

CHAPTER 2 – TRANSPORTATION PLANNING POLICIES

Introduction

Destination 2030 is Kern County's Regional Transportation Plan – the blueprint to address the mobility challenges created by our region's growth. This long-range plan contains an integrated set of public policies, strategies and investments to maintain, manage, and improve the transportation system in the Kern Region through 2030.

The purpose of the Policy Element is to address legislative, planning, financial, and institutional issues and requirements, as well as any areas of regional consensus (e.g., land use policies). The Policy Element provides guidance to decision-makers regarding the implications, impacts, opportunities and foreclosed options that will result from implementation of the Regional Transportation Plan. In addition, the Policy Element is a resource that provides input and promotes consistency of actions taken by state, regional and local agencies, such as transit agencies, congestion management agencies, and the California Highway Patrol.

This chapter lists the policies of the RTP by goal and transportation mode in Table 2.1. This table is followed by a Performance Monitoring section containing a system-wide set of measures to monitor the progress toward the goals. A description of the issues, needs, and actions is included in Chapter 4 – Strategic Investments for each transportation mode.

Goals, policies and actions are defined as follows:

A “**goal**” is the end toward which effort is directed; it is general in application and timeless.

A “**policy**” is a direction statement that guides present and future decisions on specific actions. Policies support the attainment of goals. In this document policies have been merged with objectives to streamline the policy element.

An “**action**” is a specific activity in support of the policy. Actions are detailed in Chapter 4 – Strategic Investments (Action Element).

In accordance with Government Code 65080(b)(1), all policy/objectives are relevant for both the near- (6-year) and long-term (20-year). Short- and long-range actions implementing these policies are identified in Chapter 4.

Goals/Policies

At the core of Destination 2030 are seven Goals:

1. **Mobility** – Improve the mobility of people and freight
2. **Accessibility** – Improve accessibility to major employment and other regional activity centers
3. **Reliability** – Improve the reliability and safety of the transportation system
4. **Efficiency** – Maximize the efficiency of the existing and future transportation system
5. **Livability** – Promote livable communities
6. **Sustainability** – Minimize effects on the environment
7. **Equity** – Ensure an equitable distribution of the benefits among various demographic and user groups.

While all goals are considered interrelated and important, Mobility is considered the Plan’s highest goal. Identified in Table 2.1 are policy objectives categorized by the goals they help to advance.

Table 2.1 Destination 2030 Goals and Policies

Goal(s)	Policy	Mode(s)
Mobility, Accessibility	Encourage additional air carrier service at Meadows Field and Inyokern Airport	Aviation
Mobility, Accessibility	Assist Kern County Airports in expanding facilities to meet growing general aviation demands	Aviation
Mobility, Accessibility	Continue to work with privately owned airports and local jurisdictions to support their operations and to maintain compatible uses with in the airport area of influence	Aviation
Mobility, Accessibility	Identify opportunities for truck-to-rail and truck-to-intermodal mode shifts, and evaluate the contributions of different types of truck traffic on regional air quality	Freight, Highways
Mobility, Accessibility, Sustainability	Continue to seek funding to help maintain existing bikeways.	Bike, TCM
Mobility, Accessibility, Sustainability	Continue to seek funding for bicycle projects from local, state and federal sources.	Bike, TCM
Mobility, Sustainability	Upgrade the present highway maintenance system whenever feasible.	Highways
Mobility, Sustainability	Investigate federal, state and local funding opportunities to maintain the current transportation system and promote future transportation development.	Highways

Goal(s)	Policy	Mode(s)
Mobility, Accessibility	Encourage COG member jurisdictions to implement their adopted local bicycle plans and to incorporate bicycle facilities into local transportation projects.	Bike, TCM
Mobility, Accessibility	Periodically update the bicycle plan.	Bike, TCM
Mobility, Accessibility	Provide technical and planning assistance to local jurisdictions for industrial and wholesale land use and transportation planning	Freight, Highways
Mobility, Accessibility	Encourage the use of rail and air for the transportation of goods to reduce impacts to state and inter-county routes, and reduce air quality impacts	Freight, Highways
Mobility, Accessibility	Encourage coordination and consultation between the public and private sectors to explore innovative strategies for the efficient movement of goods	Freight, Highways
Mobility, Accessibility	Identify alternatives that would improve the overall quality of transit service in Kern County	Transit, TCM
Mobility, Accessibility	Identify alternatives to traditional transit addressing Kern County's regional rural mobility needs	Transit, TCM
Mobility, Accessibility	Develop coordination alternatives that realize an improvement over the way transit is currently operated	Transit, TCM
Mobility, Accessibility	Review, identify, and discuss alternative administrative and oversight models for transit services in Kern County	Transit, TCM
Mobility, Accessibility	Create a strategy for increasing the visibility and importance of transit in Kern County	Transit, TCM
Mobility, Accessibility	Create partnerships between transit and non-transit organizations in addressing Kern County's transit needs	Transit, TCM
Mobility, Accessibility	Enhance the current lifeline intercity services available throughout the Eastern Sierra	Transit, TCM
Mobility, Accessibility	Improve intercity connections and providing new services to expand the transportation alternatives in the Eastern Sierra	Transit, TCM
Mobility, Accessibility	Determine the feasibility of passenger rail service in the Eastern Sierra	Transit, TCM
Mobility, Accessibility, Efficiency	Support the intermodal linkage of all freight transportation	Freight, Highways

