

**AGENDA
KERN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
MEETING OF REGIONAL PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TRANSPORTATION MODELING COMMITTEE**

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2026 AT 1:30 P.M.

PRIMARY MEETING LOCATION:

Kern Council of Governments, Board Room
1401 19th Street, Suite 300
Bakersfield, CA 93301

TELECONFERENCE INFORMATION: [RPAC Meeting](#)

[|Meeting-Join | Microsoft Teams](#)

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**SECONDARY MEETING LOCATIONS (for
Teleconference):**

Arvin City Hall

200 Campus Drive, Arvin, CA 93203

Shafter City Hall

336 Pacific Avenue, Shafter, CA 93265

California City City Hall

21000 Hacienda Blvd., California City, CA 93505

Taft City Hall

209 E. Kern Street, Taft, CA 93268

Offices at:

1352 W. Olive Avenue, Fresno, CA 93728

1234 O Street, Fresno, CA 93721

901 East Main Street, Visalia, CA 93292

I. ROLL CALL:

- II. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons to address the Committee on any matter not on this agenda but under the jurisdiction of the Committee. Committee members may respond briefly to statements made or questions posed. They may ask a question for clarification; make a referral to staff for factual information or request staff to report back to the Committee at a later meeting. **SPEAKERS ARE LIMITED TO TWO MINUTES. PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS FOR THE RECORD PRIOR TO MAKING A PRESENTATION.**

Disabled individuals who need special assistance to attend or participate in a meeting of the Regional Planning Advisory Committee may request assistance at 1401 19th Street, Suite 300; Bakersfield CA 93301 or by calling (661) 635-2910. Every effort will be made to reasonably accommodate individuals with disabilities by making meeting material available in alternative formats. Requests for assistance should be made at least three (3) working days in advance whenever possible.

III. APPROVAL OF DISCUSSION SUMMARY

- A. Meeting of August 5, 2026. ROLL CALL VOTE.

IV. RECOMMEND ADOPTION FOR THE: FINAL 2026 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN/SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGY; FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT; FINAL 2027 FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM; CORRESPONDING FINAL AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY ANALYSIS AND RESPONSE TO COMMENTS (Raymond)

Comment: The 4-year public involvement process gathered input from over 10,000 residents for the long- and near-term federal transportation planning documents. The process concluded on July 2, 2026, with the closure of a 55-day public review period for the Draft 2026 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)/Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS); 30-day review for Draft 2027 Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP), and corresponding Draft Air Quality Conformity Analysis (Conformity); and a 45 day review for the associated Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). Documents are available online at <https://www.kerncog.org/2026-rtp/>.

Action: Recommend to the Transportation Planning Policy Committee to adopt the FINAL 2026 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN/SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGY; FINAL 2027 FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM; FINAL PROGRAMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT; CORRESPONDING FINAL AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY ANALYSIS and RESPONSE TO COMMENTS. ROLL CALL VOTE.

V. UPDATE: SB 375 AND ADOPTION TIMELINE FOR THE 2026 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGY (Raymond)

Comment: An update on the activity related to Senate Bill (SB) 375 and the adoption timeline for the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS).

Action: Information.

VI. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY GRANTS/COG ASSISTANCE REQUESTS AND FEEDBACK MONITORING DATA – EMAIL REQUESTS DUE FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2026 (Romero Valdivia)

Comment: The 2026 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)/Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) includes a strategy to provide sub-regional feedback on SB 375 travel reduction goals and provide technical assistance and grant writing assistance to help sub areas of the County that need it most. This is an annual process reviewed by the TTAC and RPAC.

Action: Information and feedback: Member agency technical assistance requests are due to Rochelle Invina-Jayasiri at RInvina@kerncog.org by October 2, 2026.

VII. CIRCULATION UPDATES: TRUCK ROUTES (Davisson)

Comment: In response to state requirements that all cities and counties adopt truck routes, Kern COG examined truck routing throughout the Kern region. The KARGO studies provide a regional framework of solutions to this issue.

Action: 1) Per SB-415, jurisdictions with populations greater than 50,000 must update their circulation elements by January 1, 2028. Jurisdictions with populations less than 50,000 must update their circulation elements by January 1, 2030.

2) Per Kern COG Board Resolution 26-23, jurisdictions should consider the KARGO study's mapped truck routes and circulation plans when updating local circulation elements.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Legislative Update: SB 1169, SB 1116, SB 1117
- Kern COG will be at the Kern County Fair (Exhibit Building 2) from September 23 to October 4, 2026.

IX. MEMBER ITEMS

- X. ADJOURNMENT** - The next meeting will be held on September 30, 2026 (for October).

