specifics regarding existing infrastructure are known. The location, size, condition, and depth of private well or septic system facilities should be known by the property owner and maintained in a database by the county [See Recommendation 13.7.1.C].</td>
<td>Private well or septic owner</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Ensure that specifics regarding existing water or wastewater system infrastructure are known. The location, size, condition, and capacity of facilities should be known and records maintained by the community services management personnel.</td>
<td>Water or wastewater system owner</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Conduct a review of fiscal resources annually and determine the necessary levels of reserves for replacement and maintenance of infrastructure. Determine an appropriate time frame and funding plan to achieve the necessary levels of reserves.</td>
<td>Water or wastewater system owner</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Consider adding a requirement for more frequent or comprehensive and standardized assessment of TMF capacity for local water and wastewater providers, as well as updating regulatory and permit requirements for water and wastewater systems to clarify that providers must meet TMF requirements to maintain a permit to operate.</td>
<td>State Agencies and Local Primacy Agencies</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13.1.2. Provide Assistance and Training</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A. Attend training programs and encourage or require staff and board members to attend training programs.</td>
<td>Water or wastewater system owner</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Create a single local point of contact for local service providers and private well owners to obtain information and access resources to provide guidance related to water and wastewater challenges.</td>
<td>Counties and State Agencies</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Consider providing regular Special District Board training opportunities, including leadership and ethics training.</td>
<td>Counties</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Continue to convene a DAC focused stakeholder group for the Tulare Lake Basin, and expand outreach to further enhance DAC, County, IRWM, and other local stakeholder engagement and participation.</td>
<td>Non-profit organizations, Counties, IRWMs, State Agencies</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITY WATER STUDY FOR THE TULARE LAKE BASIN

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<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E. Target existing technical assistance training programs to specific communities who have shown a need and interest, to focus on their needs and provide locally available and specialized training programs.</td>
<td>State Agencies and Technical Assistance Providers</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Improve the operator certification process by providing more frequent testing, and offering certification tests in more locations.</td>
<td>State Agencies</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Consider developing operator training programs at local community colleges to address the lack of licensed water and wastewater system operators.</td>
<td>Local Community Colleges</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 13.1.3. Encourage Sharing of Resources to Build TMF Capacity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Pg #</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Even outside of larger infrastructure project development processes, alternatives such as sharing common resources, forming joint governmental agencies, or other forms of consolidation should be evaluated to determine if O&amp;M costs could be reduced or TMF capacity improved. [Same as Recommendation 13.2.1.B]</td>
<td>Water or wastewater system owners, state and federal funding agencies, LAFCo</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Establish local DAC coordinator(s) for the Tulare Lake Basin to support DAC outreach, help link communities to funding sources and training opportunities, and help integrate DACs into planning processes, including IRWMPs.</td>
<td>Existing Local Non-Profit Organizations, with support from State Agencies, Counties, IRWMs</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Support the evaluation and development of a regional entity or entities to provide regional operations, management, or other services in regions that are interested in exploring such services.</td>
<td>Local Non-Profit Organizations, Counties, LAFCo, Legislature</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 13.2 Improve O&M Funding

**Priority Issue: Lack of Funding to Offset Increasingly Expensive Operations and Maintenance Costs in Large Part due to Lack of Economies of Scale**

#### 13.2.1 Reduce Costs

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<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Pg #</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Project alternatives should be analyzed to minimize ongoing costs. If O&amp;M costs cannot be supported, other alternatives should be pursued.</td>
<td>Water or wastewater system owner</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Even outside of larger infrastructure project development processes, alternatives such as sharing common resources, forming joint governmental agencies, or other forms of consolidation should be evaluated to determine if O&amp;M costs could be reduced or TMF capacity improved. [Same as Recommendation 13.1.3.A]</td>
<td>Water or wastewater system owner, state and federal funding agencies, LAFCo</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Consider providing increased funding for capital improvements for water (or wastewater) related projects when it would allow for reduced O&amp;M costs over the long term.</td>
<td>State and Federal funding agencies</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Support the development and implementation of water conservation policies/measures by providing incentives and technical assistance to DACs and promoting the use</td>
<td>State Agencies</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<tr>
<td>of water and energy efficient equipment upgrades, such as energy-efficient or solar powered pumps.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>13.2.2 Increase Revenues</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Evaluate water and sewer rates at least every three to five years and when any major improvements are constructed, and modify as appropriate to achieve the necessary financial resources for annual operations and reserves.</td>
<td>Water or wastewater system owner</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Each local service provider (water or wastewater) should develop a single rate structure (which may include different categories, such as residential, commercial, and industrial), and no exceptions should be made to that structure. A tiered rate structure should be developed with appropriate base rates and water usage rates to encourage conservation while ensuring sufficient revenue.</td>
<td>Water or wastewater system owner</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Seek funding to install or replace water meters. The replacement meters should be capable of being read remotely (if the system size or agreements with neighboring systems support it) to reduce labor costs.</td>
<td>Water or wastewater system owner, technical assistance providers</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Establish appropriate connection fees for any new connections to support the capital improvements required to provide service to those new connections.</td>
<td>Water or wastewater system owner</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Consider establishing a transitional funding program to assist with O&amp;M costs on a temporary basis.</td>
<td>State agencies and the legislature</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13.2.3 Provide Assistance, Training, and Information</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Develop an O&amp;M plan that includes the types of ongoing O&amp;M costs needed, O&amp;M servicing and parts replacement schedule, and amount needed for O&amp;M fund reserve to help the community plan ahead to address covering O&amp;M adequately.</td>
<td>Water or wastewater system owner</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Continue to provide, expand, and better publicize technical assistance training on developing rate studies and establishing rate policies, which should also include guidance on conducting a Prop 218 hearing.</td>
<td>State Agencies, Technical assistance providers</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13.3 Improve Water Supply Quality and Reliability</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority Issues: Poor Water Quality, Inadequate Supply Reliability, Inadequate Existing Infrastructure, and Insufficient Quantity of Water</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13.3.1 Prevent Worsening of Problems</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A. Do not allow new connections if the service capacity is not confirmed. This may require imposition of a moratorium. Developing appropriate connection fees, as recommended above, is necessary to provide a means to ensure that capacity can be made available for planned new connections.</td>
<td>Water or wastewater system owner</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Recommendation

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<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B. [See Recommendations under &quot;Improve Land Use Planning to Minimize Creation of New Water/Wastewater Issues]</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Improve Groundwater Management Planning to address declining water levels and increased water quality contaminant levels, and evaluate ways the two trends may be exacerbating each other.</td>
<td>State Agencies</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Clarify the interpretation of a well site control zone with a 50-foot radius, as referred to in Title 22, Chapter 16, Article, Section 64560 of the California Regulations Related to Drinking Water.</td>
<td>State Agencies</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Consider ways to encourage and provide funding to sewer communities that rely on individual septic systems that are failing or are on inadequately sized lots.</td>
<td>SWRCB, RWQCB and other Funding Agencies</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Allow drinking water funding agencies to fund infrastructure for fire flow requirements. Where affordability or feasibility of the project is jeopardized by meeting full fire flow requirements, also allow drinking water projects to be funded for domestic purposes provided a limited level of fire flow is available. Where a viable option, the feasibility of installing a dual water distribution system to meet domestic supply and fire flow requirements, should be considered (especially where irrigation demands can be accommodated through the non-potable system used for fire flow).</td>
<td>County Fire, County Board of Supervisors, Funding Agencies</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 13.3.2 Encourage Shared Solutions to Reduce Vulnerability

A. Provide funding opportunities to encourage the development of regional cooperation, partnerships, and consolidation of services, where appropriate. | State Agencies | 229  |

### 13.4 Improve Funding for DACs

**Priority Issue: Inadequate or Unaffordable Funding or Funding Constraints to Make Improvements**

#### 13.4.1 Improve Scoring Criteria and Guidelines

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Consider changes on Category E (insufficient source water capacity or delivery capability) project rankings, to make it easier to get funding for that category of projects.</td>
<td>State Agencies</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Continue the Pre-Planning and Legal Entity Formation Assistance Program. Consider creation of similar programs for wastewater for areas currently on septic.</td>
<td>State Agencies</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Continue the Consolidation Incentive Program, however, modify the system so that large systems do not obtain benefits that are significantly out of proportion to the benefits provided by consolidation. Also consider expanding the consolidation incentive program and make it available to larger systems seeking to assist communities of private well owners impacted by the drought and/or facing water quality challenges.</td>
<td>State Agencies</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<tr>
<td>D. Consider ways to expedite the funding process, so</td>
<td>State and Federal Funding Agencies</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that communities applying for funding do not spend several years drinking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>water that does not meet primary drinking water standards, and/or relying on</td>
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<td>insufficient water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>E. Streamline the process for payment of claims for state-funded projects,</td>
<td>State Funding Agencies</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>so that local water providers can</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>receive more timely reimbursement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. Require privately owned for-profit systems to conform to all requirements</td>
<td>State Agencies</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(including audits and other fiscal requirements) of publicly owned systems</td>
<td></td>
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<td>in order to receive public funding assistance.</td>
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#### 13.4.2 Target Outreach and Technical Assistance

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<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Lead Agency/Entity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Local service providers should attend existing grant application workshops,</td>
<td>Water or wastewater system owner</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>including CFCC Funding Fairs, and participate in other training opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>provided through SWRCB, CWEA, CRWA, RCAC, and other resources.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Participate in Integrated Regional Water Management Planning group</td>
<td>Water or wastewater system owner</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meetings and consider becoming an “Interested Party” or “Member” of an IRWMP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. IRWM groups should consider organizing pre-application and grant</td>
<td>IRWM groups</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>application workshops or training opportunities for DACs that are</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“Interested Parties” or “Members” of the IRWM group, as well as prepare and</td>
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<tr>
<td>distribute outreach and educational materials to those DACs as funding from</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DWR is made available.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Consider ways to allow communities in IRWM “white areas” (areas not</td>
<td>DWR, IRWM groups</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>currently within and IRWM group boundary) to participate in the IRWM process.</td>
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#### 13.5 Improve DAC Awareness and Participation

**Priority Issue: Lack of Informed, Empowered, or Engaged Residents**

#### 13.5.1 Provide Community Outreach and Engagement

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<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Lead Agency/Entity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Provide the community as much information as possible on potential</td>
<td>Local water or wastewater providers</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>projects, and opportunity to provide input early on in the process.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Attempt to use in-person, phone or mail outreach to DAC residents as</td>
<td>Local water or wastewater providers</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>much as possible; email and website should be utilized, but are not sufficient</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>on their own.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Expand community engagement in the development of projects. Funding to</td>
<td>Local water or wastewater providers and State Agencies</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>facilitate community engagement should be included in project budgets and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>standard approved scopes of work for project development at both the planning</td>
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<td>and construction phase.</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>13.6 Improve Land Use Planning to Minimize Creation of New Water/Wastewater Issues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority Issue: Lack of Vision and Integrated Planning to Develop Solutions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13.6.1 Restricting Permits for Development</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A. County planning departments should require any new development near an existing system (within 1-2 miles) to evaluate the feasibility of connecting to the existing system, rather than permit the creation of a new system.</td>
<td>County Planning Departments, LAFCos, State Agencies</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Require and actively support investment in bringing existing systems into compliance and developing long-term sustainable and affordable solutions before allowing growth, and as part of permitting growth in communities where the existing water system cannot accommodate growth due to inadequate drinking or wastewater infrastructure.</td>
<td>County, LAFCo</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. In cases where there is a moratorium on connecting to a public water system, the county should not issue a permit to drill a private well on a property within the district boundary. Additionally, public water systems should consider implementing an ordinance prohibiting new well drilling within the PWS boundary and notify the county of this ordinance.</td>
<td>County, local service provider</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. In areas where there is no existing water system infrastructure available, building permits should only be issued if adequate supply and quality from a private well is confirmed to be available. This may include installation of a viable treatment system (POU or POE) with acceptable maintenance service.</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Provide enforcement action when people do not obtain a permit for drilling of a new well or installation of an on-site wastewater system.</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13.6.2 Planning and Zoning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. All counties shall identify areas where new growth should be directed based on the existence of public water and sewer governance and infrastructure. Counties shall only zone for residential development where there is safe and reliable water, except in situations where there are viable plans to provide safe and reliable drinking water, and additional growth will create more economy of scale and bring a greater rate payer base that will allow for a system to be sustained.</td>
<td>County Planning Departments, LAFCo</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The water quality from private wells shall be analyzed and any contaminants exceeding primary drinking water quality standards should be disclosed to the buyer upon sale of a property.</td>
<td>State Agencies, Department of Real Estate, Legislature</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Recommendation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Lead Agency/Entity</th>
<th>Pg #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C. Clarify conflicting policies related to farm worker housing. The policy that counties shall permit and encourage the development of sufficient farm labor housing (California Health and Safety Code Section 17021.6) can be inconsistent with the requirement to provide safe drinking water (in areas where water quality does not meet drinking water standards).</td>
<td>State Agencies</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 13.7 Develop & Maintain Information on DAC Water/Wastewater Needs

#### Priority Issue: Lack of Information on DACs

#### 13.7.1 Improve Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Tulare County should continue to update and maintain the database that was developed through this Study.</th>
<th>Tulare County (Lead), Fresno, Kern, and Kings Counties</th>
<th>246</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B. Tulare County should track progress with respect to the priority issues identified in this Study. The current condition should be clearly identified. Monitor and measure the success of improving the circumstances through implementation of recommendations of this Study, relative condition of drinking water supplies, and condition of wastewater service.</td>
<td>Tulare County (Lead), Fresno, Kern, and Kings Counties</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Improve County Environmental Health Department responsibilities, fee authorities, and requirements to permit and monitor on-site systems.</td>
<td>County Environmental Health Departments</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 13.7.2 Improve Data Management and Accessibility

| A. [See Recommendation 13.7.1.C] | County Environmental Health Departments | 248  |
| B. Develop a centralized reporting and data management system so that water supply related data can be shared and coordinated among agencies. For example, well logs retained by DWR can be correlated with water quality information retained by SWRCB. This will likely require confidentiality agreements between agencies. | State Agencies | 248  |
| C. Disclosure of water quality data – Require disclosure to the buyer of water quality on sale of property. In areas where there is a Public Water System, this may be in the form of recent Consumer Confidence Reports. For properties with private wells, this would be laboratory reports for samples collected from the private well. | State Agencies, Department of Real Estate | 249  |
May 25, 2017

Kern County Planning Commission
801 K Street, MS 24-02
Bakersfield, CA

Members of the Kern County Planning Commission:

The California Independent Petroleum Association (CIPA) appreciates the opportunity to submit comments as a part of Kern County’s General Plan Update. CIPA is a non-profit, non-partisan trade association representing approximately 500 independent crude oil and natural gas producers, royalty owners, and service and supply companies operating in California, many right here in Kern County.

In 2015, the Kern County Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to amend the County’s Petroleum Ordinance and created a local permitting program. Since this action, the County of Kern has processed thousands of permits and our members have worked cooperatively with Planning Department staff on the new program’s implementation. Kern County’s local oil and gas industry contributes greatly to our local community and is an essential component of Kern County’s tax base. A successful General Plan Update should help identify the County’s future land use and development policies. The continued stability and growth of our local oil and gas industry must be a guiding principle in this process. It is critical that any action taken through this process help bolster our oil and gas industry.

CIPA is committed to working with the County of Kern during this update and looks forward to our continued partnership supporting one of the strongest economic drivers in this community. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Rock Zierman
Chief Executive Officer
California Independent Petroleum Association

cc: Lorelei Oviatt, Director, Planning and Natural Resources Department
May 25, 2017

Planning Commission of Kern County
1115 Truxton Ave
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Re: General Plan Update

Dear Commissioners,

Unable to attend tonight’s session on the General Plan update I would like to address an issue that is important to me. I would like to see a separate section in the document concerning a Climate Change Action Plan. Among my reasons I would include the importance of sustainable energy options in Kern County’s economy.

The wind and solar sector of our energy production are booming, create and hire many workers and are developments of which we are proud. It would make sense to state so in the plan, with a focus on more development in these industries. In addition encouragement of solar on houses, charging stations for electric cars, strong statements about efficiency in building and conservation if stated separately, would be much more obvious than if you include these things in an “infused” fashion.

I urge you to have the staff highlight our commitment to future plans that show that we have and will do more to address climate change. It would be a bold step in the right direction to focus our communities attention on this most important issue of our time.

Sincerely,

Maria Polite
3131 La Cresta Dr
Bakersfield CA 93305
May 25, 2017

Ms. Lorelei H. Oviatt
AICP, Director
2700 “M” Street, Suite 100
Bakersfield, CA 93301-2323

Re: Comments In Response To Staff Report On General Plan Update Workshop #5

Dear Ms. Oviatt:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments and recommendations regarding the Staff Report entitled “General Plan Update Workshop #5 – Overview of the Kern County General Plan Energy and Military Element.” We believe certain changes to the scope of the Energy element should be made in order to address the needs of disadvantaged communities located within the County.

We note that these comments are preliminary, and that we will supplement them as necessary as the general plan update process continues.

A. Energy Element

The General Plan plays a fundamental role in creating the conditions to either advance or hinder the achievement of environmental justice by creating a healthy living environment for all of the County’s residents, and the General Plan’s energy policies are among those at the heart of the Plan’s ability environmental justice. It is critical as the County incorporate strong policies into the Energy Element to facilitate and incentivize the development of alternative energy resources with fewer human and environmental impacts. This includes policies to support and accelerate the County’s shift away from dirty development to clean energy technologies, such as wind and solar. It is imperative that the County take a system-wide approach that assesses opportunities for clean energy development and energy conservation options that reduce residents’ and business’ energy expenses. These options range from incentives and support for efficient heating and cooling systems, community solar panels, low-flow toilets, home insulation, or electric vehicle charging stations, targeting low-income households and communities in particular, to the creation of green jobs located in alignment with housing and transportation planning. Low-income residents often pay significant portions of their income on expensive electricity bills. As weather patterns continue to become more extreme as climate change progresses, residents’ utility costs will likely only continue to increase. The Energy Element should build
in strong policies to assure affordable, reliable, clean and renewable energy sources in the County’s communities, and the most vulnerable communities in particular, now and into the future.

In preparing the Energy Element, the County must ensure that it complies with the requirements of Government Code Section 65302(h)(1) (SB 1000), including to identify objectives and policies to reduce the uhealth risks in disadvantaged communities by reducing pollution exposure, among other goals, and by creating opportunities for civic engagement in public decisionmaking processes relating to energy development. For example, it should address the impact of small producers (less than 6,000 barrels of oil a day) on local communities. It should also address the concern of abandoned oil and gas equipment, above ground tanks and other attractive nuisances. The permitting processes should ensure residents in a community near prospective oil development or industrial facilities to be notified of any new proposed uses or expansions and have a say in the process. A recommendation is to create an Environmental Justice advisory council to discuss sittings of new facilities or expansions near DACs and evaluate health impacts.

B. Questions and Clarifications

1) On page 1 of the staff report dated May 25, 2017, it mentions that the county has existing goals. What are these goals and how will they be implemented?

2) Moreover, what role will the County have over oil and gas activities? Who will be the LEAD agency on oil and gas permitting overall?

* * * * *

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns. We look forward to working with Kern County throughout the general plan update process and implementation phase.

Best,
Patricia Leal
Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability
Policy Advocate

Gustavo Aguirre Jr.
Central California Environmental Justice Network
Project Coordinator
May 25, 2017

TO: The Kern County Planning Commission

RE: General Plan Update Workshop #5-Energy

The National Audubon Society has taken a leadership role in addressing the importance of climate change on birds. In 2014, Audubon scientists published a report that indicated that 318 bird species are threatened by climate change, either by altering current breeding locations causing birds to migrate to other areas or the complete elimination of a species. The report indicates that this dire analysis of the consequences of climate change to birds can be addressed and reduced by taking steps to reduce carbon emissions and greenhouse gases. The time line that the scientists gave is that steps must be taken by 2050 to avert a catastrophic loss of species. Audubon also understands that climate changes will affect humans to a great extent, from farming to water supplies.

