

PHASE ONE REPORT – COMMUNITY OUTREACH
KERN REGIONAL BLUEPRINT PROGRAM

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KERN REGIONAL BLUEPRINT PROGRAM

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kern Regional Blueprint Program, led by Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG), is part of a larger 8-county San Joaquin Valley wide process. At both the County and Valley levels, the Blueprint process will result in a preferred regional transportation, land use, and environmental vision responding to the many challenges associated with anticipated population growth over the next 40 years.

This document summarizes the outcomes of Phase 1 outreach efforts and **Town Hall Meetings** held March – June 2007 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 **Quality-of-Life telephone survey** conducted in February 2007 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 presentation from Kern COG regarding the purpose of and need for the Blueprint, participants joined small group discussions that were facilitated and recorded by Kern COG staff and other volunteers. Part 1 of the discussions involved participants sharing what they value most about their community, as well as their desired vision 40 years into the future. Part 2 involved participants playing and discussing a “card game” in their small groups that challenged them to prioritize top issues to be addressed in achieving their visions.

Part 1 – VISIONS AND VALUES

Maintaining a Sense of Community

Participants appreciate a strong sense of community that’s reflected by friendly, neighborly people and a small-town atmosphere. Local communities tend to be family-oriented with a strong sense of shared values, an ethic of hard work and pride that translate into active and involved community members.

Participants look forward to expanding their participation in planning for their communities’ future, knowing that community-based visioning and planning are essential to preserving and creating the neighborhoods and region that they envision. Furthermore, the region’s increasing population and broadening diversity—including age, social, and cultural demographics—will continue to add new perspectives to this ongoing process, with the hope of increasing community unity and pride.

Preserving Livable and Unique Communities

Participants believe the Kern region still enjoys a unique combination of: safe and friendly small towns, each with their own unique character; opportunities to live in rural or urban communities; a major metropolitan area and proximity to others statewide; a range of natural spaces and ecosystems; a diverse economy; and affordability. Furthermore, Kern’s communities are

livable for most residents—this is one of the last, relatively affordable places in California to raise a family, buy a home, and live the “American Dream”.

Price Research Survey	How do you feel about your community as a place to live?				
	Very Desirable	Somewhat Desirable	Somewhat Undesirable	Very Undesirable	DK/NA
West Kern	41.5%	45.0%	7.0%	6.5%	
Central Valley	35.3%	48.5%	9.8%	5.7%	.7%
Mountains	70.0%	23.0%	6.0%	1.0%	
East Kern	47.0%	45.0%	4.0%	2.5%	1.5%
Total County	44.1%	43.1%	7.8%	4.5%	.6%

However, participants understand that population growth will continue to challenge these valued aspects of life in the Kern region. Participants want to control growth impacts in ways that preserve livability and community character, but also ensure that public infrastructure improvements keep pace with growth to provide basic needs like safer streets and sidewalks, functional water-sewer-septic systems, and beautiful communities.

The survey results indicate that, generally, people in Kern County believe the quality-of-life in their community will improve (39.8%) or stay about the same (25.3%). This sentiment seems to be stronger in West Kern and East Kern.

Price Research Survey	Within the next 10 years, would you say that the quality of life in your community will improve, stay about the same, or become worse than it is today?			
	Improve	Stay About the Same	Become Worse	DK/NA
West Kern	50.0%	26.5%	18.0%	5.5%
Central Valley	34.5%	21.7%	35.2%	8.7%
Mountains	38.5%	27.5%	28.5%	5.5%
East Kern	46.5%	33.0%	14.0%	6.5%
Total County	39.8%	25.3%	27.7%	7.3%

Protecting the Diverse Environment

Kern’s natural and rural areas include mountains, deserts, valleys, a significant river and lake system, agriculture, scenic views, wildlife and habitats—a combination that few other regions enjoy. Participants understand the benefit of these features to the overall ecosystem, local economies, and recreational opportunities.

Yet participants also understand that protecting the environment involves considering new and creative ways to manage growth. This involves contributions from everyone—residents, industry, and government—through a wide range of “greener” practices such as conserving water, utilizing solar and/or localized energy sources, designing and building

with “green” best practices, and facilitating new levels of intergovernmental coordination and protection of natural areas.

Building the Economy

Participants appreciate the major industrial sectors of the region—including oil, agriculture, mining and military—but also understand that expanding these sectors will not be enough to create a more self-sustaining economy. Diversifying the region’s economic bases in line with global market and business trends will create new job opportunities and encourage

new educational and skills development of the local workforce.

Participants also look forward to closing the economic gap and supporting more locally owned businesses.

Price Research Survey	Kern County lacks opportunities for well-paying jobs.				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/NA
West Kern	14.5%	29.0%	42.5%	5.5%	8.5%
Central Valley	17.2%	35.0%	36.7%	4.5%	6.7%
Mountains	13.0%	41.5%	26.0%	6.5%	13.0%
East Kern	18.0%	34.0%	33.0%	7.5%	7.5%
Total County	16.2%	34.9%	35.3%	5.5%	8.2%

The survey results indicate that 51.1% of respondents agree (16.2% strongly agree, 34.9% agree) that Kern County lacks opportunities for well-paying jobs.

Expanding Mobility

The broader region enjoys relative ease of mobility within and among communities with limited roadway congestion. Nevertheless, participants recognize the regional air, economic, and livability impacts of congested corridors in the metropolitan Bakersfield area, particularly State Route 99. Participants’ recent experiences with the growing costs of driving a personal vehicle further inspire their desire for new mobility options.

Participants envision a wide range of new and expanded options at all scales of travel: enhanced walking and biking infrastructure within neighborhoods; specialized transit services for an aging population; expanded roadway capacity; new regional bus and rail services; and new inter-regional access on statewide high speed rail.

The survey results concur with the desires of Phase 1 town hall meeting participants with 76.3% of respondents agreeing (30.3% strongly agree, 46.0% agree) that the region should expand bus and public transit systems.

Price Research Survey	We should expand bus and public transit systems.				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/NA
West Kern	28.5%	50.0%	15.5%	3.5%	2.5%
Central Valley	29.7%	45.3%	17.2%	3.7%	4.2%
Mountains	31.5%	45.0%	17.5%	3.0%	3.0%
East Kern	32.5%	45.0%	15.0%	2.5%	5.0%
Total County	30.3%	46.0%	16.6%	3.3%	3.8%

Preparing Youth for the Future

Participants are committed to Kern's youth. Quality education is important and participants value schools that offer vocational opportunities and extracurricular activities.

Price Research Survey	Respondents' Level of Education				
	West Kern	Central Valley	Mountains	East Kern	Total County
Less than high school	8.0%	7.7%	4.5%	3.0%	6.4%
High school graduate	31.5%	25.3%	24.0%	22.0%	25.6%
Some college	32.5%	25.7%	32.5%	30.5%	28.8%
Business/technical school	4.5%	5.0%	4.0%	4.0%	4.6%
Associate Degree AA/AS	10.5%	9.8%	11.5%	10.5%	10.3%
Bachelor's Degree BA/BS	6.0%	15.0%	16.0%	18.0%	14.2%
Advanced Degree MA/MS/PhD	6.0%	10.2%	6.5%	12.0%	9.2%

Nevertheless, participants expect to see new developments in the area of additional college preparatory offerings, special education curricula, teachers, and after school and child care services. Participants also look forward to expanding the breadth of Kern's academic excellence at all levels of education, particularly higher education, including more four-year university opportunities and technical and vocational training.

Preserving our Health and Safety

Most participants believe that Kern's communities are safer and have lower crime rates than the average town or city. Participants also feel relatively safe in terms of environmental factors, specifically air quality, which has varying quality levels depending upon different areas of the region.

Today, thanks partially to ongoing efforts to manage the region's air quality, participants are more educated about and sensitive to managing related

Price Research Survey	Letter Grade Evaluation - Healthcare					
	A	B	C	D	F	Unable to Evaluate
West Kern	5.0%	10.0%	22.5%	32.5%	29.0%	1.0%
Central Valley	12.2%	34.2%	29.2%	14.5%	6.8%	3.2%
Mountains	6.0%	25.5%	30.0%	22.5%	12.5%	3.5%
East Kern	5.0%	24.0%	39.5%	16.0%	10.5%	5.0%
Total County	8.8%	27.0%	29.9%	19.1%	12.1%	3.2%

environmental hazards such as the location of dairies and waste dumps near communities. With rising levels of chronic disease and an aging population, participants envision more localized, comprehensive health and medical services in both large and small communities. To preserve the safety of Kern's communities, participants want to see improved control of illegal drugs and gang activities.