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KERN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
REGIONAL PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TRANSPORTATION MODELING COMMITTEE
MINUTES FOR AUGUST 5, 2026

KERN COG CONFERENCE ROOM
1401 19TH STREET, THIRD FLOOR
BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA

WEDNESDAY
August 5, 2026
1:30 P.M.

Chairman Ricardo Perez called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL:

RPAC MEMBERS PRESENT:	Isiah Medina Brianahi DeLeon Clarisa Olaguez Ricardo Perez Luke Risner Corey Costello Andrea Nason	Arvin McFarland Shafter GET Taft Tehachapi Caltrans
KERN COG STAFF:	Ben Raymond Rob Ball Sukhmony Brar Melody Saberon Ybarra	Karl Davisson Rochelle Invina-Jayasiri Victoria Romero Valdivia
OTHERS:	Rick Franz Phil Burns	Caltrans

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS: This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons to address the Committee on any matter not on this agenda but under the jurisdiction of the Committee. Committee members may respond briefly to statements made or questions posed. They may ask a question for clarification; make a referral to staff for information or request staff to report to the Committee at a later meeting. **SPEAKERS ARE LIMITED TO TWO MINUTES. PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS FOR THE RECORD PRIOR TO MAKING A PRESENTATION.**

There were no questions or comments from the public.

III. APPROVAL OF DISCUSSION SUMMARIES

- Meeting of April 1, 2026
- Meeting of June 3, 2026

Noted minor corrections that need to be made to April minutes regarding next meeting date. Approval motioned by J. Lara and second by B. De Leon. Unanimous vote.

IV. MOBILITY INNOVATIONS AND INCENTIVES PROGRAM STATUS REPORT

Action: There were no comments or questions from the public. This item was for information only.

V. FINAL DRAFT – SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY GRANTS/COG ASSISTANCE REQUESTS AND FEEDBACK MONITORING DATA – EMAIL REQUESTS DUE FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2026

Action: There were no comments or questions from the public. This item was for information only.

VI. PUBLIC UPDATE: SB 375 AND ADOPTION TIMELINE FOR THE 2026 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGY

Action: There were no comments or questions from the public. This item was for information only.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Legislative Update: SB 1169, SB 1116, SB 1117.

Kern COG staff is monitoring the progression of three bills through the legislative process that are of interest to the RPAC and COG member agencies.

SB 1169 - Major Provisions: Extends the expiration date on an approved or conditionally approved tentative map to 48 months after its approval. Sets a maximum life of a tentative map at 10 years.

SB 1116 – Prohibits a local agency from imposing objective zoning, subdivision, or design standards on a Starter Home Revitalization Act project if those standards would physically prevent building the maximum number of units allowed by the subdivision, prohibit otherwise permitted units or floor area, limit the number of floors, or require front or internal setbacks.

SB 1117 – For up to two ADUs per lot, requires impact fees on an ADU larger than 750 square feet to be charged only on the square footage above 750 square feet, rather than based on the size of the primary unit.

VIII. MEMBER ITEMS

BFL – Update Journal for City of Bakersfield and accepting comments through September 27, 2026.

ROB – Make sure your agency representative or proxy is available at 9/2 meeting to act on draft plan and make recommendation to approve update to 4-year plan.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m. The next scheduled meeting of the RPAC will be September 2, 2026.



IV. RPAC

September 2, 2026

TO: Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC)

FROM: Jay Schlosser, Executive Director

By: Rob Ball, Deputy Director/Planning Director
Ben Raymond, Regional Planner
Ceasar Valle, Regional Planner
Vincent Liu, Regional Planner

SUBJECT: Regional Planning Advisory Committee Agenda Item: IV.

RECOMMEND ADOPTION FOR THE: FINAL 2026 REGIONAL
TRANSPORTATION PLAN/SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGY; FINAL
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT; FINAL 2027 FEDERAL
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM; CORRESPONDING FINAL
AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY ANALYSIS AND RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

DESCRIPTION:

The 4-year public involvement process gathered input from over 10,000 residents for the long- and near-term federal transportation planning documents. The process concluded on July 2, 2026, with the closure of a 55-day public review period for the Draft 2026 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)/Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS); 30-day review period for the Draft 2027 Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP), and corresponding Draft Air Quality Conformity Analysis (Conformity); and a 45 day review for the associated Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). Documents are available online at <https://www.kerncog.org/2026-rtp/>.

