

# Roles & Responsibilities Manual



Kern Council of Governments

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Kern COG Chairman Phil Smith (at podium) and Executive Director Ron Brummett open the 2004 Regional Awards of Merit ceremony at the Holiday Inn Select in downtown Bakersfield.

## Preface

A council of governments (COG) acts as an areawide planning agency. COGs assist local governments with multijurisdictional issues such as air quality, transportation, water quality, energy and housing. Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG) serves that purpose for this region.



Kern COG's areawide planning program is a continuous, comprehensive and coordinated process involving local governments and various other local, state and federal agencies. Working in a partnership with these agencies, the program addresses regional planning concerns, state funding priorities and federal, state and local comprehensive planning requirements.

In 1967, the County of Kern and the region's 11 incorporated cities recog-

nized the need for a regional planning agency. Through a joint exercise of powers agreement (JPA), the Kern Regional Planning Advisory Commission (KERPAC) was formed.

Three years after KERPAC was established, a new joint powers agreement took effect leading to Kern COG's creation. In accordance with Section 6500 et seq. of the California Government Code, Kern COG comprises a mayor or city council member from each of the 11 incorporated cities and two supervisors from the Kern County Board of Supervisors.

According to the JPA, Kern COG was established to:

1. Provide a forum to study regional problems of concern to the different governmental entities in Kern County;
2. Streamline governmental operations through member governments' cooperation and in pooling common resources;
3. Identify, clarify and plan for solutions to regional problems;
4. Develop regional plans and policies and perform areawide planning duties;
5. Facilitate cooperation and agreements among local government bodies for specific projects, interrelated developmental action and common policies with respect to common problems.

As Kern COG was intended, so it remains to this day: an areawide planning agency addressing multijurisdictional issues in partnership with local governments and various local, state, federal and non-profit organizations.

## Introduction

Councils of Government have been created throughout most areas of the nation. The rational approach offered by COGs allows for comprehensive planning and intergovernmental coordination necessary to address multi-jurisdictional issues. Kern COG is the regional planning agency as well as the technical and informational resource and rideshare administrator for the area's 11 incorporated cities and the County of Kern. The planning process complies with all applicable federal requirements and is certified triennially.

Kern COG's monthly Board meetings are a public forum and a decision point for significant multi-jurisdictional issues. These Board meetings are the only forum in this region where policy makers from all 11 cities and the County of Kern discuss regional issues. This unique forum is the heartbeat of Kern COG's activities. It is at the monthly meetings that member agency representatives make decisions on regional issues.

Following the council's direction, staff coordinates among local, state and federal agencies to avoid overlap or duplication of programs. The intergovernmental coordination enables staff to work with many public agencies to ensure that planning and program implementation proceeds in a coordinated manner. The intense coordination by staff creates a fluid movement of programs between governmental agencies and departments.



The partnerships between Kern COG and member agencies begin with comprehensive coordination. Technical assistance and information services are available by Kern COG to the members. These services are used to assist local governments in planning activities. Modeling, Census data, mapping and graphics are a few of the many services available to member agencies. Kern COG also provides agencies planning assistance through "circuit-rider" planners. These circuit-riders serve two or more local governments directly with planning expertise.

To enhance its role in intergovernmental coordination, Kern COG has entered into memorandums of understanding (MOU) and cooperative agreements that clarify the specific responsibilities of Kern COG and the following agencies:

California Department of Finance  
 California Department of Transportation  
 California Office of Planning and Research  
 China Lake Naval Weapons Station  
 Council of Fresno County Governments  
 Edwards Air Force Base  
 Golden Empire Transit District  
 Indian Wells Valley Airport District  
 Inyo County Transportation Commission  
 Kern County Air Pollution Control District  
 Kern County Commission on Aging  
 Kern Motorist Aid Authority  
 Kings County Regional Planning Agency