Enhancing Parks and Recreation

Participants appreciate the range of parks and natural spaces that locals and visitors regularly enjoy throughout the region, such as forests, mountains, and parks. These spaces afford many recreational opportunities, from hiking, hunting, fishing, boating, camping, golf, and off-road driving.

To continue enjoying these activities and places, and to preserve them for future generations, participants envision enhancements that maintain or improve their conditions and functions. Additionally, participants see opportunities to encourage more tourism through promotion of unique parks and recreation features. Furthermore, improving and connecting neighborhood and community parks that serve local residents of all ages with new activities and improved design will increase the community’s appreciation and use of its parks, as well as contributing to the community’s overall health.

Expanding Coordinated Planning

Participants appreciate their civic leaders throughout the region, but also recognize that new levels of coordinated planning are necessary to address challenges from future growth. Participants suggest that improved coordination should occur from the local to the inter-regional levels and among all sectors of government and focus areas.

The survey results concur with the opinions of Phase 1 participants concerning governmental coordination, as 87.5% believe (41.0% strongly

agree, 46.5% agree) that governments should work together to develop a common plan for transportation, housing and land use in their region.

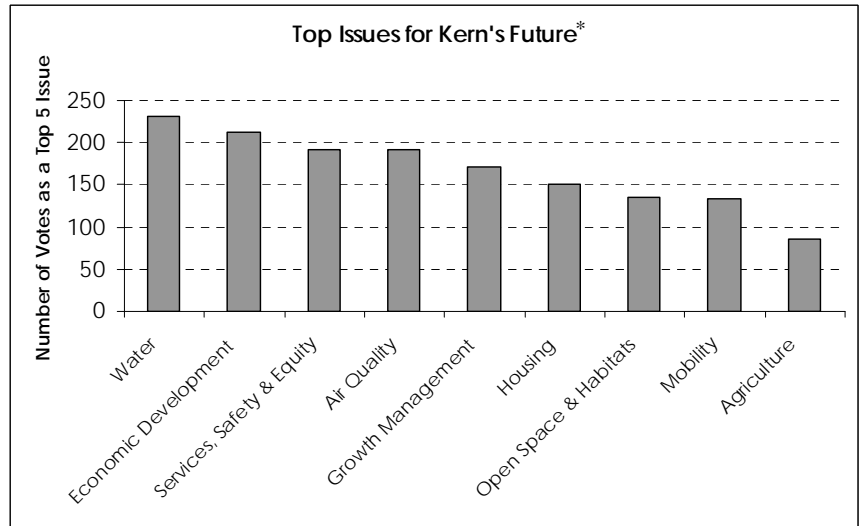
Price Research Survey	We should require local governments to work together to have a common plan for transportation and housing development and land use in their region.				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/NA
West Kern	42.5%	46.0%	6.5%	1.5%	3.5%
Central Valley	42.0%	45.8%	6.8%	1.7%	3.7%
Mountains	40.5%	47.5%	5.5%	1.0%	5.5%
East Kern	37.0%	48.0%	9.0%	2.0%	4.0%
Total County	41.0%	46.5%	6.9%	1.6%	4.0%

Part 2 – TOP ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE

As part of the small group discussions, participants played a “card game” that challenged them to prioritize what they consider to be the top issues to address in achieving Kern’s regional vision for the future. Each participant chose their top five issues from a selection of nine issues. Participants also had the option of submitting their own issues, but the vast majority worked with the original nine. The following table displays the number of times each issue was chosen as part of participants’ top five.

After facilitators tallied the top five issues within each small group, each participant received sets of cards corresponding to his small group’s shared top five issues. Each set of cards included 4 “suited” cards for an issue that correspond to general preferences for policy directions:

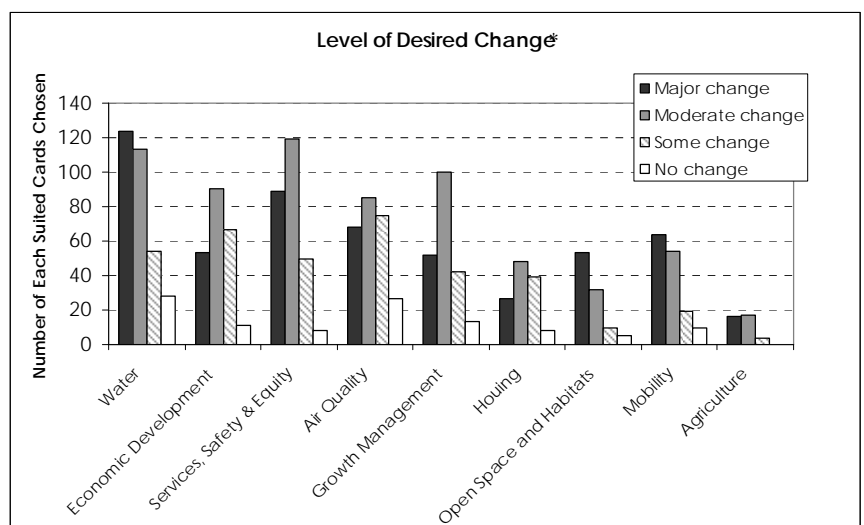
- **Spades: No change.** Maintaining today’s current approach, plans and conditions;
- **Hearts: Some change.** Providing new levels of incentives and/or voluntary measures to encourage change;
- **Diamonds: Moderate change.** Establishing new levels of regulations and dedicating significant public resources to manage the issue; and
- **Clubs: Major change.** Aggressively managing the issue through a stronger regulatory framework and incentives with major resource impacts on the public and private sectors.



*The Metro Bakersfield meetings did not feature the card game.

Each suited card also featured “discussion points” describing potential outcomes for choosing that particular policy direction such as restrictions on activities, or higher costs to public and/or private entities. The following table displays the number of choices of each suited card for each issue:

Essentially, the frequent choice of clubs and diamonds—which



*The Metro Bakersfield meetings did not feature the card game.

represent major and moderate levels of policy change, respectively—represent participants’ desire for significant policy changes related to these issues as part of achieving Kern’s regional vision. Following is a summary of participants’ discussions related to each issue:

Water

Many participants acknowledged the importance of maintaining an adequate water supply and noted that water quantity and quality are essential to supporting future growth. Participants recognized water as a limited resource and generally agreed that moderate to major change be initiated through proactive comprehensive planning of future development, and significant government regulation. Conservation will be necessary both at household and industrial levels. Many also noted the local impacts of exporting local water supplies. Some participants suggested considering new water quality standards, expanding use of gray water, developing shared-cost programs, improving supply management, implementing price inflation adjustments for low-income community members, and promoting xeriscape landscaping. Additionally, some participants noted that flood protection should be a key element addressed in new developments.

Economic Development

Participants agreed with the need to strengthen their local economies in a manner that maintains the spirit of a small town community. Many participants stressed the need to diversify local economies with new industries to reduce dependence on existing industries. To do so, participants discussed expanding the number of mid-level and skilled employment opportunities, coordinated educational and training opportunities, and focusing on industries such as tourism and technology that could build on current regional assets and economic sectors. Additionally, many participants suggested that economic development initiatives should focus on closing the growing gap between high- and low-income levels, as well as supporting local, specialized businesses. Some participants suggested that implementing such changes should be primarily market-driven, but that preserving natural and agricultural areas should remain a high priority. Some participants suggested that such efforts would help to keep future generations from leaving the region.

According to the survey, less than 8% of residents would give an “A” rating to job opportunities in Kern County.

Price Research Survey	Letter Grade Evaluation – Job Opportunities					
	A	B	C	D	F	Unable to Evaluate
West Kern	10.5%	23.5%	34.0%	17.0%	11.0%	4.0%
Central Valley	9.0%	30.7%	37.5%	13.5%	5.3%	4.0%
Mountains	6.0%	25.5%	30.0%	22.5%	12.5%	3.5%
East Kern	7.0%	22.0%	26.5%	27.0%	13.5%	4.0%
Total County	7.8%	25.3%	34.3%	18.8%	9.8%	4.2%

Services, Safety and Equity

Participants indicated the need to provide an array of services for all community members that support community growth and quality of life. Services necessary include: emergency response, fire protection, health care, emergency services and facilities, and social services. Additional primary care facilities should focus on serving children and families, especially

for those of a lower income. Education initiatives should be expanded to include a wider array of service and trade skills, a local 4-year university, and upgraded facilities. Local health care services should be expanded to include comprehensive care and more specialties to prevent the need to travel to other regions. Public safety suggestions include controlling the growing gang presence, expanding prevention initiatives, and increasing the number of law enforcement officers. Participants stressed the need to create a shared sense of inclusion for all members of the community—including those with a language barrier—who feel their needs are insignificant and not addressed by community leaders.