DISCUSSION:

What is the RTP and SCS? The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is a statutorily required, fiscally constrained, long-range planning document updated every four years that establishes Kern COG's transportation policies, investment priorities, and implementation framework through 2049. The RTP integrates transportation strategies with forecasted land use and demographic conditions to identify regional needs and develop a financially constrained program of improvements consistent with available revenues, while meeting federal and state requirements for transportation planning, air quality conformity, environmental justice, public participation, performance management, and the SB 375 Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS). The SCS

identifies a forecasted development pattern designed to achieve regional greenhouse gas reduction targets through coordination with local jurisdictions, agencies, and the public; however, it does not supersede local land use authority. The forecasted development pattern reflects local general plans, zoning, growth forecasts, and agency input, while recognizing that actual development decisions will continue to be made by local jurisdictions and may differ from RTP assumptions.

What is the FTIP? A Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) is a federally required, financially constrained program that identifies transportation projects and investments to be implemented over at least a four-year period using federal, state, and local transportation funds. Developed by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in cooperation with state and local agencies, the FTIP demonstrates that proposed projects are consistent with the RTP and meet federal planning, air quality conformity, and performance requirements. The FTIP serves as the primary programming document that allows transportation projects to receive federal funding and move forward toward implementation.

What is Conformity? A Federal Clean Air Act Conformity document demonstrates that a region's transportation plans, programs, and projects are consistent with federal air quality standards and will not delay progress toward achieving or maintaining those standards. Required under the Clean Air Act, transportation conformity analysis uses regional emissions modeling to verify that the RTP and FTIP conform with approved air quality plans and emission budgets established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Approval of the conformity determination by federal agencies is required before federally funded transportation projects can proceed in areas that do not meet federal air quality standards.

What is the EIR? A California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is an environmental review document that evaluates the potential environmental effects of a proposed project and identifies feasible measures to avoid, reduce, or mitigate significant impacts. An EIR provides decision-makers and the public with detailed information regarding project alternatives, environmental consequences, mitigation measures, and areas of potential concern before a project is approved. For long-range planning documents such as an RTP, a Program EIR or PEIR evaluates the broader environmental effects of implementing the plan and provides a framework for subsequent project-level environmental review which may also require an EIR.

Report Outline

- A. Public Involvement/Performance Based Process**
- B. Workshopped Scenarios and EIR Alternatives**
- C. Performance Measures and Indicators**
- D. Summary of Changes Compared to Previous Plan**
- E. Summary of Comments, Responses and Refinements**
- F. Next Steps/Conclusion**

A. Public Involvement/Performance Based Process

Summary of RTP outreach process and performance measures: State and federal regulations have steadily placed greater emphasis on performance measures and public outreach in the regional transportation planning process. Since 2001 Kern COG has taken these regulations seriously, developing, adapting, and implementing an integrated performance

measure process that tracks measures for system level, smart mobility framework, and health equity, for predominantly minority and/ or low-income areas. In addition, Kern COG's decision makers are able to balance the feedback from performance measures with an extensive public outreach process. The 4-year 2026 RTP public outreach process was able to successfully gather input from 10,500 participants –over 1% of our region's population – a similar level of participation compared to prior RTP outreach processes. The Public Outreach process is summarized in Appendix C to the 2026 RTP, also available at: <https://www.kerncog.org/rtp-outreach-results/>. The Integrated Performance Measure Analysis is Appendix D to the 2026 RTP.

Public Involvement Policy evaluation results: The Kern COG Board as part of the adopted 2023 Public Involvement Policy (<https://www.kerncog.org/policies/>) adopted quantifiable indicators for evaluating public involvement. Five performance indicator categories -- Accessibility, Reach, Diversity, Impact and Satisfaction – are identified in the document. All performance indicators have been met as indicated by a check mark.

Accessibility Indicators:

- ✓ Meetings are held throughout the county (over 100 meetings and outreach event held throughout the county)
- ✓ 100 percent of meetings are reasonably accessible by transit (100%)
- ✓ All meetings are accessible under Americans with Disability Act requirements (100%)
- ✓ Meetings are linguistically accessible to 100 percent of participants with three working days' advance request for translation. (Meeting announcements will offer translation services with advance notice to participants speaking any language with available professional translation services.) (100%)

Reach indicators

- ✓ Number of comments logged into comment tracking and response system (200+)
- ✓ Number of individuals actively participating in the outreach program (10,000+)
- ✓ Number of visits to the specific section of the Kern COG website (600+)
- ✓ Number of newspaper articles, radio & television interviews mentioning the plan/program (3)

Diversity indicators

- ✓ Demographic of targeted workshop/charrette/meeting roughly mirror the demographics of the Kern region (varies by event location/host organization)
- ✓ Percentage of targeted organizations and groups participating in at least one workshop/charrette/meeting (100%)
- ✓ Participants represent a cross-section of people of various interests, places of residence and primary modes of travel. (varies by event location/host organization)

Impact Indicators

- ✓ 100 percent of written comments received are logged into a comment tracking system, analyzed, summarized and communicated in time for consideration by staff and the policy board. (100%)
- ✓ 100 percent of significant written comments are acknowledged so that the person making them knows whether his or her comment is reflected in the outcome of a policy board action, or, conversely, why the policy board acted differently. (100%)

Participant Satisfaction (This information would be obtained via an online and written survey available on the Kern COG web site, and at each workshop/charrette/public meeting involving the plan or program in question.)

