



kern blueprint

PHASE TWO SUMMARY REPORT – COMMUNITY OUTREACH

kern regional blueprint program



PREPARED FOR



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WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kern Regional Blueprint Program, led by Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG), is developing a preferred regional transportation, land use, and environmental vision that responds to the many challenges associated with anticipated population growth over the next 40 years. This document summarizes Phase Two outreach efforts and **Town Hall Meetings** held October 2007 – January 2008 in the communities of Arvin, Delano, Frazier Park, Kern River Valley, Ridgecrest, Taft, Tehachapi, Lamont, McFarland, Mojave, Shafter, Wasco, and Bakersfield. Also featured are excerpts from the **Community telephone survey** conducted in April 2008 by Kern COG, which are noted along-side results from the Town Hall Meetings. This statistically valid, random survey examined public attitudes and perceptions regarding several quality-of-life issues within Kern County.

Format of Town Hall Meetings

Following a brief Kern COG presentation regarding the purpose of and need for the Blueprint and results from Phase One outreach activities, participants joined small group discussions that Kern COG staff and other volunteers facilitated and recorded. Part 1 of the discussions involved participants reviewing draft principles for achieving the regional vision, and providing input as to how effective each principle might be in doing so. Part 2 involved participants reviewing maps of draft scenarios for growth and associated performance measures at the sub-regional level and indicating their preferred scenario for growth.

Part 1 – DRAFT PRINCIPLES

Use compact, efficient development and/or mixed land uses where appropriate

Participants supported the use of compact development and mixed land uses for many reasons. First, they suggested that such development would likely be best in existing urban neighborhoods and town centers with a mix of services and housing that are conducive to walking and other non-automobile transportation options, all of which would be particularly beneficial to seniors and those with limited mobility. Furthermore, participants indicated that rural communities should retain a rural character and are less conducive to compact, mixed use development. Second, participants suggested that such development could be strategically linked to community revitalization/rehabilitation efforts and new public infrastructure such as roads and sewers. However, a few participants expressed concerns about the ability to influence such development as it may be primarily market-driven. Finally, participants valued compact development's positive effect on preserving energy and land and using existing public infrastructure, or at least requiring less infrastructure as compared to less-compact development.

Provide a variety of housing choices

Participants supported the concept of providing a range of housing types to meet the varied needs of all residents related to age, family size, mobility, culture and income. While many participants supported the need for more affordable housing options, some expressed

Godbe Research Survey	Looking ahead to the next 20 years, on a scale of 0 to 4, 0 being not important to 4 being extremely important, how important is _____ ?				
	Total County	West Kern	Central Valley	Moun-tains	East Kern
Creating more affordable housing	3.1	3.2	3.2	2.4	2.9
Developing a variety of housing options, including apartments, town-homes and condominium	2.5	2.5	2.6	1.8	2.3

concern about the potential effect that such housing may have on crime levels. Many participants suggested that developing housing stock should be closely linked with economic development and workforce projections in each community to better enable residents to live and work in the same community and reduce traffic congestion. Others suggested that the market is the primary driver of housing choices, and that public sector influences may not be effective. Some participants expressed concern that current housing stock not be lost for the sake of new housing, and that communities should consider opportunities to preserve and rehabilitate current stock. Furthermore, some participants suggested that new housing stock should be designed with “green”/sustainable practices, be located in walkable communities, and minimize the amount of necessary land and space. Others indicated the need for ownership and rental opportunities, as well as supportive home-buying and loan programs.

Provide adequate and equitable services

This principle received the highest support, with participants suggesting that comprehensive community services for health, education, safety and recreation are integral to quality-of-life. Such services should be maintained and developed to keep pace with growth. Regarding education, many participants suggested that standards and achievement levels

Godbe Research Survey	Looking ahead to the next 20 years, on a scale of 0 to 4, 0 being not important to 4 being extremely important, how important is _____ ?				
	Total County	West Kern	Central Valley	Moun-tains	East Kern
Improving fire and emergency medical services	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.1	3.3
Improving local health care and social services	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.1	3.3
Improving crime prevention and gang prevention programs	3.6	3.5	3.6	3.3	3.4
Improving the quality of public education	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.4	3.4

should be increased along with providing adequate facilities, both in K-12 and higher education sectors. Some participants indicated that adults would also benefit from new

vocational and workforce training opportunities. Many other participants said the need is growing for expanded medical services and facilities including hospitals, urgent care, and clinics, which are lacking in many communities throughout the region despite increasing costs for care. The growing youth and senior populations will continue to increase demand for these services and facilities. Participants also suggested that youth require new and expanded park and recreation opportunities that address their physical activity and care needs. Some participants indicated the need for providing adequate levels of public safety services including law enforcement and fire protection. Finally, in the broadest sense of service needs, some participants suggested that some communities have greater needs than others, and that ensuring equitable distribution is important for maintaining quality-of-life for all community members.

Provide a variety of transportation choices

Depending upon their community, participants suggested a range of transportation choices that would best serve their mobility needs. Some suggested the best balance of transportation choices should be closely linked to the types of land uses and community designs that best support those choices. Other participants recognized environmental and

Godbe Research Survey	Looking ahead to the next 20 years, on a scale of 0 to 4, 0 being not important to 4 being extremely important, how important is _____?				
	Total County	West Kern	Central Valley	Moun-tains	East Kern
Expanding highways	3.0	3.0	3.1	2.3	2.8
Reducing traffic congestion	3.2	2.6	3.5	2.5	2.3
Maintaining local streets and roads	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.3	3.5
Expanding local bus services	2.9	2.6	3.0	2.5	2.8
Improving public transportation to other cities	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.7	2.8
Maintaining and improving sidewalks and bike lanes	3.0	2.8	3.1	2.2	2.8

economic benefits of alternative forms of transportation. Participants in more urban communities generally supported more multi-modal options such as transit, bicycling and walking, while those in more rural areas stressed the need for safe and efficient road systems to connect communities and specialized transit services such as dial-a-ride. Additional transportation-related comments included reducing traffic congestion levels, improving transportation safety among all modes, and providing more inter-regional options such as high speed rail.