The survey indicates that citizens countywide agree (37.3% strongly agree, 45.0% agree) there is a gang violence problem in Kern County.

Price Research Survey	Kern County has a major gang violence problem.				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/NA
West Kern	45.5%	41.4%	9.0%		4.0%
Central Valley	43.0%	46.0%	7.0%	1.0%	3.0%
Mountains	35.5%	46.0%	9.5%	3.5%	5.5%
East Kern	14.0%	44.5%	21.5%	4.5%	15.5%
Total County	37.3%	45.0%	10.2%	1.8%	5.7%

Air Quality

Depending on their part of the region, participants proposed varying levels of policy changes to addressing air quality. Generally, those with relatively bad air quality suggested higher levels of change, while those with relatively good air quality suggested less aggressive measures, but still expressed concern about future air quality levels becoming worse and negatively affecting public health. Some participants suggested that much of the focus should be on increasing regulations in Metropolitan Bakersfield, which they believe to be the source of much of the region’s air pollution. Participants also suggested a wide range of approaches, from encouraging to requiring more energy efficient practices, public transportation, alternative fuels, compact urban growth, and public education.

The survey results concur with Phase 1 participants’ opinions concerning air quality As 78.3% agree (41.0% strongly agree, 37.3% agree) that the region has a serious air pollution problem.

Price Research Survey	Kern County has a serious air pollution problem.				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/NA
West Kern	46.0%	42.0%	9.0%	2.0%	1.0%
Central Valley	51.3%	38.3%	8.3%	.5%	1.5%
Mountains	37.5%	39.0%	16.5%	3.5%	3.5%
East Kern	8.5%	28.0%	43.5%	11.0%	9.0%
Total County	41.0%	37.3%	15.7%	3.0%	3.0%

Growth Management

Participants suggested that urban growth should be managed, limited, and well planned to avoid sprawl, develop the current town centers, uplift blighted and abandoned areas, and maintain communities’ small town character. Communities should offer a diversity of housing types and affordability levels, integrated with businesses and services in walkable environments. Growth initiatives should be sensitive to impacts on natural habitats and air quality, and should also encourage improved coordination and integration of planning

efforts between governmental agencies while maintaining local control and decision-making. Furthermore, long-term planning should ensure provision of adequate infrastructure and services including improved sidewalks and bike lanes, as well as expanded public transit.

Price Research Survey	How would you rate your local government when it comes to housing and land-use policies in your community?					
	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor	DK/NA
West Kern	3.0%	8.0%	55.5%	16.0%	15.5%	2.0%
Central Valley	3.0%	9.5%	54.0%	16.3%	13.3%	3.8%
Mountains	2.5%	15.5%	48.0%	16.0%	14.0%	4.0%
East Kern	2.5%	9.5%	57.5%	14.5%	11.5%	4.5%
Total County	2.8%	10.3%	53.8%	15.9%	13.5%	3.7%

Over 50% of the Kern citizens rate their local government average when it comes to housing and land use policies.

Housing

Participants in favor of significant changes to address housing issues emphasized the need to provide more diversity of housing types, but particularly affordable housing options for families, seniors/retirees,

Price Research Survey	We should require local governments to provide new housing that is affordable for the workforce in the area.				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/NA
West Kern	21.5%	37.5%	25.5%	13.0%	2.5%
Central Valley	22.5%	35.8%	24.8%	13.7%	3.2%
Mountains	20.0%	34.0%	29.0%	15.0%	2.0%
East Kern	22.5%	32.0%	29.0%	12.5%	4.0%
Total County	21.9%	35.2%	26.3%	13.6%	3.0%

low/fixed income residents, and young people. Participants also indicated that affordable housing should not be substandard and should support unique, small town and safe community character. Participants suggested locating housing near employment and retail centers and public transportation to increase opportunities for living close to work and shopping areas.

Open Space and Habitats

Most participants agreed that, with the pressures for future growth and development, there is significant need for long-term measures that protect Kern’s unique open space, habitats, and public lands. Some participants who live in more rural and natural areas suggested that these areas are important to preserving the unique culture and character of their communities. Other participants supported increasing the use of open space for recreational uses. Some participants suggested that local governments, the County, and public lands agencies increase coordination to improve maintenance and protection of these areas.

Mobility

While some participants emphasized the need for improved and expanded public transportation service, others focused on the need to improve and widen roads for automobile access, and yet others suggested that a combination of these solutions is necessary. Public transportation improvements should include increasing local bus services, as well as developing high-speed rail to other regions. Roadway planning should include additional lanes on heavily traveled corridors; safety improvements to better protect pedestrians, cyclists and drivers; and improvements to highway entrances and exits.

Price Research Survey	Local governments have adequate funding to provide the roads and public transportation projects needed to accommodate future population growth.				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/NA
West Kern	11.0%	33.0%	30.0%	16.0%	10.0%
Central Valley	13.2%	34.2%	30.5%	14.0%	8.2%
Mountains	7.0%	25.0%	33.5%	22.5%	12.0%
East Kern	5.0%	21.5%	40.5%	24.0%	9.0%
Total County	10.4%	30.3%	32.6%	17.4%	9.3%

Price Research Survey	Roads throughout Kern County are safe and adequate to handle the current population.				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/NA
West Kern	2.5%	24.0%	41.5%	29.0%	3.0%
Central Valley	4.3%	24.7%	41.3%	28.7%	1.0%
Mountains	4.5%	30.5%	42.5%	21.0%	1.5%
East Kern	5.0%	41.5%	38.5%	13.5%	1.5%
Total County	4.2%	28.3%	41.1%	24.9%	1.5%

The survey indicates that citizens are generally split on the issue of whether local governments have adequate funding to provide roads and public transportation projects to accommodate future growth. Additionally, 66.0% disagree (24.9% strongly disagree, 41.1% disagree) that roads throughout the county are safe and adequate to handle the current population.

Agriculture

Of the few participants who discussed agriculture, most agreed that significant levels of protection are necessary to protect this valuable industry and its land use.

Price Research Survey	How much of a problem is the loss of farm and agricultural land in Kern County?				
	Major Problem	Problem	Minor Problem	Not a Problem	DK/NA
West Kern	50.0%	26.0%	13.5%	7.0%	3.5%
Central Valley	47.8%	24.8%	13.0%	10.5%	3.8%
Mountains	50.0%	24.5%	11.5%	7.5%	6.5%
East Kern	35.0%	23.0%	10.5%	13.5%	18.0%
Total County	46.4%	24.7%	12.4%	9.9%	6.6%

1. INTRODUCTION

Accommodating the projected one million additional people by the year 2050 presents many challenges that the residents of Kern region need to work together to address. Some of the questions that need to be answered are

- 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 8-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.

A key component of the Blueprint process is involving the public in a meaningful way to provide input on their values and their visions for the Kern region in 2050. To that end, Kern Council of Governments staff, in partnership with MIG and Odyssey, designed a series of highly interactive, hands-on town hall meetings as a first step in the Blueprint process. To complement these community outreach efforts, Kern COG also conducted the Quality-of-Life telephone survey in February 2007, which was a statistically valid, random survey designed to examine public attitudes and perceptions regarding several quality-of-life issues within Kern County

In the next phase of Blueprint, a second round of town halls will elicit public input on specific scenarios for growth that will be developed by Kern COG and its advisory groups. Finally, Kern COG will adopt a preferred scenario for growth that may be used as a guide for future, more specific planning efforts by Cities, the County, and other agencies.

The following sections describe the outcomes from the first round of public town hall meetings that were held in March through June 2007 – including outreach strategies, workshop format, results, and next steps. Also featured are excerpts from the telephone survey, which are noted along-side results from the town hall meetings. Finally, an evaluation of the workshops will be used to design the second round of workshops. 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 initial round of town hall meetings.

MAILER AND WEBSITE

As a primary outreach tool, Kern COG enlisted the support of MIG in designing an outreach mailer. This began with the development of a 2-page, full-color mailer in both English and Spanish that briefly explained the project and announced the dates, times, and locations of twelve town hall meetings, including one workshop conducted in Spanish. A total of 6,000 mailers were printed. See Appendix A for a copy of this mailer.

