

**KERN REGIONAL BLUEPRINT PROGRAM/
METROPOLITAN BAKERSFIELD
GENERAL PLAN UPDATE**

TOWN HALL MEETING

S U M M A R Y R E P O R T

**NORTHEAST BAKERSFIELD
May 7, 2007**

I. INTRODUCTION

On Monday, May 7, 2007, the County of Kern, City of Bakersfield and Kern Council of Governments (COG) hosted a Town Hall Meeting for the Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan Update/Kern Regional Blueprint Program at the East Bakersfield Senior Center. The purpose of the meeting was: (a) to collect input about what participants viewed as the strengths of Metro Bakersfield; (b) to collect input about what participants viewed as weaknesses or challenges faced in Metro Bakersfield; and (c) to facilitate discussion and collect input about potential long-term solutions to the challenges faced in Metro Bakersfield.

Background

Kern COG is an association of city and county governments primarily created to address regional transportation issues. Its member agencies include the County of Kern and the eleven incorporated cities within the Kern Region.

The Town Hall Meeting is one of a series throughout the Kern Region as part of the Kern Regional Blueprint Program, which is designed to engage policymakers and citizens to create a regional vision and growth principles for the integration of transportation, housing, land use, economic development and environmental protection that will inform local decision-making and guide growth over the next 50 years. Elected officials from the County and each city throughout the Kern region will determine how their jurisdictions will accommodate the regional vision through local decision-making and planning efforts. The Kern Regional Blueprint will also be included as part of the Central California Blueprint Program, which will integrate the outcomes of the Blueprint programs from the seven other Central California counties. The Kern visioning process will continue through December 2007.

Community Outreach

To build community awareness of and involvement in the Blueprint Program, the County of Kern, City of Bakersfield and Kern COG initiated an outreach program as part of these Town Hall Meetings. Kern COG utilized outreach assistance from Odyssey, a California-based nonprofit organization focused on transportation policy improvements. The County of Kern and City of Bakersfield utilized outreach assistance from Vision 2020, a volunteer organization in Bakersfield, CA. The County of Kern, City of Bakersfield, and Kern COG implemented a number of outreach measures to advertise the meeting, including:

- Targeted mail and email of a meeting notice
- Coordination with government agencies' outreach efforts and networks
- Inserts in local and community-based newsletters and media publications
- Media campaign

These efforts will continue to build Kern COG's outreach database over time, leading to ever-expanding outreach measures in future phases of the process.

Town Hall Meeting Agenda and Format

The Northeast Bakersfield meeting was held from 6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. at the East Bakersfield Senior Center, 2101 Ridge Road, in Bakersfield. Upon entering the meeting facility, participants signed-in and received a nametag and handout materials including an agenda, comment form, and evaluation form (see pages 13 - 17). Participants were then asked to place red and green dots on an aerial photograph to locate where they lived and worked, respectively. Approximately 55 community members representing residents, businesses, local government agencies, and community-based organizations attended the meeting.

Participants then reviewed the "open house" portion of the meeting, which featured display materials of local area maps and data related to existing conditions and future growth projections, as well as other general information. Ted James, Director of Planning & Development Services for Kern County initiated the meeting with brief welcoming remarks and agenda overview. Mr. James recognized local officials in attendance: Bakersfield Council Member Ken Weir, Russell Johnson, Field Representative for Supervisor Mike Maggard, and introduced Bakersfield Planning Director, Jim Movius. Mr. Movius delivered a slideshow presentation that provided an overview, data and the process for developing the General Plan Update for Metro Bakersfield. Mr. Movius then introduced Sheryl Barbich from Vision 2020 who reviewed the format for the small group discussions before dispersing participants to their randomly assigned groups.

After brief introductions among the participants, a facilitator at each small group table guided participants through an open discussion of what participants identified as Bakersfield's strengths and weaknesses/challenges. The facilitator then guided the group through a discussion designed to identify potential solutions to the top three weaknesses chosen by the participants in each small group. The small group facilitators recorded participants' discussion points during the small group discussion on

flip chart pages, and participants also recorded comments on their own comment forms, all of which are summarized in the following pages of this report.

Following the small group discussions, participants reconvened in the large group format to hear brief summary reports from a volunteer from each group. Nancy Kays of Moore Iacofano Goltsman recorded a summary of the reports on large wallgraphic paper at the front of the meeting room, which is attached to this report as photo-reduced copy on page 18.

The following pages summarize comments captured on the wallgraphic and flip chart pages from the small group discussions, as well as those submitted by participants on comment forms. Copies of these documents may be accessed by contacting Kern COG.

II. DISCUSSION: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES/CHALLENGES

The small group facilitators asked participants to describe what they view as strengths and weaknesses/challenges faced by the Metro Bakersfield region. Participants also identified what they thought were solutions to the top three weaknesses/challenges identified by each group. Following is the small group summary individually reported at the conclusion of the meeting.

