

KERN REGIONAL BLUEPRINT PROGRAM TOWN HALL MEETING—PHASE 2

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

MOJAVE—ROSAMOND—CALIFORNIA CITY October 3, 2007

I. INTRODUCTION

On Wednesday, October 3, 2007, Kern Council of Governments (COG) hosted a Town Hall Meeting for the Kern Regional Blueprint Program at Mojave Veterans Building in Mojave. The purpose of the meeting was: (a) to educate participants about the purpose of the Blueprint; (b) to provide results of Phase 1 outreach efforts regarding the visions, values, and top issues for the future; and (c) to present and facilitate discussion and collect input about draft principles and draft illustrative “scenarios” for future growth.

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 and ex-officio members representing Caltrans, Golden Empire Transit District and the Congestion Management Agency.

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. **The Kern Regional Blueprint is not a City General Plan or a County Specific Plan; it is a 2050 visioning project designed to complement other planning processes.** 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.

Phase 1 of the outreach process focused on introducing the Blueprint Program, developing a regional vision for the future of the region and its communities, and understanding the participants’ priority issues related to growth. Phase 2 of the process is focused on developing principles for future growth and a preferred

illustrative scenario for development in each sub-region, all of which builds from the regional vision and priority issues developed in Phase 1.

Community Outreach

To build community awareness of and involvement in the Blueprint Program, Kern COG initiated an extensive outreach program as part of these Town Hall Meetings, which will carry and expand into future phases of the process. With outreach and coordination support from Odyssey, a California-based nonprofit organization focused on transportation policy improvements, Kern COG implemented a number of outreach measures to advertise the meeting, including:

- Direct phone calls to a broad range of community-based organizations including business, social service, cultural, and other interests;
- Targeted mail and email of a project newsletter and 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 Mojave—Rosamond—California City (Southeast Kern) meeting was held from 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. at the Mojave Veterans Building, 15580 "O" Street in Mojave. Upon entering the meeting facility, participants signed-in and received a nametag and handout materials including an agenda, comment form, and evaluation form (handout materials may be found at www.kerncog.org). Approximately 10 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 from Kern COG. Nancy Kays from Moore Iacofano Goltsman, (MIG) Inc. served as the meeting facilitator and initiated the meeting with brief welcoming remarks and an agenda overview. She then introduced Kern COG Assistant Director Darrel Hildebrand.

Mr. Hildebrand delivered brief introductory remarks describing the relationship of the Blueprint to local planning activities followed by a slideshow presentation that provided an overview of the purpose of, need for, and process for developing the Blueprint. The slideshow included results of the Phase 1 Town Hall Meeting in Southeast Kern including the sub-region's visions and values. The slideshow also introduced the draft principles for growth in the Kern region, which provide guidance and direction about how to manage future growth, as well as illustrative pictures to further describe each principle's meaning and intent.

Ms. Kays then reviewed the format of the group discussion. After brief introductions among the participants, Ms. Kays guided participants through a discussion of participants' reactions to the draft principles. As a discussion tool, she introduced a "card game," which is designed to allow participants to share their beliefs of how effective each principle would be in achieving the visions for future growth. Andy Pendoley of MIG recorded participants' discussion points and the card game tallies on large wallgraphic paper at the front of the room, and participants also recorded comments on their own comment forms, all of which are summarized in the following pages of this report.

Following this small group discussion, participants heard a brief presentation from Robert Ball, Senior Planner with Kern COG, regarding draft "scenarios" for future growth in the sub-region. Mr. Ball explained that each of the four scenarios represented varying levels of compact development, or the amount of development that is focused on existing urban areas. He also provided data regarding performance measures for each scenario, including the relative change in air quality, energy use, water consumption, and other measures.

Ms. Kays then asked that each participant indicate their preferred scenario and to share their ideas and reasons as part of the discussion. Mr. Pendoley recorded comments on the wallgraphic, which is attached to this report as photo-reduced copy on page A1. Also, participants recorded comments on their own comment forms. The following pages summarize comments captured on the wallgraphic and comment forms. Original copies of these documents are on file with Kern COG.

II. DISCUSSION: DRAFT PRINCIPLES

Participants discussed the draft principles in terms of their beliefs of how effective each would be in achieving the visions and values for future growth. Ms. Kays asked participants to provide any overall comments about draft principles, and then proceeded to review each principle in turn.