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

Odyssey undertook an extensive outreach process to encourage knowledge of, and attendance at, the Phase I Blueprint Town Hall Meetings. Odyssey staff started by obtaining Kern COG's contact lists. Staff sorted the lists into databases for each town hall meeting area, and added in any Odyssey organizational contacts. Staff then researched additional groups across a wide variety of categories to complete an initial database of organizations and intermediaries who might assist with publicizing the town hall meetings to members, constituencies, clients, residents and community members. Odyssey staff also helped draft newsletter articles and email announcements for each town hall meeting, provided content for the registration portion of Kern COG's website, and assisted with the town hall meeting announcement used in the outreach process.

Odyssey began official outreach efforts in February 2007. From February through June 2007, Odyssey staff contacted organizations throughout the Kern region to issue invitations, publicize the town hall meetings, and encourage attendance. In this process, Odyssey staff:

- Called organizational contacts from the databases;
- Identified the right person to work with, verified contact information, and revised the database accordingly;
- Issued an invitation to attend the town hall meeting(s) in their area;
- Requested help in publicizing the event to the group's own lists and contacts. Provided Kern COG staff with requests for hard-copy announcements for meetings or on-site distribution by organizations;
- Where desired by Kern COG, obtained mailing labels;
- Requested inclusion of the town hall meetings in newsletters where possible, and provided sample newsletter articles;
- Requested email distribution of the material to email lists, and provided email content and electronic version of the town hall meeting flier;
- Asked for suggestions and contact information for additional organizations and individuals to contact to get the word out; and
- Continued to update and expand contact information throughout the outreach effort.

Odyssey contacted a broad range of groups in this outreach effort to publicize and encourage attendance at the Phase I town hall meetings (except for Bakersfield, which was conducted by Vision 2020 as part of the Metropolitan Bakersfield City/County General Plan process), including those representing:

- Business
- Labor
- Planning
- Real Estate/Development
- Agricultural Groups
- City/County officials and staff
- Water and Community Service Districts
- Park and Recreation Districts
- Disability organizations
- Senior Groups
- Social Service agencies
- Health Care Organizations
- Educational Groups and Institutions
- Community and Service Groups
- Ethnic/Cultural Organizations
- Environmental Groups
- Youth Organizations
- Faith-Based Organizations

- Frequented community locations, such as markets, restaurants, libraries, and community centers

Odyssey staff provided mailing lists for direct mailing of town hall meeting announcements to over 850 organizational contacts in the Kern region. Close to each town hall meeting date, Odyssey staff also made follow-up calls and/or sent follow-up emails to remind potentially interested parties of the upcoming meeting(s) in their area and to take late registrations.

MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Kern COG coordinated media coverage of the workshops, and articles announcing the Blueprint town hall meetings were sent to these newspapers (“adjudicated” refers to newspapers are regarded legally as “newspapers of record” in the various communities of Kern County):

Countywide Publications	Type	Adjudicated
The Bakersfield Californian	Main / Greater Kern County	X
El Mexicalo	Hispanic Interest	X

Indian Wells Valley	Type	Adjudicated
The Daily Independent	Main / Ridgecrest	X
NWC Rocketeer	Military / China Lake	--
News-Review	Main / Ridgecrest	X

Southeastern Kern County	Type	Adjudicated
Antelope Valley Press	Main / Lancaster-Palmdale	X
Boron Bulletin	Boron	X
The Bulletin	Main / North Edwards	--
The California City Post	Main / California City	X
Desert Wings	Military / Edwards Main	--
Lancaster Desert Mailer	Lancaster / Main	X
Mojave Desert News	Main / Mojave	X
Rosamond Weekly News	Main / Rosamond	X
Southeast Kern Weekender	Ridgecrest	
Tehachapi News	Main / Tehachapi	X

Kern River Valley	Type	Adjudicated
Kern Valley Sun	Main /Lake Isabella	X

Arvin/Lamont	Type	Adjudicated
Arvin Tiller	Main /Arvin	X
El Popular	Hispanic Interest	X
Lamont Reporter	Main / Lamont	X

Southwestern Kern County	Type	Adjudicated
The Pine Mountain Pioneer	Main / Frazier (monthly)	--
Mountain Enterprise	Main / Frazier Park (weekly)	X
Metropolitan Bakersfield	Type	Adjudicated
Bakersfield Business Journal	Business / Bakersfield	--
The Bakersfield Californian	Main / Kern County	X
Bakersfield News Observer	African-American Interest	X
El Mexicalo	Hispanic Interest	X
El Popular	Hispanic Interest	X
Seniors	Aging Interests	--
Senior Gazette (monthly)	Aging Interests	--
Northwest Kern County	Type	Adjudicated
Delano Record	Main / Delano	--
El Popular	Hispanic Interest	X
Shafter Press	Main / Shafter	X
Wasco Tribune	Main / Wasco	X
Western Kern County	Type	Adjudicated
The Daily Midway Driller	Main / Taft	X

All together, the media list used for Blueprint outreach consisted of 24 newspapers and other print publications, 9 television stations, and 25 radio stations.

2007 QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY

In February 2007, Kern COG conducted a telephone survey to examine public attitudes and perceptions regarding several quality-of-life issues in the Kern region. Designed and administered by Price Research, the survey establishes a benchmark for future comparisons and long-term analyses. The survey results are based on telephone interviews with a random sample of 1,200 Kern County residents. For this study, Kern COG defined four geographical regions within the county: West Kern, Central Valley, Mountains, and East Kern. The survey sample was stratified to produce 600 respondents from the Central Valley (the largest population center) and 200 respondents from each of the other three regions. All of the findings in the survey were compared across various demographic variables, including age, gender, length of time a respondent had been a resident of Kern County, household income, level of education, ethnic identification, and region of the county.

Many of the survey results are featured in this summary report as comparative to results of the Town Hall Meetings. Full survey results are available from Kern COG at www.kerncog.org, or by calling (661) 861-2191.

3. PHASE ONE 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, March 14	Ridgecrest	83
Tuesday, March 20	Tehachapi/Stallion Springs	37
Wednesday, March 21	Taft/Maricopa	37
Wednesday, March 28	Delano/McFarland/Wasco	34
Thursday, March 29	Arvin/Lamont	32
Tuesday, April 10	Frazier Park	38
Wednesday, April 11	Kern River Valley	25
Tuesday, April 24	Greenfield Collaborative	18
Monday, May 7	Northeast Bakersfield*	54
Tuesday, May 8	Northwest Bakersfield*	34
Monday, May 21	Southeast Bakersfield*	40
Tuesday, May 22	Lamont (conducted in Spanish)	50
Thursday, May 31	Southwest Bakersfield*	69
Wednesday, June 13	Shafter	37
Thursday, June 14	Wasco	9
Wednesday, June 27	Mojave/California City/Rosamond	34
Thursday, June 28	McFarland	3
	Total	634

*Co-sponsored with Greater Bakersfield Vision 2020

Of the 634 attendees, many filled out an anonymous demographic form, with the following results:

Gender	#	% of Total
Male	108	43.4%
Female	141	56.6%

Age	#	% of Total
Under 18	3	1.2%
18 - 29	40	15.6%
30-39	24	9.3%

40-49	33	12.8%
50-59	57	22.2%
60-69	57	22.2%
70-79	17	6.6%
80-89	15	5.8%
90 or over	11	4.3%

Race / Ethnicity	#	% of Total
White / Caucasian	167	75.2%
Hispanic / Latino	23	10.4%
Asian	3	1.4%
African American / Black	5	2.3%
American Indian	4	1.8%
Pacific Islander	0	0%
Other Race	5	2.3%
Two or More Races	15	6.8%

Attended the Meeting Representing:	#	% of Total
Resident	166	62.2%
Business Community	62	23.2%
Government Agency	16	6.0%
Other	38	14.2%

FORMAT

The following format for the town hall meetings was used at all but the Bakersfield meetings, which were designed and led by Greater Bakersfield Vision 2020 staff. Results were later folded into results from the non-Bakersfield meetings, although they are not entirely comparable.

The town hall meeting objectives were to:

- Share information about the Blueprint’s purpose and process;
- Facilitate and record participant comments regarding their vision and values for Kern County;
- Introduce a range of growth related topics related to values;
- Identify and prioritize topic areas; and
- Identify, discuss and select initial approaches for priority topic areas.

The town hall meetings featured small group discussions and a “card game” led by trained facilitators. (Instead of playing the card game, the four Metro Bakersfield meetings featured an open discussion regarding desired solutions to addressing community problems and weaknesses.) Before the meetings took place, MIG and Kern COG staff held training sessions for the small group facilitators, many of whom served at several meetings. These

facilitators came from Kern COG, MIG, Kern County Planning Department, other local jurisdiction staff, interested organizations, and residents. Those trained were given long and short versions of 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, and 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 6:00 p.m. At registration, each attendee was asked to sign in and take an agenda packet (with agenda, demographic form, comment cards, 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 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?
- Why is this important?
What are the conditions driving this process? (i.e. Kern County growth projections and impacts, neighboring regions' impacts)
- What is the process for developing the Blueprint and who is involved?
- How will tonight's meeting inform the process?