Use and improve existing community assets and infrastructure

Many participants linked the need to improve existing community assets and infrastructure with new compact development and infill in existing urban areas and town centers.

Redevelopment and infill

projects can be opportunities to rejuvenate or rehabilitate existing communities, preserve historic assets and community character, and to rehabilitate or replace old and dilapidated infrastructure such as water, sewer and roads systems. Some participants also suggested that arts, museums and multi-functional facilities would benefit communities. Others stressed the need to ensure that assets and infrastructure be of high quality, and that new funding mechanisms are necessary to achieve major infrastructure projects.

Godbe Research Survey	Looking ahead to the next 20 years, on a scale of 0 to 4, 0 being not important to 4 being extremely important, how important is _____?				
	Total County	West Kern	Central Valley	Moun-tains	East Kern
Revitalizing older neighborhoods and business districts that are becoming rundown	3.3	3.2	3.4	2.8	3.2

Enhance economic vitality

Participants identified economic development as a key driver to quality of life and linked it to other principles.

Specifically, they indicated higher education and economic development initiatives should be linked to ensure that current and

future industries have a strong base of local workers to sustain their operations. A majority participants supported providing jobs, vocational training opportunities and mentorships to current residents, especially youth, to better enable them to stay as long-term residents. Some participants stressed the need to diversify employment opportunities across the spectrum of skill and income levels. Others linked the need to provide housing choices that support workforce development. Additionally, some participants suggested that alternative energy initiatives could form the basis of new industries for the region including wind and solar power. Others suggested that economic development within local communities is important to ensuring a strong sales tax base.

Godbe Research Survey	Looking ahead to the next 20 years, on a scale of 0 to 4, 0 being not important to 4 being extremely important, how important is _____?				
	Total County	West Kern	Central Valley	Moun-tains	East Kern
Creating more high paying jobs	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.2	3.4
Encouraging new businesses to relocate to the County in order to diversify the local economy	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.3

Conserve energy and natural resources, and develop alternatives

Water was the most frequently discussed of the many natural resources participants identified. A majority expressed concern about water supply meeting growing demand and suggested that conservation, regulation,

Godbe Research Survey	Looking ahead to the next 20 years, on a scale of 0 to 4, 0 being not important to 4 being extremely important, how important is ?				
	Total County	West Kern	Central Valley	Moun-tains	East Kern
Preserving water supply	3.6	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.6
Improving flood protection	2.8	2.3	3.0	2.3	2.3
Improving water quality	3.4	3.2	3.4	3.1	3.4

and management initiatives require consideration. Additionally, participants suggested that solar, wind, geothermal, and bio-fuels could be effective resources for many Kern communities, not only in providing energy, but also in serving as new economic development initiatives as well. Participants suggested that green building standards, energy efficiency requirements, and solar power infrastructure as part of new development could be helpful conservation measures. Some participants linked the need for clean air and water resources to preserving community health.

Conserve undeveloped land and spaces

Participants suggested this principle supports conservation of ecology, habitats, watersheds, vistas, wildlife, wildflowers, open spaces, and diverse mountain areas. Some participants suggested that such features improve quality-of-life and the desirability of those communities in

Godbe Research Survey	Looking ahead to the next 20 years, on a scale of 0 to 4, 0 being not important to 4 being extremely important, how important is ?				
	Total County	West Kern	Central Valley	Moun-tains	East Kern
Preventing the loss of farm land to residential and commercial development	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.0	2.6
Preserving open spaces and native animal habitats	3.1	2.8	3.1	3.2	2.7

close proximity. From an economic perspective, some participants stressed the need to preserve military air space and agriculture lands as important parts of the region's economic base. Others noted the value in preserving the spaces to control sprawl, slow development or maintain buffers between communities. Some participants suggested creating more parks and recreation opportunities within these spaces where appropriate.

Increase civic and public engagement

Participants supported early and frequent civic and public engagement initiatives to address growth issues, develop solutions, and preserve community values. All community members of all backgrounds, interests and ages should be involved in such initiatives.

Some suggested that new community spaces be developed to accommodate such meetings, or to conduct meetings at community sites such as community centers or schools.

Additionally, extensive outreach will build awareness and could include using the Internet, television advertisements and billboards. In terms of political leadership, some suggested that some elected officials must be more open and representative of all needs and interests in the community. Furthermore, civic leaders should ensure their deliberations are conducted in open, transparent processes, and that the community’s visions and principles for the future should be honored and carried forward in the years to come.

Godbe Research Survey	With respect to _____, are local government agencies doing too much, not enough, or just right to manage this issue?							
	Too Much	Just Right	Not Enough	DK/NA	West Kern	Central Valley	Moun-tains	East Kern
Preserving farm lands and open space and managing urban growth	4%	40%	52%	3%	-0.4	-0.5	-0.5	-0.4
Improving air quality	6%	29%	63%	2%	-0.5	-0.6	-0.4	-0.3
Improving local flood protection, water supply, and water quality	4%	44%	47%	4%	-0.3	-0.5	-0.5	-0.5
Reducing traffic congestion and improving public transportation	3%	34%	61%	2%	-0.4	-0.6	-0.5	-0.5
Supporting new businesses and industries, education programs and job opportunities	4%	33%	60%	3%	-0.5	-0.6	-0.6	-0.6
Improving housing affordability and encouraging the development of more housing options	14%	35%	48%	2%	-0.4	-0.4	-0.2	-0.3
Improving services, such as police and fire services and local healthcare and social services	6%	42%	49%	2%	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4	-0.5

Computation of mean scores:
 "Too Much" = +1, "Just Right" = 0, and "Not Enough" = -1

Part 2 – DRAFT SCENARIOS

Major Change

Participants who favored this scenario appreciated how it minimizes impacts on the environment and natural resources such as water, air quality and open spaces. Many stressed that growth in this scenario should be concentrated in downtowns or town centers, and outlying, rural areas should remain as such. This would help to avoid loss of more rural areas and character to suburban sprawl. These town centers would provide a mix of housing and services that would allow more people to walk for daily needs and reduce the need to travel to other areas. Participants also appreciated that this scenario utilizes infrastructure efficiently and would provide many housing options and an affordable lifestyle for more people. However, some indicated that this level of change would require proactive, community-based planning in land use and transportation with strong political leadership. Those participants who did not support this scenario suggested that the level of change is too extreme and not realistic. Others expressed concern that some current neighborhoods might be removed to accommodate new growth, or a more-urban character might develop in current rural communities.