Strengths

- Friendly
- Affordable
- Central location
 - Mountains
 - Ocean
 - Los Angeles
- Open Spaces
 - Can still do things
- Natural resources
- Community activities
 - Kern River bike path
- Diverse economy
- Accountability of elected officials
 - Electeds affordable
- Trails plan
 - River trail
 - Topography
- Farmland
- Strong faith base

Weaknesses/Challenges

- Lack of planning
- Lack of infrastructure planning
- Lack of accountability
- Development without infrastructure
- Lack of sufficient green belts
- Facilities for the youth need improvement
- Traffic circulation
- Redevelopment & use of infill development
- Incorporation of health in planning process
- Air Quality
- Population increase
- Traffic
- Trash
- Walkable communities
 - Not enough trees
- Lack of Affordable housing
- Poverty
- Segregation
- Racism
- Graffiti
- Gangs
- Low education attainment
- Ineffective public transportation
- Need more safe bike/walk paths
- Older sections need rehabilitation
- Maintaining a people friendly community
- Public services can't keep up

Solutions

- Infill development
- Define true costs of development
- Urban renewal in centers
- Half-cent sales tax
- Transportation impact fees
- Citizens exercise the right to vote
- Better and more understandable communication with the public
 - More town hall meetings
 - Use of multi-media
 - On-line agendas
- Electeds need higher pay
- More eyes on the street
- Head Start Programs
- Incentives for Low-income neighborhood development
- Plant more trees
- Hybrid cars

- Connect bike paths
- Efficient transit
- Stabilize growth
 - Growth moratorium
- Increase volunteerism
- Walkable/Bikeable communities
- Decreased sprawl
- Green development
- Solar/renewable energy
 - Solar Photovoltaics
- Cost effective road models
- Mixed use development
- Farmland preservation

III. TOP ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE

Each small group identified the issues of most concern and potential solutions. The following table outlines the top nine participant concerns recorded on flip chart pages and submitted on comment forms. Individual tables record summary comments to the top nine identified concerns.

Top Concern Related to Metro Bakersfield's Future	Growth Management	Infrastructure Planning	Walkable/ Bikeable	Traffic/ Mobility	Gangs/Crime	Air Quality	Landscaping/ Tree Planting & Maintenance	Services Safety & Equity	Urban Renewal
TOTALS	46	37	37	37	32	28	27	22	22

CONCERN	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
GROWTH MANAGEMENT	<p>Participants generally agreed growth needed to be stabilized. Some participants suggested there should be a moratorium on growth. Participants agreed public service needs should be continuously re-evaluated, updated and streamlined. Some participants suggested issuance of building permits should be limited to projects where infrastructure is in place to support the growth. Participants identified the need to increase mixed use development including providing incentives for infill. Some participants suggested issuance of building permits should be limited to infill development. Participants identified the need to continue revitalizing downtown. Participants discussed the prospect of studying the advantages/disadvantages of concentrated growth. Participants agreed there needed to be good planning decisions made and then require (by participation in the political process) the decision makers to follow the plan.</p>

CONCERN	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
INFRA-STRUCTURE PLANNING	Participants identified the need to increase transportation impact fees and the need for the City and County to do a joint cost-benefit analysis. Participants identified the need for better communication of proposed changes in roads i.e. road widening, etc. Some felt public transportation should be enhanced and free. Others identified the potential for increasing or instituting parking fees to encourage people to use public transportation. Participants identified the need to mix high density with low density in a strategic manner. Some participants felt developers should be required to create and maintain parks.

CONCERN	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
WALKABLE/BIKEABLE COMMUNITY	Participants identified the need to plan commercial development and schools for walkability. Participants identified the need to plant more trees along bike paths as well as community wide and offer better/professional maintenance of all trees. Some participants identified a need to provide some form of separation between bike lanes/paths and vehicular traffic. Participants generally agreed there should be a network of connected bike paths. Participants agreed there was a need for sidewalks in some parts of Metro Bakersfield. Participants expressed the opinion that walled-in communities do not lead to walkability. Some participants felt there should be detailed standards, developed by a citizens committee, for walkable communities and those standards inserted into the General Plan.

CONCERN	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
TRAFFIC/ MOBILITY	Participants identified the need to decrease sprawl, increase mixed-use development, enhance public transportation, develop better bike friendly roads, and have better City/County coordinated planning for roads. Participants also identified the need for a sales tax for road construction and maintenance and increased traffic impact fees. Some participants felt housing should be built only in incorporated areas.

CONCERN	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
GANGS/ CRIME	Participants agreed that reducing gangs and crime needed to begin with children. Participants believed there should be more investment (community centers) in low-income neighborhoods. Some participants believed police substations should be located in high crime areas and law enforcement provided with high tech tools. Some participants believed empowering neighbors and creating truly walkable communities would reduce gangs and crime.