- ✓Accessibility to meeting locations.
- ✓Materials presented in appropriate languages for targeted audiences. (Spanish speakers appreciated provided Spanish materials and translation services.)
- ✓Adequate notice of the meetings provided.
- ✓Sufficient opportunity to comment. (Interactive voting was used and participants were given the opportunity to make written and oral comments.)
- ✓Educational value of presentations and materials. (Positive comments were received.)
- ✓Understanding of other perspectives and priorities.
- ✓Clear information at an appropriate level of detail.
- ✓Clear understanding of items that are established policy versus those that are open to public influence.
- ✓Quality of the discussion.
- ✓Responsiveness to comments received.

Based on the above analysis, the RTP fully met or exceeded all the 2023 Public Involvement Policy evaluation indicators. The policy monitoring, performance measures, and outreach processes are key elements of Kern COG's regional transportation planning process, which has been recognized at regional, state and national levels as a best practice in transportation planning.

Recognition of Kern COG Planning Process: The Kern RTP and regional planning process has long been recognized as an exemplary best practice through awards, and the state RTP guidelines. In 2026, Kern COG has been recognized for its transportation planning efforts from the national Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) for outstanding overall achievement; the California Transportation Foundation (CTF) for freight planning; and the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) transportation project excellence in goods movement. These awards highlighted the work of the Kern Area Regional Goods-movement Operations (KARGO) study, one of several special emphasis outreach areas for the 2026 RTP. In 2024, Kern COG was noted as a good example for our Public Involvement Procedure/Public Participation Plan, and RTP's Integrated Performance Measure Process. In 2022, Kern COG was recognized as 1st Runner-up by the Caltrans Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) special recognition competition the RTP's Integrated Performance Measure Process. In addition, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) 2017 RTP guidelines listed Kern COG as the only Medium/Small Metropolitan Planning Organization cited as an "Exemplary Planning Practice" for its Public Education/Outreach program. In the 2010 RTP Guidelines adopted by the CTC, Kern COG's Integrated Performance Measure process was the only one in the state identified as a "Best Practice" for environmental

Kern RTP Process Recognized as a Best Planning Practice:

2026 – ASCE regional award, Excellence in goods movement transportation

2026 – AMPO National Award Outstanding Achievement: Freight

2026 – CTF State Award – 1st Runner-Up for freight planning

2024 – CTC Guidelines Highlighted Example

2021 – LTAP SMART Transformation Award 1st Runner-Up

2017 – CTC Guidelines Best Practice

2010 – CTC Guidelines Best Practice

justice analysis. The performance measures are used to compare scenarios and alternatives in both the workshops and the EIR.

B. Workshopped Scenarios and EIR Alternatives

The distinction between public workshop scenarios and CEQA alternatives: California SB 375 requires that the SCS demonstrate through modeling how the region can meet state greenhouse gas reduction targets through integrated land use and transportation scenarios. This quantitative modeling of projects undertaken for the financially constrained 2026 RTP does not model all the projects listed or discussed in the strategic plan because funding for many of these projects is speculative and implementation of these projects is not yet reasonably foreseeable. As part of the development of the RTP, Kern COG identifies scenarios to better understand development and transportation options. Similarly, CEQA requires a reasonable range of alternatives to a proposed plan that could feasibly avoid or reduce significant environmental impacts.

To better differentiate the use of each model run, Kern COG has made the following distinction between the use of the terms “alternative” and “scenario.” An alternative refers to modeling, assumptions and output that is intended to be included in the CEQA document for the RTP in order to provide a reasonable range of development patterns and transportation options and reduce environmental impacts where feasible. As the RTP/SCS has evolved over the years development patterns have become increasingly sustainable (i.e. local land use plans have been approved that generally reduce traffic and air quality impacts where possible). With these changes, the options available to Kern COG to improve upon these patterns have narrowed. A scenario describes modeling results intended to generate feedback from the public in a public workshop. Feedback on scenarios is used to inform the development of assumptions for the CEQA required alternatives.

