

**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

**NORTHWEST BAKERSFIELD
May 8, 2007**

I. INTRODUCTION

On Tuesday, May 8, 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 Greenacres Community 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 Northwest Bakersfield meeting was held from 6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. at the Greenacres Community Center, Senior Room, 2014 Calloway Drive, 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 12 - 15). Participants were then asked to place red and green dots on an aerial photograph to locate where they lived and worked, respectively. Approximately 35 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 Dave Couch, 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 16.

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.

Strengths

- Spirit of Collaboration
- Higher education opportunities – Bakersfield College; CSUB
- Economic opportunities – agriculture; oil
- People – family friendly
- Agriculture
- Affordable Housing
- Location/Proximity
 - Mountains
 - Ocean
 - Los Angeles
- Parks/Open Spaces/Riverwalk
- Approachable public officials
- Water supply
- Small town spirit
- Donate to needy

Weaknesses/Challenges

- Air Quality
- Traffic
- Congestion
- Free/convenient recycling
- Health
 - Obesity rates

- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Separation of land uses
- Lack of good planning – overbuilding/caving in to developers
- Lack of infrastructure planning (roads etc.)
- Lack of walkability
- Lack of City/County cooperation/coordination
- Development fees for infrastructure
- Water – is there going to be enough for all the growth?
- Road maintenance
- Not protecting farmland – no vision for the future
- Gang violence
- Crime rate
- Education levels
- Job availability
- Leaders not listening to the people
- Urban sprawl

Solutions

- Infill development
- Smart Growth
- Restructure City Code
- Traffic impact fee
- Half-cent sales tax
- Reduce congestion/travel time
 - Incentivize carpools
 - Staggered work schedules
- Walkable neighborhoods – sidewalks
- Public transit
 - Incentives
 - Downtown shuttles
- High speed rail and light rail
- Vocational education
- Kern River Parkway funding
- Widen Rosedale Highway
- Roads before growth
- Mixed use development
- Sustainable solar power
- Use of native landscaping
- Redevelopment
- Gang research, awareness, suppression
- Strengthen family values
- Outlaw leaf blowers
- Fewer drive thru businesses
- Sell water for income stream for roads

- Supervisorial redistricting
- Urban growth boundary

III. TOP ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE

Each small group identified the issues of most concern 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	Traffic/Mobility	Infrastructure Planning	Air Quality	Gangs/Crime	Misc. Economic Issues	Health	Services & Safety & Equity	Walkable/Bikeable
TOTALS	35	32	31	30	22	22	21	20	17

CONCERN	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
GROWTH MANAGEMENT	<p>Participants generally agreed rapid growth and the influx of people to the area was causing sprawl. Some participants identified what they termed “walled-in” communities as unfriendly to pedestrians and bicyclists. Some participants felt land uses were not mixed and therefore not friendly to pedestrians. Some participants suggested the need for urban growth boundaries. Some participants felt the City/County should review planning principles for criteria for ordinances for subdivisions.</p>

CONCERN	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
TRAFFIC/ MOBILITY	<p>Generally participants agreed there was a need for smart growth development, walkable communities and infill development/redevelopment. Some participants identified the need for a ½ cent sales tax for road construction/maintenance as well as the need to increase traffic impact fees. Some participants suggested building as many roads as possible when money is available. Participants generally agreed funding sources needed to be identified for the Kern River Parkway (Alt. 15). Some participants felt that growth should not be allowed until there was funding identified for infrastructure and an actual timeline for when roads would be built. Participants also identified the need for more public transit choices and incentives for utilizing transit. Other comments included the need for stronger political will, staggered work schedules and widening of Rosedale Highway.</p>

CONCERN	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING	<p>Participants generally agreed traffic impact fees needed to be increased and a ½ cent sales tax passed for road construction and maintenance. Participants identified a parking problem downtown and the need for a downtown shuttle system. Participants generally agreed with the concept of mixed use design, more compact development, and the need for more parks</p>

CONCERN	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
AIR QUALITY	Participants agreed public transportation needed to be improved and encouraged. They also agreed public transit needed to be passenger friendly. Some identified the need for a downtown shuttle. Some participants wanted to have parking set aside for hybrids and incentives provided for use of less polluting vehicles. Participants generally agreed the public needed to be less dependent on cars and identified a need for more infill development and redevelopment to encourage walking. Participants felt there needed to be better planning for bikeability and walkability. Some participants expressed the desire to see more native landscaping that required less resources to maintain. Others wanted to increase the tree canopy. Many participants wanted the use of leaf blowers to be eliminated. Participants suggested the use of incentives to use solar energy for commercial and residential buildings.

CONCERN	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
GANGS/ CRIME	Participants generally agreed there needed to be more early education and support for strengthening families through existing collaborative groups. Participants also identified the need to do more research into how gang members develop and how schools and the community can intercede earlier. Participants also expressed the desire for more community involvement and awareness. Some felt there needed to be a law enforcement gang unit.