Madera Local Transportation Commission  
 Merced County Association of Governments  
 North of the River Consolidated  
 Transportation Service Agency  
 Minter Field Airport District  
 Mono County Transportation Commission  
 San Bernardino Associated Governments  
 San Joaquin County Council of Governments  
 San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District  
 Southern California Association of Governments  
 Stanislaus Area Association of Governments  
 Tulare County Association of Governments

Kern COG also coordinates its transportation planning activities with adjacent areas through Caltrans Districts 6 and 9. The region is adjacent to Caltrans Districts 5, 7 and 8 as well. Land use planning, including analysis of present land uses and projections of future uses, analysis of population trends and projections of future populations and their distribution is carried out in coordination with:

California Office of Planning and Research  
Inyo-Mono Association of Governmental Entities  
San Bernardino Associated Governments  
San Luis Obispo Council of Governments

Santa Barbara County Association of Governments  
Southern California Association of Governments  
Ventura County Association of Governments  
Tulare Association of Governments

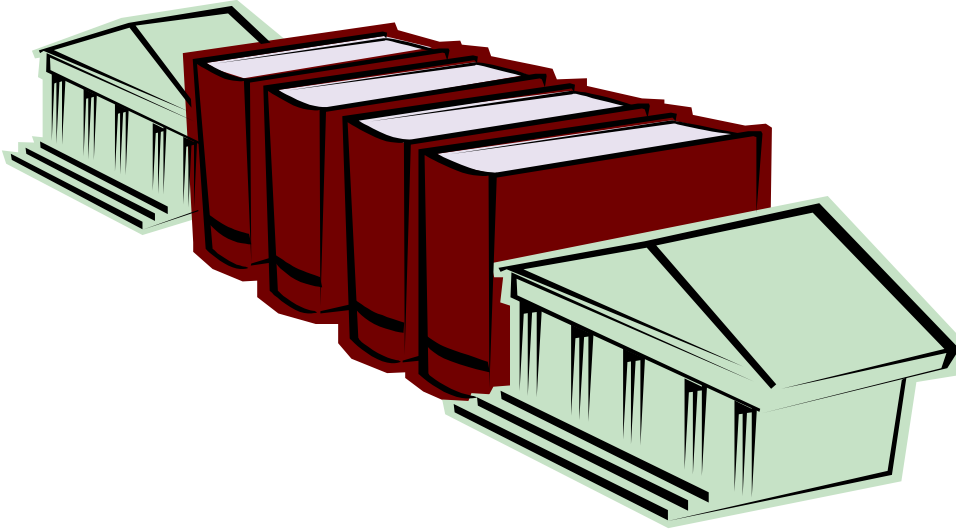
Kern COG's coordination extends beyond governmental departments and agencies. Board members and staff serve on a variety of boards and committees that profile the needs of this region.

Eastern California Planning Partnership  
Kern Economic Development Commission  
Kern County AIDS Advisory Committee  
Kern County Solid Waste Management Committee  
Southern California Water Committee  
Kern County City Managers Association

Kern GEONET  
Kern County Transportation Symposium Committee  
Kern Regional Transportation Modeling Committee  
Kern Transportation Foundation  
California Association of Counties  
San Joaquin Valley COG Directors



**Kern COG Executive Director Ron Brummett, left, and Chairman Phil Smith, right, sign the Eastern California Transportation Planning Partnership MOU in Adelanto in November 2002. The Partnership comprises officials from Caltrans Districts 6 and 9; San Bernardino Association of Governments, Kern COG, and the Inyo and Mono County Transportation Commissions.**



## Local, State and Federal Designations

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Kern COG serves as a comprehensive planning agency and provides information and technical assistance to its member agencies through several local, state and federal designations.