Goal(s)	Policy	Mode(s)
Mobility, Accessibility, Efficiency, Livability	Coordinate planning efforts to ensure efficient, economical and environmentally sound movement of goods	Freight, Highways
Mobility, Accessibility, Equity	Support the creation of an effective Valleywide truck model to track regional commodity flows and to identify critical economic trends that will drive truck flows on regionally significant truck routes	Freight
Mobility, Accessibility, Livability	Study parking for long distance trips including a review of available rest areas, layover lots, and truck stops to determine needs for more parking	Freight, Highways, TCM
Mobility, Accessibility, Reliability	Support a higher safety level requirement for hazardous material transportation programs	Freight, Highways
Mobility, Accessibility, Sustainability	Maintaining Existing Roadway Infrastructure and use it efficiently.	Highways
Mobility, Accessibility, Sustainability	Work with Caltrans, COG member agencies and other interested parties to prepare environmental studies and design engineering work	Highways
Mobility, Accessibility, Sustainability	Provide input to neighboring regions conducting Studies for corridors that have significance to the Kern region.	Highways
Mobility, Accessibility, Sustainability, Livability	Oppose higher axle load limits for the trucking industry on general purpose roadways	Freight, Highways,
Mobility, Efficiency	Build upon the momentum and stakeholder coalition generated through the San Joaquin Valley Goods Movement Study to pursue ITS commercial vehicle projects.	ITS
Mobility, Efficiency	Investigate how ITS can support other efforts to improve east-west travel between the inland areas an the coastal communities.	ITS
Mobility, Efficiency	Utilize momentum form the Valleywide ITS planning effort in conjunction with proposed federal rules (ITS architecture and standards conformity and statewide and metropolitan planning).	ITS

Goal(s)	Policy	Mode(s)
Mobility, Efficiency	Build upon the existing extensive Caltrans District 6 Traffic Management Systems to fill gaps and complete coverage on major facilities, including expansion of their highway closures and restrictions database to include other agencies.	ITS, TCM
Mobility, Efficiency	Capitalize upon the extensive ITS technology testing and standards development conducted by Caltrans by, where appropriate, utilizing Caltrans approaches for local traffic management systems.	ITS, TCM
Mobility, Efficiency	Build upon lessons learned from past and current transit ITS deployment experience in the San Joaquin Valley (Fresno Area Express, GET, San Joaquin Regional Transit).	ITS, TCM
Mobility, Efficiency	Build upon Caltrans District 6 experience with co-location and coordination between traffic management and Highway Patrol staff.	ITS, TCM
Mobility, Efficiency	Traveler information commercial vehicle operators at truck rest stop locations. As new laws require longer off-duty periods, demand for rest areas and for access to services will increase.	ITS, TCM
Mobility, Efficiency	Improve the visibility of the access to existing Caltrans Valleywide alternate route plans.	ITS, TCM
Mobility, Efficiency	Coordinate Bakersfield area TMC with Caltrans' District 6 TMC via satellite	ITS, TCM
Mobility, Efficiency	Look for ways to integrate the ITS capabilities being implemented at Golden Empire Transit (GET) with the developing Bakersfield traffic management system, including sharing of information between the two centers during emergencies.	ITS, TCM
Mobility, Efficiency	Facilitate the transfer of lessons learned from GET ITS deployment now beginning, to other area transit operators, and look for opportunities for those agencies to better coordinate with GET using GET's new ITS capabilities.	ITS, TCM
Mobility, Efficiency	Expand upon the accident reduction success of Route 46 Safety Coalition Program and the South Kern Corridor Safety Program.	ITS, TCM
Mobility, Reliability, Livability	Provide heavy truck access planning guidance including a review of the current Surface Transportation Assistance Act route system, review of geometric issues and signaling for all routes identified as major local access routes, and the development of standards	Freight, TCM