At 6:45 p.m., the master facilitator introduced the format of the small group activities, 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.



For the rest of the meeting, the master facilitator introduced each small group exercise, helped the small groups keep track of time so the meeting would end at the pre-determined

time (8:30 p.m.), assisted as needed with the individual small group discussions, and wrapped up the meeting with brief reports from the small groups to the large group.

At the small group discussions, participants were asked to first introduce themselves and fill out their demographic forms. The small group facilitator then spent 20 minutes leading a discussion and recording on flip charts participants' responses to the following three questions:

1. What do you like most about Kern County? (6 minutes)
2. What do you like least about Kern County? (6 minutes)
3. Imagine you have just traveled in a time machine and are now in the year 2050. You are in a hot air balloon, overlooking Kern County and the entire Valley. You have a bird's eye view of everything. What do you hope to see? (8 minutes)



Brief answers to each of these questions were recorded on separate flip chart pages, and these were torn off and placed on a nearby wall. The synthesis of these flipchart pages is found in Section 5 of this report.

Following this open-ended discussion, a card game was introduced as the next exercise. (Instead of playing the card game, the four Metro Bakersfield meetings featured an open discussion regarding desired solutions to addressing community problems and weaknesses.) The small group facilitators were asked to pass out rubber-banded packets of nine topic cards to each participant. Each topic card was a different color and contained several points of relevant information about the following topics:

1. Agriculture
2. Air Quality
3. Economic Development
4. Growth Management
5. Housing
6. Mobility (or transportation)
7. Open Space & Habitats
8. Services, Safety & Equity
9. Water

The topic cards were printed in English on one side and Spanish on the other. Participants were asked to silently review the topic cards, and each participant chose five cards that represented the most important topic areas related to future growth. They were told that *all* of the topics are important, but asked to choose the five most critical to achieve their 2050 vision for Kern County. When everyone in the small group was ready, the facilitator asked for a show of hands and took a tally on the flip chart of how many people chose each of the nine cards in their top five. The overall results of these tallies are shown in Section 5 and the cards are shown in Appendix D. The tally results for each table resulted in a ranking of the topics, from one to nine and selection of the five topics for the card game (in some cases there was a tie, and if that happened the group could include more than five or re-vote).



At this point, the master facilitator introduced the card game itself, which was intended to gauge opinions about how to approach the five topic areas selected by the group and to spur discussion. The small group facilitators handed out rubber-banded sets of Suited Cards to each person at their table. As with the topic cards, the suited cards were printed in English on one side and in Spanish on the other. The master facilitator explained that each packet contained 36 cards – four cards for each of the nine topic areas. The four cards were labeled with a spade, a heart, a diamond, or a club, and each represented a different policy approach to the topic along with several potential tradeoffs of using that approach. Generally speaking, the suited cards were designed as follows:



- **Spades:** No Change. The “status quo” approach;
- **Hearts:** Some Change. The “voluntary incentives” approach;
- **Diamonds:** Moderate Change. The “public policy and regulations” approach; and
- **Clubs:** Major Change. The “do everything possible” approach.

The job of the small groups over the following 40 minutes was to play the suited card game with each topic as follows.

For each topic, the small group facilitator briefly reviewed each of the four suited cards with the group and then without further discussion asked the participants to “play their cards.” Each person then chose which of the four suited cards for that topic that was their preferred approach. (If people objected to the choices or felt that the cards contained wrong information or that the tradeoffs were not correct, they were encouraged to write this down on their comment cards).



The flip charts for each table were pre-formatted with areas on two pages corresponding to each of the suits. For each suit, there were rows of removable double-stick tape. Each time members of the group played their cards, the cards were mounted next to the appropriate suit. Because the cards for each topic were color-coded, it was easy to see at a glance how the group voted on the topic, for example, how many people voted for the clubs, diamonds, hearts, or spades approach to agriculture. As the group worked through its five topics, the cards for each topic were added to the tape and people were able to see how the overall vote was going. For instance, a group could have voted mostly diamonds on the topics or only clubs and diamonds, or mostly hearts. An illustration of a typical card game vote is shown in Appendix E.

After each vote, the group was asked to discuss its voting choices. At the end of the voting and discussion of each individual topic, the groups were asked to review their overall voting pattern (including responding to questions such as, “Is there a clear pattern here? Was the voting surprising to you? Are there any comments concerning the group’s #6, #7, #8, and #9 topics that didn’t make it to the top five?”)

4.

VALUES AND VISIONS FINDINGS

The first portion of the small group discussions involved participants sharing what they like the most, what they like least, and their visions for the future of their communities in the year 2050. While this was an open discussion, a number of values and visions emerged frequently across the town hall meetings, as noted in the following tables.

Participants' comments about what they like least about their communities were extrapolated into visions for the future. For example, if a participant lamented about traffic congestion in her community, the corresponding vision for the future would be for reduced traffic congestion. Additionally, the small group discussions at the four Bakersfield town hall meetings featured slightly different questions that focused on community strengths, weaknesses, and solutions for the future. As such, the strengths are categorized in the visions table, and weaknesses and solutions are categorized in the visions table.

VALUES

<i>What do you like most about your community?</i>	Bakersfield															
	Arvin	Delano	Frazier Park	Kern River Valley	McFarland	Mojave	Indian Wells	Shafter	Taft	Tehachapi	Wasco	Lamont	Northeast	Northwest	Southeast	Southwest
Community spirit	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Low crime/sense of safety	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Location/proximity		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
Educational system	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X		X		X		X
Rural tranquility	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X		X				
Clean water		X	X		X	X			X	X	X	X		X		
Parks/recreational opportunities		X	X	X		X	X		X	X			X	X		
Government/public services		X					X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X
Affordable housing		X	X		X		X		X	X			X	X	X	
Agriculture/ranching	X			X				X		X		X	X	X	X	X
Limited traffic congestion	X	X	X	X			X	X	X			X				
Environment/open space	X		X	X		X		X		X	X		X			
Cultural diversity	X	X		X				X				X			X	X
Clean air			X			X	X		X	X	X					
Business opportunities		X				X	X	X			X					
Land use planning/growth			X	X			X	X		X						
Walkable community	X							X	X							
Good climate			X	X						X						
Small community size	X	X										X				
Cultural activities				X	X											
Diverse economy													X	X		

VALUES

<i>What do you like most about your community?</i>														Bakersfield			
	Arvin	Delano	Frazier Park	Kern River Valley	McFarland	Mojave	Indian Wells	Shafter	Taft	Tehachapi	Wasco	Lamont	Northeast	Northwest	Southeast	Southwest	
Improved educational system and youth activities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Planned and managed growth that responds to needs	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Improved infrastructure and public services	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
More parks and recreational programs	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	
Improved public safety (less crime)	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Improved bikeways, roads, highways		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
More public transit	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Smart growth (infill, mixed-use, redevelopment, compact development, housing choices, walkable, focus on downtowns)	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	
Improved local medical services	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			
Maintain/improve air quality	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	
Diverse, affordable housing choices	X	X	X	X		X		X		X	X	X	X			X	
Economic diversity, job development	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Maintain/improve water quality and quantity	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X			
Improved local government and leadership	X	X	X				X	X					X	X	X	X	
Increased use of alternative energy			X					X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	