## Regional Transportation Planning Agency

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Pursuant to state law, Kern COG has been designated the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for the Kern region. Acting in this capacity, Kern COG is responsible for developing and adopting several transportation planning documents and studies, including:

Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)	Metropolitan Bakersfield Signal Study
Transportation System Management Element	Ridgecrest Pavement Management Program
Regional Transportation Improvement Program	Shafter Pavement Management Program
Rural Transportation Development Plans	Bakersfield Pavement Management Program
Metro Bakersfield Impact Fee Study	Bakersfield Downtown Transitway Facility
Morning Drive Corridor Study	High-Speed Rail Terminal Study
West Beltway Corridor Study	Metropolitan Bakersfield Major
Kern River Canyon Highway Study	Transportation Investment Strategy
Highway 178 Corridor Study	S.E. Kern Transportation Impact Fee Study
Tehachapi Railroad Crossing Study	Mojave Route 58 Corridor Study

Kern COG is also responsible for coordinating regional transportation planning with the Air Quality Maintenance Plan / Nonattainment Area Plan, and for determining unmet transit needs within the Kern region. In addition, Kern COG administers the Transportation Development Act (TDA), which includes the following functions:

TDA Unmet Transit Needs and Process	Triennial Performance Audits
TDA Transit Fund Financial Management	Annual Productivity Improvement Committee
Claims for TDA Funds	Kern Regional Transit Guide
Annual Fiscal and Compliance Audits	Metropolitan Bakersfield Bicycle Plan

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## Metropolitan Planning Organization

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As the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Kern COG is responsible for implementing the comprehensive transportation planning process for the urban Bakersfield area. An integral element of the planning process is the Overall Work Program's (OWP) annual adoption.

The OWP contains a detailed narrative of all Kern COG planning activities, as well as related planning responsibilities of local, state and federal governments. The OWP is designed to clarify the planning process and serves as the basis for applications for state and federal funding.

The OWP contains a detailed narrative of all Kern COG planning activities, as well as related planning responsibilities of local, state and federal governments. The OWP is designed to clarify the planning process and serves as the basis for applications for state and federal funding. Similarly, Kern COG is required to annually develop and endorse the Regional Transportation Improvement Program.

Kern COG's responsibilities in relation to the Golden Empire Transit (GET) District, as cited in the Federal Register, Vol. 40, No. 151 / Thursday, Aug. 6, 1981, are as follows:

1. Kern COG, in cooperation with the state of California and GET (a publicly owned operator of mass transportation), shall be responsible for carrying out the urban transportation process.
2. Kern COG, in cooperation with the state of California and GET, shall develop work programs;
3. Kern COG shall be the forum for cooperative decision making by principal elected officials of general purpose local government; and
4. Kern COG shall annually endorse the transportation plan and programs required in the Federal Register.

Changes in urban transportation planning regulations require the State of California and Kern COG to certify that the planning process is being carried out in conformance with all applicable federal requirements. Kern COG, pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 139, and 49 U.S.C. 1607 is responsible for areawide planning.

Reflecting the eight county air basin, an MOU was developed between the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and each of the eight counties. In accordance with the MOU, Kern COG shall coordinate with the seven other counties during the execution of interregional issues that involve: mobile source emission reduction; coordination with the Caltrans District Office on transportation systems planning; transportation and traffic data modeling; and preparation of interregional technical and transportation systems studies in developing transportation corridor plan alternatives. The seven councils of government, representing the seven counties, that have agreed with Kern COG to the aforementioned items are:

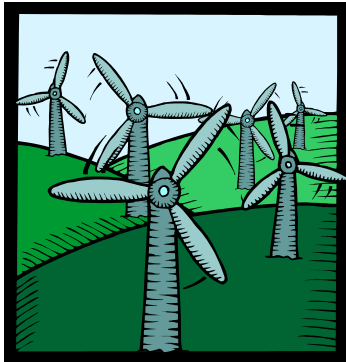
Council of Fresno County Governments  
Kings County Association of Governments  
Madera County Transportation Commission  
Merced County Association of Governments

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San Joaquin Council of Governments  
 Stanislaus Area Council of Governments  
 Tulare County Association of Governments

Pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding, Kern COG and the Kern County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) share responsibility for air quality maintenance planning and implementation in Eastern Kern County. Generally, the APCD is responsible for the AQMP/NAP implementation process while Kern COG is responsible for fiscal accountability.