Moderate Change

More participants selected this scenario than the others. Some suggested that the level of change is more feasible as compared to the “major change” option. Participants suggested that this scenario would adequately control growth, provide new choices, and would help many communities develop the right scale and mix of development types. As in the previous scenario, participants indicated that growth and development should occur in downtowns and town centers, while preserving more residential and rural neighborhoods. This will help to reduce the amount of commuting to other communities for jobs and services. They also appreciated the opportunities to use infrastructure more efficiently and cost-effectively, and that communities would be afforded a broader range of housing options and affordability levels. Furthermore, other participants appreciated the reduced impacts on water, air quality, open spaces and agricultural lands.

Some Change

The relatively few participants who selected this scenario did so for a range of reasons. Some participants suggested that this scenario is more realistic based on the market-driven nature of growth. Others preferred the stronger emphasis on single-family, detached homes, or do not want to introduce other housing types or higher building heights that might change their neighborhood character. Some participants indicated that this scenario accommodates growth adequately in terms of preserving open spaces and lands.

No Change

The few participants who selected this scenario provided little information to explain their decision. A few indicated that this scenario supports a rural development pattern, or that the market will drive development of single-family, detached homes. Participants who

rejected this scenario indicated that it either does not solve growth problems, is self-destructive, does not provide housing choices, enables more crime, neglects town centers, loses too much open space, or uses resources inefficiently.

1. INTRODUCTION

As long-term residents of the Kern region can attest, growth has changed the nature, design and functioning of their communities in positive and negative ways. Growth will continue to influence Kern's quality-of-life for residents in the future, including the look and feel of their neighborhoods, traffic congestion, air quality, community health, economic development, natural and open spaces, public services, and many other important aspects of community life.

Since March 2007, communities throughout the Kern region have collaborated to understand the potential impacts of population and development growth, but, most importantly, to produce a shared vision and approach to managing the projected 1 million additional people in the region by the year 2050. A wide range of community members representing various interests are working together to address these questions:

- How should we grow?
- Where should we grow?
- How will we travel around the region?
- How will growth affect our environment?
- How will growth affect our quality of life?

The Kern Regional Blueprint Program, led by Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG), is part of a larger eight-county San Joaquin Valley-wide Blueprint process. At both the County and Valley levels, the Blueprint process will result in a preferred regional transportation, land use, and environmental vision that responds to the many challenges associated with population growth.

Involving the public in a meaningful way to provide input on their shared values, visions, and growth management principles for the Kern region to the year 2050 is a key component of the Blueprint process. To that end, Kern COG staff, in partnership with MIG, Inc. and Odyssey, continued the community involvement process through Phase Two outreach activities. Similar to the design of Phase One town hall meetings, the Phase Two meetings included a highly interactive, hands-on meeting format that reflected and built on the region's visions and values expressed in Phase One through facilitated discussions of principles and scenarios for growth management.

To complement these community outreach efforts, Kern COG also conducted the Community telephone survey in April 2008, which was a statistically valid, random survey

designed to examine public attitudes and perceptions regarding several quality-of-life issues within Kern County

The results of Phase Two will form the foundation to complete the first iteration of the Kern Regional Blueprint in summer 2008, which will document the region's shared values, visions and growth management principles. Additionally, an accompanying illustrative scenario map and performance measures will highlight the Blueprint's potential contribution to managing the negative impacts of growth in the region to the year 2050.

The Blueprint will serve as the region's interface for sharing information and developing new tools and strategies that support local decision-making. Additionally, the Blueprint will function as a key communication tool for the Kern region's involvement in planning coordination with neighboring San Joaquin Valley counties.

The following sections describe the outcomes from the second round of public town hall meetings that were held in October 2007 through January 2008— including outreach strategies, meeting format, results, and next steps. Also featured are excerpts from the Community telephone survey, which are noted along-side results from the town hall meetings. An evaluation of the outreach activities will be used to design future community outreach activities. A series of appendices are provided as a separate attachment.

2. OUTREACH STRATEGIES

The outreach process was designed to educate the public about the Blueprint Program and encourage attendance at the Phase Two town hall meetings.

NEWSLETTER AND WEBSITE

As a primary outreach tool, Kern COG enlisted MIG to design a newsletter that highlighted the outcomes of Phase One outreach activities and advertised Phase Two town hall meetings. The newsletter featured a four-page, full-color design in both English and Spanish that updated the project status and announced the dates, times, and locations of twelve town hall meetings, including one meeting conducted in Spanish. The design allowed for the newsletter to be mailed, which Kern COG distributed to its growing database of stakeholders. A second version of the newsletter was printed with updated meeting dates for the Metro Bakersfield communities. A total of 1,500 were printed. See Appendix A for a copy of this newsletter.

The Blueprint Program was also featured on the Kern COG website, www.kerncog.org, with a number of informational links. These included information on the town hall meetings in English and Spanish and an automatic e-mail meeting registration that was sent to Kern COG staff.

OUTREACH PROCESS

Similar to Phase One outreach, Odyssey undertook another extensive outreach process to encourage knowledge of, and attendance at, the Phase Two Blueprint Town Hall Meetings.



Odyssey staff updated its 12 databases from Phase One outreach activities, including new contacts from other Odyssey projects in Kern County. Additionally, staff developed a database for outreach for the three Metropolitan Bakersfield town hall meetings sponsored by Kern COG in Phase Two, in conjunction with the City of Bakersfield, Kern County and Vision 2020. (Phase One outreach was managed by Vision 2020 as part of the Bakersfield City/County General Plan process). Odyssey obtained Vision 2020's large database and other lists from Kern COG. Staff merged these various Bakersfield contacts into a master Bakersfield database, and added new contacts identified through Odyssey's work on other Bakersfield-area projects and research.