VALUES

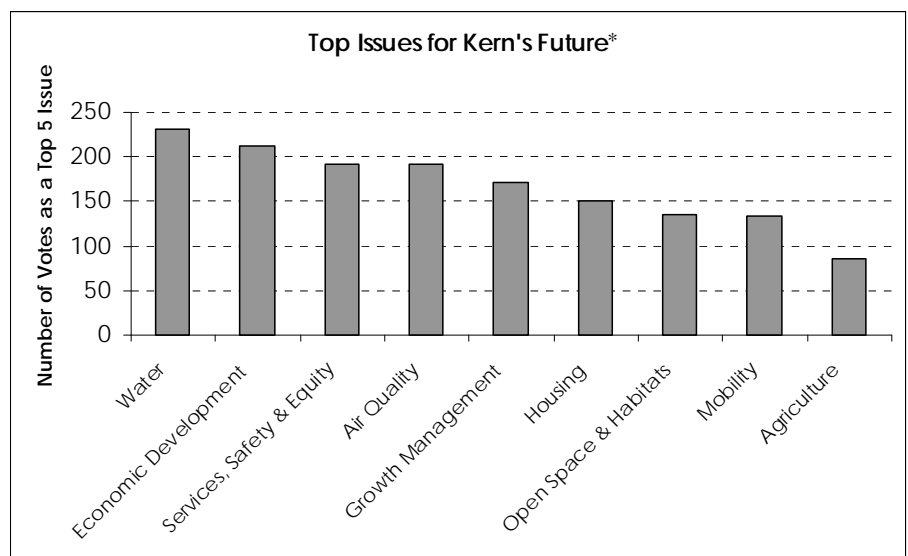
<i>What do you like most about your community?</i>	Arvin	Delano	Frazier Park	Kern River Valley	McFarland	Mojave	Indian Wells	Shafter	Taft	Tehachapi	Wasco	Lamont	Bakersfield			
													Northeast	Northwest	Southeast	Southwest
More and better local retail	X	X	X		X	X				X	X	X				
Agriculture and ranching		X		X				X		X		X		X		X
Maintain/enhance quality of life		X	X				X	X				X		X	X	
Protected ecosystem			X	X	X		X		X	X						
Community spirit	X		X				X	X		X		X				
Identified new funding sources													X	X	X	X
Improved community image	X								X	X	X					
Reduced traffic congestion													X	X	X	X
More tourism (including eco-tourism)		X				X	X			X						
No more prisons	X	X						X			X					
Cultural, racial and age diversity							X				X		X			X
More cultural opportunities			X			X		X		X						
Expanded airports						X	X			X		X				
Expanded tree and landscaping plantings													X	X		X
No more dairies		X						X								
Separate and distinct cities	X			X												

5. POLICY APPROACH FINDINGS

CARD GAME - TOPICS

During the second portion of the small group discussions, the small group facilitator led participants through the policy approach card game (except for the Metro Bakersfield meetings, which conducted an open discussion of solutions for the future.) The purpose of this game was to spark discussion, elicit participants' thoughts and feelings about the most important policy issues to the future of the Kern region and the preferred general approach to these issues. The exercises were structured so that individual opinions could be quickly tallied, the results presented to the group, and then discussed in some detail. There was no attempt to form a consensus at the small group level. Each participant had a comment card that could be used to give additional feedback and offer ideas that were not represented in these exercises. At the end of the workshop, spokespersons from each table gave a brief summary of the card game results and discussions that took place.

The game started with each participant being given a set of nine topic cards containing relevant local information about the following topics: Air Quality; Agriculture; Economic Development; Growth Management; Housing; Mobility; Open Space; Safety, Services and Equity; and Water. The topic cards represent most of the major policy areas of concern to Kern COG for Blueprint scenario-building, and are shown in Appendix D (in English and Spanish versions). Within each small group, each person was asked to rank the topics in order of how important they are to their vision of the year 2050 that was just discussed. After a few minutes, participants were asked to vote with a show of hands on their top five topics. The results of these votes, across all of the workshops (except for the Metro Bakersfield meetings) is as follows:



**The Metro Bakersfield meetings did not feature the card game.*

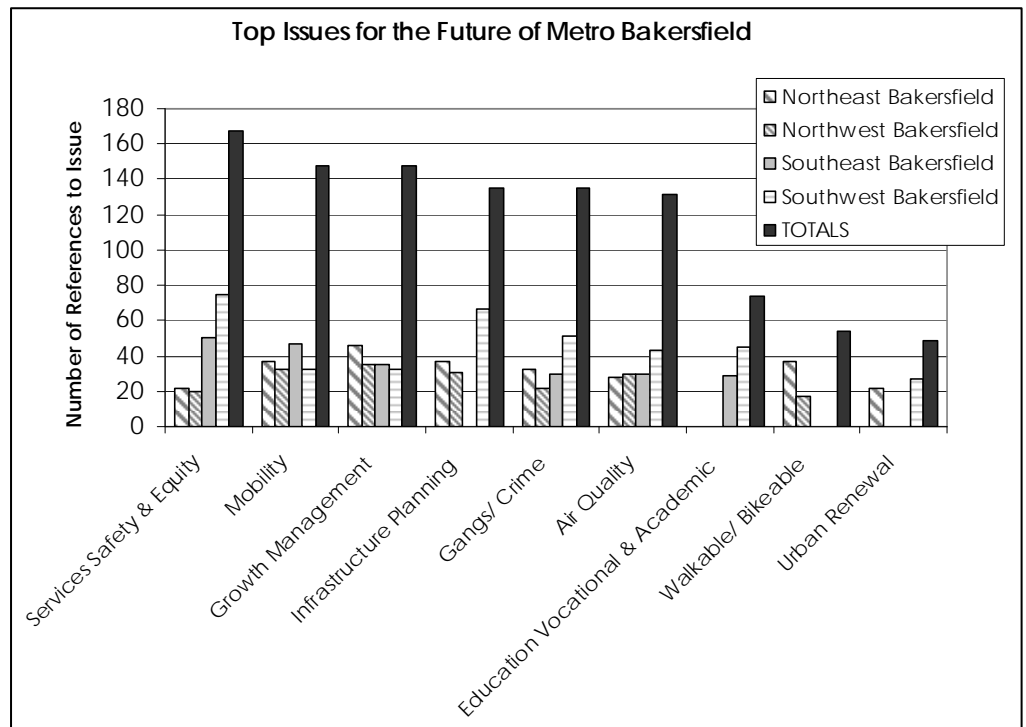
TOPIC SELECTION BY TOWN HALL MEETING*

	Water	Economic Development	Services, Safety & Equity	Air Quality	Growth Management	Housing	Open Space & Habitats	Mobility	Agriculture
Arvin	20	24	22	28	8	16	7	10	10
Delano	24	28	23	22	13	15	6	19	12
Frazier Park	30	15	21	18	23	5	30	18	4
Kern River Valley	21	12	8	19	10	7	20	4	11
McFarland	3	4	3	5	4	4	1	2	5
Mojave	23	22	19	10	21	19	17	14	3
Indian Wells Valley	37	38	29	21	37	16	23	26	2
Shafter	21	21	18	19	21	15	5	19	13
Taft	11	19	17	16	17	21	7	14	6
Tehachapi	14	9	11	12	13	7	17	3	6
Lamont	27	20	20	21	5	25	3	4	14

*The Metro Bakersfield meetings did not feature the card game

Although these are clearly complex and interrelated topics, the results provide an idea of participants’ priorities for addressing issues related to growth both at the region-wide and sub-regional levels. In the Kern region, water issues—including quality, quantity and flood control—and air quality are of significant concern, while economic development and social policy issues also rank high as important issues. Growth management, housing, open space and habitats, mobility and agriculture then followed in priority.

While the Metro Bakersfield town hall meetings did not feature the card game, the results of the open discussions about solutions to top issues in these meetings have been extrapolated in a similar framework to identify top issues related to regional planning as identified in the following chart.



Related Survey Results: Top Three Problems in Kern Communities

For general comparison to the selection of top issues at the Town Hall Meetings, the 2007 survey yielded the following results across four quadrants of the Kern region regarding respondents' top three problems facing their community.

- *What is the most serious problem currently facing your community?*
- *What is the second most serious problem currently facing your community? **
- *What is the third most serious problem currently facing your community?*

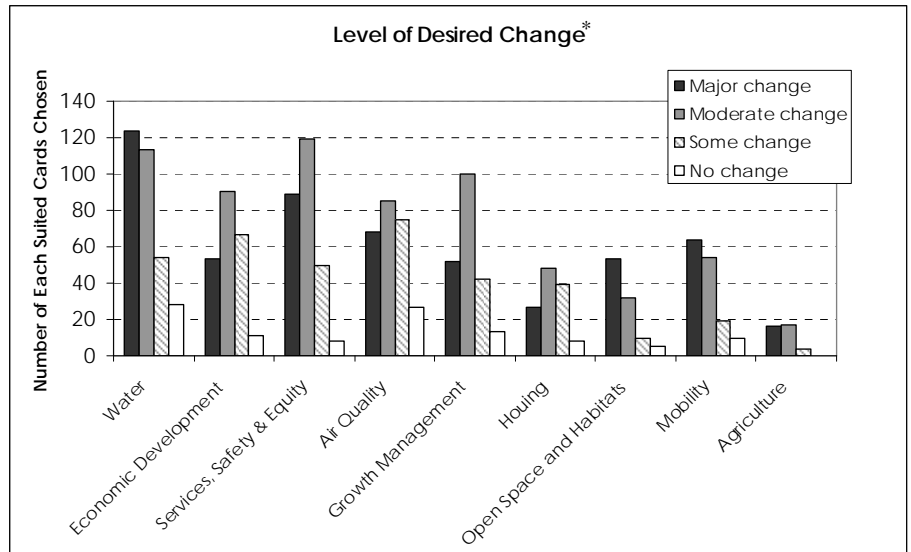
MOST SERIOUS PROBLEMS ACROSS THE KERN REGION (PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS)