As the state-designated MPO, Kern COG develops the following reports and documents:



Transportation Development Plans  
 West Bakersfield Sewer Study  
 Air Quality Maintenance Plan  
 Energy Contingency Plan  
 Kern River Plan

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## Areawide Planning Organization

In accordance with federal law, Kern COG is designated the Areawide Planning Organization (APO) for the Kern region. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that an APO develop and maintain areawide land use, housing and open space plans. As the APO, Kern COG prepares the Regional Housing Allocation Plan, which is discussed on Page 8.




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## Local Clearinghouse

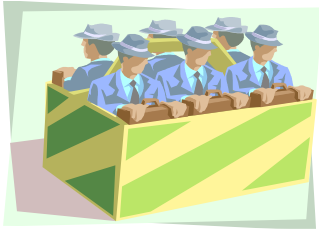
In accordance with Executive Order 12372, Kern COG is designated the Local Clearinghouse for the Kern County region. Kern COG's primary responsibility is to review and comment on local applications for state and federal funding assistance. The local clearinghouse process is designed to provide an opportunity for interjurisdictional coordination of federal and federally assisted activities within state and regional localities.





## Affiliate Data Center

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The California Department of Finance has designated Kern COG as the Affiliate Data Center for Kern County. The U.S. Census Bureau recognizes the statewide network of data centers for the decennial census and all other census programs. Kern COG provides assistance to census data users, maintains a publicly accessible collection of reference and statistical publications, and determines the need for census workshops within Kern County. Kern COG also produces Kern Data Books replete with regional

demographic data.

## Home Mortgage Disclosure Depository

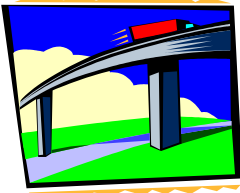
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The Federal Reserve Board has designated Kern COG as the central depository for bank mortgage residential loan reports. Kern COG is required to provide public access to the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act information.



## Kern County Transportation Authority

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On May 31, 1986, with Resolution 86-466, the Kern County Board of Supervisors appointed Kern COG as the Local Transportation Authority, in accordance with Division 19 of the Public Utilities Code (Section 180000 et seq.). In that capacity, Kern COG shall adopt an ordinance that outlines an expenditure plan of transportation projects and a proposed increase in transaction and use taxes.

## Kern Motorist Aid Authority

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In accordance with Sections 2500, 2550-2560 of the California Streets and Highways Code, the County of Kern and the incorporated cities, the Kern Motorist Aid Authority (KMAA) was created on May 19, 1989. Kern COG's Board doubles as the KMAA Board of Directors and is authorized to finance, operate and maintain a motorist aid call box system in coordination with Caltrans and the California Highway Patrol.



## Kern Congestion Management Agency

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Kern COG has been designated the Congestion Management Agency by a majority of cities and the Kern County Board of Supervisors. Under the federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, each Transportation Management Area must develop a congestion management system that provides for effective management of new and existing transportation facilities through the use of travel demand reduction and operational management strategies.

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## Kern Commuter Connection

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In cooperation with Caltrans, Kern COG administers the region's rideshare program. The program helps employers and commuters reduce the number of single occupant vehicle trips. Staff educates employers on Transportation Demand Management strategies and provides commuters with potential car and vanpool match lists. A reduction in the number of single occupancy vehicle trips plays a significant role in the transportation control measure portion of the Air Quality Attainment Plan.



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## Regional Housing Allocation Plan

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Kern COG is designated to prepare the Regional Housing Allocation Plan in accordance with California Government Code Section 65584. The plan addresses all housing needs from all income levels in the Kern region. Need is based on available census data, market demand for housing, employment opportunities, the availability of suitable sites, public facilities, commuting patterns, and population projections. Kern COG evaluates these criteria and determines the existing and projected housing need for the region.