The Audubon Society has been a strong and vocal advocate of the use of non-fossil sources of energy such as solar and wind. Kern County is a major producer of electricity via large scale wind and solar projects. This accomplishment requires that the County take the leadership in requiring renewable energy sources to be used for transportation, commercials, and residential use. The best approach in applying this leadership is through a general plan that has a specific Climate Action Plan (CAP) incorporated as a separate element,

We believe that a specific CAP, as an element in the General Plan, would be the best way to reach specific goals by delineating those areas that must be addressed in planning documents. A separate, stand-alone CAP would be far favorable to one that is imbedded in various elements of the plan. A CAP allows agencies and the public to view directly the steps and process in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It will list specific steps and remedies that should be considered. It also is the best conduit to evaluate new development proposals, especially the associated transportation issues. A CAP thus becomes a measurement tool that will be applied to a variety of planning actions. By having it as a stand-alone element of the plan, it becomes a valuable guidance tool.

The County of Tulare is our neighbor to the north. In 2010 it adopted General Plan 2030. Within the plan, a CAP is incorporated as a separate element. This step is endorsed and recommended by the Institute for Local Government. It was founding in 1955 and is based in Sacramento. The institute’s goal is to assist local government leaders to govern effectively and to work collaboratively to foster healthy and sustainable communities. In support of the Institute’s position, Matthew Rodriquez, Secretary for Environmental
Protection, of the Office of the Governor of California, issued a report in 2015 entitled "Climate Change Research Plan for California". The report calls for each county to incorporate a CAP within its general plan. Such action will ensure that the objectives and actions regarding climate change that has been developed for the state will be addressed at the county level.

I have excerpted sections of the Tulare County General Plan regarding a CAP. I have incorporated them as an addendum to my comments.

Sincerely,

Harry Loeve, Conservation Chair

ADDENDUM: EXCERTS FROM THE TUARE COUNTY CLIMATE ACTION PLAN (2010)

Climate Action Plan Description
This CAP follows a four-step process recommended by the Institute for Local Government. First, an inventory of greenhouse gas emission sources was developed for a base year (2007) to identify the most important categories and potential for emission reductions. Second, future year inventories for 2020 and 2030 were projected to illustrate what emissions would be in the future accounting for growth, but without controls on the sources. The future year inventory is referred to as a "business-as-usual scenario." The year 2020 projection was used to allow comparison to the State’s year in California Air Resources. The Tulare County Climate Action Plan (CAP) serves as a guiding document for County of Tulare ("County") actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the potential effects of climate change. The CAP is an implementation measure of the 2030 General Plan Update. The General Plan provides the supporting framework for development in the County to produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions during Plan buildout. The CAP builds on the General Plan’s framework with more specifications that will be applied to achieve emission reduction targets consistent with California legislation. The terms Climate Action Plan and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan are often used interchangeably. The County has chosen to use Climate Action Plan abbreviated as CAP for this document. The CAP follows a series of guiding principles to ensure that it is consistent with the County’s values, objectives, and economy.

- The CAP will focus on strategies that meet multiple County objectives and enhance the quality of life and well-being of Tulare County residents.

- The CAP will not duplicate strategies and programs that are better handled by other agencies.

- The CAP will recognize that Federal, State, and SJVAPCD requirements set for local government regarding greenhouse gas reductions and climate change are evolving, so strategies and targets must be adaptable to changing conditions.
CAP implementation and monitoring will use existing data collection and reporting systems to the maximum extent possible.

...The policies, regulations, and programs considered in the CAP include those by federal, State, and local governments. These were then quantified to the extent possible using best available methodologies and data to determine the amount of reductions that are needed by the target years from Tulare County to achieve consistency with State targets. The last step was the development of a monitoring program that tracks implementation progress and emission reductions over time and identifies a process for taking corrective actions, if needed.

**Tulare County’s Role**

One of the key issues to resolve in developing a CAP is defining the County’s role in reducing emissions from the different source categories. The County’s focus is on emission sources within its regulatory authority, which are mainly related to land use and the local transportation system. To some extent, the County can influence activities that provide greenhouse gas reductions such as water conservation and solid waste diversion and recycling. The County also can require feasible mitigation measures for new projects as a Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The County has land use regulatory authority over the location of agriculture, but very limited authority over the vast majority of agricultural activities that are consistent with agricultural zoning and many agricultural related support activities. Most intensive agricultural activities such as confined animal facilities, including but not limited to, dairies, feedlots, poultry, swine, sheep, horses, rabbits, and other facilities require County land use approvals that are subject to CEQA. These and other new projects are required to address greenhouse gas and climate impacts under CEQA during the approval process.

**Role of State and Regional Agencies**

The CARB has the primary responsibility for the State’s climate programs and regulations that would apply to mobile and industrial sources of greenhouse gases. The California Energy Commission has primary responsibility for energy efficiency standards related to buildings and certain consumer products. The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) regulates stationary, area wide, and indirect sources of emissions that impact health. Many SJVAPCD regulations on health-based pollutant emissions also reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The State Legislature provided the SJVAPCD with authority to require permits for agricultural sources of emissions with State Senate Bill 700 (2003 Stats, Ch. 479) in 2003. Since then, the SJVAPCD has implemented a permitting program for large agricultural sources and has implemented a rule requiring controls of reactive organic gases (ROG) that would apply to most dairies and other confined animal facilities in Tulare County. Controls effective for ROG often are also effective at reducing greenhouse gases.
Summary of CAP Actions:
* Identifies sources of greenhouse gas emissions caused by activities within the unincorporated areas of Tulare County and estimates how these emissions may change over time.
* Establishes a reduction target of reducing Tulare County’s greenhouse gas emissions to demonstrate consistent with AB 32 (2006) and CARB Scoping Plan targets.
* Provides energy use, transportation, land use, water conservation, and solid waste strategies to bring Tulare County’s greenhouse gas emissions levels to the reduction target.
* Mitigates the impacts of Tulare County activities on climate change (by reducing greenhouse gas emissions consistent with the direction of the State of California via AB 32, Governor’s Order S-03-05, and the 2009 amendments to the CEQA Guidelines to comply with SB 97 (2008). The CEQA Guidelines encourage the adoption of policies or programs as a means of addressing comprehensively the cumulative impacts of projects. (See CEQA Guidelines, Sections 15064(h)(3), 15130(c).)
* Allows the greenhouse gas emissions inventory and CAP to be updated every five years and to respond to changes in science, effectiveness of emission reduction measures and federal, State, regional, or local policies to further strengthen the County’s response to the challenges of climate change.
* Provides substantial evidence that the emission reductions estimated in the CAP are feasible.
* Serves as the threshold of significance within the County of Tulare for climate change impacts, by which all applicable developments within the County will be reviewed.
* Proposed development projects that are consistent with the emission reduction and adaptation measures included in the CAP and the programs that are developed as a result of the CAP, would be considered to have a less than significant cumulative impact on climate change and emissions consistent with CEQA Guidelines 15064(h)(3) as amended to comply with SB 97.
Every bird species has adapted to the places it currently lives. But global warming is altering the availability of food and suitable nesting and wintering grounds, and if those shifts are too extreme, birds will be forced to seek out habitat and/or food supplies elsewhere. To determine how bird ranges will be affected, Audubon scientists used sophisticated climate models that combine decades of observations from the Audubon Christmas Bird Count and the North American Breeding Bird Survey, factoring in 17 climate variables, including temperature, precipitation, and seasonal changes. The models forecast the “climate envelopes,” or ranges, where future conditions are expected to support each species’ historical climatic needs. Here are some important takeaways from the study:

The models predict the ranges of 588 North American bird species under future climate scenarios. It found that the majority—314 species—will lose more than 50 percent of their current range by 2080.

Of the 314 species at risk from climate change, 126 of them, classified as “climate-endangered,” are projected to lose more than 50 percent of their current range by 2050. The other 188 species are “climate-threatened,” and expected to lose more than 50 percent of their current range by 2080.

While some species may be able to adapt, others will have nowhere to go. Many of our most cherished birds, including the Bald Eagle, Brown Pelican, and Common Loon, face an increased risk of extinction.

The findings may appear shocking, and we know that a certain amount of change is already inevitable, but the study provides a roadmap for action. By identifying which birds are most at risk and the places they might inhabit in the future, we can prioritize protections for critical habitat.

To give birds a chance at a future, we need to continue supporting efforts to curb global warming by cutting greenhouse gases. These dire outcomes are inevitable only if we do not use this warning as an opportunity to take collective action.

For more information about Audubon’s climate work, go to audubon.org/climate.
What You Can Do to Help Protect Birds
Audubon's new science sends a clear message about the serious dangers birds face in a warming world. Protecting them will require both redoubling conservation efforts to safeguard critical habitat and curbing greenhouse gas emissions. Below are a few important steps you can take right away. For more ideas and to share your stories, visit audubon.org/climate.

Create a Bird-Friendly Yard
Healthy birds will be better equipped to face the challenges of climate change. Commit to creating safe spaces for birds around your home and community by using fewer pesticides, letting dead trees stand, installing birdbaths, and converting lawns and gardens to native plants. School grounds, parks, vacant lots, and common areas can all be "bird-scaped." Learn more atathome.audubon.org.

Get Involved With Your Local Important Bird Area
Protect the places birds need most today and in the future by pitching in with Audubon's IBA program, which identifies and conserves areas that are vital to birds and biodiversity. You can help with IBA restoration, cleanup, citizen science, and field trips. To get started, find Audubon near you at audubon.org/search-by-zip.

Put Birds on Your Community's Agenda
Use this pullout to begin a conversation with your neighbors, colleagues, and local leaders about why it's important to protect your community's birds, and share what you're doing on behalf of birds. Reach more people by writing a letter to your newspaper, speaking at a community event, or visiting a local school.

Meet With Local Decision Makers
Share this science with state wildlife agencies, city parks departments, extension services, and other groups that manage our natural resources to illustrate how global warming imperils birds, and ask decision makers how they are planning to address it. For more information on how to help officials use and integrate Audubon's science, email climatescience@audubon.org.

Support Policies That Lower Emissions
Urge leaders at the local, state, and national levels to enact policies that lower greenhouse gas emissions and support clean energy. Renewable portfolio standards, energy efficiency targets, and other proactive measures will reduce emissions and help limit the effects of global warming on birds. Put these policies on your leaders' agendas, and publicly support efforts to make them stick.

Sign Up to Learn More About What You Can Do Year-Round
Go to audubon.org/climate to receive the latest findings, explore climate-related volunteer opportunities in your state or local area, and enlist in Audubon's forthcoming citizen science project to help monitor birds and document how they respond to a changing climate.

Winners and Losers: Summer Ranges in 2080
Some birds will adapt better to climate change than others. The distribution above includes data for all 588 species Audubon studied and projects the potential gains and losses in summer (read, breeding) range. The 13 species here represent different prospects for success along the spectrum, with some flourishing and others collapsing. Potential gains in range don't necessarily mean healthy populations: Birds may find that new climatically appropriate areas can't support them for a host of other reasons.

Go to audubon.org/climate to see maps for all 314 climate-threatened or climate-endangered species.
GUIDE TO AUDUBON'S CLIMATE MODEL DATA

How to Read the Maps
Each map displays the approximate range of a bird species in 2000 (solid outline) and the projected climactic ranges for the summer (yellow) and winter (blue) in 2080. Where the summer and winter ranges overlap (green), the bird will likely be a year-round resident in the future.

It's important to understand that while these look like the maps in field guides, the models can forecast only where future climatic conditions will match those in each species' current range—defining, by extension, that species' potential future range. But variables other than climate could render that potential future range unsuitable, a possibility this model does not take into account. For example, while a dove might easily shift from prairie to forest as the planet warms, a grassland-dependent bird would have a hard time making a go of it in the woods. Birds that lose significant amounts of their summer habitat will likely have a harder time reproducing.

Common Loon
By 2080 the call of the loon may disappear from Minnesota as its summer range moves north (see map above). Its winter range is even more heavily affected, declining 62 percent by 2050.

Shifting Ranges
The size of the Venn diagram circles roughly indicates the species' range size in 2000 (left) and 2080 (right). The amount of overlap between the 2000 circle and the 2080 circle indicates how much the range will shift geographically. Lots of overlap means the bird's range doesn't shift much. No overlap means the species will leave its current range entirely.
Baird's Sparrow
This grassland songbird will likely go extinct. According to the models, it will lose 100 percent of its summer range by 2080.

Bobolink
This songbird's range is projected to expand into Canada's boreal forests, but making this shift may be impossible for this grassland-dependent bird. Data for its wintering grounds in South America is not available.

Ruffed Grouse
The grouse's summer and winter ranges will migrate north, which means this species, the state bird of Pennsylvania, could disappear from the Northeast entirely.
American Black Duck
By 2080 its winter range will migrate north, while its summer range will be largely unaffected.

Black-billed Magpie
Like most corvids, the magpie is projected to lose significant winter and summer range. By the end of the century it could be gone from most of the United States.

European Starling
This introduced and invasive species will continue its march across the continent, eventually colonizing Alaska.
From:
flbeachluvr@aol.com

Subject:
Healthy Communities

Comment:
Here are my ideas for a healthy Oildale and healthy Kern County: 1) Clean air and clean water are two basics to healthy human living. 2) Encouraging well-planned trips and carpooling. 3) Improved and additional street lighting in older, urban areas - such as Oildale. 4) Strict enforcement and limitation of medical-marijuana dispensaries. 5) Continued improved and additional infrastructure upgrades - such as sidewalks, curbs and gutters in Oildale. 6) The redevelopment of east Beardsley Ave. - near N. Chester Ave., south to the north banks of the Kern River; area known for poverty, blight, drugs and crime - for decades. Start over; bulldoze and make room for an attractive, welcoming gateway to North of the River; botanic garden, maybe? A development that would attract people from all over the county - on the banks of the Kern. 7) Improved landscaping of center median on N. Chester. Decorative and attractive medians for other 'main drags' in Oildale - such as Airport Dr.
From:
flbeachluvr@aol.com

Subject:
Land Use

Comment:
Additional Oildale & Kern General Plan ideas: 1) Attractive gateway mural painted on the railroad bridge over Airport Dr., Oildale - such as are commonly found in suburban Los Angeles cities in the San Gabriel Valley. 2) Pro-active policing efforts in Oildale to reduce crime and help create an area attractive to investors. 3) The specific recruitment of companies and businesses to older, urban areas such as Oildale. 4) A recognizable commitment to the redevelopment and sustainability of older, urban areas by the county. 5) The limitation of continued urban sprawl and disappearance of farmland and other agricultural land which serves as de-facto open space. 6) A commitment to the health and well being of county residents is excellent; Kern County is part of the 'breadbasket of the world'; this can be stressed. Education in healthy living and healthy choices can be emphasized (air quality must be improved). 7) Unify & simplify travel between Bakersfield's far-flung areas.
Thanks, Suzanne.

I will attend.

Do you happen to know what the County's intentions are for older existing Specific Plans. I represent Blackwell Land. They own land at SR33 and SR46 under an old Blackwell Corners SP. Will that plan still be on the books under the County's strategy for the GP Update?

Dave

---

Dave Dmohowski

Executive Officer

Home Builders Association of Kern County

661.510.8311

On Tue, Mar 21, 2017 at 8:29 AM, GeneralPlanUpdate <GeneralPlanUpdate@co.kern.ca.us> wrote:

Good Morning,

I am writing to let you know the Staff Report and Newsletter are available on the General Plan Update webpage:

http://pcd.kernsda.com/generalplanupdate

Thank you for your participation in this process.

Very Truly Yours,

Suzanne Hansen

Planner I
Kern County Planning &
Natural Resources Department
(661) 862-5006
GeneralPlanUpdate@co.kern.co.us
hello,
regarding this month's question: Moving forward what do you believe the General Plan needs to focus on?

as the general plan process moves forward i encourage researching of existing and developing data which points towards the belief "health is not determined by genetic markers as much as it is by zip code".

in Kern County we see the overwhelming occurrences of obesity, high blood pressure, cancer, teen pregnancy, mental illness, poverty and the numbers increase depending on the "zip code".

i believe there are progressive planning actions, if taken, could help alleviate some of these occurrences. some of those include; dedicated funding to neighborhood parks/safety, safe walk to school routes, more accessibility to libraries, support of neighborhood gardens.

Greg Collins
661-703-1731
Greetings!

Can you please send me the time and location of the April 27th workshop on the Housing Element of the County’s GP?

Thank you,
Tony

Tony Miranda
Executive Director
PO Box 3267
Bakersfield, CA 93385
661-861-8449 office
661-861-8145 fax
661-520-1156 cell
www.habitatbakersfield.org
https://www.facebook.com/HabitatforHumanityGoldenEmpire

Habitat for Humanity
Golden Empire
Building houses, building hope
Hi Suzanne,

Thank you so much for the information. American Farmland Trust is very pleased to participate in this process. We’d love to have a meeting with you to present you with recommendations for your plan. I will be attending Thursday night’s meeting – can we chat in person?

Sincerely,

Virginia

Virginia Jameson
Deputy State Director for California
American Farmland Trust
Office: (916) 448-1064
Cell: (831) 239-7909
2001 N St., Ste 110
Sacramento, CA 95811

Check out the new www.farmland.org
New look; Same commitment to protecting farmland

From: GeneralPlanUpdate [mailto:GeneralPlanUpdate@co.kern.ca.us]
Sent: Monday, April 24, 2017 10:52 AM
To: Virginia Jameson
Subject: General Plan Update Workshop
Good morning,

I am writing to let you know the Staff Report and Newsletter are available on the General Plan Update webpage:

http://pcd.kerndsa.com/generalplanupdate

Thank you for your participation in this process.

Very Truly Yours,

Suzanne Hansen

Planner I
Kern County Planning &
Natural Resources Department
(661) 862-5006
GeneralPlanUpdate@co.kern.co.us
Hello-

Attached please find comments regarding Kern County's General Plan Update from the California Independent Petroleum Association.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,
Willie

Willie Rivera
Director of Regulatory Affairs
California Independent Petroleum Association
(661) 477-0401
May 25, 2017

Kern County Planning Commission
801 K Street, MS 24-02
Bakersfield, CA

Members of the Kern County Planning Commission:

The California Independent Petroleum Association (CIPA) appreciates the opportunity to submit comments as a part of Kern County’s General Plan Update. CIPA is a non-profit, non-partisan trade association representing approximately 500 independent crude oil and natural gas producers, royalty owners, and service and supply companies operating in California, many right here in Kern County.

In 2015, the Kern County Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to amend the County’s Petroleum Ordinance and created a local permitting program. Since this action, the County of Kern has processed thousands of permits and our members have worked cooperatively with Planning Department staff on the new program’s implementation. Kern County’s local oil and gas industry contributes greatly to our local community and is an essential component of Kern County’s tax base. A successful General Plan Update should help identify the County’s future land use and development policies. The continued stability and growth of our local oil and gas industry must be a guiding principle in this process. It is critical that any action taken through this process help bolster our oil and gas industry.

CIPA is committed to working with the County of Kern during this update and looks forward to our continued partnership supporting one of the strongest economic drivers in this community. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Rock Zierman
Chief Executive Officer
California Independent Petroleum Association

cc: Lorelei Oviatt, Director, Planning and Natural Resources Department
Dear Colleagues,

There is plentiful data on the economic and social inequity found throughout the San Joaquin Valley. It is less common to see the evidence of inequity presented in tandem with evidence of the power of the people who are working to change systems and policies in order to create a more equitable region. This report, Kern County: Geography of Inequity and Opportunities for Action, commissioned by the San Joaquin Valley Health Fund and prepared by the UC Davis Center for Regional Change with funding from The California Endowment, does just that. It documents the systemic disparities created by a history of wealth concentrated in the hands of those who control access to Kern County’s vast agricultural and industrial resources. Yet it is also full of hope. In addition to identifying policy opportunities in education, land use, health and the environment, it presents case examples of organizations that are working in Kern County communities to organize residents to bring about sustainable change.

The picture can look bleak. Kern County, with a population of more than 880,000, has an unemployment rate almost twice that of the state as a whole. It faces environmental woes, areas of concentrated poverty, disadvantaged unincorporated areas without services, insufficient primary health care providers, and a myriad of other problems. But the report’s examples of community transformation demonstrate what a community can do when mobilized, as when the Committee for a Better Arvin secured funds from the Environmental Protection Agency to build a new drinking water well free from the groundwater pollution plume, and when immigrant parents, with the support of the Dolores Huerta Foundation, participated in Local Control Accountability Plan development. The inspirational stories show how community-based organizations and residents can change the trajectory of inequity when they have tools for effective community advocacy.

This report reveals the deep racial and social inequities in Kern County while also illustrating the power of community organizing for policy and systems change. We hope it motivates your action on behalf of the under-resourced and vulnerable communities of Kern County, and the broader valley, so that all residents of California can prosper.

