

**OBJECTIVE:**

To provide planning processes and products to support the long-range planning efforts of Kern COG member agencies, the eight San Joaquin valley MPOs and compliment the work of the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley.

**PREVIOUS AND ONGOING WORK:**

- Formation of the eight SJ Valley TPA Directors' Group.
- Coordination of public transit issues among the Valley transit agencies.
- Executed MOU with the eight SJ Valley TPAs and Air District to ensure a comprehensive and cooperative approach to air quality transportation planning.
- Coordination of SJ Valley TPA technical sub-committees.
- Continuity of air quality transportation planning approaches with the SJ Valley Air District.
- Adoption of the SJ Valley TCM program.
- Hosted State of California High Speed Rail Commission and High Speed Rail Authority meetings
- Coordination with the eight SJ Valley TPAs, the SJ Valley Air District, and Caltrans (Districts 6 and 10) to complete a SJ Valley-wide Goods Movement Study (Phases I and II).

**ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENT:**

1) Kern COG designation as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) and Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MPO); 2) Memorandums of Understanding between eight San Joaquin Valley Transportation Planning Agencies; 3) Memorandums of Understanding between the San Joaquin Valley Transportation Planning Agencies and the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District; and 4) Memorandum of Understanding with Caltrans, District 6.

**DISCUSSION**

The San Joaquin (SJ) Valley is a large, diverse, and complex area that contains millions of acres of the world's most fertile farmland, a wealth of natural resources, and large urban environments. The 240-mile long valley stretches from Stockton to Bakersfield and encompasses an eight-county region (Kern, Kings, Tulare, Fresno, Madera, Merced, Stanislaus and San Joaquin).

Today, 3.3 million people live in the SJ Valley. According to the Department of Finance, the SJ Valley's population will grow 131 percent by 2050. How will the region accommodate this anticipated growth? Will it be through expansion of current cities or the development of new ones? How will intra and interregional transportation accommodate commuters, travelers, and goods movement? And how will balance be maintained between the development of new infrastructure and the need to preserve the region's most important resources?

A look at the current economy of the region points to agriculture as the SJ Valley's economic base. While growth of agriculture has altered some of the natural environmental landscape over time, perhaps even more concerning is the rate at which prime agricultural land is being converted to urban uses. Much of the land conversion is due to the attractiveness of SJ Valley home prices to residents of the Bay Area and Los Angeles regions. However, these new SJ Valley residents often commute back to their place of origin for employment thereby compounding transportation impacts, air quality dynamics, and civic engagement challenges.

State Route 99 bears the yeoman's share of commuter traffic, and is also burdened with extraordinary truck traffic transporting goods. Insufficient for current traffic loads, Highway 99 is

further impacted by industrial growth and new distribution centers, especially in the Southern SJ Valley.

At both the federal and state levels, policymakers have begun to recognize the extraordinary challenges facing the SJ Valley. Through executive orders issued by two presidents, the Federal Interagency Task Force was formed to help coordinate federal efforts within the region. And just this year, Governor Schwarzenegger signed an executive order creating the *California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley*, a state effort to direct resources to the region. Through the Blueprint process, regional leaders will work closely with the Partnership to address the significant issues facing the region. Teaming with the Partnership will enable pooling of resources, consistency of vision, and combined momentum to solutions to the forefront.

**IMPACT:**

Use of “visualization planning” techniques to integrate transportation, land use, housing, environmental resources and other infrastructure and services on a regional basis; foster more efficient land use patterns; provide consumers more transportation and housing choices; improve economic competitiveness and quality of life; reduce costs and time needed to deliver transportation projects; and secure local government and community support, including under-represented groups, for achieving the comprehensive vision developed through the use of innovative public involvement activities and computer models.

**PRODUCTS AND SCHEDULES:**

1. Institutional Framework for SJ Valley-wide Blueprint Planning
2. Community Outreach Plans
3. SJ Valley Modeling group established
4. Traffic Model Update Plan
5. GIS Data Inventory and Conversion
6. GIS Standards
7. Blueprint Vision Summit
8. Blueprint Media Campaign
9. Stakeholder and committee meetings

**FUNDING SOURCE:**

**RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES:**

SJV COG MOU	TOTAL	KERN COG	CONSULTANT	TOTAL
\$356,932	\$356,932	\$206,932	\$150,000	\$356,932

**TASKS:**

**Task Description**

- 1) Identify local potentially affected interests and stakeholders that need to be involved in the decision making process (Feb 28, 2006);
- 2) Solicit participation from local, state and federal agencies; organizations and individuals with land use, housing, transportation, environmental and economic interests;
- 3) Define and concur on the problem solving and decision making process;
- 4) Define and concur on committee structure and purposes;
- 5) Prepare committee bylaws for each committee;
- 6) Prepare conflict resolution memorandum;
- 7) Assess citizen participation needs;
- 8) Identify specific citizen participation objectives that the MPO/Region intends to achieve;
- 9) Select citizen participation techniques that will support identified objectives;
- 10) Identify potentially affected interest groups that need to be involved in the planning process;
- 11) Identify best practices for successful group participation;

- 12) Form focus groups and engage all segments of the population, specifically;
- 13) Prepare a detailed task list and schedule of the strategic outreach techniques selected;
- 14) Interface the outreach schedule with the technical tasks and planning process;
- 15) Provide citizen participation training;
- 16) Schedule regular debriefing sessions to determine what is working and what is not (ongoing);
- 17) Evaluate and adjust the Citizen Participation Program accordingly (ongoing).
- 18) Form a Regional Blueprint Model Steering Committee (MSC);
- 19) Local Transportation Planning Agencies meet to discuss options and select one for updating valley-wide Traffic Model data;
- 20) MSC to evaluate available Modeling tools;
- 21) Selection of preferred Modeling tools;
- 22) Inventory of existing GIS data (each county);
- 23) MSC to determine valley-wide GIS data standards;
- 24) Conversion of existing GIS data to valley-wide standard (each county);
- 25) Convene a Blueprint Vision Summit of regional leaders to outline the process and brainstorm the regional objectives (June 2006);
- 26) Implement a regional media campaign to announce the launching of this planning effort- as defined in the community outreach plan (June 2006);
- 27) Prepare Blueprint press releases describing the problem solving and decision making process;
- 28) Conduct one-on-one Blueprint interviews with key SJ Valley stakeholders to discuss the problem solving and decision making process;
- 29) Present problem solving and decision making process to interested parties;
- 30) Provide project management services for the San Joaquin Valley effort