Summary of three SCS scenarios used in public workshops: Consistent with prior RTP/SCS processes, and to meet the requirements of SB 375, Kern COG developed and workshopped 3 scenarios that varied in the amount of infill, compact development, and transit/bike/pedestrian infrastructure. Scenario 1 was the least compact while Scenario 3 was the most compact land use scenario. The results were similar to prior years with the weighted average of participants falling closest to Scenario 2. By weighting and averaging the responses, the resulting preferred scenario provides a level of infill, compact development, and mix of strategies that represent all the responses received at over a dozen public workshops spread throughout the county. The public input received from over 1,000 residents at the Kern County Fair re-enforced the preferred plan alternative which is similar yet a little more aggressive in GHG reduction strategies than prior RTPs.

Summary of the EIR alternatives required by CEQA: Next, alternatives were developed for inclusion in the environmental document to the RTP to meet CEQA requirements. Currently there is the Plan alternative based on Scenario 2, and three other alternatives to the Plan alternative. They have been named the No Project, Old Plan, and Countywide Infill alternatives.

The RTP/SCS alternatives use Kern COG's latest transportation model improvements completed in November 2025, and the Regional Growth Forecast adopted in April 2024. The distribution of the growth forecast by Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ) and Regional Statical Area (RSA)

subregion was presented to the RPAC in April 2025. The RSA totals were used to generate forecasts of socioeconomic data by jurisdiction and include future annexation assumptions. These control totals are used across all scenarios and alternatives consistent with RHNA. Full model documentation and a peer review report are available at: <http://www.kerncog.org/category/data-center/transportation-modeling/>.

The Plan and three primary alternatives are designed to provide a range of reasonable alternatives to the plan in accordance with CEQA regulations.

The Plan: The Plan alternative is a balanced reflection of the input received during the 4-year public involvement process. The following bullets highlight some of the plan assumptions:

- **Maintenance Investment:** Increased to fully maintain transportation infrastructure.
- **Telecommute Strategy:** Kern COG continues to use its CommuteKern program to encourage commuters and employers to expand telecommuting as a long-term strategy to reduce congestion and vehicle miles traveled. While telecommuting peaked in early pandemic-era, recent data indicate that approximately 40% of Kern County commuters would like to telecommute at least part of the week. Kern COG has increased resources for the CommuteKern program to strengthen employer outreach, commuter education, and supportive workplace policies to expand telecommuting participation across the region.
- **Transit/Bike/Walk Investment:** Transit investment is based on the 2025 Golden Empire Transit (GET) Long Range Transit Plan, the 2012 Kern Commuter Rail Study, and includes an expanded Bus Rapid Transit system for Metro Bakersfield and extends Metrolink commuter rail service from Lancaster to Rosamond in East Kern as well as High-Speed Rail stops in Bakersfield and Palmdale. Transit ridership is anticipated to increase with the use of on-demand micro-transit, shared mobility and autonomous vehicles to increase first/last mile connectivity. Additional bike and pedestrian improvements identified by the Kern County Active Transportation Plan would enhance transportation in revitalized areas. This alternative continues the rideshare program and adds the new 511 travel information system.
- **Housing Choices:** 30-40% of new housing growth characterized by multi-family, attached and small lot single family development less than ~6,000 square feet located predominately in Metropolitan Bakersfield consistent with the RTP/SCS and public input.
- **Revitalization:** Focus infill on vacant lots in Metropolitan Bakersfield and at the transit-oriented development (TOD)/infill sites identified in the GET Long Range Transit Plan, and the Bakersfield Downtown Station Area Vision Plan and consistent with the local General Plans.
- **Land Use Forecast:** This RTP/SCS utilizes the new 2024-2050 Growth Forecast adopted by the Kern COG board in April 2024. The distribution in Metropolitan Bakersfield has been revised to assume all vacant lots in developed areas are filled, consistent with the existing General Plan as well as some revitalization around TOD/infill sites and downtown. This alternative uses Uplan land use model software developed by UC Davis to re-distribute the growth from areas with the lowest level of economic attractions in Metro Bakersfield to the infill areas.
- **Highway Investment:** Transportation investments would continue to alleviate the most critical roadway bottlenecks while investing in operational improvements, improved truck flows, safety and demand management strategies such as promote of vanpool programs.

The No Project Alternative: The No Project alternative is required by Section 15126.6(e)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines and assumes that the proposed project would not be implemented. The No Project alternative allows decision-makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed project with the impacts of not approving the proposed project. However, “no project” does not

necessarily mean that development will be prohibited. The No Project alternative includes “what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and infrastructure that would be completed in the first 5 years of the Plan that is nearing or under construction. This alternative is consistent with the alternative in the 2022 RTP/SCS EIR.