Odyssey staff also developed newsletter articles for organizations' newsletters, as well as email announcements for each town hall meeting. Odyssey began outreach efforts in September 2007 and completed the last outreach in January 2008. Odyssey staff contacted organizations throughout the region to issue invitations, publicize the town hall meetings, and encourage attendance. In this process, Odyssey staff:

- Provided mailing lists to Kern COG for mailing the newsletters, and obtained mailing labels from key groups.
- Emailed and called organizational contacts from all of the databases to issue an invitation to attend the town hall meeting(s) in their area.
- Requested organizations' help in publicizing the event to their group's own lists and contacts through emails, websites, newsletters, and meeting announcements.
- Followed up to make sure materials were received and to encourage participation.
- Updated and expanded contact information throughout the outreach effort.

Odyssey again contacted a wide range of groups to publicize and encourage attendance at the Phase 2 town hall meetings, including those representing:

- City and County officials and staff
- Business, including city/community Chambers of Commerce, Kern County Hispanic and Black Chambers of Commerce, downtown business associations, and individual businesses
- Real estate/development interests, including Realtor associations, the Home Builders Association of Kern County, and individual developers
- Local chapters of the American Planning Association, American Institute of Architects, and American Society of Civil Engineers
- Agricultural interests, including the Kern County Farm Bureau, other agricultural associations, and individual farmers/ranchers
- Water and Community Service Districts
- Park and Recreation Districts
- Labor
- Disability organizations

- Senior organizations and centers
- Membership organizations, such as AARP and League of Women Voters
- Service organizations such as Rotary, Lions Clubs, Optimists, Kiwanis, and Soroptimists.
- Veterans organizations
- Environmental organizations, including Sierra Club, Audubon Society, and Tree Foundation of Kern
- Social Service agencies, including County human services, Community Action Partnership of Kern, Kern County Network for Children and its Collaboratives, and many more.
- Health care organizations, including county health and mental health departments, major local hospitals and clinics.
- Educational groups and institutions, including school districts, community colleges, and CSUB
- Ethnic/cultural organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- Community-based organizations, including United Way, youth programs, job training programs, foundations, women’s organizations, and others
- Frequented community locations such as libraries and community centers.

Odyssey staff provided mailing lists for direct mailing of town hall meeting announcements to over 2500 organizational contacts in Kern County. Prior to each town hall meeting, Odyssey staff also emailed out reminder notices to promote attendance.

MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Kern COG coordinated media coverage of the workshops, with press releases announcing the Blueprint town hall meetings distributed to approximately 65 different media outlets, including all three major TV network affiliates in Bakersfield, in addition to every radio group in the county and most of the region’s 35 newspapers. Television and newspaper coverage was both extensive and positive, with most of the dozen or so reports extolling the Blueprint’s virtues and community value.

FOCUSED KERN REGIONAL BLUEPRINT MEETINGS

The American Surveyors & Civil Engineers and the Department of Public Health invited Kern COG to facilitate Phase 2 meetings for the Kern Regional Blueprint Project exclusively for their organizations. Additionally, Kern COG reached a portion of the student population from the Kern High School District by coordinating with the Director of Instruction. The meeting with the students incorporated Phase One and Phase Two of the Kern Regional Blueprint process. At the conclusion of the meeting one student expressed the following: “This was a great experience for me as a Senior at South High. I really

enjoyed talking about the future and I am very happy that we as a whole want to improve our society.” Another student stated: “Great experience! I enjoyed being able to have visuals while still being able to voice my own opinion. It was very interesting and insightful.”

3. PHASE TWO TOWN HALL MEETINGS

The dates and locations of the sixteen town hall meetings are shown below, along with the number of attendees:

Date	Location	# of Attendees
Wednesday, October 3, 2007	Mojave/Rosamond/California City	9
Tuesday, October 9	Tehachapi/Stallion Springs	55
Wednesday, October 10	Taft/Maricopa/Buttongwillow	24
Tuesday, October 16	Lamont (Spanish language)	22
Wednesday, October 17	Arvin	22
Tuesday, October 23	Delano	17
Wednesday, October 24	Kern River Valley	25
Friday, October 26	Greenfield Walking Group	39
Tuesday, October 30	McFarland	9
Wednesday, November 14	Ridgecrest/Inyokern	42
Tuesday, November 27	Shafter	15
Wednesday, November 28	Wasco	18
Tuesday, December 11	Frazier Park	17
Tuesday, January 29	Bakersfield*	29
Wednesday, January 30	Bakersfield*	15
Wednesday, February 6	Bakersfield*	79
	<i>Total</i>	<i>437</i>

*Co-sponsored with Greater Bakersfield Vision 2020

Additional meetings with specific organizations included the following:

Date	Location	# of Attendees
Wednesday, January 16, 2008	American Surveyors and Civil Engineers	48
Thursday, February 14	Department of Public Health	51
March 7, 2008	Kern High School District Students & Instructors	15
	<i>Total</i>	<i>114</i>

Of the 551 attendees, many filled out an anonymous demographic form, with the following results:

Gender	#	% of Total
Male	130	46.1%
Female	138	48.9%

Age	#	% of Total
Under 18	5	2%
18 - 29	21	7%
30-39	27	10%
40-49	51	18%
50-59	85	30%
60-69	58	21%
70-79	23	8%
80-89	4	1%

Race / Ethnicity	#	% of Total
White / Caucasian	165	59%
Hispanic / Latino	66	23%
Asian	7	2%
African American / Black	11	4%
American Indian	6	2%
Pacific Islander	2	0.7%
Two or More Races	8	3%

Attended the Meeting Representing:	#	% of Total
Resident	174	62%
Business Community	40	14%
Government Agency	43	15%
Other	33	12%

FORMAT

The town hall meeting objectives were to:

- Share information about the Blueprint’s purpose and process;
- Report on the outcomes of Phase One outreach activities including visions and values for the Kern region;
- Facilitate and record participant comments regarding draft principles for growth management in the region;
- Introduce conceptual growth scenarios and associated performance measures; and
- Facilitate and record participant comments regarding the scenarios.

Similar to Phase One, the town hall meetings featured small group discussions and a “card game” led by trained facilitators from Kern COG, MIG, local jurisdiction staff, interested organizations, and residents. The facilitators used a Small Group Facilitator Guide and a tally sheet for small group discussion and game results.