Chet P. Hewitt
President and CEO
The Center at Sierra Health Foundation

Dr. Robert K. Ross
President and CEO
The California Endowment

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Opportunities for Action:
Engaging Communities in Systems Change

Kern County's fertile soil and extensive oil and mineral deposits are a source of wealth, but prosperity eludes many of Kern's residents. These residents struggle to make ends meet on low-wage jobs and lack access to basic necessities such as clean air and water, healthy food, safe neighborhoods, high quality schools and health care. The stark inequities in Kern County and across the San Joaquin Valley are being addressed by organizations working to transform their communities into sustainable, prosperous, healthy and equitable places by empowering residents to inform local decision-making.

With funding from The California Endowment, the San Joaquin Valley Health Fund commissioned the UC Davis Center for Regional Change to document conditions contributing to health inequities in Kern County, as well as efforts by nonprofit organizations to increase community capacity to advocate for policy and systems change initiatives that will increase social and health equity in Kern County and throughout the region.

Methods

Center for Regional Change researchers conducted more than 25 key informant interviews to identify policy and systems change opportunities to advance health equity through community action in Kern County. Interviewees included leaders in community-based and advocacy organizations, such as the UFW Foundation and the Center for Rural Legal Assistance, and representatives of public and private agencies, including First 5, school districts, health systems and the Department of Public Health. This report draws from information that emerged in these interviews as well as analysis of public secondary data and previously published research reports. In particular, the study uses the Regional Opportunity Index, which was developed by the Center for Regional Change to assess disparities in people- and place-based opportunity across California. The report also draws on data presented in another report commissioned by the San Joaquin Valley Health Fund, with funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and Sierra Health Foundation and prepared by the Center for Regional Change, California's San Joaquin Valley: A Region and Its Children Under Stress.

Cross-Cutting Themes

Analysis of interviews and other data revealed cross-cutting themes that were consistent with those identified in California's San Joaquin Valley: A Region and Its Children Under Stress. The following themes speak to the deeply entrenched nature of inequities in the region.

- A structural divide separates those who benefit from and control access to the region's abundant natural resources, and those who are impoverished by policy and planning decisions that have left them with inequitable access to these resources and other opportunities.
  - Social and health inequities exist across a number of dimensions including class, gender, race/ethnicity and immigration/documentation status, but are compounded when these dimensions intersect. Inequities are starkest for groups that face multiple forms of disadvantage. These groups are more vulnerable to social and environmental burdens, and have access to fewer resources.
- Political and economic leaders in existing power structures often are reluctant to view decision-making through an equity lens, which increases the need to build capacity among historically disenfranchised and vulnerable groups to advocate for policies and systems that improve conditions and opportunities for all.
- Community organizing and capacity building is hard, time-consuming work that does not produce immediate results. However, true and lasting change that promotes equity is unlikely to occur until the voices of disadvantaged residents are heard.

The following sections discuss these themes in greater detail.
The Geography of Inequity and Opportunity

Located at the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley, Kern County’s fertile soil and abundant sunshine contribute to its second-place rank among California counties in terms of agricultural crop value. Kern also sits atop large oil reserves, producing more oil than any other county in the nation. Despite this wealth of natural resources, many of Kern’s residents live in poverty and lack access to resources that promote health and well-being. In order for Kern County to truly prosper, a more equitable distribution of resources and opportunities is necessary.

Numerous community-based organizations are working to build the capacity of immigrants, people of color and low-income populations to advocate for policies and systems that promote equity. These organizations follow in the footsteps of the farm worker movement, which has deep roots in Kern County. Under the leadership of Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta and Larry Itliong, the United Farm Workers (UFW) union utilized grassroots organizing techniques to build a social movement that advocated for higher pay, fair labor practices and the civil rights of farm workers. The UFW, headquartered in Kern County, became the largest union of agriculture workers in California and the Southwest, winning concessions from growers that included higher wages and better working and living conditions. Chavez, Huerta and Itliong recognized that true and lasting change would require more than harnessing the collective bargaining power of farm workers. As they organized, they educated workers about their civil rights and civic responsibilities, empowering them to participate in decisions impacting their communities. The UFW continues to organize and represent the interests of farm workers across the nation, while the UFW Foundation and Dolores Huerta Foundation focus on building the capacity of immigrants and other disadvantaged groups to advocate for equity and social justice. However, in recent years, the number of farm contracts and workers under UFW contracts has declined substantially, leaving many farm workers without workplace representation.

The sheer size of Kern County – at 8,170 square miles it is the third largest county in the state – presents a challenge to organizations that help residents access resources and engage in civic opportunities. Rachel Vizcarra, Programs Assistant for UFW Foundation, alluded to this when she asked, “How do you reach all of the different corners of Kern County, and make sure the message is passed on to everybody in the outlying areas [and that everybody] has access to the information, and to the resources, and the same opportunities and signs up for the programs that are available?” The time and expense of traveling to distant meetings is just one of many barriers that suppress involvement by Kern’s vulnerable residents in policy- and decision-making opportunities. This topic is addressed in greater detail in the Community Engagement Challenges and Opportunities section of this report.

Kern County Demographics

Kern County was home to nearly 850,000 people at the time of the 2010 Census, about 50% of whom were Hispanic/Latino and 40% were white (Figure 1), with African Americans (5%), Asians (4%), Filipinos and Indians are the two largest Asian ethnic groups), American Indians (1%), and other racial and ethnic groups (1%) making up the rest. Kern’s population is expected to double by 2060, growing faster than the San Joaquin Valley region and the state as a whole. The Latino share of the population will continue to expand, constituting approximately 60% of the population by 2060. The Asian and multi-race populations are also expected to grow rapidly, but will remain a relatively small percentage of the total population.

Figure 1. Population in Kern County by Race/Ethnicity as a Share of the Total Population, 2010 (actual) and 2060 (projected)


Roughly 20% of Kern County residents are foreign born, and approximately 40% of children have a foreign-born parent. Children who participate in programs for English Learners at school reveal the county’s cultural
diversity in the languages they speak at home: Spanish, Hmong, Punjabi, Arabic, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Korean, Cantonese and Russian, among others. Kern County’s ethnic diversity is often overlooked as a resource that can enhance social and economic conditions by increasing innovation, productivity and the presence of desirable amenities. Those goals can be promoted by valuing diversity and facilitating immigrant integration in a culturally sensitive manner.

Kern County is young, with nearly 1 in 3 residents children under the age of 18 (Figure 2), but the youth share of the population is declining and the over-44 population is increasing. These trends mirror changes in the age distribution for California as a whole, although Kern residents are younger, with a median age of 31.4 years in 2015 compared to the statewide median of 36.2 years.

As of January 2016, Bakersfield was home to about 43% of Kern County residents. Another 22% lived in other incorporated cities, with the remainder in unincorporated parts of the county. A detailed analysis of Census Bureau and county parcel data revealed that roughly 40% of residents in unincorporated areas, or 140,000 individuals, lived in disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs) in 2013. These are “places that are densely settled, outside of city limits, and low income.” Some DUCs originated as farm worker camps and settlements and are still surrounded by agricultural land; others are adjacent to or encompassed by cities, yet do not receive services from them. In both cases, years of neglect and disinvestment, and lack of representation in decisions about the allocation of resources, contribute to living conditions that are unsafe and unhealthy. Many of the 96 DUCs in Kern County lack access to basic services typically provided by municipalities, such as clean water, sewer systems, sidewalks, streetlights, and adequate police and fire protection.

“What are we going to do to ensure that there’s enough water as the population continues to grow in the state, and particularly in places like the Central Valley where you have a lot of small communities, low income, a lot of farm worker communities. How are we going to provide people with the basics?” – An Neuhauser, Assistant Director, Rural Community Assistance Corporation

Economic and Environmental Conditions Contribute to Disparities in Well-Being

Kern County derives much of its wealth from natural resources, but industries that use these resources – primarily agriculture, oil/gas extraction and mining – often have negative environmental impacts. These impacts are made worse by the county’s climate and geography. Surrounded by mountains on three sides, with a major transportation corridor running through the county, harmful pollutants accumulate in the environment, contributing to some of the worst air quality in the U.S. Kern County had the highest levels of particulate matter (PM 2.5) of any county in the nation, and ranked third in terms of ozone pollution, for the years 2012-14. Water quality and quantity impacts from agriculture and other industries exacerbated by drought and climate change threaten the health of Kern residents and the county’s economy.

“We have serious water quality issues. We have horrible air. We have some of the worst air in the nation, one that causes illness and all kinds of other issues... The poorest communities often have the worst water and the worst air.” – Michelle McLean, Superintendent, Arvin Union School District
In addition to poor air and water quality, oil wells, hazardous waste facilities and other sources of toxic pollution tend to be concentrated in low-income communities and communities of color. The co-occurrence of pollution burden and social vulnerability is evident in Figure 3, which shows that much of Kern County has high pollution burden in areas with high concentrations of vulnerable populations. Research confirms that Latinos and low-income residents in the San Joaquin Valley are more likely to live in areas served by contaminated water supplies, are more likely to be exposed to pesticides at work, and their children are more likely to attend schools exposed to pesticide drift, compared to white and wealthier residents.

Despite the risks that oil extraction pose to the environment, the economic benefits – and downside – of the county’s oil deposits cannot be overlooked. High oil prices buffered Kern from the worst impacts of the Great Recession, but the county is now reeling from the effects of plummeting prices. Cutbacks in oil production at existing wells and a halt in new drilling contributed to Kern’s high unemployment rate, which stood at 9.9% in December 2016, about twice the statewide unemployment rate of 5.0%. Tax revenues declined as the price of oil fell by two-thirds from the end of 2014 to the end of 2015. In response, county officials have declared a budget emergency and are reducing vital services.
Limited economic opportunities further exacerbate conditions for Kern residents, while a shortage of highly educated workers limits expansion opportunities for high skill-based industries. The Regional Opportunity Index job quality indicator (Figure 4) reveals that, outside of Bakersfield, Edwards Air Force Base and the west side oil fields, the rest of the county has a lower percentage of high-paying jobs (those that pay more than $3,333 per month) compared to the state average. The percentage of Kern County adults over the age of 25 who have at least a bachelor’s degree is 16.2%, half the state average of 32.3%. High levels of educational attainment increase earning potential, but a lack of high-quality job opportunities for those without advanced degrees contributes to disparities in income. Median annual income for college graduates living in Kern County is nearly $60,000, about twice the median for high school graduates and three times the median income for those with less than a high school degree. Among those with the lowest incomes are undocumented immigrants and farm workers, who experience low hourly wages, seasonal employment, intermittent hours, and heightened vulnerability to wage theft and other workplace violations. The Center for Migration Studies estimates that about half of the approximately 42,000 undocumented immigrants in the labor force in Kern County in 2013 worked in the farming industry, which would struggle to maintain profitability without their labor.

Lack of economic opportunity, especially for those without a college education, helps explain the county’s high rate of poverty. Nearly 20% of working-age Kern residents had incomes below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) in 2015, which was $24,257 for a family of four. Because the cost of living in California exceeds that in many other parts of the nation, a higher poverty threshold provides a more accurate view of the extent of poverty. One-quarter of working-age adults in Kern County had incomes below 125% of the FPL in 2015 (Figure 5), approximately $36,000 for a family of four. More than 10% of full-time workers had incomes below 125% of the FPL, rising to nearly 30% among part-time workers. Close to 10% of working-age adults lived in deep poverty, with incomes below 50% of the FPL, or roughly $12,000 for a family of four.
According to research and analysis conducted for the San Joaquin Valley Fair Housing and Equity Assessment, the majority of San Joaquin Valley residents living in poverty are also living in areas of concentrated poverty. The report cites economic patterns, historical land use and zoning, and housing discrimination as ongoing contributors to these conditions. Furthermore, areas of concentrated poverty in the Valley have disproportionately high non-white populations and very low access to opportunity. As is the case across California, poverty is more prevalent among people of color in Kern County, with rates of 30% or more for Hispanics, Blacks and Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders (Figure 6). Across racial and ethnic groups, poverty rates tend to be lower in Kern County than the San Joaquin Valley as a whole, but remain higher than the state average.

Economic and Environmental Conditions Contribute to Disparities in Health

Serious economic and environmental challenges contribute to the poor health of Kern residents. Kern County ranks near the bottom (52nd out of 57 reporting counties) on health outcomes that include length of life, low birthweight and perceived health. The County Health Ranking system measures “...the many factors that, if improved, can help make communities healthier places to live, learn, work and play.” Kern County received the lowest possible ranking for health behaviors that contribute to poor health outcomes, including smoking, obesity, teen births and sexually transmitted diseases. It ranked 50th on clinical care, largely due to the shortage of health care providers (primary care physicians, dentists and mental health care providers) in the region. In addition, a significant proportion of Kern County residents do not have access to or cannot afford employer-based or private insurance. About 45% of Kern County residents are covered through Medi-Cal and approximately 8% are uninsured. These individuals have limited options when seeking health care due to a shortage of providers willing to accept them as patients.

A Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) completed in 2016 conducted a forum in which 38 community leaders identified significant health needs in Kern County and ranked them using the Relative Worth method. Participants included representatives from public health and other government agencies, schools and nonprofit organizations that serve specific parts of the community identified in the regulations – the medically underserved, low-income and minority populations. Forum participants allocated a fixed set of points to the health needs based on the size and seriousness of the problem. The top 10 priorities identified in this manner and presented in Figure 7 mirror the health behavior items contributing to Kern’s low County Health Ranking score. Overweight/obesity was identified as the top health...
need by the participants, followed closely by mental health and access to health care. Forum participants also prioritized diabetes, cardiovascular disease, substance use and asthma as significant problems, followed by maternal and infant health, cancer, and HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. There is some overlap between the priorities identified in the CHNA and those identified in the report commissioned by the San Joaquin Valley Health Fund, with funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and Sierra Health Foundation and prepared by the Center for Regional Change, California's San Joaquin Valley: A Region and Its Children Under Stress, but residents from under-resourced communities in the latter study prioritized determinants of health, such as economic and environmental conditions, over health conditions. For example, community members in that study emphasized the lack of access to fresh, healthy, affordable food rather than obesity as a key challenge.

When asked to name the underlying factors that cause poor health, community members whose perspectives are documented in California's San Joaquin Valley: A Region and Its Children Under Stress and the Kern CHNA forum participants identified lack of access to fresh, healthy, affordable food; lack of recreation opportunities; lack of safe spaces to engage in exercise; and barriers to health care such as cost, transportation, provider shortages, lack of culturally competent services and, most importantly, poverty. Limited economic opportunities make it difficult for residents to access basic necessities like food, housing and clothing, and contribute to stress, substance use and crime. Analysis of the County Health Ranking data for California supports this assessment, as socioeconomic factors do a better job of explaining health outcomes than health behaviors, clinical care or the physical environment. Declining economic standing is driving an increase in "deaths of despair," mortality caused by self-inflicted harms such as drug overdose, alcohol poisoning and suicide. A recent report from The California Endowment and the Center on Society and Health notes that Kern County has seen a dramatic rise in these stress-related deaths since the 1990s. According to one of the report's authors, "Household incomes have been stagnant and poverty rates have been climbing in these counties over a period of many years. Stress, anxiety and depression are taking their toll on this population. The economy is literally costing lives."

**Mapping Geographic Disparities**

Within Kern County, there is substantial geographic variation in access to resources that promote health and well-being. The variation can be clearly seen in Regional Opportunity Index maps. The Regional Opportunity Index consists of two dimensions. The first, referred to as People Opportunity, combines data about the relative level of resources possessed by individuals in a census tract, and compares the tract to the statewide average. Data include level of education, employment status, income, housing, health, and social and political engagement. The second dimension is called Place Opportunity. It describes the relative level of institutional and physical resources available in each tract. The Place Opportunity score is comprised of measures of educational and economic opportunities; housing adequacy and affordability; access to health care, banks and grocery stores; air quality; and civic and social opportunity. Indicators in each of these domains combine to provide a holistic snapshot of community well-being.
Figure 8. Regional Opportunity Index Place Opportunity In Kern County

Regional Opportunity Index: Place, 2014

Disparities in economic, environmental, infrastructure and other resources in the Place Opportunity dimension are reflected in the large swaths of Kern County that have very low Place Opportunity scores (Figure 8). Census tracts that perform worse than the state average are red and orange in color; tracts that are at or above the state mean are yellow and green. The low degree of place-based opportunity in Kern County was confirmed by Joseph Williams, Director of the Kern Chapter of Faith in the Valley, who stated that conversations with more than 300 Kern residents revealed that "Jobs was the number one issue. Jobs and affordable housing were the emerging theme. Then public safety and infrastructure."
Disparities in the resources held by individuals in the county are demonstrated by the map of Regional Opportunity Index People Opportunity scores (Figure 9). Census tracts with lower levels of People Opportunity than the state mean are displayed in orange, while tracts with the lowest levels of opportunity are in red.

People living on the west side of Highway 99, in tracts that are displayed in green, tend to do better in terms of education, economic opportunity and health/environment. On the east side of Highway 99, and in areas around Wasco, Shafter and Taft, levels of opportunity are much lower in these domains.

In summary, Kern County has a wealth of place-based economic resources from agriculture, oil and other industries, but these resources do not benefit all residents. People of color and immigrants are most likely to experience environmental injustice through exposure to contaminated air and water, economic injustice with low wages and substandard housing, and social injustice with inequitable access to health and education resources. These inequities stem from the cumulative impacts of earlier planning and policy decisions that cannot be bandaged over; new approaches are needed to redress these issues. The next section identifies promising policy and systems change opportunities, followed by some examples of the ways in which local organizations are building community capacity to participate in opportunities such as these.

Figure 9. Regional Opportunity Index People Opportunity in Kern County
Policy and Systems Change Opportunities

Overcoming Kern County’s significant economic, environmental and health challenges will require sustained efforts to forge new policies and restructure ineffective systems. Policy development holds great promise to improve community outcomes when it is informed by the experiences of communities that experience the greatest inequities. Underrepresented populations are increasingly engaged in local decision-making forums thanks to the grassroots organizing and capacity-building efforts of community-based organizations. This approach empowers residents to exercise greater community ownership and increases capacity to influence decision-making for lasting solutions. Such an approach is needed in order to address systemic issues and ultimately create a more equitable county and region.

Through interviews and a review of policy briefs and other materials, we identified the following areas as presenting prime opportunities to enact policies that have the potential to improve community well-being and increase health equity in Kern County. These opportunities differ in the extent to which they address systemic inequities and in the manner in which they permit and encourage community engagement. Nonetheless, each has been identified as having the potential to make a meaningful difference in advancing equity.

Education Policy

Local Control Funding Formula
The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), enacted by the state legislature in 2013, increased funding to districts serving high concentrations of low-income, English Learner, homeless and foster youth student populations, while providing more flexibility and accountability in how districts allocate funding. As part of LCFF, school districts are required to develop and adopt a Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) describing how the district plans to meet state education priorities in accordance with specific metrics and local goals. An important component of LCFF is that parents and community stakeholders must be involved in the development of and annual updates to the LCAP, and school districts must provide relevant data to inform this activity. By facilitating community input on how to meet the needs of disadvantaged students, and informing funding allocation, community groups can leverage LCFF to reshape education systems in ways that promote more equitable outcomes and improve community health. For example, community stakeholders have successfully advocated for school-based student wellness centers and parent resource centers paid for with LCFF supplemental funds.

LCFF is new and school districts are still learning how to engage community stakeholders in a meaningful way. In the words of Erika Brooks, former Education Program Manager at the Dolores Huerta Foundation, LCFF is “a learning process for everyone; for community members and for school districts to really make community members and parents feel welcome, and engaged, and really feel that their voices are heard when they ask for something... of course we know that not all recommendations are going to be part of the LCAP, but when parents feel that their recommendations are acknowledged, and that they’re really taken into consideration, that’s a good thing.”

With only loose guidelines on the form that stakeholder engagement must take, and with limited oversight and accountability mechanisms for upholding LCAPs, there is no guarantee that LCFF will lead to meaningful reforms. Community organizations play an important role by helping districts authentically engage parents and community members in the LCAP process, monitoring LCAP implementation to ensure that community priorities are being addressed and that funds intended to add or improve services for high-need students are indeed reaching them.