The Old Plan Alternative: The Old Plan alternative is an update of the adopted 2022 RTP/SCS reflecting the most recent growth distribution and transportation planning decisions and assumptions. This Old Plan alternative does not include the updated development pattern strategies included within the 2026 Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) but includes all of the projects in the 2022 RTP/SCS. The growth scenario for the Old Plan is a combination of local input and existing General Plan and land use data provided by local jurisdictions during the 2022 RTP/SCS and Kern Regional Blueprint process which represented a significant change from previous development patterns. This alternative is consistent with the alternative in the 2022 RTP/SCS EIR.

The Countywide Infill Alternative: The Countywide Infill alternative would result in a more aggressive development pattern than the 2026 RTP Plan. Under the Infill alternative, new growth would be focused in the 2024 existing urban/built-up areas countywide. The housing mix in this alternative would average about two-thirds medium or high density. This alternative is consistent with the infill alternative in the 2022 RTP/SCS EIR.

C. Performance Measures and Indicators

The outputs generated by the transportation model are used to produce performance measures for the scenarios and alternatives. These measures such as Vehicle Miles Travels (VMT) are used to evaluate the efficiency of the transportation system. Indicators are produced mainly from the outputs generated by the land use model. Indicators such as land consumption are used to evaluate the impacts and benefits a future land use pattern may have. Indicators are also used to evaluate the co-benefits such as public health and are included in RTP Appendix D. The results of the measures indicate that the Plan will not negatively impact the predominantly minority and/or low-income communities at a rate greater than the County as a whole.

ARB has established percentage change in CO₂ per capita as a key measure to determine that the SCS (RTP Chapter 4) if implemented is projected to meet the SB 375 reduction targets of 9% by 2020 and 15% by 2035. The prior SCSs resulted in better CO₂ per capita reductions of 10.7% per capita by 2020 and this plan achieves the target of 15% by 2035.

D. Summary of Changes Compared to Previous Plan

The Draft 2026 RTP is very similar to the adopted 2022 RTP. Following is a list of substantive changes found in the 2026 RTP.

- The 2026 Plan horizon was extended from 2046 to 2049, however it still covers over 20 years of growth.
- The Plan uses a significantly lower revised growth forecast adopted by the Kern COG Board in 2024.
- The Plan includes several policy updates based on public input from groups such as the Tejon Indian Tribe a representative from which now serves on the RTP/SCS oversight committee.
- The Plan incorporates recommendations of the Safe Routes for Cyclists community outreach and education program.

- The Plan is consistent with the extensive public feedback and transit priorities highlighted in the 2025 GET Long-range Transit plan, increasing the existing fleet of 14 hydrogen buses.
- The Plan incorporates updates to local General Plan land use assumptions.
- The Plan assumes new funding from sources such as the latest federal transportation spending bill and new grant programs, Safe Streets and Roads for All, state Cap & Invest programs, and other new and/or potential sources. If some of these sources are repealed or not fully realized, certain types of projects could slip depending on which are not fully funded.
- The Plan has the advantage of an improved Travel Model with observed base year data and assumptions updated from 2020 to 2023. Over 700 annually surveyed traffic count locations were used to ground truth the model.
- The Plan benefits from two additional federal performance measures to provide better accountability. The award-winning integrated performance measure process also provides an analysis of impacts on predominantly minority and/or low-income areas.

E. Summary of Comments, Responses & Refinements

RTP Comments: Kern COG received 30 comment submission, 20 were written comment emails/letters from local residents, a comment from the City of Delano, and 7 comment letters from: Kern Community College District, Leadership Council for Justice & Accountability, California Department of Transportation, Center on Race Poverty & the Environment, Mojave Air & Space Port, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, and California High Speed Rail Authority. Additionally, Kern COG received verbal public comments during the June 18th 2026 Public Hearing from Leadership Council for Justice & Accountability and 5 residents.

- 1) **Local residents written comments:** focused on transportation needs and improvements in the Rosamond and Mojave areas, including roadway safety and maintenance, traffic operations, pedestrian facilities, access to SR 14 and SR 58, railroad crossings and grade separation, emergency access, and regional connectivity.
***Summary Response:** Kern COG provided detailed responses addressing the specific transportation needs identified by residents and identified related projects and strategies included in the 2026 RTP. Responses also clarified the role of Kern COG and other responsible agencies, the funding and implementation status of projects, and Kern COG's continued coordination with local and state agencies to pursue transportation improvements and funding opportunities.*
- 2) **The City of Delano:** requested a correction to a project title.
***Summary Response:** Kern COG made the requested correction.*
- 3) **Kern Community College District:** commented on two additional success stories to add to Appendix E of the RTP.
***Summary Response:** Kern COG will consider the additional success stories for future amendments or updates to the RTP.*
- 4) **Leadership Council for Justice and Accountability (LCJA) written comments:** related to the RTP focused on active transportation, pedestrian safety, environmental justice, community engagement, and transportation infrastructure needs in disadvantaged communities, particularly Fuller Acres, Unidos por el Agua, Shirley Lane, and Doney Street. Comments also addressed safety and potential projects along SR 184, freight movement and the KARGO projects, air quality and public health impacts. Comments related to the PEIR are addressed in the PEIR section.