CONCERN	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
AIR QUALITY	Participants identified the need for more efficient transportation alternatives i.e. mass transit, carpools, walking and biking. Participants generally agreed with incentives for use of public transportation, carpools, energy conservation such as solar power, “green” homes and office building, hybrid vehicles etc. Participants identified the need for more trees and better maintenance of trees. Participants felt there may be a need to prohibit use of 2-stroke engines, wood-burning fireplaces, etc. Some identified the need for pollution standards on diesel engines. Generally participants agreed planning for smarter urban design was needed.

CONCERN	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
LANDSCAPING/ TREE PLANTING & MAINTENANCE	<p>Participants generally agreed recycling centers/bins should be required in new development and in redeveloped areas. Participants also agreed recycle bins should be free. Generally participants agreed more trees needed to be planted in new developments and more professional maintenance of trees in public areas. Some participants felt there needed to be a higher canopy of trees and there should be a permit required to prune trees. Participants identified a need for an informational/educational list of trees that should be planted in the area as well as trees that are not conducive to the area. Participants generally agreed there should be more consequences for littering and fines should go to cleanup. Use of prison labor and the need for more volunteers was also identified as a means to clean up landscaping along roadways.</p>

CONCERN	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
SERVICES, SAFETY & EQUITY	<p>Trash on roadways was identified as a concern. Solutions included providing free recycling centers. Additionally, some participants felt recycling centers should be a requirement in new development and redevelopment. Some participants identified a need for more street sweeping personnel and the potential to utilize prison labor to clean up litter. Some participants indicated that existing parks are not safe or adequately maintained. Participants agreed new parks are needed in older areas. Creation of more green space was identified as something people wanted. Participants felt there needed to be more investment in low-income neighborhoods i.e. providing police substations in high crime areas. Gang violence was a major concern to participants.</p>

CONCERN	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
URBAN RENEWAL	Participants agreed that urban renewal should be encouraged. Participants agreed that revitalizing downtown was important and felt incentives should be available for those providing infill development. Some participants felt building permits should be limited to infill development. Participants agreed that landlords need to be held accountable for the appearance and maintenance of their properties. Participants felt there should be a study on the advantages/disadvantages of concentrated growth.

ADDITIONAL CONCERNS

The following concerns were identified including the number of votes received by the groups:

- Health 15
- Agriculture/Habitat Preservation 14
- Miscellaneous Economic Issues 14
- Infrastructure Maintenance 13
- Education Including Vocational 12
- Growth Affecting Public Services 10
- City/County Coordination 10
- Blight 9
- Housing 8
- Poverty 6
- Homeless 5
- Development Not Paying Way 4
- Water 1

Participants provided the following additional comments via comment cards:

Health

- Incorporation of health that is explicit in the planning process
- Use health impact assessments
- Low emphasis on individual preventative health practices
- Medical resources

Education

- Low educational attainment
- Equal public education

Miscellaneous Comments

- Poverty
- Segregation
- Racism
- Lack of affordable housing
- Improve facilities for youth for positive experiences via recreational facilities and library system

ATTACHMENTS

The following pages contain handouts and presentation materials featured at the meeting and described in the summary report.

- Agenda
- Comment Form
- Evaluation Form
- Wallgraphic



COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

METROPOLITAN BAKERSFIELD GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

A G E N D A

May 2007

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Presentation: The General Plan Update.....Why Now?
- III. Small Group Discussions
 - a. Strengths, Weaknesses, and Vision
 - b. Prioritizing Issues
- IV. Large Group Discussion
 - a. Reports from Small Group Discussions
- V. Next Steps

Close



METROPOLITAN BAKERSFIELD
GENERAL PLAN UPDATE
COMMUNITY MEETINGS
MAY 2007

C O M M E N T F O R M

Thank you for participating in this process! **Your comments are important to us, so please use this form to provide written comments about the discussion topics and any other issues.** Please submit your completed form at the end of the meeting to the registration table. Otherwise, you may mail this form within one week of this meeting to: Planning Department, City of Bakersfield, 1715 Chester Avenue, Bakersfield, California 93301.

Meeting Date: _____ Meeting Location: _____

1. Please provide any comments related to the slideshow presentation.
2. What do you like most about your community?
3. What are the major areas or issues for improvement in your community?