Investment in capacity building around LCAP development can be leveraged to increase community engagement more broadly. The knowledge and skills required for effective LCAP participation transfer directly to other governance processes, a point made by several of our informants. Participation in school leadership roles empowers parents and opens the door to other forms of civic engagement, as noted by Arvin Union School District Superintendent Michelle McLean, who expressed the importance of “…getting people engaged in school site governance, and then, ideally, you would want to see your parents and community members then running for school boards, because they’re the ones that set policy, and have a bigger voice at the state level.”
Other Education Policy and Systems Change Opportunities
Participation on school site councils and English Learner Advisory Committees, school district and county boards of education, community college district governing boards, school bond oversight committees, and city, county and state governments all represent important opportunities to advocate for more equitable education opportunities. Community members can use these forums to advocate for policies that hold promise for reducing disparities in community well-being, including the expansion and improvement of early childhood education opportunities, the equitable distribution of school construction bonds, the expansion of career and technical education offerings, locating community college campuses in disadvantaged communities, and removing barriers that make it difficult for community college students to transfer to four-year universities.

Land Use Policy

General Plan Update
California law requires that each county and city in the state develop, adopt and periodically update a general plan, which outlines a comprehensive land use strategy and guides both short- and long-term growth and development. There is no set schedule for updating general plans, but municipalities generally find it necessary to update their plans every 10 to 15 years as new data become available and growth patterns shift. When a city or county general plan is updated, this presents a prime opportunity to influence policy and long-term community change. The Kern County General Plan update is currently under way and has been a focus of many local organizations and community leaders.

The general plan includes a minimum of eight state-mandated elements. It also can include additional elements that the county or city deems significant. The eight mandated elements include: Land Use, Open Space, Conservation, Housing, Circulation, Noise, Safety and, as of October 2016 when SB 1000 became law, Environmental Justice. Optional elements include: Health, Air Quality, Capital Improvements/Public Facilities, Community Design, Economic/Fiscal Development, Energy, Flood Management, Geothermal Resources, Parks and Recreation, and Water. Optional elements serve as key opportunities to incorporate planning guidelines that equitably address community health and well-being. For example, the City of Arvin included a health element in its general plan, which has encouraged significant changes to policy and development efforts, including the installation of a new park, the creation of community gardens, and corner store conversions. Additionally, the Kern County Department of Public Health Services has been asked to provide advice on the inclusion of a health element in the general plan that would focus on the social determinants of health. Examples such as these demonstrate the potential impact that land use and planning processes can have when decision makers are responsive to community needs.

It is important to recognize that policy processes such as the general plan update are often inaccessible to community members with little experience or knowledge of local governance. People may not understand the relevance or significance of these planning decisions. As Marisa Lundin, Co-Director of California Rural Legal Assistance’s Community Equity Initiative, which
focuses on addressing inequitable living conditions in disadvantaged unincorporated communities, said, "A lot of the changes that we're looking at in these communities do come in the form of these dry, 30-year planning documents and land use policy decisions. So it's a question of how to bridge that, something that is just by its very nature, very inaccessible to people. How do you make it accessible?" This is where local organizers and advocates see potential for community engagement and empowerment. Through outreach and education about the significance of these planning processes and land use decisions, residents can see where their input is needed and how their lived experiences can help inform these critical decisions.

Another tactic that holds promise to improve health equity in Kern County is strengthening the health care safety net by pursuing better coordination of care between the county hospital, community clinics and hospital emergency rooms in order to provide better, more cost-effective health care for the uninsured and underinsured. Health advocates point to the Accountable Communities for Health (ACH) model, proposed by the nonprofit organization Community Partners, as a framework that promotes multi-sector collaboration to improve health outcomes and reduce costs. ACH calls for health systems, health plans, public health, community-based organizations, schools and other partners to integrate their efforts to improve the health of the entire community, with particular attention to achieving greater health equity among its residents. The ACH framework can be leveraged to tackle multiple, interconnected issues that contribute to health and well-being, such as poverty and education, given its attention to short-term, intermediate and long-term health outcomes. Unlike the education and land use policy areas, where community input is mandated by state law, there are fewer avenues for community members to influence health policy. Community groups and advocates therefore face the critical challenge of finding or creating opportunities to elevate the voices of disadvantaged community members in pursuit of equitable health policies. Joseph Williams, Director of the Kern Chapter of Faith in the Valley, spoke about bringing stakeholders together to "dissect how our county is implementing global payment plan" and how they're picking their hospital authorities. A lot of the people on the Authority Board are ag and oil and all the special interest. How does that represent our community, which is 70 percent Latino and the rest white and Asian, Native American, and Black?"

Healthy Living Environments
Health equity requires equitable access to healthy living environments, which can be pursued through a variety of programs and policies. Examples include school wellness plans that expand resources for physical education and include a commitment to serve healthy meals made from locally sourced ingredients, and joint-use agreements that permit the use of school grounds for health-promoting activities such as farmer's markets and recreation programs that encourage physical activity.

#Health4All banner. They are now fighting to protect ACA by telling stories about how ACA has helped save lives, holding rallies and educating state and federal lawmakers about the importance of affordable health insurance for all.
To address structural factors that undermine community health and contribute to health disparities, advocates can urge municipalities to incorporate health considerations into their programs, policies and planning guidelines. Kern County Superintendent of Schools Health Services Director Shelley Northrop noted that “it’s a different time, and people are more open to health initiatives” such as the inclusion of a health element in general plan guidelines (as described in the Land Use Policy section), and the adoption of a Health in All Policies framework “[embeds] health, equity, and sustainability considerations into government decision-making processes so that healthy public policy becomes the normal way of doing business.”

Environmental Policy

Environmental Monitoring and Enforcement
Grassroots organizations have become powerful and effective environmental watchdogs by empowering citizens to monitor air and water quality in communities that are often overlooked by regulators. Organizations participating in the Central California Environmental Justice Network train residents to monitor the environment, report suspected environmental hazards and advocate for environmental justice. Through Central California Environmental Justice Network’s crowd sourcing-based reporting system in Kern County called Identifying Violations Affecting Neighborhoods (IVAN) Kern (formerly Kern Environmental Enforcement Network, or KEEN), they have mobilized local, regional, state and federal regulatory agencies to enact stricter controls and enforce them. In addition, the capacity building and empowerment experienced by these citizen scientists often leads to their engagement in other policy and systems change efforts. (See the following section for more information about IVAN Kern.)

Statewide Environmental Legislation
At the state level, several initiatives are under development that would strengthen environmental protections for vulnerable communities. These include legislation to expand school buffers for pesticide spraying, and to protect access to clean water in vulnerable communities. Of special significance to the San Joaquin Valley is a proposed law (SB 1318) that would prohibit municipalities from extending drinking water or wastewater infrastructure or services until they have provided those services to all disadvantaged communities within or adjacent to its sphere of influence. Additional legislation (SB 1317) would prohibit the drilling of new wells in water basins where aquifers are in critical overdraft, leaving some homeowners without any water. Both of these bills died in the Assembly, but are expected to return in future legislative sessions.

Other Policy and Systems Change Opportunities

Economic Policy
Though mentioned by interviewees less frequently than other issues, data indicate that community economic development strategies that promote job opportunities and entrepreneurship opportunities are sorely needed in Kern County. Such strategies might include workforce development to address the shortage of highly skilled workers, the development of locally driven value-added agriculture enterprises, expanding job opportunities in the clean energy sector, living wage ordinances, local hire requirements and Community Benefit Agreement mechanisms to ensure that Kern County residents benefit from the development of high-speed rail and other publicly
financed infrastructure projects. It will be vitally important to ensure that the job training pipeline is strengthened so that when high-quality jobs become available in Kern County, those jobs go to local residents from communities that experience systemic discrimination.

Lack of access to capital hampers development in some communities, particularly smaller communities that do not have local banks. Jill Egland, Vice President of Community Impact with United Way of Kern County and a founding member of the Kern Food Policy Council, remarked, "They don't have a banking relationship with anyone, so where's the capital supposed to come for local innovation? They can have all the innovative ideas that they want, the city infrastructural support, and the willingness to shift the policies, but there's no capital. There's no economic partnership right now between mainstream financial institutions and the micro-entrepreneurs who need access to non-predatory financing options."

Even if the political climate in Washington is not conducive to advancing comprehensive immigration reform, there are opportunities to pursue policies at the state and local level to protect immigrants. For example, the passage of bills such as the California Values Act (SB 54), which prohibits the use of state or local resources for immigration enforcement purposes, help to encourage immigrants to utilize law enforcement, health, education and other services without fear. Community groups perform vital functions such as educating immigrants about their rights and ensuring that existing laws are upheld. Moreover, advocates and concerned citizens can participate in public forums to be held by cities or counties that turn immigrants over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). These forums are mandated by the TRUTH Act, which went into effect on January 1, 2017. The TRUTH Act further requires that immigrants detained in local jails be informed that they have a right to say no or to request to have an attorney present for interviews with ICE agents. Community groups can monitor local law enforcement to ensure they are complying with the law.

Kern Food Policy Council
A multi-sector collaboration of food banks, nonprofits, agricultural interests, public health and health systems, the Kern Food Policy Council is conducting a Food System Assessment to articulate community priorities and goals for a sustainable, healthy food system. This assessment has the potential to galvanize change in the way food is grown, processed and distributed in Kern County, with the goal of ending food insecurity. Community meetings organized by the Food Policy Council provide an opportunity for residents to advocate for inclusion in the identification of goals that meet the needs of their communities and lead to more equitable outcomes. Jill Egland, founding member of the Food Policy Council, explained that the purpose of the community meetings is "to see where the interest is, where innovation is happening, where the potential leadership is, and then begin to understand where the policy shifts need to happen, where do we need to push for changes, and how to leverage the information that we've gathered to make those changes happen." Residents will need to participate in these and other forums to advocate for change in the institutions that make up complex food systems to promote equitable outcomes.

Photo courtesy of Dolores Huerta Foundation

Immigration Policy
Informants did not identify immigration policy as a top policy opportunity when interviewed prior to the election. However, the anti-immigrant stance adopted by the Trump administration and echoed in many communities across the region is generating a great deal of fear and uncertainty in Kern County's large immigrant population, the industries that employ them and agencies that serve them. Hate crimes are on the rise, and law enforcement agencies cite fear of deportation as driving down crime reporting in immigrant communities and reducing safety. A potential restriction on travel from Muslim countries and a reduction in H-1B visas could worsen the doctor shortage in places like Kern County, which is already medically underserved. Kern County is home to a private immigrant detention center, feeding suspicions that it "serves as a pipeline to having folks detained and actually deported from Kern County," according to Jonathan Bibriesca, Administration and Development Coordinator for the California Immigrant Youth Justice Alliance. He continued, "What we do know, is that people that were getting picked up were the main providers of the household, so people became homeless. Undocumented families and also citizen families of mixed statuses were becoming homeless." Several community-based groups advocate for the removal of the detention center.
Leading the Way Toward a Healthy and Equitable Kern County

Numerous efforts are under way in Kern County to build the capacity of disadvantaged and underrepresented communities to engage in policy and advocacy work that supports healthy, sustainable and equitable communities. Nonprofit community-based organizations, faith-based groups, government agencies, coalitions, foundations and individuals committed to empowering communities that have traditionally lacked a voice in their own governance are helping residents advocate for social, environmental and economic justice.

"In some cases, it's the first time a lot of these partners have been brought together, so those are the groups that are equipped to rally on and engage with the school district, the school board members, the superintendent." — Kendra Rogers, Children Now

In this section, we present examples of community organizing efforts that were identified through our key informant interviews as particularly effective at engaging residents in actions that have a transformative impact on community well-being. We highlight the issues that local groups are working on, the strategies they employ to engage community members, and the impact of community involvement in these efforts. We also highlight some of the challenges and opportunities these organizations face as they strive to build community capacity as a means to increase racial, health and social equity in Kern County and beyond. Although not an exhaustive list, these efforts illustrate a range of strategies that are being employed and the diverse issue areas that can be addressed with community input and action.

Using LCFF to Promote Equity in Education – Dolores Huerta Foundation

Issue: Students of color and disabled students are disproportionately likely to be suspended or expelled, putting them at increased risk for grade retention, dropout and contact with the juvenile justice system.46

Strategy: Build the capacity of parents to participate in LCAP in order to make schools more inclusive, safe spaces where all students are given the resources and afforded the opportunity to meet academic goals.

The Dolores Huerta Foundation is one of several organizations working to address racial disparities in education by increasing community capacity to participate in school governance processes.

Dolores Huerta Foundation partners with districts to provide LCFF/LCAP training for parents, as well as information about parents' rights, school resources and programs, and the reclassification process for English language learners. The superintendent of a school district where Dolores Huerta Foundation is deeply engaged stated that LCAP has formalized and deepened collaboration between school districts and community members, likening the new relationship to "collaboration on steroids."

Dolores Huerta Foundation organizers hold house meetings to educate parents, many of whom are immigrants, about how the school system works, how schools are governed and funded, and about the importance of LCFF/LCAP. During their weekly meetings, they go through LCAP documents line by line to ensure parents understand them, translating the documents if necessary. In these meetings, parents raised concerns about school climate and high rates of suspensions and expulsion among students of color. Dolores Huerta Foundation encourages them to bring these concerns to LCAP meetings and push for changes that promote greater equity and better serve the needs of disadvantaged students.

Impact: School districts across Kern County are starting to implement restorative justice and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and have committed funding for those programs through their LCAPs. Following a 2014 lawsuit by Dolores Huerta Foundation and other members of the Kern Education Justice Collaborative alleging discriminatory discipline and transfer policies, Kern High School District appropriated $2.59 million for PBIS in its 2015-16 LCAP and used no supplemental or concentration grant funds for its police department, as it had in previous years. In addition, Dolores Huerta Foundation has helped parents use the LCAP process to successfully advocate for family and parent resource centers on school grounds, and increased opportunities for parental education, volunteerism and school leadership. Building community capacity to
participate in the LCAP process has paid off with changes that promote a safer, more inclusive school climate for Kern's disadvantaged children and increased opportunities for parental involvement.

**Establishing Resident Committees to Leverage Community Power – Center for Race, Poverty and the Environment**

**Issue:** Low-income communities and communities of color lack representation in decision-making structures in environmental and health issues.

**Strategy:** Build political power in low-income communities and communities of color through community organizing with the goal of engaging residents who have been systematically excluded from decision-making processes.

The Center for Race, Poverty and the Environment has used door-to-door canvassing, house meetings, community meetings and other face-to-face outreach efforts that aim to build a grassroots movement and challenge existing power structures. In many cases, this organizing results in an action committee of local residents. Examples of these groups include Committee for a Better Arvin, Committee for a Better Shafter, Greenfield Walking Group and the Delano Guardians. Center for Race, Poverty and the Environment provides guidance on how to run effective meetings, establish group priorities, and create bylaws and decision-making structures, allowing these communities to function more effectively and leverage their collective power. In the words of Center for Race, Poverty and the Environment Executive Director Caroline Farrell, "It's really about building relationships, building leaders, [and] building trust within the community."

**Impact:** Many of these committees have gone on to become powerful agents of change, with their members participating in a number of collaboratives, attending school board and city council meetings, joining in lawsuits on behalf of residents, and participating in the creation of school district LCAPs. Several informants noted that these grassroots organizations have become highly effective at influencing policies in their cities and providing much-needed monitoring and oversight.

For example, Committee for a Better Arvin pressured the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to improve the cleanup of a polluted Superfund site in the community. After several years of concerted efforts, they secured $1 million from the EPA to build a new drinking water well in Arvin free from the groundwater pollution plume. The group also has become a trusted community resource and city council members regularly attend their meetings to learn about community issues and priorities. Committee for a Better Shafter has taken on the administration of a community garden and focuses on engaging residents in creating other positive changes in their community. As a result, the city has become more responsive to their efforts and views the committee as a valuable resource. The Greenfield Walking Group has established a community garden in Bakersfield and maintains a close working relationship with the city. The Delano Guardians serve as a "watchdog" and their current efforts are focused on helping residents better understand what's happening with the city council so residents can remain informed about local decision making.

As demonstrated by these local resident committees, many organizing efforts begin with mobilization on a specific action, but the larger goal is to empower disenfranchised communities to speak for themselves and make their voices heard by policymakers. These organizing efforts ideally evolve into continued activism, advocacy and community engagement. According to Center for Race, Poverty and the Environment's Caroline Farrell, these groups "house and institutionalize some of this power building and leadership development within the community." This method empowers residents, identifies likely leaders and begins to build momentum as these individuals engage in addressing important issues.

"There is definitely a hunger in Kern County to create spaces that organize the charged seeds of conversations, and that are led by people being directly affected by the issue, that are sustainable in a way that allows for, particularly youth, to grow as leaders." - Jonathan Blanco, California Immigrant Youth Justice Alliance
Civic Scientists Protecting Vulnerable Communities – Identifying Violations Affecting Neighborhoods (IVAN) Kern

**Issue:** Disadvantaged communities are disproportionately impacted by environmental burdens and are often overlooked by enforcement agencies.

**Strategy:** Empower residents to collect and report their own data on suspected environmental hazards in their communities, and to partner with local agencies to improve enforcement and spur regulations that protect vulnerable communities and residents.

IVAN Kern is one of several IVAN reporting networks throughout the state. IVAN Kern consists of an online reporting web site (https://kernreport.org/) and a task force charged with resolving environmental problems reported through the web site. The task force is comprised of environmental justice and other community-based organizations, along with staff from federal and state environmental agencies, and community members appointed by community organizations. As explained by Gustavo Aguirre, Jr., Project Coordinator for Central California Environmental Justice Network, “the task force is responsible for receiving reports from community members on...illegal dumping of trash, graffiti on neighborhoods, big industry violations, oil and gas, violation of permits, illegal water discharging, and illegal pesticide drift. And so, we deal with what affects community members at the very micro level, and address issues there.”

The success of IVAN Kern depends on the capability of residents to monitor the environment and report potential hazards. Community-based organizations participating in the network perform the vital role of training “civic scientists” so they have the knowledge and skills to monitor the environment in communities that often are overlooked by environmental protection agencies. Rosana Esparza, an independent researcher with the Kern Environmental Health Project in Lost Hills explained, “The role of the organizer is to identify issues affecting residents on multiple levels. It's important that residents are the primary investigators and researchers. They have a history living in the community and are the holders of information. Together with their children they have experienced changes in the area over time. Their children are the ones most affected by environmental conditions, pollution, oil and gas production, and traffic.”

Organizers from IVAN Kern and related organizations also help residents understand environmental laws, regulations, public agencies and their policy priorities. This helps community members recognize what information public agencies need to begin addressing environmental wrongs, and facilitates their participation in the resolution of environmental problems.

**Impact:** Residents of Arvin who had been evacuated from their homes due to a leak in a gas pipeline were told by the operator of the pipeline that it was safe to return. These residents and concerned community members had been trained to sample the air. Community groups toured the site shortly afterward, using their own monitoring equipment to detect gas emissions from nearby storage tanks, and filed a report on the IVAN Kern web site. The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District quickly responded, issuing a notice of violation to the company operating the facility, and promising that it would be fined. This collaborative interaction stands in contrast with other more conflictual relationships between the Air District and regional environmental justice organizations, and it prompted legislation granting state regulators the capacity to protect individuals living near oil and gas pipelines.

More than simply reporting environmental conditions, residents trained as “civic scientists” gain experience that empowers them to proactively and constructively participate in problem-solving. Lost Hills noted that along with an increase in environmental literacy, IVAN Kern-trained residents gained a sense of pride and ownership in their community, and became accustomed to giving media interviews and hosting visitors from other cities wanting to learn more about their air monitoring project. When youth from Lost Hills attending a regional leadership training workshop were asked to describe what made their community unique, they named the air monitoring stations, and spoke with pride about their parents who agreed to place the stations in their yards and participate in the data collection effort. What began with a simple question – “Is the air we breathe making us sick?” – has led to the mobilization of engaged, empowered residents around this and other issues impacting the community.

Building Healthy Communities – South Kern

**Issue:** Communities are burdened by health and racial inequities due to institutional policies and disinvestment that have created longstanding barriers in their physical and social environments.
Strategy: Use the power of collaborative partnerships to create healthy environments for vulnerable populations. Building Healthy Communities is a multi-year, multi-site initiative of The California Endowment. Partners at each Building Healthy Communities site pursue a policy and systems change agenda to address the needs of the local community. Building Healthy Communities – South Kern has leveraged input from residents, community-based organizations, businesses, school districts and public agencies in Arvin, Lamont, Weedpatch and Greenfield to develop a shared vision, goals and action plan for improving community health. Action Teams pursue improvements in education, the environment, health access and recreation. These efforts are supported by the Building Healthy Communities HUB, which provides staffing and resources to the Action Teams and the Central Table, both of which are key structures for communication and organization. Using the “Collective Impact” framework, the multi-sector partners of Building Healthy Communities – South Kern employ multiple strategies (e.g., outreach, advocacy, direct action) to work toward their common vision and goals, while meeting regularly to identify priorities, strategize and report on progress.