Summary Response: Kern COG provided detailed responses addressing the identified transportation and environmental justice concerns, including existing and planned pedestrian, bicycle, safety, and roadway improvements and applicable RTP policies. Kern COG affirmed its commitment to Title VI, environmental justice, public engagement, and multimodal transportation goals; identified funding and projects in the RTP that could address several of the requested improvements; clarified that certain projects remain conceptual and subject to further planning; and committed to continued coordination and meetings with LCJA, local agencies, and Caltrans to advance appropriate solutions.

- 5) **California Department of Transportation:** comments related to the RTP focused on suggest changes and clarifications to further demonstrate consistency with state policies and statutes. Comments related to conformity analysis are addressed in the conformity analysis section.

Summary Response: Kern COG has provided clarifications and edits to demonstrate consistency with state policies and statutes.

- 6) **Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment:** comments related to the RTP focused on freight and goods movement, including the potential effects of intermodal facilities, inland ports and expanding warehousing, truck and rail electrification, local infrastructure investments in environmental justice communities, emergency preparedness, flood and extreme-heat resilience, warehouse-related road fees. Comments related to the PEIR are summarized in the PEIR section above and full responses in the Final PEIR document.

Summary Response: Kern COG provided detailed responses addressing the commenter's concerns, expanded policies and incorporated additional information and revisions into the RTP to address the comments. The responses also clarified the assumptions used in the RTP's freight modeling and identified existing and planned policies, programs, and projects intended to address transportation, environmental, and community impacts.

- 7) **Mojave Air & Space Port:** comments related to the RTP emphasized the facility's national significance as a commercial spaceport and aerospace test center, and requested stronger recognition of its role as an industrial employment hub and logistics asset in eastern Kern County. They also urged continued prioritization of access improvements, freight mobility, resilient infrastructure, emerging aviation technologies, and ongoing coordination with aerospace and industrial stakeholders. Comments related to the PEIR are addressed in the PEIR section.

Summary Response: Kern COG updated the RTP to incorporate expanded recognition of Mojave Air & Space Port's aerospace, industrial, and transportation roles, adding new text in multiple sections to address MASP's requests. The responses also reaffirm continued prioritization of access, freight mobility, resiliency, and stakeholder coordination consistent with RTP/SCS policies.

- 8) **San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District:** focused on reducing VMT, advancing clean-air design in new development, applying best practices for freight facility siting, evaluating truck routing to protect nearby communities, and ensuring compliance with Rule 9510 for major projects. The District emphasized strategies that lower emissions from passenger travel, heavy-duty trucks, and freight operations while improving community health protections.

Summary Response: Kern COG noted that the RTP already incorporates VMT-reduction strategies, clean truck technology policies, freight best-practice references, truck-routing protections, and expanded discussion of Rule 9510 requirements. Additional clarifying text and footnotes were added to strengthen alignment with District recommendations and ensure these strategies are reflected in future planning and project-level coordination.

- 9) **California High-Speed Rail Authority:** comments emphasized that statewide high-speed rail will expand access to jobs and housing, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and support Kern COG's long-range planning goals. They also highlighted ongoing evaluation of Bakersfield station options, support for multimodal access improvements at SR 204, and concerns about growth assumptions related to future highway projects.

Summary Response: Kern COG affirmed that high-speed rail's mobility and sustainability benefits align with the RTP/SCS and updated the RTP to reflect ongoing station planning, interim concepts, and multimodal access coordination. Kern COG also clarified regional growth assumptions, corrected project timing, and explained that the SR 204 improvements are designed as managed lanes to support reliable bus and HSR station access.

- 10) **Leadership Council for Justice and Accountability (LCJA) public hearing comments:** focused on advocating for residents from Fuller Acres and Shirley Lane communities requested that the RTP include new complete streets projects and near-term pedestrian safety improvements along Weedpatch Highway and within their neighborhoods, citing dangerous walking conditions, past fatalities, and lack of basic infrastructure such as sidewalks, speed control, and safe routes to school and transit. They emphasized that these projects align with existing RTP safety and equity policies and urged Kern COG, Kern County, and Caltrans to incorporate them into the final plan.