The town hall meetings were held in large meeting rooms in easily accessible public locations. Each room was set up with a registration table, refreshment table, a laptop computer, projector, screen, and microphone. Multiple participant tables were set up, each with ten chairs, a table number, and an easel with flip chart pads for recording the group’s discussions and game results. The easel pads were pre-printed for each of the tables to keep the process more efficient.

Meeting registration and a light supper started at 6 p.m. At registration, each attendee was asked to sign in and take an agenda packet (with agenda, demographic form, comment card, and evaluation form - see Appendix B for examples). They were also given a nametag with a randomly assigned table number.

At 6:15 p.m., a master facilitator from MIG or Kern COG invited everyone to be seated, welcomed them to the meeting, and provided a brief overview of the agenda. The master facilitator then introduced an elected official from the local jurisdiction for an additional welcome that thanked everyone for coming and urged active participation in this important meeting. In most cases, the Mayor or a City Council member performed this role.



The master facilitator then reviewed the agenda packet and gave housekeeping information about the meeting such as the location of refreshments and restrooms.

A Kern COG staff member then presented a PowerPoint slide show explaining the Blueprint Program (see Appendix C), which addressed the following points:

- What is regional planning?
- What is the Blueprint?
- What is the process for developing the Blueprint and who is involved?
- Phase One outreach results, including regional visions and values
- Draft principles for growth
- How will tonight’s meeting inform the process?

At 6:45 p.m., the master facilitator introduced the format of the small group discussions, which were the heart of the meetings. The master facilitator explained the role of the Small Group Facilitators (one per table, and if there were additional facilitators available, a separate person served as scribe). Participants were given ground rules for the discussions, including:

- Have an open discussion where there are no right/wrong comments or answers;
- Allow everyone a chance to be heard;
- Only one person speaks at a time; and
- Respect everyone’s comments and opinions.

At the small group discussions, participants were asked to first introduce themselves, fill out their demographic forms, and review the draft principles for growth as listed in their comment booklets.

The small group facilitator explained that the draft principles are designed to respond to the region-wide vision for Kern’s future, and that some may have different levels of effectiveness in different communities. To that end, the facilitator then introduced and explained an interactive card game, which was designed to understand participant’s beliefs about how effective each principle would be in achieving their community’s vision for the future and in managing growth to the year 2050.



The facilitator handed each participant a set of 5 suited cards—

- **Clubs** represent major effect
- **Diamonds** represent moderate effect
- **Hearts** represent small effect
- **Spades** represent no effect
- **“X”** represents deleting the principle altogether (e.g., regardless of effectiveness, the principle is totally undesirable)

The small group facilitator then spent 45 minutes leading the card game and a discussion. For each of the principles, the facilitator asked participants to display their beliefs about its effectiveness by holding up the corresponding suited card. The recorder tallied the cards and recorded them on pre-printed flip chart pages. After each tally, the participants

discussed their selections, which were also recorded on the flip chart pages. Participants also recorded their choices and reasons in their comment booklets.

Following this card game and discussion, Rob Ball of Kern COG presented a slide show of four draft scenarios for growth for the sub-region represented by the town hall meeting, which included illustrative maps and performance measure data. Mr. Ball graphically illustrated the range of potential growth patterns and outcomes over the next 40 years, as well as the assumptions and data that form the basis of the scenarios. Furthermore, Mr. Ball explained that the scenarios and associated imagery are purely illustrative, are intended to provide a basis for discussion, and do not prescribe or direct changes to local land use, zoning and community design. Rather the scenarios provide a visual/graphic representation of how the draft principles could be implemented and impact the sub-region.



Each participant received a handout that included the data featured in the slideshow, and posters-size versions were displayed near each small group. The small group facilitators then asked participants to further review the scenarios and data and ask any additional questions. After answering clarifying questions, the facilitators asked participants to indicate their preferred scenario by holding up the corresponding suited card, the results of which were tallied on a flip chart page and noted in each participant's comment booklet.

The small group facilitators then led a discussion with participants about each scenario with the following questions:

- What aspects of this scenario are most appealing?
- What aspects of this scenario are most problematic?
- Would anyone like to change their preferred scenario? (Re-tally on the flipchart.)

The facilitators then recruited a volunteer reporter to share their group's discussion points with the large group.

Prior to return to the large group format, the master facilitator tallied all of the



card game results on a large wallgraphic paper at the front of the room. Upon returning to the large group format, the master facilitator asked for brief reports from the volunteer reports and recorded key findings on the wallgraphic. During and after the reports, the master facilitator summarized the apparent themes as highlighted on the wallgraphic, and asked for additional comments from participants.

By 9 p.m., Kern COG staff thanked everyone for their valuable participation in the meeting and encouraged their ongoing involvement. Prior to their leaving the meeting, participants submitted completed comment booklets and evaluation forms.

4.

DRAFT PRINCIPLES FINDINGS

The first portion of the small group discussions involved participants reviewing and discussing the draft principles for growth in the Kern region. The principles are designed to guide the realization of the region-wide vision for Kern’s future, yet some may have different levels of effectiveness in different communities.

To assist facilitation of the discussion, participants played an interactive card game designed to understand participant’s beliefs about how effective each principle would be in achieving their community’s vision for the future and in managing growth to the year 2050. For each of the principles, participants indicated their beliefs about its effectiveness by holding up the corresponding suited card and provided comments during the group discussion and/or in their comment booklets. The results of these discussions are summarized on the following pages.

Use compact, efficient development and/or mixed land uses where appropriate





Participants supported the use of compact development and mixed land uses for many reasons. First, they suggested that such development would likely be best in existing urban neighborhoods and town centers with a mix of services and housing that are conducive to walking and other non-automobile transportation

♣ Major effect	♦ Moderate effect	♥ Small effect	♠ No effect	X Delete
53%	31%	11%	2%	3%

options, all of which would be particularly beneficial to seniors and those with limited mobility. Furthermore, participants indicated that rural communities should retain a rural character and are less conducive to compact, mixed use development. Second, participants suggested that such development could be strategically linked to community revitalization/rehabilitation efforts and new public infrastructure such as roads, sewers and the like. However, a few participants expressed concerns about the ability to influence such development as it may be very market-driven. Finally, participants valued compact development’s positive effect on preserving energy and land and using existing public infrastructure, or at least requiring less infrastructure as compared to less-compact development.