	<i>Most Serious Problem</i>				<i>Second Most Serious Problem</i>				<i>Third Most Serious Problem</i>			
	East Kern	West Kern	Mountains	Central Valley	East Kern	West Kern	Mountains	Central Valley	East Kern	West Kern	Mountains	Central Valley
Traffic	3.5	2.0	5.0	8.7	3.0	3.0	6.0	13.3	2.5	3.0	10.5	13.0
Population Growth	12.5	4.0	22.0	8.2	8.5	7.0	14.5	8.0	7.5	6.0	9.0	10.5
Crime	17.5	8.5	12.0	25.8	17.5	10.5	17.5	21.8	14.5	9.0	11.5	11.7
Air Pollution	2.0	10.0	2.5	20.2	2.0	12.0	2.0	14.8	7.5	7.0	2.0	9.5
Economy	8.5	5.0	7.5	2.7	6.5	6.5	5.5	4.3	6.5	11.0	11.5	3.7
Education	6.5	1.5	7.5	5.8	9.5	4.0	7.5	7.7	10.0	6.5	4.5	9.2
Immigration	9.5	23.5	9.0	16.3	9.5	16.0	7.0	8.8	10.5	11.0	6.0	9.5
Health Care	10.5	22.0	13.0	1.2	6.5	13.5	8.5	4.3	10.0	10.5	10.5	8.0
Affordable Housing	6.0	10.5	5.5	4.8	13.5	9.0	11.5	8.0	10.5	15.0	11.5	10.3
Road Maintenance	18.5	7.0	10.0	3.8	17.5	12.0	11.5	6.7	9.5	10.0	8.5	9.0
Don't Know or N/A	3.0	2.5	2.5	1.3	6.0	6.5	8.5	2.2	11.0	11.0	14.5	5.7

CARD GAME – SUITED CARDS

The top five policy topics within each small group became the topics for playing the card game. The facilitator then passed out a set of “suited cards” on all nine topics. For each topic, each group member selected a suited card that best represented their individual preferred policy approach to the issue, which were organized as follows:

- **Spades: No change;** maintaining today’s current approach, plans and conditions
- **Hearts: Some change;** providing new levels of incentives and/or voluntary measures to encourage change
- **Diamonds: Moderate change;** establishing new levels of regulations and dedicating significant public resources to manage the issue
- **Clubs: Major change;** aggressively managing the issue through a stronger regulatory framework and incentives with major resource impacts on the public and private sector.



*The Metro Bakersfield meetings did not feature the card game.

Each suited card also featured “discussion points” that described potential outcomes for choosing that particular policy direction such as restrictions on activities, or higher costs to public and/or private entities. The following bar chart displays the number of choices of each suited card for each issue, and the subsequent table displays the number of choices of each suited card for each issue by town hall meeting:

LEVEL OF DESIRED CHANGE BY TOWN HALL MEETING*

	Arvin	Delano	Frazier Park	Kern River Valley	McFarland	Mojave	Indian Wells Valley	Shafter	Taft	Tehachapi	Lamont	TOTAL
Water												
♣ Major change	12	9	19	12	2	7	15	7		15	26	124
♦ Moderate change	5	15	13	8	2	18	18	8		18	8	113
♥ Some change	8	4	3	3	1	5	9	6		9	6	54
♠ No change	3	1	0	0	1	1	10	2		10	0	28
Economic												

LEVEL OF DESIRED CHANGE BY TOWN HALL MEETING*

	Arvin	Delano	Frazier Park	Kern River Valley	McFarland	Mojave	Indian Wells Valley	Shafter	Taft	Tehachapi	Lamont	TOTAL
Development												
♣ Major change		14	3	4	1	5	10	4	0	0	12	53
♦ Moderate change		11	4	5	3	15	30	10	5	5	2	90
♥ Some change		5	0	7	1	10	21	9	2	2	10	67
♠ No change		2	0	0	1	2	3	0	1	1	1	11
Services, Safety & Equity												
♣ Major change	5	20	7	8		7	14	4	14	4	6	89
♦ Moderate change	13	11	6	6		17	23	9	18	10	6	119
♥ Some change	4	0	1	2		7	19	3	2	2	10	50
♠ No change	3	1	1	0		0	0	0	1	1	1	8
Air Quality												
♣ Major change		11	5	10	0		5	3	10	5	19	68
♦ Moderate change		17	12	11	2		10	8	11	10	4	85
♥ Some change		3	3	2	4		14	5	13	14	17	75
♠ No change		0	3	1	0		10	1	2	10	0	27
Growth Management												
♣ Major change			9		2	4	7	2	14	14		52
♦ Moderate change			9		4	12	31	20	12	12		100
♥ Some change			6		0	4	14	6	6	6		42
♠ No change			2		0	1	3	1	3	3		13
Housing												
♣ Major change	2	3				3		0	5		14	27
♦ Moderate change	4	1				12		6	19		6	48
♥ Some change	8	0				10		7	10		4	39
♠ No change	0	0				6		1	1		0	8
Open Space & Habitats												
♣ Major change	5		20	15						13		53
♦ Moderate change	1		8	9						14		32
♥ Some change	0		7	0						3		10
♠ No change	1		0	0						4		5
Mobility												
♣ Major change	5	15	12			7	7	6	12			64
♦ Moderate change	4	11	8			2	10	14	5			54
♥ Some change	2	3	4			2	4	3	1			19
♠ No change	1	0	0			8	1	0	0			10
Agriculture												

LEVEL OF DESIRED CHANGE BY TOWN HALL MEETING*

	Arvin	Delano	Frazier Park	Kern River Valley	McFarland	Mojave	Indian Wells Valley	Shafter	Taft	Tehachapi	Lamont	TOTAL
♣ Major change				10	1			3		2	8	16
♦ Moderate change				5	5			2		5	10	17
♥ Some change				0	0			2		2	12	4
♠ No change				0	0			0		0	1	0

**Note: The Metro Bakersfield meetings did not feature the card game.*

Essentially, the frequent choice of clubs and diamonds—which represent major and moderate levels of policy change, respectively—represent participants’ desire for significant policy changes related to these issues as part of achieving Kern’s regional vision. Select sub-regions placed higher emphasis on some issues compared to other sub-regions—for example, Frazier Park placed a higher priority on preserving open space and habitats relative to most of the other sub-regions. Very few participants selected the spades or “no change” card on any of the topics.

After playing each card for each issue, participants discussed their reasons for their card selections, which were documented by facilitators at each small group table, and/or completed a comment card. Detailed results of each town hall meeting are available in the individual meeting reports through Kern COG (www.kerncog.org/blueprint). Following is a summary of participants’ discussions across all town hall meetings related to each issue:

Water

Many participants acknowledged the importance of maintaining an adequate water supply and noted that water quantity and quality are essential to supporting future growth. Participants recognized water as a limited resource and generally agreed that moderate to major change be initiated through proactive comprehensive planning of future development, and significant government regulation. Conservation will be necessary both at household and industrial levels. Many also noted the local impacts of exporting local water supplies. Some participants suggested considering new water quality standards, expanding use of gray water, developing shared-cost programs, improving supply management, implementing price inflation adjustments for low-income community members, and promoting xeriscape landscaping. Additionally, some participants noted that flood protection should be a key element addressed in new developments.

Economic Development

Participants agreed with the need to strengthen their local economies in a manner that maintains the spirit of a small town community. Many participants stressed the need to diversify local economies with new industries to reduce dependence on current industries.

To do so, participants discussed expanding the number of mid-level and skilled employment opportunities, coordinated educational and training opportunities, and focusing on industries such as tourism and technology that could build on current regional assets and economic sectors. Additionally, many participants suggested that economic development initiatives should focus on closing the growing gap between high- and low-income levels, as well as supporting local, specialized businesses. Some participants suggested that implementing such changes should be primarily market-driven, but that preserving natural and agricultural areas should remain a high priority. Some participants suggested that such efforts would help to keep future generations from leaving the region.