Impact: The local organizations identified in the previous sections are some of the many partners involved in the Building Healthy Communities – South Kern initiative. These efforts demonstrate the collaborative potential in South Kern, and many successes have been produced as a result. For example, through the coordinated efforts of Building Healthy Communities – South Kern, the Dolores Huerta Foundation has been able to partner with other organizations and school districts to increase parent engagement and support LCFF activities to improve school climate. Building Healthy Communities – South Kern partners also were responsible for launching IVAN Kern to help improve reporting, monitoring and enforcement of air quality in South Kern. Furthermore, Center for Race, Poverty and the Environment and the local resident committees that they support (e.g., Committee for a Better Arvin, Greenfield Walking Group) are active partners in the Building Healthy Communities initiative. The concerted efforts of Building Healthy Communities – South Kern have aided their success as they’ve fought to clean up toxic waste sites and secure clean drinking water in the City of Arvin, among other actions.

Another opportunity that Building Healthy Communities – South Kern has pursued is investing in community groups to advocate for greater resident input on the Kern County General Plan update. Since many communities in Kern County face significant threats to their health and well-being due to inadequate land use policies, it is essential for county and city planners to seek their input when making decisions about housing, transportation, health and infrastructure. Through the collaborative efforts of Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability, Center for Race, Poverty and the Environment, and Central California Environmental Justice Network, Building Healthy Communities – South Kern has engaged community members in the planning process and given them a space to contribute recommendations for their neighborhoods. Building Healthy Communities – South Kern also advocated for the creation of a Bike Master Plan for the City of Arvin and supported Arvin’s General Plan update. This marked the first time Arvin had included a health element in their planning policy and placed them among the few cities in California to do so.

These are some of the many successes achieved by Building Healthy Communities – South Kern while advocating for health and racial equity. As demonstrated by this initiative, community action is amplified when efforts are coordinated and supported with sustained resources. This ultimately strengthens the “civic infrastructure,” creates greater connection among local efforts, and builds momentum within communities. In the words of The California Endowment’s South Kern Program Manager Annalisa Robles, “The evolution has to do more with community—those community groups and residents owning their power and using their power and voice.”

Photo courtesy of Building Healthy Communities – South Kern
Community Engagement Challenges and Opportunities

Key informants identified community organizing and mobilization as an instrumental strategy in the effort to address many of the challenges facing residents in Kern County, while noting that it is time- and labor-intensive work. To be effective, this work requires building trust and establishing relationships in the community, creating sustained community engagement, ensuring that community voices are heard, holding decision makers accountable, and creating effective collaborative partnerships. Though difficult, this work is vital, because, as Susana DeAnda, Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director of the Community Water Center said, "if we really want to create social change, it's important that impacted residents are at the forefront, are at the decision-making level, are at the table recommending solutions for their community."

Community organizations seeking to increase the power of those who are under- or unrepresented in local, state and national politics recognize the importance of increasing voter turnout. As noted in research from the California Civic Engagement Project, Latino youth, almost all of whom are U.S. citizens and therefore eligible to vote once they reach voting age, make up an increasingly large segment of the population (52% in 2014). Yet voting rates are low among Latinos and other non-white populations. Although 1 in 3 Californians of voting age is Latino, only about 1 in 5 voters is Latino. Many groups we spoke with view voter registration and voter education as an important part of their capacity-building work, because voter turnout remains low among non-whites in Kern County. In the 2016 general election, only 35% of adult citizens of Latino heritage in Kern County cast a vote, 12 percentage points lower than the 47% turnout rate of eligible Latinos statewide. Turnout of Asian-Americans in Kern County (39%) is closer to the 41% of eligible Asian-Americans who voted statewide, but still trails the overall turnout rate in Kern County (45%) and the state (59%).

Trust and Relationship Building

Informants expressed the importance of trust and relationship building in their work, and emphasized that this is a process that takes time, mindfulness and commitment. As explained by Juana Carbajal, Outreach Coordinator with the UFW Foundation, "They will not talk to someone if they don’t trust them... when they trust you, they’ll open a little bit more on the other issues that they’re having. So trust is something super, super important here in Kern County." Community trust is seen as an essential component of this work, but interviewees noted that some funders may not provide sufficient resources to support the effort that goes into securing and maintaining trust. Marisa Lundin of California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. observed that "Trust building [is] something that doesn’t look super quantifiable on a grant report. But you need dedicated staff to maintain those relationships because otherwise, it’s just going to continuously be these very cheap, surface-level relationships."

Valuing Community Voice and Perspectives

Language barriers, cultural barriers and community isolation contribute to the perception by some policymakers and county leaders that residents of disadvantaged communities are uninterested or unqualified to participate in decision-making processes, despite their local expertise and knowledge of community issues. An organizer working with women to improve lives in farm worker communities countered this perception by stating, "I mean, we like to think that even though we don’t have formal education, extensive formal education, that we’re still very talented women, skillful women that have great ideas." Many informants explained that there is a lack of opportunities to participate in community development and residents often do not feel “invited to the table.”

Additionally, when outside researchers, funders or other groups come into a community, there is a tendency to assume that they “know best.” This can override the community voice and diminish efforts of local residents. As one environmental justice advocate explained about an organization that entered a community with a well-intentioned agenda that didn’t align with community priorities, "It was a challenge to get the organization to realize as a new organization coming into a community, it’s not your position to be an expert in anything. Your job is to learn, to listen, and to work with the ideas that residents have.” This attests to the importance of creating viable opportunities for residents to be involved in decision making and valuing local expertise, perspectives and experiences.
Sustaining Community Engagement

Policy development and systems change are slow and deliberative processes, and it can be difficult to sustain resident engagement over time. Many community members are constrained in their ability to participate due to long work hours, seasonal work schedules, distance to events/meetings, lack of transportation and childcare needs. Rachel Vizcarra, Programs Assistant with the UFW Foundation, noted that "It's not that people don't want to participate, right? And that's what we've seen. They want to. They absolutely want to come and share their stories. But can I get off of work to come and participate? And who's going to take care of my kids if I'm going to be at a two hour long meeting that goes beyond my work hours?"

In order to sustain their commitment, people need to feel that their input and efforts matter. As explained by Camila Chavez, Executive Director of the Dolores Huerta Foundation, mobilizing residents can be difficult when they "don't understand how their involvement or contributions would make a difference." Without clear roles or tangible results, it can be challenging to ensure their long-term engagement. Community Water Center Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director Susana de Anda said "I think it's really important that we have short-term and long-term strategies to bring about change. Because as organizers...people are going to lose hope if they're not seeing any traction change in a couple of years, they're going to lose hope. Policy work takes some time. And because our local leadership is not necessarily very conducive to our needs, that's even harder."

Because these are long-term processes, sustainable funding and investment are needed to support community change efforts. Predictable funding streams strengthen organizations on the ground and enable them to focus on their work, rather than "chasing money."

Lack of Local Representation in Positions of Power

Kern County was described by many of our informants as a politically “ultra-conservative” community. This creates significant challenges when trying to advance policies that address inequities. As articulated by Annalisa Robles, The California Endowment Program Manager for South Kern County, "Oftentimes decision-making is not made through this lens of equity or equality or spread; in other words, it's still kind of the haves and have-nots. And whoever has the power is going to be able to kind of control, again, the most precious of all things, those resources and where decisions are being made and where they flow.” This observation highlights the need for accountability and added pressure to ensure that decision makers are responsive to community needs and priorities. In addition, it speaks to the need to develop formal political leadership in historically disenfranchised and vulnerable communities. As noted by Kendra Rogers, Managing Director of Early Childhood Policy at Children Now, “There's a lot of power in the grassroots, but there's also a lot of power in investing in the right people in communities that are willing to stand up, and be strong, and have a voice, and, push things as well.” She reiterated the importance of electing leaders from these communities to positions of power by saying “everything circles back to the political infrastructure, because you have to have people willing to make change.”

Collaboration

Although local leaders emphasized the importance of working with other organizations and partners to effectively address complex, interconnected issues, many interview informants also identified some of the challenges that come with collaborating. Most notably, collaboration can be very time-consuming and drain resources from an organization’s primary work. Others stated that it is easy to fall into the trap of collaborating for the sake of collaboration. Without a clear purpose and goal, collaboration is likely to be ineffective. Joint decision making can be complex, consensus can be difficult to reach, and follow-through is challenging in the absence of accountability mechanisms. With multiple networks of organizations already in existence, and a relatively low level of local financial and organizational resources, pursuing collaboration must be intentional and thoughtful in order to be effective. This requires commitment for good collaborative practice from the local organizations as well as by their funders.
Conclusion

Despite the challenges of community organizing and capacity-building work, supporting the self-empowerment of the populations experiencing racial and health inequities to participate in civic life is leading to more equitable, sustainable and healthy communities in Kern County. Our key informants noted the untapped potential of residents who may have limited knowledge of and experience in formal decision-making processes, but who are intimately aware of racial, social and health inequities in their communities. These residents experience first-hand the harmful effects of systemic injustice and should be involved in identifying problems, establishing priorities and proposing solutions. Without their participation in these processes, it is unlikely that systems will be transformed to meet the needs of historically underrepresented people and places. The challenge for community organizations and funders is that capacity building requires a slow, deliberate approach and sustained funding in order to achieve lasting change rather than fleeting success. A sustained commitment to supporting grassroots organizing will bear fruit as a new generation of leaders comes forward to tackle the underlying causes of racial and social inequities through policies and programs that promote equity.
Endnotes

1. The San Joaquin Valley Health Fund strengthens the capacity of communities and organizations in the San Joaquin Valley to improve health and well-being by advancing programs and policy changes that promote community health and health equity for all. See http://www.shfcenter.org/sjvhealthfund for more information.


18. U.S. Census Bureau (2015). Table S1501, American Community Survey 1-year estimates.

The Center for Migration Studies (CMS) estimated the total number of undocumented immigrants in Kern County in 2013 to be 61,510, 95% of whom were Hispanic and about 45% of whom had been in the U.S. for 15 years or more. (Retrieved April 1, 2016. Data about unauthorized immigrants are no longer published on their website.) The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) estimated the total number of undocumented immigrants to be slightly lower, 58,500 in 2013. (Retrieved from http://www.ppic.org/publication/undocumented-immigrants-in-california).

The FPL is set at three times the cost of a minimum food diet, adjusted for inflation, as well as age, family size and composition, but it is not adjusted for regional differences in the cost of living. Poverty level data in this paragraph are from the U.S. Census Bureau (2015), Table 51703, American Community Survey 1-year estimates.

The County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program is a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. “The Rankings are based on a model of population health that emphasizes the many factors that, if improved, can help make communities healthier places to live, learn, work and play.” As cited on www.countyhealthrankings.org.


Tax-exempt hospitals are required by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to conduct community health needs assessments. They are intended to ensure that hospitals have the information they need to provide community benefits that meet the needs of their communities. By statute, the CHNAs must take into account input from persons who represent the broad interests of the community served by the hospital facility, including those with special knowledge of or expertise in public health. (http://www.astho.org/Programs/Access/Community-Health-Needs-Assessments). The Kern County Community Benefits Collaborative, comprised of the major health systems serving Kern County (Delano Regional Medical Center, Dignity Health, Kaiser Permanente and San Joaquin Community Hospital) conducts a CHNA for Kern County every three years.


Ibid 2.


The Kern County General Plan Update was launched in September 2016. Kern County hosted informational workshops between January 2017 and June 2017, and encouraged community input to identify general plan priorities, objectives and implementation measures. A draft general plan will be circulated for public comment in September 2017, with a final proposed general plan and environmental impact report made available for review in April 2018. More information is available at: http://pcd.kendosa.com/generalplanupdate.


Ibid Lucia, Dietz, et al. (See note 24).

Ibid Lucia, Dietz, et al. (See note 24).


"The Global Payment Program (GPP) establishes a statewide pool of funding for the remaining uninsured by combining federal DSH and uncompensated care funding, where select Designated Public Hospital systems can achieve their "global budget" by meeting a service threshold that incentivizes movement from high cost, avoidable services to providing higher value, and preventative services." California Department of Health Care Services. Retrieved from http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/provgovpart/Pages/GlobalPaymentProgram.aspx


For information on IRWM see http://www.water.ca.gov/irwm.


Ibid 41.

Ibid 41.


The San Joaquin Valley Health Fund strengthens the capacity of communities and organizations in the San Joaquin Valley to improve health and well-being by advancing programs and policy changes that promote community health and health equity for all.

The San Joaquin Valley Health Fund is managed by The Center with funding from Sierra Wellness Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Blue Shield of California Foundation, Wallace H. Coulter Foundation, Dignity Health and Tides.

www.shfcenter.org/sjvhealthfund

The California Endowment's mission is to expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved individuals and communities and to promote fundamental improvements in the health status of all Californians.

www.calendow.org

The UC Davis Center for Regional Change produces innovative and collaborative research to help build healthy, prosperous, sustainable, and equitable regions in California and beyond.

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http://regionalchange.ucdavis.edu

Report designed by Snapshot Media, Fresno, California
www.snapshot-media.net
I am pleased to attach the Preliminary Summary Report for the San Joaquin Valley Land-Water Resources Intersection Project, funded as part of the SJV Greenprint. I trust that this will satisfy the terms of our agreement with Fresno COG and will get in touch with you to confirm this after I return from vacation on June 26.

As the report itself explains, additional information and complete documentation of sources, etc., will be forthcoming in the final report later this summer. This will include the results of scenarios reflecting the impact of climate change, SGMA implementation, the WRCB proposal for the Stanislaus, Merced and Tulolomne Rivers, and alternative urban growth patterns. This additional work is being funded through other sources. All the data, logic models and maps will also be posted to the SJV Gateway.

We don’t mind if you distribute this report, but we would like to wait until the additional work is completed before making a formal public release.

Edward Thompson, Jr.
California Director
American Farmland Trust
1003 Gravenstein Highway, 2nd Floor
Sebastopol, CA 95472
202-309-1162 mobile
EXPLORING THE INTERSECTION OF
AGRICULTURAL LAND & WATER RESOURCES
IN THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY OF CALIFORNIA
Demonstrating the Utility of Data Basin as a Decision Making Tool

Preliminary Summary Report
June 2017

American Farmland Trust and
Conservation Biology Institute

Introduction

Both land and water resources are critical to San Joaquin Valley agriculture. Water has received more attention because its supply appears to be more limited. But land is no less essential for agricultural production. In fact, it is the intersection of land and water resources – how their characteristics combine in any given area – that determines the agricultural potential of that area.

As part of the San Joaquin Valley Greenprint project, American Farmland Trust (AFT) sought to explore the intersection of land and water resources in the region as they affect agricultural production, both today and in the future. Our inquiry focused on several key questions:

- Where is the quality of agricultural land higher or lower?
- Where are irrigation water resources more or less abundant and reliable?
- How and where does the combination of land quality and water reliability appear to make agriculture more or less resilient?
- How and where will urban growth, regulatory proposals – SGMA and the WRCB Delta plan – and climate change likely to affect agricultural land and water resources?

In trying to shed light on these questions, we also sought to demonstrate the capacity of Data Basin as an analytic planning tool for local governments, state agencies and private business and organizations. Thus, the results of our analysis, the data and the methodology we used will be posted on the San Joaquin Valley Gateway web portal that can be used by anyone for planning or further analytic purposes.

This report is a summary of our preliminary findings, issued to satisfy the requirements of the grant we received from the Greenprint project. These findings may change as we complete our analysis. But they are likely to be fairly close to what will eventually be included in our final report.
Basic Approach

The scope of our study was limited to the floor of the San Joaquin Valley – comprising roughly 6 million acres – where irrigated agriculture predominates and, hence, both land and water resources are essential to food production. To answer the questions we posed, AFT partnered with the Conservation Biology Institute (CBI), which invented the Data Basin geographic information system platform and used it to compile and analyze relevant quantitative, spatial data, some of it generated by the Greenprint project itself. The data were organized using a logic model that defined their relationship and relative weight. The logic model had components related to the qualities of the land, to the abundance and variability of water supplies, and to the degree of urban development risk. The details are discussed below.

In the process of assembling data and constructing a logic model, we held a series of workshops throughout the Valley and a number of on-line webinars to engage stakeholders. We asked for their perspectives on the questions we were investigating and sought their advice on what kind of factors (represented by the data) were most relevant and how much weight they should carry. The public engagement process was not as robust as we had hoped, probably because our outreach budget was limited and key stakeholders tend to be very busy. But we nonetheless gained valuable insights through these meetings. And, going forward, we hope to further engage a wide range of Valley stakeholders using the results of our final report.

Land Resources

Land is the foundation of agriculture. Indeed, the word agriculture derives from the Latin word for field, i.e., land. And though it is axiomatic that not all land is the same, the very real, practical differences are often overlooked when decisions affecting agricultural land are made.

Methodology for Assessing Land Quality

Our first inquiry was into the intrinsic quality or resource value of the land in the Valley. The focus was on characteristics that are inherent in the land itself and, as such, are impossible, difficult and/or costly to improve or overcome by human intervention. Our assumption was that, all other things being equal, land with more favorable intrinsic characteristics is likely to be more productive, versatile, sustainable and profitable to farm.

The criteria we used to define the relative quality of agricultural land included both positive and negative attributes reflecting the intrinsic characteristics of the land. The data representing positive attributes included:

1 The sources of all data will be documented in the final report, though for brevity we have omitted them in this summary.
- California Storie Index (a formal measure of soil productivity for agricultural uses)
- Farmland Mapping & Monitoring Program (FMMP) categories (reflecting soil productivity and active irrigation)
- Aquifer recharge potential (a direct link between land and the availability of water)
- Microclimate (particularly for high value citrus production)

These data were processed for the entire floor of the San Joaquin Valley on a 270 square meter grid, so that each data point represents about 18 acres of land. For all these and other data sets, the range of the data from highest to lowest were converted (normalized) to a scale of one to negative one. (Figure 1) This allowed us to average the normalized scores for the data sets to produce a final score representing the positive attributes or “land asset value” for each grid cell. In so doing, all of the data sets were given equal weight, so that the highest score a parcel could receive on the land asset scale was one and the lowest negative one.

Figure 1 - Example of the Normalization Process

We took the same approach in combining data sets representing negative attributes of the land, including:

- Soil salinity and sodicity (limiting productivity as well as what can be grown on the land)
- Shallow water tables (also a limitation on production)
- Pattern of recent fallowing (reflecting economic decisions based on land limitations)

This produced a “land impairment value” for each parcel of land, ranging from negative one (most impaired) to one. This was added to the land asset value to obtain an overall land quality score. (Figure 2)² The land quality scores throughout the Valley were then divided into high, medium and low ranges using a mathematical protocol called the Jenks

² Maps representing each individual data layer will eventually be accessible on the San Joaquin Valley Gateway web portal. https://sivp.databasin.org/articles/50e144bc34aa40bc959989effd80f1a8 This will enable readers to unpack the data to see how each individual attribute contributed to overall land quality scores.
method, which identifies natural breaks in the data. This approach eliminates any bias that would have influenced the breakdown had we used the alternative method of simply selecting break points, e.g., defining the top 25 percent of the data points as “high,” etc.