Provide a variety of housing choices

Participants supported the concept of providing a range of housing types to meet the varied needs of all residents related to age, family size, mobility, culture and income. While many participants supported the need for more affordable housing options, some

 Major effect	 Moderate effect	 Small effect	 No effect	X Delete
50%	35%	11%	2%	2%

participants expressed concern about the potential effect that such housing may have on crime levels. Many participants suggested that developing housing stock should be closely linked with economic development and

Godbe Research Survey	Looking ahead to the next 20 years, on a scale of 0 to 4, 0 being not important to 4 being extremely important, how important is _____ ?				
	Total County	West Kern	Central Valley	Moun-tains	East Kern
Creating more affordable housing	3.1	3.2	3.2	2.4	2.9
Developing a variety of housing options, including apartments, town-homes and condominium	2.5	2.5	2.6	1.8	2.3

workforce projections in each community to better enable residents to live and work in the same community and reduce traffic congestion. Others suggested that the market is the primary driver of housing choices, and that public sector influences may not be effective. Some participants expressed concern that current housing stock not be lost for the sake of new housing, and that communities should consider opportunities to preserve and rehabilitate current stock.





Godbe Research Survey	Given your household income, would you consider living in _____ if you were to relocate within Kern County in the next 10 years?			
	Definitely Yes	Probably Yes	No	DK/NA
A single-family home with a small yard	28%	37%	34%	0%
A single-family home with a large yard	57%	27%	15%	0%
A townhouse or condominium	13%	27%	58%	1%
A building with offices and stores on the first floor and condominiums on the upper floors	8%	13%	78%	1%
An apartment	10%	19%	71%	1%

Furthermore, some participants suggested that new housing stock should be designed with “green”/sustainable practices, be located in walkable communities, and minimize the amount of necessary land and space. Others indicated the need for ownership and rental opportunities, as well as supportive home-buying and loan programs.

Godbe Research Survey	Please rate how important the housing option would be to you personally if you were to relocate within Kern County on a scale of 0 to 4, 0 being not important to 4 being extremely important.						
	Mean Score	Not Important 0	1	2	3	Extremely Important 4	DK/NA
Housing close to your work	3.0	7%	5%	15%	27%	45%	1%
Housing within walking distance to shopping, restaurants and entertainment	2.8	7%	8%	22%	26%	36%	0%
Housing within driving distance to shopping, restaurants and entertainment	3.2	2%	3%	16%	29%	50%	0%
Housing close to health care and professional services	3.2	3%	3%	16%	28%	49%	0%
Housing with access to public transportation	3.0	7%	5%	18%	25%	45%	0%
Housing within walking distance to parks and recreation programs	3.2	5%	3%	15%	26%	52%	0%
A neighborhood with yards or land separating the houses	3.4	3%	1%	10%	26%	59%	0%
Energy efficient housing	3.6	2%	1%	6%	17%	74%	0%
Housing close to quality public schools	3.3	6%	3%	10%	17%	64%	0%

Provide adequate and equitable services

This principle received the highest support with participants suggesting that comprehensive community services for health, education, safety and recreation are integral to quality-of-life. Such services should be maintained and developed to keep pace with growth.

 Major effect	 Moderate effect	 Small effect	 No effect	<i>X Delete</i>
85%	10%	4%	1%	>1%

Regarding education, many participants suggested that standards and achievement levels should be increased along with providing adequate facilities, both in K-12 and higher education sectors. Some participants indicated that adults would also benefit from new vocational and workforce training opportunities. Many other participants

Godbe Research Survey	Looking ahead to the next 20 years, on a scale of 0 to 4, 0 being not important to 4 being extremely important, how important is _____?				
	Total County	West Kern	Central Valley	Moun-tains	East Kern
Improving fire and emergency medical services	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.1	3.3
Improving local health care and social services	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.1	3.3
Improving crime prevention and gang prevention programs	3.6	3.5	3.6	3.3	3.4
Improving the quality of public education	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.4	3.4

suggested the need is growing for expanded medical services and facilities including hospitals, urgent care, and clinics, which are lacking in many communities throughout the region despite increasing costs for care. The growing youth and senior populations will continue to increase demand for these services and facilities. Participants also suggested that youth require new and expanded park and recreation opportunities that address their physical activity and care needs. Some participants indicated the need for providing adequate levels of public safety services including law enforcement and fire protection. Finally, in the broadest sense of service needs, some participants suggested that some communities have greater needs than others, and that ensuring equitable distribution is important for maintaining quality-of-life for all community members.

Use and improve existing community assets and infrastructure

Many participants linked the need to improve existing community assets and infrastructure with new compact development and infill in existing urban areas and town centers. Redevelopment and infill projects can be opportunities to rejuvenate or rehabilitate existing

♣ Major effect	♦ Moderate effect	♥ Small effect	♠ No effect	X Delete
65%	29%	6%	0%	>1%

communities, preserve historic assets and community character, and to rehabilitate or replace old and dilapidated infrastructure such as water, sewer and roads systems. Some participants also

Godbe Research Survey	Looking ahead to the next 20 years, on a scale of 0 to 4, 0 being not important to 4 being extremely important, how important is _____?				
	Total County	West Kern	Central Valley	Moun-tains	East Kern
Revitalizing older neighborhoods and business districts that are becoming rundown	3.3	3.2	3.4	2.8	3.2

suggested that arts, museums and multi-functional facilities would benefit communities. Others stressed the need to ensure that assets and infrastructure be of high quality, and that new funding mechanisms are necessary to achieve major infrastructure projects.

Provide a variety of transportation choices

Depending upon their community, participants suggested a range of transportation choices that would best serve their mobility needs. Some suggested the best balance of transportation choices should be closely linked to the types of land uses and community designs that best support those choices. Other participants

♣ Major effect	♦ Moderate effect	♥ Small effect	♠ No effect	X Delete
54%	30%	13%	2%	>1%

recognized environmental and economic benefits of alternative forms of transportation. Participants in more urban communities generally supported more multi-modal options such as transit, bicycling and walking, while those in more rural areas stressed the need for safe and efficient road systems to connect communities and specialized transit services such as dial-a-ride. Additional transportation-related comments included reducing traffic congestion levels, improving transportation safety among all modes, and providing more inter-regional options such as high speed rail.