PLEASE TURN OVER

4. When you envision your community in the year 2050, what are some of its **MOST POSITIVE** aspects?

5. When you envision your community in the year 2050, what are some of its **BIGGEST CHALLENGES**?

6. Please share any additional comments about the project.

**METROPOLITAN BAKERSFIELD
GENERAL PLAN UPDATE
COMMUNITY MEETINGS MAY 2007**

MEETING EVALUATION FORM

Thank you for participating in this meeting! **Your comments are important to us, so please use this form to evaluate the meeting.**

Date: _____ Meeting Location: _____

1. What did you like about the meeting?

2. What did you not like about the meeting?

3. Please rate the following aspects of the meeting:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
A. Slideshow presentation and information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Small group open discussion: vision & values	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Small group discussion: solutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Large group discussion & small group reports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Overall meeting design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. The meeting addressed issues important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. I was able to provide input and it was recorded.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. I would participate in a future meeting.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes		<input type="checkbox"/> No	

Please write any additional comments on the above items on the back of this form.

4. Please help us determine the success of our community outreach efforts by telling us a bit about yourself:

Gender

Female
Male

Age group:

Under 18 60-69
 18-29 70-79
 30-39 80-89
 40-49 90-99
 50-59

Ethnicity:

White or Caucasian Asian
 Hispanic or Latino American Indian
 Black or African American Two or more races
 Pacific Islander Other

5. I attended this meeting and provided input *primarily* as a(n):

Resident
Member of the business community
Government Employee
Other: _____

6. I heard about this meeting through:

Newspaper article in: _____
 Email from an organization: _____
 Flier received in the mail
 Newsletter article in: _____
 Other: _____

Please submit your completed form at the end of the meeting to the registration table, or mail within one week to: Planning Department, City of Bakersfield, 1715 Chester Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93301

METRO BAKERSFIELD

GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

Blueprint for the Future

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP
MAY 7, 2007

STRENGTHS

AFFORDABILITY
 DIVERSITY
 FARMLAND-AG
 STRONG FAITH
 DIVERSE ECONOMY
 ACCOUNTABILITY OF ELECTEDS
 FRIENDLY
 HIKE-SKI-RAFT
 "ELECTEDS AFFORDABLE"

CENTRAL LOCATION!!
 2 HR'S
 ETHNIC
 STILL CAN DO THINGS
 OPEN SPACES
 COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES
 KERN RIVER BIKE PATH

HIGER ED
 TRAILS PLAN
 RIVER TRAIL
 TOPOGRAPHY

UNDERSTANDABLE COMMUNICATIONS
 Multi-media
 on-line agendas

ELECTEDS NEED HIGHER PAY
 EYES ON STREET
 HEADSTART
 LOW-INCOME NEIGH.
 INCENTIVES

CHALLENGES

LACK OF INFRASTR. PLANNING
 GANGS
 DEV. W/O INFRA.

FIX OLDER SECTIONS
 AIR QUALITY!
 BIKE/WALK
 TREES

LACK OF PLANNING
 PEOPLE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY
 POPULATION INCREASE
 TRAFFIC
 PUBLIC SERVICES CAN'T KEEP UP
 TRASH
 TREES - WHO
 GRAFFITI
 INEFFECTIVE TRANSIT
 PUBIC TRANSP.

SOLUTIONS

BETTER RECYCLING
 1/2% SALES TAX
 PUBLIC OFFICIALS ADMIT!
 TRANS. IMPACT FEES
 BETTER COMMUN. w/ COMMUNITY
 MORE TOWN HALLS
 PUBLIC NEEDS TO VOTE
 UNDERSTANDABLE COMMUNICATIONS
 Multi-media
 on-line agendas
 ELECTEDS NEED HIGHER PAY
 EYES ON STREET
 HEADSTART
 LOW-INCOME NEIGH.
 INCENTIVES

PLANT TREES! MORE GREEN AREAS
 HYBRID CARS
 LIGHT BULBS
 PARKS - fun with kids! Accept
 CONNECT PATHS
 SAFETY
 WALKABLE/BIKABLE
 ANIMAL CONTROL
 1 DAY / WEEK WATCHING
 ATTEND LOCAL SCHOOLS
 POWER PLANT SATING
 PHOTOVOLTAIC
 EFFICIENT TRANSIT
 DECENTRALIZED
 STABILIZE GROWTH
 INCREASE VOLUNTEERISM

DESIGN
 URBAN RENEWAL in centers
 MAINTENANCE IN NEW BUILDINGS - RENEWAL
 OVERANTICIPATE GROWTH
 CONCENTRATE ON INFILL
 PERMISSIBLE
 BROADEN MONITORING
 MORE MULTI-UNITS
 MORE \$ SOURCES!
 BIKE FRIENDLY
 DECREASED SPRAWL
 EXPAND LANES (EVENING HOV 2)
 HOVING ONLY IN HOV 2+ AREA
 MIXED USE
 COST-EFFECTIVE ROAD MODELS
 BUSES +
 SOLAR/RENEWABLE
 GREEN HOMES - OFFICES

ACCOUNTABILITY
 TRANSPARENCY
 INCENTIVES - DITTO
 FOR DEVELOP.
 FOR PUB. SERVICE!
 WALKABLE COMMUNITIES
 IN (C)