Each participant received a set of five cards as part of the "card game." Ms. Kays explained that the suited cards represent levels of effectiveness in achieving the visions for future growth. The suited cards were labeled as:

- ♠ **Spades** represent "No effect"
- ♥ **Hearts** represent "Small effect"
- ♦ **Diamonds** represent "Moderate effect"
- ♣ **Clubs** represent "Major effect"
- "X" represents "Delete this principle"

As Ms. Kays introduced a draft principle, each participant raised the card that represented his belief in the effectiveness of the principle. After tallying the results on the wallgraphic, Ms. Kays asked participants to comment on why they played their respective cards, which Mr. Pendoley recorded on the flip chart pages. Ms. Kays also encouraged participants to record their card play and associated comments on their comment form. Following is a summary of card game results and participants' comments on each principle:





Use compact, efficient development and/or mixed land uses

Participants supported this principle and emphasized the need to link with providing a range of transportation options and improving roads as the two principles go hand-in-hand. Some participants also suggested that the principle supports more efficient water consumption and access to community services.

 Major effect	 Moderate effect	 Small effect	 No effect	X Delete
8	0	0	0	0





Provide a variety of housing choices

Most participants suggested that expanding housing choices is important to balancing supply and demand for housing. Some participants noted the importance of providing housing that meets the needs of the community's current and future workforce. However, a few participants expressed concern that an over-emphasis on more affordable housing might support an increase in community crime, or that market forces should be the primary driver of housing development.

 Major effect	 Moderate effect	 Small effect	 No effect	X Delete
0	6	1	0	1





Provide adequate and equitable services

Participants indicated that services are important to supporting local community members, particularly in the spirit of "growing our own," or providing an environment that supports long-term residency in the community. Of particular interest among some participants was emphasizing development of more recreation services and opportunities.

 Major effect	 Moderate effect	 Small effect	 No effect	X Delete
7	1	0	0	0





Use and improve existing community assets and infrastructure

Participants encouraged linking infill or compact development with this principle as an opportunity to improve the community’s overall infrastructure. Some participants noted that infrastructure improvements should also account for and preserve historical amenities to maintain community character.

 Major effect	 Moderate effect	 Small effect	 No effect	X Delete
7	1	0	0	0





Provide a variety of transportation choices

Participants expressed significant support for this principle for specific reasons. Some participants emphasized the need to improve dangerous streets and traffic patterns in the community. Others supported developing more “walkable” streets and local bikeways as ways to broaden transportation choices.

 Major effect	 Moderate effect	 Small effect	 No effect	X Delete
8	0	0	0	0





Enhance economic vitality

As a key driver of economic vitality, participants stressed the need to provide more local jobs and training opportunities for local residents. Additionally, participants suggested that developing alternative energy sources such as wind and solar would not only support energy conservation, but would also support the local economy.

 Major effect	 Moderate effect	 Small effect	 No effect	X Delete
8	0	0	0	0





Conserve energy and natural resources, and develop alternatives

As previously noted, participants linked this principle with opportunities to enhance economic vitality. Furthermore, some participants suggested that energy conservation supports broader national security initiatives. Other participants noted the opportunities of water banking in local communities as a water conservation and supply initiative, referring to the example of the Rosamond lake bed.

 Major effect	 Moderate effect	 Small effect	 No effect	X Delete
6	2	0	0	0

Conserve undeveloped land and spaces

As the Southeast Kern region is home to significant military and private airspace traffic, participants indicated the need to avoid

 Major effect	 Moderate effect	 Small effect	 No effect	X Delete
6	2	0	0	0

encroaching on airspace. Additionally, some participants noted the value of conserving undeveloped land to function as buffer zones between communities and to support habitat preservation.

Increase civic and public engagement

Participants supported the need for increased civic and public engagement as a means for continuing to address long term growth management issues and to develop new community-based solutions.

♣ Major effect	♦ Moderate effect	♥ Small effect	♠ No effect	X Delete
6	2	0	0	0

III. DISCUSSION: DRAFT SCENARIOS

Following Mr. Ball’s presentation of the draft scenarios and associated performance measures for the sub-region, participants indicated their preferences for the draft scenario of compact development and associated performance measures that best reflect the visions for growth and appropriate level of implementation of the draft principles. The four scenario options included:

- **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

After tallying participant’s preferences for scenarios, Ms. Kays asked participants to comment on their choices, which Mr. Pendoley recorded on the flip chart pages. Ms. Kays also encouraged participants to record their scenario choice and associated comments on their comment form. Following is a summary of participants’ scenario choices (with tallies noted next to the scenario names) and comments:

Major Change (3)

Participants who selected this scenario suggested that significant change in managing growth is necessary to prevent urban sprawl. More specifically, participants supported the scenario because it emphasizes creating more walkable communities—particularly for senior citizens—reduces energy use, and maximizes protection of natural resources such as open spaces and water.