Figure 2 – Land Quality Logic Model

To test the accuracy of our land quality model, we compared our results with the cropping patterns in selected parts of the Valley. Our assumption was that, if the land identified by our model as of highest quality closely mirrored where the highest value crops are grown, it would have successfully captured the intrinsic characteristics of the land that make it most valuable for agriculture. This is, in fact, what it appears to do.\(^3\) (Figure 3)

Figure 3 – Coincidence of High Value Agricultural Land (left) and Highest Value Crops (right) in Kern County

\(^3\) Stakeholders noted, however, that some “lower” value land may contribute more to agriculture than the quality of the land itself would suggest. Examples are land producing low-value forage crops that support the Valley’s high value dairy industry or annual crops that support more farm worker jobs per acre than higher-value permanent crops.
Major Findings About Agricultural Land Quality

Based on its intrinsic characteristics – again, things that are impossible, difficult or costly to change or overcome – a relatively small fraction (39%) of the agricultural land in the San Joaquin Valley qualifies as high quality. (Figure 4)

Figure 4 – Profile of Agricultural Land Quality in the San Joaquin Valley

This land is generally more productive and versatile, and it has few limitations, making it the most important land to retain in agricultural use if the goal is to sustain agricultural production. It will simply be more expensive and difficult to do so if agriculture has to rely on lower quality land. Most of this land is found along the Highway 99 corridor on the east side of the Valley with a smaller band along I-5 on the western side. (Figure 5) The fact that most of the Valley’s cities are located on or near high quality agricultural land is a reflection of the fact that the original agrarian settlers of the Valley were aware of the superior nature of this land. But this is now working at cross purposes with the goal of sustaining agricultural production as the cities grow and permanently remove high quality land from production.
A special subset of agricultural land serves as groundwater recharge areas that are critical to the water supply of both agriculture and cities. This land is generally high quality, prime farmland with well-drained soils that easily allow precipitation and irrigation water to percolate down into the water table. It, too, is concentrated around the Valley’s cities where it is vulnerable to development. (Figure 6)
Figure 6 – Aquifer Recharge Areas in the San Joaquin Valley (High Groundwater Banking Index)

Water Resources

Land, of course, is only half of the equation for agricultural production in the semi-arid San Joaquin Valley. Irrigation water is its lifeblood and the quality of the land in this region matters little if it does not have water. Thus, as the recent drought has underscored, it is crucial to understand where and to what extent agricultural water supplies are under stress or subject to uncertainty that could affect future agricultural production. The second focus of our inquiry attempted to answer this question.

Methodology for Assessing Water Stress
Our assessment of the degree of water stress relied on a logic model that took into account both the extent of reliance on different sources and the variability of the supply of these sources. The major sources of irrigation water in the Valley that we considered were:

- Local surface water (from watersheds that drain into the San Joaquin Valley)
- Imported surface water (from watersheds outside the Valley, e.g., through the Delta)
- Groundwater

For surface water, we used Department of Water Resources data to measure both the percentage of total agricultural water supplies in any given region\(^4\) that come from local and imported sources, as well as the variability of those supplies over the longest and most recent period for which data were available. Variability was defined as the extent of deviation from the mean using a variable called the coefficient of variation, with higher scores representing the greatest deviation, i.e., less reliability.

For groundwater, we measured stress levels by considering both the depth to groundwater and the change in depth to groundwater, again for the most recent period for which data were available. The former reflects the cost of pumping irrigation water to the surface, while the latter is a direct indicator of the extent to which groundwater is being drawn down and, in many cases, depleted. Each of the three data sets were, like those for land, converted to a scale of one to zero in this case, then added to produce a water stress index. (Figure 7) The Jenks method was also used to identify natural breaks in the data to define high, medium and low water stress levels. A high stress level generally means that a sub-region relies heavily on sources of water that are highly variable or unreliable, while a lower stress level reflects less reliance on variable sources, greater reliance on relatively stable sources or both.

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\(^4\) Surface water data are collected for each of 22 DWR water management regions in the Valley. They are not available for individual parcels of land as with land quality data. Thus, our analysis of surface water reliability could not be as fine-grained as our land quality analysis. Groundwater data from wells are available on a more detailed basis but require interpolation and, thus are useful only for large-scale analysis.
Major Findings About Agricultural Water Stress

The portion of the Valley currently experiencing high water stress is relatively limited, with only about 374 thousand acres or six percent of the total agricultural acreage falling into this category. However, more than 60 percent (3.7 million acres) of the agricultural land in the region is subject to medium stress levels – with significant variability of, and uncertainty about, at least one of its sources of supply. And only about one-third (2.1 million acres) of the land is experiencing low stress on its water supplies. (Figure 8 and Table 1)

Water stress on high quality agricultural land is disproportionately greater. Nine percent of this land is subject to high water stress levels, and 56 percent of all highly water-stressed acreage in the Valley is high quality agricultural land.

Figure 8 – Profile of Water Stress on Agricultural Land in the San Joaquin Valley
Again, there are fairly dramatic geographic distinctions between highly water stressed land and that experiencing lower water stress. Generally, water stress increases from north to south and from east to west, owing to a number of factors, including lower precipitation, variability of deliveries through the Delta and greater reliance on groundwater. This geography is well-known and tends to confirm that our analysis of water stress closely approximates actual conditions.

Figure 9 – Geography of Water Stress in the San Joaquin Valley

The water stress profile of the Valley’s agricultural land is likely to change, perhaps dramatically, because of climate change and pending state regulatory decisions. These include implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act – an estimated 13 percent of all agricultural water in the Valley comes from over-drafted groundwater
sources⁵ – and a proposal by the state Water Resources Control Board to require significant new limits on irrigation withdrawals from the Stanislaus, Merced and Tuolumne Rivers. AFT and CBI are using Data Basin to model the potential impact of each of these scenarios on the Valley’s water resources and will report their findings in the final report.

**Intersection of Agricultural Land and Water Resources**

By themselves, our findings about the quantitative profile and spatial distribution of agricultural land and water resources shed light on the value, importance and stress on those resources. But it when these findings are combined – when the intersection is plotted – that a more interesting and useful, if not unique, perspective emerges. By dividing the Valley’s agricultural acreage into nine separate categories, representing all the possible combinations of land quality and water stress level in our logic model, we obtained a much more refined picture of its resources. (Table 1)

Table 1 – Profile of the Intersection of Agricultural Land and Water Resources  
All figures in acres unless otherwise indicated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Quality</th>
<th>Water Stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>727,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>1,034,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>336,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,098,916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pct High Land Quality</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall picture that emerges is that higher quality land tends to be experiencing disproportionately more water stress than lower quality land. A greater proportion of high water stressed land (56%) than of lower water stressed land (35%) is high quality land. And a greater percentage of high quality land (70%) is experiencing medium to high water stress levels than medium and low quality land (63%). Areas subject to high stress levels are likely to expand if regulatory decisions and climate change further limit water availability.

The intersection of land that is both of high quality and is experiencing low water stress – the “best of the best” – appears to be extraordinarily small. Of the roughly six million acres of agricultural land in the Valley, only 39 percent is of high quality. But of the high quality land, only 30 percent also has low water stress levels. This 727 thousand acres (1,137 square miles) represents only 12 percent of all the agricultural land in the Valley. On the other hand, the land that either has high water stress or is of low quality amounts to 1.5 million acres or one quarter of all agricultural land in the Valley. That leaves about

3.9 million acres “in the middle” with relatively good land and fairly reliable water supplies.

These findings suggest that different management strategies will be needed to address the challenges associated with different types of land-water intersection. For high quality land with low water stress – the “best of the best” – the most important priorities should be to prevent the land from being converted to non-agricultural use and to assure that it continues to have adequate water supplies. For high and medium quality land with medium to high water stress, the priority should be to augment water supplies through conservation, transfers, active groundwater recharge and other strategies. (Of course, this won’t make any difference if this land is converted to urban use, so that should also be a priority.) For low quality land, particularly with medium to high water stress, consideration should be given to finding alternatives to agricultural use – large-scale solar is one option⁶ – and transferring water (to the extent possible) to higher quality agricultural land. While controversial, this choice may be forced upon the Valley by climate change and regulatory decisions further limiting water supplies.

The geography of the land-water intersection paints an even more dramatic picture of the differences that exist in this region. (Figure 10) On this map, the degree of water stress is represented by the basic colors: green for low, yellow-orange for medium and red for high. The quality of the land is represented by variations within this color scheme with the darkest and most intense colors connoting high quality land, the more muted hues medium quality and the lightest hues the lower quality land.

Much of the “best of the best” land is located around and between Modesto and Fresno on the east side of the Valley with smaller concentrations in western Stanislaus and east of Visalia. South of Fresno, again on the east side, there are large expanses of high quality land experiencing medium to high water stress levels, especially in Kern County. In San Joaquin County, the high value land on the east side, as well as in the Delta, appears to have water supplies that have not been as reliable as they are just to the south. Obviously, the resource management challenges and strategies noted above will play out differently in the various sub-regions of the Valley, depending on the land-water intersection profile in a given sub-region.

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Development Risk

Another stress factor to be considered in managing agricultural land for sustainable agricultural production is the conversion of the land to non-agricultural, mostly urban uses. Since records were first kept in 1984, almost 200,000 acres of agricultural land have been developed in the Valley, roughly one-third of all the land urbanized since the region was first settled. In addition, about 160,000 acres have been converted to rural residential development (1.5 to 10 acre lots), comprising about one-quarter of all the acreage converted to non-agricultural use.
Methodology for Assessing Development Risk

To assess future development risk to agricultural land, we again used a logic model that included data on various indicators of the likelihood of conversion to non-agricultural use. These data included:

- City limits and spheres of influence (reflecting a government intention to convert these lands)
- General plan designation of land for development
- Forecast of urban growth by California Department of Natural Resources

Land falling within city limits or spheres of influence, or designated for development in general plans was all categorized as having a high risk of conversion. Land outside these areas but forecast for urban growth by DNR was considered at medium risk of conversion, while all other land was deemed at low risk of conversion. (Figure 11)

Figure 11 – Logic Model for Development Risk

![Logic Model for Development Risk]

- High Development Threat
- Moderate Development Threat
- Low Development Threat
- City Limits
- General Plan Development Zone
- Sphere of Influence
- Projected Growth Area (2050)
- All other areas

Major Findings About Development Risk to Agricultural Land

Based on our analysis, about 725,000 acres (12%) of San Joaquin Valley agricultural land are subject to high to medium development risk. (Table 2) High quality agricultural land is disproportionately more at risk – 16% or one out of six acres -- largely because so much of it is located around cities. Land that is both of high quality and with low water stress has an even higher risk of development with 131,000 acres (18%) at high to medium risk of conversion. By contrast, 11 and six percent respectively of the medium and low quality land appears to be at risk of development. Our analysis also found that almost one-quarter of the land with high water stress levels is at high risk of development, primarily in Kern County. But the spheres of influence (one indicator of development risk) in that county are exceptionally large, so they probably overstate the potential extent of future development. With this exception, land with lower water stress had a higher risk of development (13%) than land with higher water stress.
Table 2 – Development Risk Distributed Among Land Quality and Water Stress Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development Risk</th>
<th>Land Quality</th>
<th>Water Stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>274,149</td>
<td>210,605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>113,160</td>
<td>59,373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2,007,236</td>
<td>2,273,128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,394,545</td>
<td>2,543,106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pct High &amp; Med</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Combining the effects of water stress and development risk yields another perspective on the Valley’s agricultural land. Of all the land in the Valley, more than a million acres – one out of every six acres – is subject to either high water stress or high to medium development risk. (Table 3) of the Valley’s high quality agricultural land, more than one out of five acres is subject to one or both of these influences that jeopardize future agricultural production.

Table 3 – Cumulative Impact of High Water Stress and Development Risk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Land</th>
<th>High Quality Land</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High/Medium Dev Risk</td>
<td>724,636</td>
<td>387,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Water Stress</td>
<td>373,872</td>
<td>209,326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>90,458</td>
<td>69,649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Risk &amp; Stress</td>
<td>1,008,050</td>
<td>526,986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Valley Agricultural Land</td>
<td>6,147,520</td>
<td>2,394,545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pct of Valley Agricultural Land</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations

Our analysis of the San Joaquin Valley’s agricultural land and water resources offers a new perspective on the viability and sustainability of food production in California’s and the nation’s premier agricultural region. Mapping the intersection of the quality of land, reliability of water supplies and development pressure offers a more detailed picture of the distinctions among the resources across the landscape. These finer-grained distinctions should be useful in planning and have important implications for policy decisions and strategies for conserving and managing land and water resources.

The results of this analysis are quite sobering. The coincidence of high quality land and low water stress is quite small, encompassing only one-eighth of the total agricultural acreage – an area only 80 percent the size of Kings County. The opposite conditions, lower quality land and/or high water stress, are twice as extensive, comprising one quarter of the Valley’s acreage. One-sixth of the total acreage, and more than one-fifth of
high quality land, is subject to high water stress or high to medium development risk. 
Significantly, almost twice as much land in the Valley is subject to development risk than 
is currently experiencing high water stress.

These figures do not take into consideration the potential impacts of climate change and 
pending regulatory decisions that could further reduce irrigation water supplies. Based on 
further analysis we are conducting – and will present in our final report – all of these 
could have a very dramatic impact on agriculture, significantly expanding water stressed 
areas with the likely result that more agricultural land will be taken out of production. 
This will place a premium on trying to assure that the higher quality land retains – or 
obtains – adequate irrigation water and, in general, taking steps to increase water supplies 
through innovative means such as active groundwater recharge.

On the other hand, our analysis of urban development suggests that a considerable 
amount of agricultural land, particularly high quality land, could be saved by pursuing the 
alternative of more compact, efficient growth patterns. As other land is taken out of 
production because of shrinking water supplies, it will become even more important to 
minimize conversion of the highest quality farmland by implementing strategies such as 
those encouraged by the San Joaquin Valley Blueprint and the Sustainable Communities 
Strategies designed by the councils of government under SB 375.

Perhaps the most important lesson to be drawn from our findings is that the San Joaquin 
Valley faces a stark choice. This choice isn’t necessarily between this land or that land, or 
this use of water or that one, though such choices probably will have to be made. 
However, the ultimate choice – the one that could make or break agriculture in the Valley 
– is between acknowledging and forthrightly addressing the differences in agricultural 
land and water resources across the Valley landscape with pro-active, effective 
conservation and management strategies; or simply allowing a random pattern of land 
development and retirement to occur regardless of the consequences.
Acknowledgments

American Farmland Trust wishes to thank the following people and institutions for their assistance and support in conducting this project:

- Edward Thompson, Jr., California Director and Senior Associate of American Farmland Trust, who authored this report and took part in the analysis.

- The Conservation Biology Institute; its director James Strittholt, the creator of Data Basin who provided valuable advice on the project; and GIS analyst Dustin Pearce who led the analytical work and produced the maps for the report.

- Fresno Council of Governments and the state Strategic Growth Council which provided most of the funding for the project, as well as the Kern County Planning Department for additional funding.

- Jay Lund, Josué Medellin-Azuara, Ellen Hanak and other technical experts for their sound advice, but who bear no responsibility for the conclusions we have drawn.

- The agricultural, local government and other stakeholders from whom we learned much in our workshops and webinars.

This project was conducted under the auspices of, and with additional financial support from, the Helen K. Cahill Center for Farmland Conservation Policy Innovation. The Cahill Center is the research and educational arm of American Farmland Trust in California. Its namesake, Helen Kennedy “Peggy” Cahill (1916-2013), was a proud fourth generation descendant of California pioneers who in 1849 founded the City of Stockton. A teacher, outdoors enthusiast and philanthropist, Peggy had an abiding interest in the conservation of farmland, especially in the San Joaquin Valley. In her memory, her family has endowed the Cahill Center as a living legacy for future generations who will depend on the land that feeds and sustains us.
Please find attached a proposed lay out of one of the area in Rosamond for future developments of apartments and town homes.
I will call you to see if we have the support of the County for such project, and advice how we can proceed.
Thank you,

ABE NEJIM P.E.
ANTELOPE VALLEY DESIGN GROUP INC.
602 COMMERCE AVENUE, SUITE E
PALMDALE, CA. 93551
(661)266-1600
WEB:AVDGI.COM

Hi Ms. Nelson,
Please find attached a proposed lay out of one of the area in Rosamond for future developments of apartments and town homes.
I will call you to see if we have the support of the County for such project, and advice how we can proceed.

Thank you,

ABE NEJIM P.E.
ANTELOPE VALLEY DESIGN GROUP INC.
602 COMMERCE AVENUE, SUITE E
PALMDALE, CA. 93551
(661)266-1600
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been included, but so far all I see is a lot of abstract information about decibels and stuff. 2) Air pollution - this has to be the #1 detractor for our area.

We have an overabundance of loud trucks, motorcycles and cars in this area - Bakersfield especially. Whatever happened to "mufflers"? It used to be a violation to make all this noise, but now it has become popular to make as much noise as possible, and I don't know if car manufacturers have embraced this, or if these giant tailpipes I see on trucks all over town are after-market. Nothing is done about it from an enforcement standpoint as far as I can tell. This noise is a menace in my area of town (west Bkfd near that Aera ballparks) where we have to listen to the loud roar of oversized trucks and the screaming whine of high-powered motorcycles that race by at speeds of 70-80 mph or more at all hours of the night. Some of these vehicles are so loud you can hear them clearly until they are several miles away. I can't help thinking that these same vehicles are major sources of air pollution, along with the proliferation of diesel trucks, that cause our air to be so bad much of the time. Bakersfield has many advantages over the big cities and it's future could be very bright, but I think that regulation of these loud (and smoggy) vehicles has to be put in place and enforced to make this a desirable place to live.

I hope you will take this into consideration. Thank you, Jason Badgley
Hi!

I was wondering if there is someone that I can speak to over the phone tomorrow (Friday) that can discuss the meeting with me? I will not be able to make the meeting tonight and would like to discuss what was said and the timeline for what is upcoming. Thank you very much!

-Marcus Castro
Suzanne Hansen

From: Lindo, Kevin@CALFIRE <Kevin.Lindo@fire.ca.gov>
Sent: Monday, June 26, 2017 11:57 AM
To: General Plan Update
Cc: Potkey, Gene@CALFIRE; Moxley, Chad@CALFIRE
Subject: RE: Kern County General Plan Update Workshop

Suzanne,

Thank you very much for the update. Board of Forestry (BOF) recently approved our updated Safety Element (SE) Assessment form. This new form is easy to follow and understand. Once I receive approval, I will forward you a copy of the SE assessment form to review. My plan for this review process is to work with your staff and have any recommendations talked about prior to actual submittal of the SE assessment to BOF. Once you’re Planning Department has a good draft SE completed I can then start a draft review process so we can discuss any questions that may come up. This allows for less confusion and questions later. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Kevin Lindo
Fire Captain
Land Use Planning
CAL FIRE
Southern Region Fresno
(559) 243-8993 Office
(559) 400-2464 Cell

From: General Plan Update [mailto:GeneralPlanUpdate@kerncounty.com]
Sent: Tuesday, June 20, 2017 9:02 AM
To: Lindo, Kevin@CALFIRE <Kevin.Lindo@fire.ca.gov>
Subject: Kern County General Plan Update Workshop

Good morning,

I am writing to let you know the Staff Report for the General Plan Update Workshop on Thursday, June 22, 2017 is available on the General Plan Update webpage:

http://pod.kerndsa.com/generalplanupdate

Thank you for your participation in this process.

Very Truly Yours,

Suzanne Hansen

Planner
Kern County Planning & Natural Resources Department
(661) 862-5006
GeneralPlanUpdate@kerncounty.com
Hello - I have been unable to make any of the meetings due to family issues, but I think there are 2 very important issues for planning the future here in Kern, and these are closely related. Those are: 1. Noise - which I'm pleased to see has been included, but so far all I see is a lot of abstract information about decibels and stuff.  2) Air pollution - this has to be the #1 detractor for our area.

We have an overabundance of loud trucks, motorcycles and cars in this area - Bakersfield especially. Whatever happened to "mufflers"? It used to be a violation to make all this noise, but now it has become popular to make as much noise as possible, and I don't know if car manufacturers have embraced this, or if these giant tailpipes I see on trucks all over town are after-market. Nothing is done about it from an enforcement standpoint as far as I can tell. This noise is a menace in my area of town (west Bkfd near that Aera ballparks) where we have to listen to the loud roar of oversized trucks and the screaming whine of high-powered motorcycles that race by at speeds of 70-80 mph or more at all hours of the night. Some of these vehicles are so loud you can hear them clearly until they are several miles away. I can't help thinking that these same vehicles are major sources of air pollution, along with the proliferation of diesel trucks, that cause our air to be so bad much of the time. Bakersfield has many advantages over the big cities and it's future could be very bright, but I think that regulation of these loud (and smoggy) vehicles has to be put in place and enforced to make this a desirable place to live.

I hope you will take this into consideration. Thank you, Jason Badgley
Thank you Suzanne. I did forget to add that I have specific suggestions for the regulation and enforcement of rules or ordinances that would help affect positive change in the areas I have brought up. They are:

1. speed traps (random times) in designated areas that are known areas plagued with dangerous driving and speeding. The fines would help our law enforcement depts. as well.
2. charge a premium for registration of any diesel vehicles that cannot be proven to be designated work vehicles. Something like $500 a year would discourage folks from buying these vehicles if they didn't really need them.
3. figure out some way to charge an extra tax on modified tailpipes, etc.