Services, Safety and Equity

Participants indicated the need to provide an array of services for all community members that support

Price Research Survey	During the past five years has the quality of life in your community gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse?				
	Gotten Better	Stayed About the Same	Gotten Worse	Little of Both	DK/NA
West Kern	24.5%	42.0%	27.0%	4.0%	2.5%
Central Valley	28.7%	35.5%	29.2%	2.5%	4.2%
Mountains	35.5%	42.0%	13.0%	3.5%	6.0%
East Kern	36.5%	44.0%	11.0%	4.5%	4.0%
Total County	30.4%	39.1%	23.1%	3.3%	4.2%

community growth and quality of life. Services necessary include: emergency response, fire protection, health care, emergency services and facilities, and social services. Additional primary care facilities should focus on serving children and families. Education initiatives should be expanded to include a wider array of service and trade skills, a local 4-year university, and upgraded facilities. Local health care services should be expanded to include comprehensive care and more specialties to prevent the need to travel to other regions. Public safety suggestions include controlling the growing gang presence, expanding prevention initiatives, and increasing the number of law enforcement officers. Participants stressed the need to create a shared sense of inclusion for all members of the community—including those with a language barrier—who feel their needs are insignificant and not addressed by community leaders.

Air Quality

Depending on their part of the region, participants proposed varying levels of policy changes to addressing air quality. Generally, those with relatively bad air quality suggested higher levels of change, while those with relatively good air quality suggested less aggressive measures, but still expressed concern about future air quality

Price Research Survey	Kern County has a serious problem with childhood asthma.				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/NA
West Kern	25.5%	40.0%	7.5%	1.5%	25.5%
Central Valley	28.3%	39.3%	9.8%	1.2%	21.3%
Mountains	20.5%	32.0%	12.0%	2.5%	33.0%
East Kern	8.5%	20.5%	20.5%	2.0%	48.5%
Total County	23.3%	35.1%	11.6%	1.6%	28.5%

levels becoming worse and negatively affecting public health. Some participants suggested that much of the focus should be on increasing regulations in Metropolitan Bakersfield, which they believe to be the source of much of the region’s air pollution. Participants also suggested a wide range of approaches from encouraging to requiring more energy efficient practices, public transportation, alternative fuels, compact urban growth, and public education.

Growth Management

Participants suggested that urban growth should be managed, limited, and well planned to avoid sprawl, develop the current town centers, uplift blighted and abandoned areas, and maintain communities’ small town character.

Price Research Survey	We should restrict future development to existing suburban and urban areas rather than expanding development into the existing rural areas.				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/NA
West Kern	21.0%	48.5%	19.0%	6.5%	5.0%
Central Valley	20.7%	42.0%	23.3%	7.0%	7.0%
Mountains	26.5%	36.0%	26.5%	6.0%	5.0%
East Kern	19.5%	34.0%	37.0%	4.5%	5.0%
Total County	21.5%	40.8%	25.4%	6.3%	6.0%

Communities should offer a diversity of housing types and affordability levels, integrated with businesses and services in walkable environments. Growth initiatives should be sensitive to impacts on natural habitats and air quality, and should also encourage improved coordination and integration of planning efforts between governmental agencies while maintaining local control and decision-making. Furthermore, long-term planning should ensure provision of adequate infrastructure and services including improved sidewalks and bike lanes, as well as expanded public transit.

Housing

Participants in favor of significant changes to address housing issues emphasized the need to provide more diversity of housing types, but particularly affordable

Price Research Survey	Letter Grade Evaluation – Affordable Housing					
	A	B	C	D	F	Unable to Evaluate
West Kern	4.5%	17.5%	32.5%	30.0%	12.0%	3.5%
Central Valley	9.0%	23.5%	35.3%	18.8%	9.8%	3.5%
Mountains	7.5%	24.5%	35.5%	18.5%	9.0%	5.0%
East Kern	11.0%	22.0%	34.0%	18.5%	10.0%	4.5%

housing options for families, seniors/retirees, low/fixed income residents, and young people. Participants also indicated that affordable housing should not be substandard and should support unique, small town and safe community character. Participants suggested locating housing near employment and retail centers and public transportation to increase opportunities for living close to work and shopping areas.

Open Space and Habitats

Most participants agreed that, with the pressures for future growth and development, there is significant need for long-term measures that protect Kern’s unique open space, habitats, and public lands. Some participants who live in more rural and natural areas suggested

that these areas are important to preserving the unique culture and character of their communities. Other participants supported increasing the use of open space for recreational uses. Some participants suggested that local governments, the County, and public lands agencies increase coordination to improve maintenance and protection of these areas.

Mobility

While some participants emphasized the need for improved and expanded public transportation service, others

Price Research Survey	What is your usual method of transportation to and from work?						
	Drive Alone	Car Pool	Public Transit	Walk/Bike	Other	No Outside Work	DK/NA
West Kern	51.5%	9.5%	2.0%	2.0%	.5%	27.5%	7.0%
Central Valley	60.2%	7.2%	2.7%	1.3%	.8%	21.5%	6.3%
Mountains	53.5%	5.5%	1.5%	1.0%	3.0%	25.0%	11.0%
East Kern	56.0%	8.0%		3.5%	.5%	25.0%	7.0%
Total County	51.5%	9.5%	2.0%	2.0%	.5%	27.5%	7.0%

focused on the need to improve and widen roads for automobile access, and yet others suggested that a combination of these solutions is necessary. Public transportation improvements should include increasing local bus services, as well as developing high-speed rail to other regions. Roadway planning should include additional lanes on heavily traveled corridors; safety improvements to better protect pedestrians, cyclists and drivers; and improvements to highway entrances and exits.

Agriculture

Of the few participants who discussed agriculture, most agreed that significant levels of protection are necessary to protect this valuable industry and its land use.

Price Research Survey	We should forbid urban and suburban development on farm and agricultural lands				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/NA
West Kern	29.0%	32.5%	25.0%	7.5%	6.0%
Central Valley	25.0%	33.8%	29.0%	8.2%	4.0%
Mountains	29.5%	33.5%	20.0%	12.5%	4.5%
East Kern	24.0%	38.5%	25.5%	6.0%	6.0%
Total County	29.0%	32.5%	25.0%	7.5%	6.0%

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	75	134	18	0
B. Small group open discussion; visions and values	148	76	10	2
C. Card game and discussion; or Solutions discussion (Metro meetings)	113	88	23	7
D. Large group discussion and small group reports	87	88	15	1
E. Overall meeting design	104	115	13	0
F. The meeting addressed issues important to me	125	91	12	2
G. I was able to provide input and it was recorded	158	65	7	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>810</i>	<i>657</i>	<i>98</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>% of Total (1577)</i>	<i>51.2%</i>	<i>41.7%</i>	<i>6.2%</i>	<i>0.8%</i>

In total, 51.2% of workshop ratings were “excellent” and 92.9% of the ratings were “excellent” or “good.” When asked if they would participate in a future meeting, 98.7% of those answering the question said “yes.” Kern COG and consultant staff will consider these ratings and comments in the design of the next round of Blueprint town hall meetings.

7.

NEXT STEPS

This report marks the end of Phase 1 of the Kern Blueprint Process. 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 formulate a vision statement, goals and objectives and develop draft Blueprint scenarios for each sub-region for projected growth to the year 2050.

In fall 2007, a second round of Blueprint town hall meetings will be held around the region to consider the growth scenarios for each sub-region and arrive at a set of land use, transportation, and environmental features that best responds to the challenges of population growth and meets the expressed core values and vision for each sub-region and the entire Kern region. The second round of town hall meetings will also involve the public in structured, interactive exercises that will allow meaningful input to the final Blueprint.

Kern COG will use the input gathered in the second round of town hall meetings to arrive at a consensus on a Blueprint for the Kern region. It will also refine the goals and objectives, guiding principles, performance measures and indicators associated with the public's preferred Blueprint scenario.

8.

PROJECT STAFF AND CONSULTANTS

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MIG Communications and Media Services
Sharon Sprowls, Odyssey
Lauren Cencic, Odyssey
Carlos Morales, Odyssey
Matthew Perry, Odyssey

9. PROJECT VOLUNTEERS

The following agencies provided volunteers to act as small group facilitators for the town hall meetings.

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Volunteer Name</u>
Kern County Planning Department	Shawn Beyeler Jaymie Brauer Cheryl Casdorff Jacqui Farnholtz Michael Hollier John George Craig Murphy Lorelei Oviatt Cory Wilkerson
City of Arvin	Issac George Pamela Taylor
City of Taft	Louise Hudgens Mike Lee Pat Parsons Margie Quintero
Taft College	Sandy Popejoy
Chamber Group	Roger Funston
Cummings Valley Protective Association	Jo Anne Huckins
Employers Training Resource	Dedre Ahl
Smart Growth Coalition	Holly Hart