CONCERN	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
MISC. ECONOMIC ISSUES	<p>Participants generally agreed jobs were too low in pay to keep college graduates in the area. Participants identified the need for CSUB to increase the number of majors especially engineering. Participants felt businesses needed to actively recruit CSUB graduates. Participants identified the need to attract high tech industries to the area. Participants felt there was a lack of industry diversification and that the economic development that has occurred is for short term gain with negative long term consequences i.e. dairies.</p>

CONCERN	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
HEALTH	<p>Participants identified the need to plan a sidewalk system that would allow children to walk to school safely, and provide more connectivity between neighborhoods. They also identified the need for more tree canopy for shade to encourage walking. Many felt there needed to be more green space, and homes/parks within ¼ mile of each other. Participants expressed a desire for safer bike lanes and the need for more bike racks. Participants felt employers should provide incentives to encourage employees to walk during the day and potentially provide workout facilities. Participants felt there should be more mixed-use design such as restaurants, retail, and grocery stores close to work and home.</p>

CONCERN	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
SERVICES, SAFETY & EQUITY	Generally participants expressed there was poor community recycling. Participants felt recycling centers should be more visible and that home recycling containers and composting bins should be free to induce people to recycle. Some participants identified the lack of diverse entertainment/theater/fine arts as an issue. Others felt there was a lack of indoor recreation for 18-21 year olds. Some participants identified the lack of a children’s hospital as a service needed in the community.

CONCERN	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
WALKABLE/ BIKEABLE	Participants identified the need for pedestrian friendly environments. Participants acknowledged the community was not walker friendly and created a dependency on autos. Some participants felt there needed to be more bike paths and others felt bike lanes were poorly developed. Some participants thought there was a need to create incentives for developers to design walkable communities.

ADDITIONAL CONCERNS

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

- Agriculture/Habitat Preservation 14
- Landscape/Trees/Maintenance 11
- Water 11
- Blight 11
- City/County Coordination 11
- Infrastructure Maintenance 7
- Education Including Vocational 7
- Development Not Paying Way 7
- Urban Renewal 5
- Housing 5
- Growth Affecting Public Services 2

Participants provided the following additional comments via comment cards:

Water

- Is there going to be enough for all the development
- Where is water going to be recharged

Health

- Obesity rates
- Diabetes
- Heart disease

I. Miscellaneous Comments

- Provide today for tomorrows needs – water, open space, affordable housing, and public services
- Lack of strong elected leadership – special interests funding their campaigns
- Lack of coordination between City and County – City acts like a “Big Bully” – not respectful to County
- Our Supervisor does not listen or respond to our concerns

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 8, 2007

STRENGTHS

- WATER SUPPLY
- SPIRIT OF COLLABORATION
- PEOPLE - FAMILY
- AG - DITTO (+ OIL)
- AFFORDABLE HOUSING (DITTO - RELATIVE)
- LOCATION - PROXIMITY
- LOVE CITY
- DONATE TO NEEDY ☺
- SMALL-TOWN SPIRIT
- PARKS - OPEN SPACE - RIVERWALK
- APPROACHABLE PUBLIC OFFICIALS

WEAKNESSES CHALLENGES

- AIR QUALITY DITTO DITTO
- TRAFFIC DITTO (don't get worse)
- FREE/CONV. RECYCLING
- HEALTH/WALKABILITY DITTO
- SEPARATION OF LAND USES
- LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING (roads, etc)
- GANG VIOLENCE
- LACK OF CITY/COUNTY COOPERATION
- WATER
- DEV. FEES FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

EX. (Necessity of the future)

SOLUTIONS

- SYNS - MORE!
- GREEN BUILDING
- HYBRID VEHICLES
- BICYCLES → "shower" like shower, bike shower, bike shower, bike shower
- TRANSIT
- INDIRECT SOURCE
- WALKABILITY → sidewalks
- MIXED USE → LIGHT DISTRICTS
- SOLAR POWER: sustainable
- LANDSCAPING - native
- TRANSIT INCENTIVES
- DOWNTOWN SHUTTLES
- OUTLAW LEAF BLOWERS / DITTO
- CONNECTIVITY!
- SELL H₂O FOR INCOME STREAM
- REDISTRIBUTE SUPERSTREET

ATTRACT HIGH TECH

- SMART GROWTH
- INFILL RESTRUCTURE CITY CORE
- FEWER DRIVEWAYS
- REDUCE CONG., TRAVEL TIME
- WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOODS
- INCENTIVIZE CARPOOLS
- PUBLIC TRANSIT - DITTO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
- STUDY BEST PRACTICES LOCAL RECRUITMENT
- HIGH SPEED RAIL → LIGHT RAIL OF CALIF.
- KERN RIVER PARKWAY FUNDING
- VADEN ROSEDALE HWY
- GROWTH AFTER ROADS
- STAGGERED WORK SCHEDULES
- INCENTIVES
- BACK DOOR ENTRANCE
- REDEVELOPMENT
- INFILL
- GANG RESEARCH, AWARENESS, SUPP
- STRENGTHEN FAMILY VALUES
- TRAFFIC IMPACT FEES
- 1/2% SALES TAX