Something needs to be done about gardeners as well. There should be a program developed where they can trade in their gas powered (noisy) equipment for electric or battery powered equipment, and the same for the ancient, super-smog emitting trucks they drive. Develop a program where they can trade in that 1961 Ford pickup for a brand new one that allows them to pay for it over time or something. And how about banning leaf blowers and replacing them with vacuums? Ambitious, I know...but something has to be done.

Thanks again - Jason Badgley

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Dear Mr. Badgley,

Thank you for your comments/suggestions. They have been added to the record.

If you have future comments, suggestions or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you.

Very Truly Yours,

Suzanne Hansen
Planner
Kern County Planning & Natural Resources Department
(661) 862-5006
GeneralPlanUpdate@kerncounty.com

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been included, but so far all I see is a lot of abstract information about decibels and stuff. 2) Air pollution - this has to be the #1 detractor for our area.

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I hope you will take this into consideration. Thank you, Jason Badgley
Ms. Lorelei Oviatt
County of Kern Planning Department
2600 M Street, Suite 100
Bakersfield, California 93301

Re: General Plan Update – County of Kern

Dear Ms. Oviatt,

The intent of this letter is to address comments made during Mr. Murphy’s presentation(s) regarding jurisdictional issues between the County of Kern and the City of Bakersfield in reference to the Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan (MBGP) while you are conducting the county-wide update for the County of Kern General Plan.

During the Planning Commission meeting on Thursday, April 27, 2016, Mr. Murphy gave a presentation discussing the MBGP, the boundaries covered by that plan and some statistics as they related to the plan area. This issue was brought up again by Commissioner Sprague at the June 22, 2017, meeting in addition to previous meetings.

If the County is currently updating this plan along with its county-wide plan, how will the City coordinate with the County? Is the City of Bakersfield involved in the planning process? It was mentioned in previous meetings before the County Planning Commission, that the County and City are discussing this process. Who is discussing this? Has the Board of Supervisors appointed a subcommittee to coordinate communications with the City of Bakersfield, in order to create a comprehensive and coordinated effort? If not, what is purposed at this point? Has there been any mutual agreement on a plan of action?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Renee Donato Nelson
Clean Water and Air Matter (CWAM)
San Joaquin Valley Environmental Defense Center

Cc: Richard L. Harriman, Esq
    Andrew Hegland, Esq.
    Board of Directors, San Joaquin Valley Environmental Defense Center
April 27, 2017

Sent Via Email

Ms. Lorelei H. Oviatt
AICP, Director
2700 "M" Street, Suite 100
Bakersfield, CA 93301-2323

Re: Comments In Response To Staff Report On General Plan Update Workshop #4

Dear Ms. Oviatt:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments and recommendations regarding the Staff Report entitled “General Plan Update Workshop #4 – Overview of the Metropolitan Bakersfield Land Use, Metropolitan Bakersfield Habitat Conservation Plan, and Water Element” (the “Staff Report”). We support Kern County’s decision to develop a water element and welcome this opportunity to integrate water and land use planning in Kern County. We believe certain changes to the scope of the water element should be made in order to address the needs of disadvantaged communities located within the County.

We note that these comments are preliminary, and that we will supplement them as necessary as the general plan update process continues.

A. Public Process

As an initial matter, we would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department to hold community workshops. We hope that community involvement remains a priority during the general plan update, and that the Department continues its partnership with the signing organizations during the environmental study and implementation phases.

B. The Water Element

Turning to the Staff Report, the following comments are made largely in response to Attachment 2, which includes a document setting forth potential water element concepts. As this document sets forth broad concepts rather than details, our comments are similarly high level and focus on ensuring that the water element encompasses all policy areas necessary to address the drinking water and wastewater needs of disadvantaged communities within Kern County.
Environmental justice is the heart of the General Plan and reflects environmental conditions and population vulnerability to pollution. Kern County is home to some of the most contaminated communities throughout California. It is critical as the County approaches the water element that it incorporate strong policies that will protect disadvantaged communities from health hazards due to oil refineries, pesticides, dairies, and the over extraction of our shared groundwater resources. Residents want strong water policies and regulations to assure clean, reliable and affordable drinking water, wastewater and stormwater services in existing communities.

In order to properly address environmental justice issues in Kern County, several additions and changes should be made to the outline included in Attachment 2. First, as acknowledged in the Staff Report, the water element included in the April General Plan Update must comply with the requirements of SB 1000 (Government Code § 65302(h)(1)), which require the County to analyze the environmental justice issues impacting disadvantaged communities and adopt objectives and policies to address those issues. In implementing SB 1000, the County should use the CalEnviroScreen tool, which is used to identify California communities that are disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution. The County should also incorporate the Analysis of Underserved Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities contained in Chapter 7 of the 2016 Housing Element Update.

Second, in addition to compliance with SB 1000 and SB 244, the water element should include mandatory requirements ensuring that the drinking water needs of existing disadvantaged communities are met before new developments are permitted within the county. New development should not come at the expense of existing communities that do not presently have access to sustainable, clean and affordable drinking water.

The same can be said with respect to access to wastewater services, as many communities in Kern County have failing septic systems and there is very limited funding at the local or State levels to address this issue when residents cannot afford the cost of repairing or replacing the system. The water element should address both wastewater consolidation and repair or replacement of failing systems.

Third, the water element should more expressly address recycled water and stormwater policies. Many disadvantaged communities faced severe flooding and associated problems over the recent wet winter, and more flooding is expected as the Sierra Nevada snowpack melts over the spring and summer. Stormwater retention is also an effective conservation method, and grant funding for stormwater projects is available.

Finally, in the interest of brevity, the following is a list of suggestions and questions that we have after reviewing the staff report. These are presented in no particular order.

1. We support the focused inclusion of consolidation of water systems in the concept document, especially in light of SB 88, but request that promotion of consolidation be expanded to include expansion of water systems to those presently on domestic wells, and consolidation of wastewater systems.
2. Strong policies should be included to prevent the construction of new developments which cannot
demonstrate that their water use will not impact existing residents in a potentially impacted
shared groundwater basin or customers of existing neighboring water systems. Again, service
connections can help prevent such harm, but adequate well spacing can be used as an interim
measure prior to service connections.
3. There should be a ban on new non-water system wells within the service area of public water
systems in order to prevent impacts to a water system’s capacity.
4. The County must evaluate whether a water system servicing a new development has an adequate
supply and distribution system to meet present and future needs.
5. SB 1263 (2016) allows the State Water Board to permit or deny new water systems in order to
prevent unnecessary proliferation of new water systems which may not have the economies of
scale to be sustainable. In line with this goal, the General Plan should encourage service
extensions for new developments from the start, rather than applying for the creation of a new
system.
6. To the extent that there is limited water supply for new housing developments, priority shall be
given to construction of affordable housing.
7. The water element should expressly promote and discuss groundwater recharge including its
potential to benefit water quality and quantity in disadvantaged communities.
8. What "alternative uses" are contemplated by the concept document for properties that have
limited access to water?
9. Does the fact that the Tehachapi Specific Plan that Kern is using as an example covers
adjudicated basins affect the water element outline?
10. The Tehachapi Specific Plan includes caps for additional residential development. If Kern
County is contemplating similar caps, this will likely be problematic when applied to existing
communities and construction of quality affordable housing.
11. The water element should include policies relating to ongoing periodic domestic well testing to
determine water quality, focused on disadvantaged communities. Additionally, when problems
are identified through testing, the County should develop procedures for working with domestic
well owners to solve the problem(s).
12. With respect to annexations, the water element should direct that annexations should not be
permitted for purposes of new development while disadvantaged communities lack drinking
water and wastewater services.
13. We believe that the water element should address and regulate the use, reinjection and/or
recycling of fracking water.
14. The water element should include support for Integrated Regional Water Management activities
in the county and recognize the importance of inclusive regional water planning with diverse
stakeholders in developing sustainable and multi-benefit solutions to local water challenges.
15. The County should support water purveyors in developing plans for responding to droughts and
the effects of global climate change, including contingency plans, and suggest the County take an
active role in leading this type of planning for those small water systems and self-suppliers not
covered by Urban Water Management Plans as is now required by EO B-37-16.
16. The Tulare Lake Basin Disadvantaged Community Water Study of 2014 provided a list of more than 60 recommendations to help address DAC water and wastewater needs including various recommendations to be implemented by the four Basin counties. We suggest that each of the recommendations be included in the water element. See the attached executive summary of the Study for the list of recommendations.

17. An explicit and documented goal for the water element should be ensuring the human right to safe, clean, affordable and accessible drinking water in the County.

18. Policies should be in place to require, or at a minimum encourage, metering of all groundwater use.

19. With respect to coordination with GSAs and conformity with SGMA, we suggest that the County use the water element as an opportunity to include information and guidance to GSAs to integrate drinking water as a beneficial use of groundwater in the GSP development process.

20. Also with respect to coordination with GSAs and conformity with SGMA, we suggest an express requirement in the water element that disadvantaged communities within Kern County be included in GSAs and have a voice in the process.

* * * * *

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns. We look forward to working with Kern County throughout the general plan update process and with respect to the development of a water element.

Best,

Patricia Leal
Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability
Policy Advocate

Gustavo Aguirre
Center on Race Poverty & the Environment
Organizing Director

Kristin Dobbin
Community Water Center
Regional Water Management Coordinator
June 8, 2017

Lorelei Oviatt, Director
Planning and Natural Resources Department
County of Kern
2700 M Street, Suite 100
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Ms. Oviatt:

We are writing to you regarding the Kern County General Plan Update. We have worked as advocates for many years on behalf of disadvantaged communities and low-income residents of Kern County.

SB 1000 requires a county which has a disadvantaged community to "identify objectives and policies to reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged community by means that include, but are not limited to, the reduction of pollution exposure, including the improvement of air quality, and the promotion of public facilities, food access, safe and sanitary home, and physical activity." By law Kern County fits the definition of a disadvantaged community.¹

Furthermore, SB 1000 requires that counties, "shall adopt or review the environmental justice element . . . upon the adoption of the next revision . . . on or after January 1, 2018."

Request

Kern County General Plan Update currently under development include specific provisions to address environmental justice issues as they relate to disadvantaged communities and low-income residents of Kern County. We request and support a separate Kern County General Plan Environmental Justice element that meets the language of SB 1000 (signed into law by Governor Brown on September 24, 2016).

One aspect of our concern relates to the recent extensive public discussions regarding a possible parking fee and more generally, the future of Hart Park.

Hart Park is administered by the Parks and Recreation Division of the General Services Department—under the umbrella of the Kern County Administrative Office. It is a regional park—opened to the public in 1929. It is the only park serving the Greater Bakersfield area with year-round access to naturally-flowing water.²

On January 10, 2017 then Assistant County Administrative Officer for General Services Jeff Frapwell presented an item to the Kern County Board of Supervisors requesting the approval of a $5 daily parking or $50 annual parking fee.

In this item Frapwell wrote, "Hart Park has long stood as a destination for families to enjoy on a weekend to enjoy lunch alongside the Kern River, fish in Hart Lake, or marvel at the peacocks.

¹ SB 1000 (Leyva): (Chapter 587, which amends Section 65302 of the State of California's Government Code) Land use: general plans: safety and environmental justice.
² Kern River, major source of water for recreational and residential use.
Unfortunately these large crowds that gather bring an increased need for addressing restroom and trash issues that are a result of heavy use and inadequate staffing to maintain cleanliness and safety of the facility. It is no surprise to see as many as 500 vehicles within the park on an Easter Sunday. Despite the Park’s past efforts to add trash cans on busy weekends, the users of the park often either find them full, or choose to leave their trash where they gathered causing an exponential increase in work to clean it up, with no additional staffing to dedicate to the effort." The Board item was deferred until February 7, 2017 for final action. By a 4-1 vote the Board expressed its general support of a fee.

In collaboration with organizations and individuals working with environmentally, economically, and politically disenfranchised residents of Kern Co, we and others expressed our concerns about a possible fee in January 2017. In our Facts and Questions about the Proposed Hart Park Fee we asked, "Have current users of Hart Park been surveyed about their frequency of usage, their ability to pay a fee; their use of other public recreational opportunities for recreation (e.g. tennis courts and Kern County’s three golf courses)?" As noted in SB 1000 “Surveys must be linguistically appropriate and printed in Spanish and English."

Concern

Ensure users of Hart Park continue access to the park without incurring a user fee. Many Hart Park visitors have limited incomes. Geographically residents in closest proximity to Hart Park are residents of east and southeast Bakersfield (e.g. Arvin, Lamont, Greenfield, and central Bakersfield). Many users are Hispanic. These are the working poor for whom weekend time spent at Hart Park provides precious family time. For example: Picnics, barbecues, family reunions, walks along the Kern River. Children play everywhere in Hart Park. Some enjoy soccer and football, or volleyball games. Others enjoy the simple life, an afternoon nap under the shade of a beautiful canopy.

We remain concerned about the issue of trash. We question whether the number of trash bins being allocated for use in Hart Park is adequate.

On February 7, 2017, after considerable public input, the Board voted to defer taking action on the proposed Hart Park fee and (from the Board minutes) "Directed County Administrative Office And General Services Division To Return To The Board In Three Months With Recommendations For A Strategic Plan For Managing County Parks."

Subsequently, On February 16, 2017, Mr. Alsop met with those who spoke at the Board meeting and others concerned about the future of Hart Park. We met at Emmanuel Lutheran Church. Mr. Alsop indicated that he would be in communication with us (the group) about possible planning regarding the future of Hart Park. He indicated that we would be "his conscience" as he proceeded with the issue. And, he brought up the possibility of a parks bond issue for Hart Park and other Kern County parks.

With no communication during February and into March of 2017, Margie Bell, Chair of the Buena Vista Group of the Kern-Kaweah Chapter of the Sierra Club sent a letter to Mr. Alsop. This letter reiterated advocacy concerns with regard to public/user input (specifically a 2nd request) that a survey be conducted of park users regarding the future of Hart Park, the issue of

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3 Facts & Question sheet Hart Park (1-23-17) distributed during meetings with Board of Supervisor members and/or members of their staff prior to the February 7, 2017 Board meeting.
the allocation of trash bins to Hart Park, and more generally collaborative efforts to improve Hart Park. This letter was sent on March 18, 2017. A copy is enclosed. It is our understanding that as of this date Ms. Bell has not received a reply.

The issue of trash bins was highlighted in an after-Easter article about Hart Park entitled "At Hart Park on Easter, trash can be a challenge" in The Bakersfield Californian (April 18, 2017). There was a picture of an overflowing trash bin. The article ended with a suggestion that "a few more trash bins may help." Apparently additional trash bins (as had been indicated was being done in the January 10 General Services letter to the Board of Supervisors—which specifically mentioned Easter as a day of heavy usage) had not been distributed. Overflowing trash bins on Easter and the lack of additional trash bins completely undermine the original rationale for requesting a parking fee—that additional staffing is necessary because "people leave trash where they gathered." Our observation: users of Hart Park use trash bins—when they are made available.

More than a month later (May 25, 2017) an e-mail was sent by Harry Love of the Audubon Society to various Hart Park advocates. Mr. Love indicated that he had talked to Mr. Alsop by phone. Mr. Love reported that Mr. Alsop was developing a "Vision for Hart Park"—with three community meetings planned. Hart Park is not a "neighborhood" park with a community center at or near it. Rather, it is a regional park—located more than three miles and many hills away from any housing or population center in Bakersfield with no public transportation option.

The thoughts and opinions of current users of the park need to be identified in order to plan for the future of Hart Park. The opinions and beliefs of well meaning staffers and concerned citizens who do not use the park should not supersede those of current users.

Instead of announcing yet another round of community meetings, it is preferable to engage park users 1:1 in a survey at Hart Park. Invite community based organizations, schools, and faith organizations to help facilitate outreach regarding all aspects of planning for the future of Hart Park. Mr. Alsop might be surprised to learn how much information is currently available and the volume of rich community-based data that has been collected and submitted to Planning Division by groups like: The Center on Race Poverty and the Environment, Central CA Environmental Justice Network, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability, California Walks, Committee for a Better Arvin, Committee for a Better Lamont for inclusion in the Kern County General Plan.

And, apparently there are to be no surveys of the current users of Hart Park. This was our number one recommendation: current users must be consulted. At minimum Mr. Alsop ought to be familiar with the Environmental Health Screening Tool: CalEnviroScreen 3.04 a screening methodology that can be used to help identify CA communities that are disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution in addition to survey of park users.

Some questions that we would like asked (of current users):
1. Where they live (what part of Greater Bakersfield or surrounding communities—or elsewhere).
2. Income levels.
3. Financial ability to use Kern County’s three public golf courses.
4. What attracts them to Hart Park?
5. What detracts them from using Hart Park?
6. How often they visit Hart Park.

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4 Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) [http://oehha.ca.gov](http://oehha.ca.gov). See SB 1000.
7. How many months or years they have been visiting Hart Park.
8. The adequacy (or not) of trash bins at Hart Park.
9. Adequacy (or not) of restroom facilities at Hart Park.

Permit us to return to our basic concern: environmental justice (according to SB 1000) is to include the promotion of "public facilities" (which includes public parks) and "physical activity." This is currently happening in Hart Park albeit without new and improved public restrooms. Resist any urge to privatize Hart Park. Do current users of the park want Hart Park known as the Kern River Oil Field Park?

The primary users of Hart Park are low-income, primarily Latino residents of Kern County. Without the significant and direct input and involvement of current users, plans for the future of Hart Park (the current Kern County Administrative Office plans as reported via the phone conversation between Mr. Love and Mr. Alsop) don't "promote civil engagement in the public decision-making process" (from SB 1000).

A secondary set of issues of importance

1. In the January 10, 2107 Board letter from Jeff Frapwell noted that comparable "jurisdictions throughout the state have implemented such fees in their regional parks" and specifically mentioned Fresno and Tulare Counties.

There are major differences between Fresno, Tulare and Kern Counties. Number one: the size of their budgets. Fresno County' Parks and Grounds recommended budget for FY 2016-2017 is just under $4 million (to "operate and maintain all regional County parks, campgrounds, etc."). Tulare County's recommended budget for Recreation and Cultural Services is just under $2.3 million. Kern County's recommended budget for Parks and Leisure is just over $12.6 million—double that of Fresno and Tulare County budgets combined.

2. There are environmental justice questions about whether Kern County is subsidizing golf course usage at the expense of parks. One overall budget (Parks and Leisure) includes both golf courses and parks. Is there a separate budget breakout for Kern County General Funds used for parks? A separate breakout for Kern County General Funds used for golf courses? Such a breakout would need to include administrative and fiscal support, monitoring, oversight, and audit expenses as well as maintenance and operational expenses.

And, in order to draw a contrast: how many residents make use of Kern County parks—in contrast to its three Kern County-owned public golf courses? What are the income levels of park users—in contrast to income levels of users of the three golf courses?

Directly apropos to this point: Kern Radio News Talk (1180 and 96.1) reported on May 31, 2017 that Sorenson Brothers, which operates the North Kern Golf Course "has asked to reduce its promised $50,000 per year maintenance commitment ... to about $10,000." This would imply that Kern County personnel are providing maintenance services at this golf course. Is that accurate? The article further indicated that the "General Services Division has approved a revision to the lease, but the Board of Supervisors is expected to vote on the matter at its Tuesday afternoon meeting." The question: where is this $40,000 "deficit" coming from, Kern County General funds? Isn't this preferential treatment for golf course users in contrast to park users?5

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5 www.kernradio.com/2017/03/31/kern-county-board-to-consider-easing-lease-agreement-on-golf-course/.
3. A related budgetary issue has to do with the Golf Course Enterprise Fund for FY 2016-2017. It is found on page 551 in the Recommended Budget—Budget Unit 8991. In the detail is a note regarding a Retained Earnings line item. The budget anticipates using $8,748 from this Retained Earnings line item during FY 2016-2017.

Matt Henry of the Kern County Auditor-Controller’s Office explained that Retained Earnings are cumulative net income generated from many years of operation. And, that Retained Earnings are used for capital improvements. According to the Recommended Budget there is a current balance of $1.2 million.6

The question: with this healthy balance of $1.2 million and with only $8,748 projected to be used during the current fiscal year, why cannot some of that $1.2 million be used for capital improvements for Kern River Golf Course’s neighbor Hart Park (or possibly also Ming Lake Park—which adjoins the Kern River Golf Course)?