Moderate Change (4)

Again, participants emphasized the need for significant change, though these participants suggested that more moderate change would be more manageable

for the community. Some participants suggested that this scenario facilitates compact development that will be the right scale for local community character. Similar to the previous scenario, some participants supported the value in preserving resources and infrastructure and development costs. Additionally, participants noted that this development pattern would support low and moderate income families with local jobs and affordable housing options, but that local amenities and services are also important. Participants also supported the scenario because it would reduce intercity commuting and improve air quality. Some participants cautioned that water access will be a primary determinant of housing development patterns.

Some Change (0)

No Change (0)

Participants did not support these scenarios. One participant noted that the “No change” scenario does not solve future growth problems.

ADDITIONAL ISSUES AND COMMENTS

Participants provided additional comments via comment cards.

- The discussion provided me with a better idea of what we’re trying to accomplish
- I wish more participants from the first meeting would have returned to this meeting
- I found the meeting to be informative. I hope that our children and grandchildren have good communities in the future.
- Compact growth increases crime.

KERN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
KERN REGIONAL BLUEPRINT PROGRAM
Town Hall Meeting
SOUTH EAST KERN
OCTOBER 3, 2007

LINK TO PROVIDING TRANSP. OPTIONS
Use compact, efficient development and/or mixed land uses
IMPROVES WATER & SERVICES ACCESS
BETTER ROADS INFRASTRUCTURE

LOW COST HOUSING LEADING TO CRIME?

Provide a variety of housing choices
IMPORTANT TO ADDRESS SUPPLY DEMAND
NEED TO MATCH LOCAL WORKFORCE ONLY ON HOUSING
LOCAL RECRUITING
IMPORTANT TO "GROW OUR OWN"

Use and improve existing community assets and infrastructure
CONNECTION TO INFRASTRUCTURE
PRESERVE LOCAL HISTORY

ADDRESS DANGEROUS STREETS VEHICLES
NEED FOR WALKABLE STREETS BIKENWAYS
Enhance economic vitality
NEED JOBS
WIND ENERGY
SECURE
PROMOTE LOCAL RESIDENTS TO FULL JOBS
CONSERVE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES AND DEVELOP ALTERNATIVES
LINK TO ECON. DEV.
ENERGY & NATIONAL SECURITY
CONSERVE UNDEVELOPED LAND AND SPACES
DAVID ARSAGE ENCROACHMENT BUFFER ZONES
INCREASE CHIC AND P.MIC ENGAGEMENT
NEED TO BE INVOLVED

RELAY TO AIR QUALITY

NEED SIGNIFICANT CHANGE!

ADDRESS LOWER ENERGY USE
NEED WALKABLE COMMUNITIES
PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES
OPEN SPACE
WATER

DAVID BEING TOO COMPACT
NEED TO PROVIDE AMENITIES
HOW CAN WE CENTRALIZE THIS?
SUNSHINE RESOURCES
ECONOMY
SUPPORTS LOW & MOD INCOME FAMILIES
LOCAL JOBS
REDUCE COMMUTE
IMPROVE AIR QUALITY
WATER ACCESS WILL IMPACT GROWTH OF HOUSING

CHANGING OUTLOOK
TOBS HOUSING

ROSEWOOD MARKET

Kern Blueprint 2050 - Phase II

Compact Development

Population 2050: 1,140,000

PLANNING THEME: Compact, walkable communities with mixed-use development and transit-oriented growth.

Urban Growth Concepts

Population 2050: 1,140,000

Major Change

PLANNING THEME: Compact, walkable communities with mixed-use development and transit-oriented growth.

Moderate Change

PLANNING THEME: Compact, walkable communities with mixed-use development and transit-oriented growth.

Some Change

PLANNING THEME: Compact, walkable communities with mixed-use development and transit-oriented growth.

No Change

PLANNING THEME: Compact, walkable communities with mixed-use development and transit-oriented growth.