Godbe Research Survey	Looking ahead to the next 20 years, on a scale of 0 to 4, 0 being not important to 4 being extremely important, how important is ?				
	Total County	West Kern	Central Valley	Moun-tains	East Kern
Expanding highways	3.0	3.0	3.1	2.3	2.8
Reducing traffic congestion	3.2	2.6	3.5	2.5	2.3
Maintaining local streets and roads	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.3	3.5
Expanding local bus services	2.9	2.6	3.0	2.5	2.8
Improving public transportation to other cities	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.7	2.8
Maintaining and improving sidewalks and bike lanes	3.0	2.8	3.1	2.2	2.8

Godbe Research Survey	What would encourage you to use alternative transportation, such as carpooling or bus service?
	Nothing/Not interested 25%
	Public transit stop near my house/work 14%
	Better transit schedule/More buses 13%
	Higher gas prices 12%
	Carpool planning from my employer 9%
	Cheaper/discounted transit fares 6%
	Express bus service 5%
	Extreme circumstances that make me unable to drive 3%
	Environmental issues/Reducing pollution 2%
	Better roads and traffic conditions 2%
	Informationa bout transit/schedules 1%
	Other 2%
	DK/NA 16%

Enhance economic vitality

Participants identified economic development as a key driver to quality of life and linked it to other principles. Specifically, they indicated higher education and economic development initiatives should be linked to ensure that current and future industries have a strong

base of local workers to sustain their operations. A majority of participants supported providing jobs, vocational training opportunities and mentorships to current residents, especially youth, to better enable them to stay as long-term residents. Some

participants stressed the need to diversify employment opportunities across the spectrum of skill and income levels. Others linked the need to provide housing choices that support workforce development. Additionally, some participants suggested that alternative energy initiatives could form the basis of new industries for the region including wind and solar power. Others suggested that economic development within local communities is important to ensuring a strong sales tax base.

♣ Major effect	♦ Moderate effect	♥ Small effect	♠ No effect	X Delete
65%	25%	8%	2%	0%

Godbe Research Survey	Looking ahead to the next 20 years, on a scale of 0 to 4, 0 being not important to 4 being extremely important, how important is _____ ?				
	Total County	West Kern	Central Valley	Moun-tains	East Kern
Creating more high paying jobs	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.2	3.4
Encouraging new businesses to relocate to the County in order to diversify the local economy	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.3

Conserve energy and natural resources, and develop alternatives

Water was the most frequently discussed of the many natural resources participants identified. A majority expressed concern about water supply meeting growing demand and suggested that conservation, regulation, and management initiatives require consideration.

Additionally, participants suggested that solar, wind, geothermal, and bio-fuels could be effective resources for many Kern communities, not only in providing energy, but also in serving as new economic development

♣ Major effect	♦ Moderate effect	♥ Small effect	♠ No effect	X Delete
81%	13%	4%	1%	1%

Godbe Research Survey	Looking ahead to the next 20 years, on a scale of 0 to 4, 0 being not important to 4 being extremely important, how important is _____ ?				
	Total County	West Kern	Central Valley	Moun-tains	East Kern
Preserving water supply	3.6	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.6
Improving flood protection	2.8	2.3	3.0	2.3	2.3
Improving water quality	3.4	3.2	3.4	3.1	3.4

initiatives as well. Participants suggested that green building standards, energy efficiency requirements, and solar power infrastructure as part of new development could be helpful conservation measures. Some participants linked the need for clean air and water resources to preserving community health.

Conserve undeveloped land and spaces





Participants suggested this principle supports conservation of ecology, habitats, watersheds, vistas, wildlife, wildflowers, open spaces, and diverse mountain areas. Some participants suggested that such features improve quality-of-life and the desirability of those communities situated in close proximity. From an economic perspective, some participants stressed the need to preserve military air space and agriculture lands as important parts of the region’s economic base. Others noted the value in preserving the spaces to control sprawl, slow development or maintain buffers between communities. Some participants suggested creating more parks and recreation opportunities within these spaces where appropriate.

♣ Major effect	♦ Moderate effect	♥ Small effect	♠ No effect	X Delete
62%	22%	12%	2%	2%

Godbe Research Survey	Looking ahead to the next 20 years, on a scale of 0 to 4, 0 being not important to 4 being extremely important, how important is _____?				
	Total County	West Kern	Central Valley	Moun-tains	East Kern
Preventing the loss of farm land to residential and commercial development	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.0	2.6
Preserving open spaces and native animal habitats	3.1	2.8	3.1	3.2	2.7

Increase civic and public engagement

Participants supported early and frequent civic and public engagement initiatives to address growth issues, develop solutions, and preserve community values. All community members of all backgrounds, interests and ages should be involved in such initiatives. Some suggested that new community spaces be developed to accommodate such meetings, or to conduct meetings at community sites such as community centers or schools. Additionally, extensive outreach will build awareness and could include using the Internet, television advertisements and billboards. In terms of political leadership, some suggested that elected officials must be more open and representative of all needs and interests in the community. Furthermore, civic leaders should ensure their deliberations are conducted in open, transparent processes, and that the community's visions and principles for the future should be honored and carried forward in the years to come.

 Major effect	 Moderate effect	 Small effect	 No effect	X Delete
64%	27%	7%	1%	1%

Godbe Research Survey	With respect to _____, are local government agencies doing too much, not enough, or just right to manage this issue?							
	Too Much	Just Right	Not Enough	DK/NA	West Kern	Central Valley	Moun-tains	East Kern
Preserving farm lands and open space and managing urban growth	4%	40%	52%	3%	-0.4	-0.5	-0.5	-0.4
Improving air quality	6%	29%	63%	2%	-0.5	-0.6	-0.4	-0.3
Improving local flood protection, water supply, and water quality	4%	44%	47%	4%	-0.3	-0.5	-0.5	-0.5
Reducing traffic congestion and improving public transportation	3%	34%	61%	2%	-0.4	-0.6	-0.5	-0.5
Supporting new businesses and industries, education programs and job opportunities	4%	33%	60%	3%	-0.5	-0.6	-0.6	-0.6
Improving housing affordability and encouraging the development of more housing options	14%	35%	48%	2%	-0.4	-0.4	-0.2	-0.3
Improving services, such as police and fire services and local healthcare and social services	6%	42%	49%	2%	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4	-0.5

Computation of mean scores:
 "Too Much" = +1. "Just Right" = 0. and "Not Enough" = -1

5.