The Function listed for this Enterprise Fund is "Recreation and Culture" and the Activity is "Recreation Facilities," so can’t the Board of Supervisors simply expand the use of this Enterprise Fund?

4. There is confusion about the actual budget for Hart Park. In the January 10 Board letter Mr. Frapwell indicated that "the cost of operating Hart Park is nearly $750,000." Yet, during the February 17 meeting Mr. Alsop indicated that the cost was approximately $1.2 million. What is needed is a detailed working budget for Hart Park.

5. Related to these questions are concerns about the water pumped from the Kern River to the Kern River Golf Course. During the drought years (2013-2016) an ample amount of water was pumped to keep the grass green. How is this water usage being measured? During the drought years was this water usage monitored to comply with State of California drought restrictions which were imposed elsewhere in Kern County? What is the source of funding for this water? Were the Buena Vista Golf Course and North Kern Golf Course (also owned by Kern County) subject to drought restrictions during the drought years?

6. There is no public transportation available to Hart Park. Why not?

We thank you for this opportunity comment on these important environmental justice issues. We appreciate your response to our questions.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Rosanna Esparza, PhD
Environmental Health Project Kern Co, Salud! Concerned Citizen

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6 "Golf Course Enterprise Fund" informational sheet developed by Eddy Laine.
Edify Laine, M.D., Concerned Citizen

Tony Perez Jr., Concerned Citizen

Community Supporters:
Kern Environmental Enforcement Network
Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability
Center on Race Poverty and the Environment
Greenfield Walking Group
Community for a Better Arvin
California Walks

cc: Ryan Alsop, Kern County Administrative Officer
    Kern County Board of Supervisors
    Jeffrey Hill, Interim Assistant County Administrative Officer for General Services
    Margie Bell, Chair, Buena Vista Group, Kern-Kaweah Chapter, Sierra Club
    Steve Montgomery, Chair, Kern-Kaweah Chapter, Sierra Club
    Harry Love, The Audubon Society

Bakersfield Californian
KERN COUNTY
GENERAL PLAN 2040
REPORT ON OUTREACH
PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOPS
JANUARY TO JUNE 2017

Kern County Planning and
Natural Resources Department
2700 ‘M’ Street, Suite 100
Bakersfield, CA 93301
(661) 862-8600

Lorelei Oviatt, AICP, Director

March 8, 2018
General Plan Introduction

Kern County is the third (3rd) largest County in California and the twentieth (20th) largest County in the United States, consisting of 8,202 square miles. The County has eleven (11) incorporated cities within its boundaries and sixty-five (65) unincorporated communities (2010 US Census) with a combined population estimate of 882,176. The overall population is expected to increase to over 1.2 million by 2023 (California Department of Finance E-5 estimates.) The City of Bakersfield is now one of the “Big 11” cities in California with populations large enough to have meaningful influence in state policy making ranked as number nine (9) with a population of 383,512.

Since 1990, Kern County has managed two (2) General Plans with the Metropolitan Bakersfield General plan (updated 2002 for 409 square miles) adopted separately but planned jointly with the City of Bakersfield and the Kern County General Plan (updated 2004) for the remaining unincorporated county areas. This comprehensive update will now incorporate the Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan into one Kern County General Plan 2040 with a Metropolitan Bakersfield area plan (same 409 square miles) coordinated with the City of Bakersfield.

The Kern County General Plan 2040 update is more than the legal underpinning for land use decisions; it is a vision about how a community will grow, reflecting community priorities and values while shaping the future. The general plan is a document designed to guide the future actions of a community. It presents a vision for the future, with long-range goals and objectives for all activities that affect the local government. The General Plan Update is intended to review and update pertinent issues, goals and objectives to provide for orderly and appropriate new development in Kern County for the next 20 years, while preserving a quality of life for its residents. Furthermore, the update will result in an organization of these various elements in a consolidated, comprehensive document along with implementable programs, action items and user-friendly guides to allow for a workable document for Kern County departments, stakeholders, partnering agencies, and residents.

Outreach – 2017 Planning Commission Workshops

From January to June 2017, Staff conducted a series of six (6) consecutive General Plan Update public Workshops utilizing the Planning Commission each month. These workshops replaced the regularly scheduled second hearing of the Planning Commission and the agenda did not include any development projects or other matters. This format provided for evening meetings with translation capability, televised and archived on KGOV in the Board chambers. With newsletters circulated in advance for the topic, the workshops allowed community residents, the public, agencies, and other interested stakeholders to hear staff presentations that included a synopsis on required elements within the General Plan and other potential content discussions that should be considered for inclusion in the update. The workshop format was intended to generate new ideas, educate and inform on new general plan and related laws and present an over view of our current land use conditions and challenges. Reformatting of the General Plan from paper to an online version for better access and relevance is part of the update and the workshops provided feedback on how much the public understands about the function of the General Plan in community planning and permitting.
This report provides a summary of the results from the workshops for comments and suggestions. All staff reports can be found on the General Plan 2040 website:

https://kernplanning.com/general-plan-update/

The following attachments have been provided:

- Workshop Newsletters
- Summary of Workshop Comments
- Workshop Submittals
- Public Comment Correspondence

**Workshop 1 Healthy Communities and Economics (January 26, 2017)**

An introduction of Kern County was presented including its geographic features, constituent demographics and economy, a summary of new legislative actions that need to be incorporated into the General Plan 2040.

**Healthy Communities**

Matt Constantine, Director of Public Health Services, presented a review of Kern County’s ranking on the California Department of Public Health’s annual County Health Status Profile Report which presents public health data using a list of eighteen (18) healthy community indicators recommended for tracking by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and provides a County by County ranking of how each jurisdiction compares to each other using the identified indicators. This review resulted in the Kern County Public Health Department making a recommendation that our Healthy Community element focus on the development of policies and programs designed around four (4) key Healthy Community Focus Areas. These focus areas include:

1. Transportation;
2. Green space;
3. Food; and
4. Community Design

The presentation included information indicating that chronic disease is the largest threat to our communities. In addition to Mr. Constantine’s presentation, Staff discussed healthy communities and the potential possibilities for incorporating strategies for creating healthy neighborhoods which give opportunity to active and access to healthy, locally grown food.

**Economics**

The Kern Economic Development Corporation (KernEDC) gave a presentation regarding the state of the county from a business, economic, perspective. It was noted that Kern County has a diverse economic base and it was projected that healthcare positions would grow.

**Public Comment and Presentations**

Twenty-nine (29) residents spoke regarding community concerns including Kern County has one of the highest rates of diabetes, obesity, heart disease, opiate addiction, air pollution, teen pregnancy, asthma,
lack of swimming pools, lowest funded libraries in California, lowest number of all-weather tracks and poor support for park systems. Summarized comments include the following, such as the need(s) and want for:

- Support for a Healthy Communities element in General Plan.
- Health care, access to food, clean water, an increase of commercial businesses, reliable public transportation, and affordable housing should be made readily available in underserved areas.
- A community center including additional funding for library branches for cultural exchange and education.
- Consideration for incorporating SB 1000 and SB 379 into general plan.
- Adding/improve sidewalks, bike lanes, more visible traffic signals, street lights, annex private streets for maintenance, and gutters in unincorporated areas.
- Addressing school closures and delays due to flooding and drainage solutions.
- Improved park maintenance is needed including: walking trails, sufficient trashcans, water fountains, basketball court, boxing club, volleyball court, and a swimming pool with lessons.
- Solutions towards removal of trash and bug infected furniture on the streets, it was suggested cameras be added as well as more no littering signs, and fines for those who litter.
- Buffer zones/setback separating agriculture and oil from new residences and gathering areas such as schools and parks.
- Addressing dog problems that make walking unsafe, it was suggested that fines be imposed to people with multiple dogs through the ordinance.
- Preservation of land around stream courses.
- Additional substance abuse programs.
- Imposing a limit on smoke shops and a social host fine for underage alcohol consumption in a home.

Workshop 2 Healthy Communities, cont. and Land Use (February 23, 2017)

A brief overview of the existing Kern County General Plan Land Use Element and the purpose of the 35 Map Code Designations and how evaluations of these designations will determine prospective modifications and how those may be applied or if new designations might be created to meet the needs of new statutory requirements or the community’s vision.

Public Comment and Presentations
The Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment made a presentation entitled “Our Valley, Our Voices” that proposed policies such as:

- Buffer zones between oil and gas and agriculture and sensitive receptors such as schools and residences;
- Clean and affordable drinking water for all; and
- Access to alternative technology such as rooftop solar, representatives of the environmental justice community requested an Environmental Justice element be added to the General Plan Update

Audubon, Defenders of Wildlife, Sierra Business Council, the Nature Conservancy and Sequoia Riverland Trust gave a joint presentation recommending policies including improved connectivity for plants and animals, corridors, migratory pathways, land protection, and restoration. In addition, the presentation stressed the need for groundwater availability and the desire for infill development to help guide decision making. The presentation also recommended policies and strategies for working landscapes and the protection of groundwater recharge areas be incorporated in the general plan.

Twenty (20) members of the community spoke. Summarized comments include the following, such as the need(s) and want for:

- Regulations for home businesses not following safety laws.
- Safe routes to school, improved road conditions and walkable communities.
- Easily found information on maps indicating where county/city roads are located and to which jurisdictions reports should be made.
- Limiting the number of Marijuana dispensaries opening in communities and the addressing of rising crime rates surrounding them.
- Staff to research other counties and why they are doing better in their health indicators.
- Separation of agriculture and oil from residential areas and schools.
- Support for a solution of flooding in Lamont, better drainage, and roads.
- Jobs and food the agricultural businesses provided in the county.
- Continued affordable housing and promotion of businesses.
- Policies to protect farmland and a specific agricultural element in the General Plan.

Workshop 3 Circulation Element, Housing Element, Open Space and Conservation (March 23, 2017)

Information presented primarily focused on the elements within the adopted Kern County General Plan including a summary of existing major land use categories within the adopted Kern County General Plan.

Circulation
The Circulation Element is a Transportation System Plan that identifies what is needed to accommodate existing and future development for Kern County. In consultation with the Kern County Public Works Development Review Division, Staff presented key areas of opportunity for consideration and study in updating the Plan:

- Potential removal of unnecessary Arterial and Collector designations along Section and Midsection Lines;
- Developing Street Design Standards; and
- Incorporating Complete Street Policies in key areas around Kern County.
Public street standards should recognize the multipurpose elements by combining utility, pedestrian, bicycle, transit, truck, auto uses and railroad crossings. Street design standards may include design features such as wider sidewalks to buffer traffic, marked street crossings at intersections, pedestrian-scale lighting, benches, bus shelters and street trees. In addition, local street design intentionally discourages through traffic and is important to neighborhood identity. Kern County Public Works Development Review Division and Planning and Natural Resources Department will be collaborating to refine Kern County street standards to enhance sustainability and promote healthy communities, increase functionality of the road system, and include multimodal features.

Complete Streets policies were presented as well explaining Complete Streets are a street system that is purposely designed to provide safe access for all users including pedestrians, motorists, bicyclists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. In addition, Complete Street policies are designed for a distinct place which means there are countless ways to accomplish this type of functional street system. For example, a Complete Street in a rural area will look quite different from a Complete Street in a highly populated urban area or in a primarily residential suburban area. All are designed with a distinctive purpose in mind depending on the uniqueness of the area.

Housing
The 2015-2023 Kern County Housing Element (adopted April 2016) will be incorporated into the update. Part of the Housing Element review process was to recognize or identify disadvantaged unincorporated communities according to Senate Bill (SB) 244 (Wolk) which was approved by the state in October 2011. SB 244 requires cities and counties to address the infrastructure needs of disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUC) in city and county general plans, Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo), Municipal Service Reviews (MSR) and annexation decisions. Government Code Section 65302.10(a) requires that before the due date for adoption of the next housing element after January 1, 2012, the general plan land use element must be updated to identify and describe each DUC (fringe community, legacy community, and/or island community) that exists within unincorporated areas of the county or in spheres of influence of each city; analyze for each identified community the water, wastewater, stormwater drainage, and structural fire protection needs; and identify financial funding alternatives for the extension of services to any identified communities.

Public Comment and Presentations
Twenty-two (22) members of the community spoke at the March 23, 2017 workshop. Comments included the following, such as the need(s) and want for:

- Support of policies to promote and support businesses, streamline processes and avoid unnecessary regulations that prohibits job creation. In addition, a request for the development and use of specific and area plans to accommodate larger developments was made.
- Policies to protect agricultural zoning and promote participation in the Williamson Act.
- Encouragement towards the partnership between conservation groups and farmers and ranchers. The example of retired land was used to demonstrate that as farmers retire land, the conservation groups offer grass seed options for planting to help the environment.
- Policies to reduce conflict between zones, buffer zones between industries and residents.
• Support of policies promoting environmental justice and a climate action plan.
• More bicycle lanes, improved street design, sidewalks, safe paths to parks, crosswalks and lights in Lamont, and a program for cleaning up trash along roads.
• Encouragement towards developing community centers and the possible reuse of abandoned buildings for youth programs in disadvantaged communities.
• Development of a soccer field in the Rexland Acres Park.
• Regional bus routes and zero emission buses.
• Solutions for flooding problems and the need for better drainage are wanted.
• Inclusion of mixed use policies and infill development to generate tax revenue.

Workshop 4 Metropolitan Bakersfield Habitat Conservation Plan and New Water Element (April 27, 2018)

An introduction of existing Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan (MBGP) major land use categories was presented. The MBGP was adopted by the Kern County Board of Supervisors in 1990, and updated on December 3, 2002. The City of Bakersfield adopted their update on December 11, 2002. The Metropolitan Bakersfield Planning Area encompasses an area of approximately 409 square miles. The boundary includes the entire city limits and sphere of influence for the City of Bakersfield and the unincorporated communities of Oildale, Greenfield, East Bakersfield, Rexland Acres, Lamont and the Western Rosedale Specific Plan and Kern River Corridor Plan. The boundary of the existing Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan is south of Seventh Standard Road to just north of Bear Mountain Boulevard/Interstate 5 and east of Enos Lane to Edison Road and Tower Line Road.

Metropolitan Bakersfield Habitat Conservation Plan

The Metropolitan Bakersfield Habitat Conservation Plan (MBHCP) which is a program addressing the effect of urban growth on federally and State protected plant and animal species within the Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan area. The MBHCP is a joint program of the City of Bakersfield and Kern County that was undertaken beginning in 1990, to assist urban development applicants in complying with State and federal endangered species laws while allowing future economic growth of the Metropolitan Bakersfield area thereby bridging both the Land Use Element and the Conservation Element. The HCP permit has ended and the City and County are participating on a five (5) year temporary permit while a more comprehensive new permit is negotiated and environmental work completed.

New Water Element

The Kern County Water Agency spoke regarding the history of water in Kern County and the need for regional management strategies to help the water needs of the County. The presentation referenced the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014 (SGMA) which is a three-(3-) bill package that collectively established a new structure for managing California’s groundwater. A central feature of SGMA is the recognition that groundwater management in California is best accomplished locally and required the formation of locally-controlled Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) which must develop Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) in groundwater basins or sub-basins that the Department of Water Resources (DWR) designates as medium or high priority to become sustainable. Kern County has two (2) such basins that meet standards thus requiring Kern County to balance its water budget and fix the overdraft problem.
The Kern Groundwater Authority was established to provide a framework for the active, comprehensive management of the groundwater basin underlying the valley portion of Kern County. The Kern Groundwater Authority is a facilitating voice acting on behalf of its members, not act upon them. SGMA also requires jurisdictions look closer at water quality as well as availability. For the first time in California’s history, groundwater will be regulated. Limits on water pumping are real and impact residents/cities as well as industry.

**Public Comment and Presentations**
Matt Towery, representing the Home Building Association, noted affordable housing in Kern County is getting more and more difficult including fees and other industry changes have increased the baseline for home building. The presentation included information on rising homebuilding costs and the impact it has on affordability and the economy. A request for policies to support homebuilding growth was made.

Fifteen (15) members of the community spoke, however, many more showed support for the speakers. Those who spoke included the following comments, such as need(s) and want for:

- Road improvements, street lights, sidewalks, flooding solutions and fire hydrants on Lytle Avenue between County Line Road and Cecil Avenue area.
- Policies regarding prisoners near homes.
- Policies for clean water and walkable communities.
- A water element to development of drought plans, groundwater recharge policies and policies for quality water especially in disadvantaged communities.
- Consultation with conservation groups and water management teams.
- Policies encouraging affordable housing, infill, higher density.
- Addressing dumping trash in Oildale and the need for a fence blocking the alley where this is taking place.
- Solutions for contaminated water in disadvantaged communities in Lamont.


A review was given of the County’s Energy Element and possible updates to maintain Kern County’s status as California’s leading energy producer and the County’s current military readiness land use policies and identifying future needs.

**Energy Element**
Kern County’s energy resources which include: petroleum, oil and gas production, utility-scale solar development, and utility-scale wind production. The following three (3) Energy Element primary objectives were also reasserted:

- Resource management and protection,
- Establishing development standards to provide for the protection of the environment, public health, and safety, and;
- Promoting and facilitating energy development.
Military Readiness – JLUS
A presentation of the County’s current military readiness land use policies and an overview of the Joint Land Use Study Program (JLUS), administered by the Department of Defense’s (DOD) Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) was also made. The program, established in 1985 in an effort to work with local jurisdictions to ensure compatible development around installations and ranges particularly with respect to noise, safety, and operationally sensitive areas, also works to raise awareness at the state and local levels for the sustainability requirements of local military installations, and provides technical or community planning assistance to support compatible land use efforts through grants authorized under title 10 USFC section 2391.

While separate from the General Plan, an update to the JLUS is in the initial stages of moving forward. As with the previous JLUS, it is anticipated that Kern County will have an active role in the preparation and processing of this document. An update to the JLUS will serve as an opportunity to identify necessary changes to our General Plan to ensure ongoing compatibility between our military institutions and the community that support and surround them.

Public Comment and Presentations
Fifteen (15) members of the community spoke at the workshop. Support from non-speakers was shown for these policy requests; in addition, an invitation for Commissioners to visit homes in disadvantaged communities was received. Summarized comments include the following, such as the need(s) for:

- A Climate Action Plan and an Environmental Justice Element.
- Increased investment in renewable energy.
- Increased education county-wide regarding Valley Fever and the need for more Valley Fever mitigation measures for projects.
- Solutions regarding Kern County’s poor air quality.
- Additional policies regarding clean and cheap energy.
- Continued promotion for Kern County’s Oil and Gas Environmental Impact Report and the positive effects it has had on the environment.

Workshop 6 Noise Element, Safety Elements (June 22, 2017)

Noise
The County’s Noise Element seeks to preserve and enhance the acoustical environment which relates directly to the quality of life that can be achieved in the County’s communities. By recognizing existing sources of noise pollution, taking reasonable steps to mitigate future impacts, and preventing additional substantial sources of noise, the County can achieve a quieter environment and a more comfortable and calming community. Noise has been linked directly to human health and aside from general annoyance, excessive noise is a source of discomfort, interferes with sleep and disrupts communication and relaxation.

Safety
Several new laws effect the Safety Element such as AB 3065 (Keohoe, 2004) and SB 1240 (Hancock, 20006). These new requirements include updating the hazard mitigation plan, flood management, and wildfire prevention plans.
Public Comment and Presentations
Twenty-three (23) members of the community spoke at this workshop. Summarized comments from this final workshop include the following, such as the need(s) and want for:

- Research regarding the Western Rosedale Specific Plan was made as to whether the county would be updating or removing the plan.
- Status update regarding the Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan update.
- Solutions for safety issues for communities next to prisons and for a wall to be built to separate the community from the prison.
- Buffers around agriculture and setbacks to oil and gas facilities.
- The addition of strong policies supporting SB 1000.
- Adding and improving sidewalks and public lighting in unincorporated areas.
- Safe routes to schools including possible alternative semi-truck routes, specifically rerouting to not go through neighborhoods where children walk to school.
- An evacuation plan and emergency facilities to be developed including the creation of maps of oil pipelines to be made easily available to emergency responders, and for fire hydrant services in unincorporated areas to be incorporated.

Kern County General Plan 2040 Information:

For more information, please visit our General Plan 2040 website page at:

https://kernplanning.com/general-plan-update/

In addition, to submit a comment, concern, ask questions or to get on our notification list to receive updates and the newsletter, please contact Staff below:

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