Goal(s)	Policy	Mode(s)
Accessibility, Efficiency, Livability, Sustainability	Encourage land uses decisions by local government member agencies that promote pedestrian, bike and transit oriented mixed use and infill development.	Land use, TCM
Accessibility, Efficiency, Livability, Sustainability	Promote land uses patterns that support current and future investments in bus transit and may one-day support commuter rail alternatives.	Land use, TCM
Accessibility, Efficiency, Livability, Sustainability	Promote increased communication with neighboring jurisdictions on interregional land use issues.	Land use, TCM
Livability	Encourage the coordination of land use decisions and transportation systems.	TCM
Livability	Support goals contained in city and county general plans that strive to enhance urban and community centers, promote the environmentally sensitive use of lands in Kern County, revitalize distressed areas, and ensure that new growth areas are planned in a well-balanced manner.	TCM
Livability	Achieve the national and state air quality standards for healthy air by the mandated deadlines.	TCM
Livability	TCM Coordination - Coordinate with the all responsible agencies necessary to implement all feasible measures to control harmful air emissions.	TCM
Livability	TCM Implementation - Promote implementation all feasible and cost effective transportation control measures to achieve air quality emissions by the mandated deadlines.	TCM
Livability	TCM Education - Provide necessary support and education to member agencies and other responsible entities on all feasible control measure.	TCM
Livability	Delay the need for future increases in highway capacity and congestion relief through the implementation of Transportation Control Measures.	TCM, Highways
Livability	Promote sustainable community design that supports transit use and increases nonmotorized transportation while still meeting the mobility needs of residents and employees.	Transit, Bike, TCM

Goal(s)	Policy	Mode(s)
Equity	Avoid, minimize or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects, including social and economic impacts, on traditionally disadvantaged communities, especially racial minority and low-income communities	Environ. Justice
Equity	Ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process	Environ. Justice
Equity	Prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority populations and low-income populations	Environ. Justice

Performance Monitoring

The purpose of performance monitoring is to: (1) provide current and ongoing information on how well the transportation system is performing; (2) identify opportunities for near-term improvements; and (3) assess the impacts of future improvements.

In the past, Kern COG and other transportation operators have conducted performance monitoring, though not always on a consistent or ongoing basis. Consistency and frequency of data collection are key to tracking how well the transportation system is performing. The following section outlines the status of current or near-term regional transportation system performance monitoring efforts.

The primary tool for Kern COG's Transportation Monitoring System is the Kern Regional Transportation Model. The model uses monitoring data and growth assumptions to track the performance measures for the Regional Transportation Plan and Environmental Justice. Chapter 6 – Environmental Justice contains a detail description of the performance measures.

Since the adoption of the 2001 RTP, Kern COG has examined the California RTP Guidelines for performance monitoring and considered the following issues: What types of data are best suited to assess the performance of the multimodal transportation system? How can Kern COG build upon its existing data collection efforts? What is the best way to collect these data, and how often? Who should be responsible for the data collection and monitoring and how should it be financed? How will this information be used?

Based on this analysis, the following needed improvements in performance monitoring were identified:

1. Performance monitoring needs to reflect the multimodal nature of Kern County's transportation system by focusing on all modes of transportation.
2. Freeway data collection and reporting activity needs to be expanded to include freeway onramps, conventional highways, principal arterials, and transit.
3. Data collection in support of performance monitoring needs to be:
 - a. Automated – this will reduce costs and provide more frequent data collection;
 - b. Uniform – If system performance is to be monitored over time, then data collection efforts must be consistent year to year;
 - c. Reported – Performance monitoring information needs to be regularly reported to decision-makers to assist in project selection and programming decisions, and to the general public to assist them in making travel route and mode choices.
4. The most useful indicators of how well Kern County's transportation system is performing should include:
 - a. Travel Time – The average time it takes to complete a trip;
 - b. Travel Speed – The average speed of a trip;
 - c. Usage – Changes in traffic, transit ridership, or bicycle facility use.

These basic data can be combined to generate other indicators; for example, speed and traffic volume are used to determine roadway level of service (LOS), an indicator of congestion.

5. Augmenting these automated data collection efforts should be periodic surveys to assess customer satisfaction and to identify other needed improvements from a user perspective.

These identified improvements provide the basis for the following recommended action:

- Develop/Implement a Regional Transportation Monitoring Improvement Plan to recommend and prioritize the following:
 - Improve/consolidate collection of traffic count information;
 - Improve truck counts along key corridors;
 - Develop a more regular traffic speed survey program;
 - Improve transit ridership information.