DRAFT SCENARIOS

FINDINGS

During the second portion of the small group discussions, participants reviewed and discussed their preferences for a draft scenario map and associated performance measures for potential growth in their respective sub-regions. The purpose of the scenarios is to graphically illustrate the range of potential growth patterns and outcomes based on the intensity of compact development in communities over the next 40 years, as well as the assumptions and data that form the basis of the scenarios.

The scenarios and associated imagery are purely illustrative, are intended to provide a basis for discussion, and do not prescribe or direct changes to local land use, zoning and community design. Rather the scenarios provide a visual/graphic representation of how the draft principles could be implemented and impact the sub-region. Examples of the draft scenarios and performance measures presented at the town hall meetings are available as appendices to this report.

After reviewing a slide show of the draft scenarios and performance measures, each participant received a handout that included the data featured in the slide show, and posters-size versions were displayed near each small group. After answering clarifying questions, participants indicated their preferred scenario as either:

- **No change**, or maintaining development patterns as projected in today’s local land use planning policies
- **Some change**, or some increase in compact development
- **Moderate change**, or a moderate increase in compact development
- **Major change**, or a major increase in compact development





The small group facilitators then led a discussion with participants about each scenario with the following questions:

- What aspects of this scenario are most appealing?
- What aspects of this scenario are most problematic?
- Would anyone like to change their preferred scenario? (Re-tally on the flipchart.)

Following is a summary of participants’ scenario choices (with tallies noted next to the scenario names) and comments:

Major Change

Participants who favored this scenario appreciated how it minimizes impacts on the environment and natural resources such as water, air quality and open spaces. Many stressed that growth in this scenario should be concentrated in downtowns or town centers, and outlying, rural areas should remain as such. This would help to avoid loss of more rural areas and character to suburban sprawl. These town centers would provide a mix of housing and services that would allow more people to walk for daily needs and reduce the need to travel to other areas. Participants also appreciated that this scenario utilizes infrastructure efficiently and would provide many housing options and an affordable lifestyle for more people. However, some indicated that this level of change would require proactive, community-based planning in land use and transportation with strong political leadership. Those participants who did not support this scenario suggested that the level of change is too extreme and not realistic. Others expressed concern that some current neighborhoods might be removed to accommodate new growth, or a more-urban character might develop in current rural communities.

 Major change	 Moderate change	 Small change	 No change
39%	43%	15%	3%

Moderate Change

More participants selected this scenario than the others. Some suggested that the level of change is more feasible as compared to the “major change” option. Participants suggested that this scenario would adequately control growth, provide new choices, and would help many communities develop the right scale and mix of development types. As in the previous scenario, participants indicated that growth and development should occur in downtowns and town centers, while preserving more residential and rural neighborhoods. This will help to reduce the amount of commuting to other communities for jobs and services. They also appreciated the opportunities to use infrastructure more efficiently and cost-effectively, and that communities would be afforded a broader range of housing options and affordability levels. Furthermore, other participants appreciated the reduced impacts on water, air quality, open spaces and agricultural lands.

Some Change

The relatively few participants who selected this scenario did so for a range of reasons. Some participants suggested that this scenario is more realistic based on the market-driven nature of growth. Others preferred the stronger emphasis on single-family, detached homes, or do not want to introduce other housing types or higher building heights that might change their neighborhood character. Some participants indicated that this scenario accommodates growth adequately in terms of preserving open spaces and lands.

No Change

The few participants who selected this scenario provided little information to explain their decision. A few this scenario supports a rural development pattern, or that the market will drive development of single-family, detached homes. Participants who rejected this

scenario indicated that it either does not solve growth problems, is self-destructive, does not provide housing choices, enables more crime, neglects town centers, loses too much open space, or uses resources inefficiently.

6. MEETING EVALUATIONS

Each town hall meeting participant was urged to fill out an evaluation form and turn it in before leaving. The following consolidated summary shows overall rating results across all workshops:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
A. Slideshow presentation and information	120	122	19	2
B. Draft principles card game and discussion	109	119	23	6
C. Draft scenarios slideshow presentation and information	95	118	34	6
D. Draft scenarios card game and discussion	97	117	24	6
E. Small group reports to the large group	87	113	19	2
F. Overall meeting design	120	119	12	4
G. The meeting addressed issues important to me	156	89	12	4
H. I was able to provide input and it was recorded	152	88	13	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>936</i>	<i>885</i>	<i>156</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>% of Total (2007)</i>	<i>46.6%</i>	<i>44.1%</i>	<i>7.8%</i>	<i>1.5%</i>

In total, 46.6% of workshop ratings were “excellent” and 90.7% of the ratings were “excellent” or “good.” When asked if they would participate in a future meeting, 97.2% of those answering the question said “yes.” Kern COG will consider these ratings and comments in the design of future Blueprint outreach activities.

7.

NEXT STEPS

This report marks the end of Phase 2 of the Kern Regional Blueprint Program. Kern COG staff and its Roundtable groups will conduct a series of meetings to consider the public input summarized in this report. Kern COG and the Roundtables will then refine the draft principles and scenarios, as needed, which will form the basis for the Kern Regional Blueprint.

In summer 2008, Kern COG will host a summit with the region's policymakers to celebrate the Draft Kern Regional Blueprint, and to report on the activities that led to its development. Policymakers will contribute their perspectives about the visions, values, principles, scenarios and performance measures that form the Blueprint. The Kern COG Board will then receive the Draft Blueprint for consideration, followed by review and consideration among the San Joaquin Valley Blueprint coalition of counties for valley wide planning and coordination efforts.

8.

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