Summary Response: Kern COG noted that several of the requested projects are eligible for RSTP funding but must be prioritized and applied for by the local jurisdictions, as RSTP funds are limited and programmed in grouped categories within the RTP. Kern COG also referenced responses to LCJA's written RTP comments.

- 11) **Local Residents public hearing comments:** described long-standing safety hazards caused by the absence of sidewalks, drainage, lighting, signage, and safe crossings, noting frequent near-misses, past fatalities, and dangerous conditions for children, elderly residents, and people with disabilities. They urged Kern COG to include complete-streets projects, pedestrian infrastructure, and basic safety improvements in the RTP to address decades of unmet needs in the disadvantaged communities of Fuller Acres and along the Weedpatch Highway corridor.

Summary Response: Kern COG referenced prior responses to LCJA's similar written comments advocating for these residents and their communities. Kern COG also noted that many of the proposed improvements fall under local-jurisdiction responsibility and funding programs such as the RSTP. Kern COG is forwarding signage-related requests to Kern County and Caltrans and reiterated that project prioritization and applications for available funding must be initiated by the responsible local agencies.

FTIP Comments: Comments were received from California Department of Transportation Office of Federal Programming and Data Management email dated 6/25/26 with 26 comments and from District 6 Office of Asset and Program Management email dated 7/16/26 with 4 comments on the FTIP. The Draft Final 2027 FTIP is available at: www.kerncog.org/2027-ftip/

- 1) **California Department of Transportation, Office of Federal Programming** provided 26 comments on additional information they would like Kern COG to provide.

Summary Response: Provided clarifying edits and verifications requested regarding 16 projects in the FTIP.

- 2) **California Department of Transportation, District 6 Office of Asset and Program Management** provided 4 comments on additional information they would like Kern COG to provide.

Summary Response: *Provided clarifying edits and verifications requested regarding 4 projects in the FTIP.*

Conformity Comment: Comments were received from California Department of Transportation Air Quality Conformity Branch email dated 6/25/26 with 7 comments on the federal air quality Conformity document.

- 1) **California Department of Transportation, Air Quality Conformity Branch** provided 7 comments on suggested edits and clarifications.

Summary Response: *Provided requested text updates and clarifications.*

RTP PEIR Comments: Five comment letters were received relating to the Draft 2026 RTP Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). The PEIR comment letters were from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, Mojave Air & Space Port, Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment, and Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability. A summary of the comments and responses is provided below. Full responses and the bracketed comment letters are provided in the Final PEIR.

- 1) **California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)** comments focused on biological resources and requested revisions/additional guidance regarding special-status wildlife and plants, species status information, biological surveys, nesting birds, wildlife movement and habitat connectivity, infrastructure and wildlife-crossing design, compensatory mitigation, CNDDDB information, cumulative biological impacts, and lake and streambed alteration.

Summary Response: *The suggested revisions were incorporated into the Final PEIR and mitigation measure BIO-12 was revised in response to this letter.*

- 2) **San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District** comments focused on air quality and strategies for project-level implementation. The Air District provided information and recommendations on VMT-reduction strategies, freight facility design, construction and operational emissions, health risk assessments and screening, coordination with the District, Voluntary Emission Reduction Agreements, truck routing, and applicable District incentive programs, permitting requirements, and rules.

Summary Response: *The Final EIR was updated to include additional information on the rules and links to resources and factsheets were also added. Several mitigation measures were revised to include references to the air district's suggested measures.*

- 3) **Mojave Air & Space Port** comments included aviation hazards and airport land use compatibility, including FAA Part 77, the State Aeronautics Act, airport compatibility planning, potential hazards to airport operations, and consistency with the Kern County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP). The commenter also recommended mitigation related to airport hazards and land use compatibility.

Summary Response: *The suggested mitigation measures were included in the Final PEIR. Clarifications related to ALUCPs were also added to the Final PEIR.*

- 4) **Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment** comments primarily related to the PEIR's air quality and health-effects analysis, including emissions methodology and assumptions, particulate matter and diesel emissions, toxic air contaminants, health impacts, climate change effects on TACs, transportation refrigeration units, cumulative impacts, and impacts

associated with freight development. The letter also requested additional information on reasonably foreseeable projects and requested additional mitigation for freight-related impacts.

Summary Response: *Kern COG prepared a detailed response to this letter. Many of the issues were related to the RTP and are addressed in the RTP response to comments. For the issues related to the PEIR, Kern COG prepared a detailed Master Response that clarified Kern COG's modeling methodology and assumptions. Details on the land use, transportation and emissions model were provided. An additional health study was summarized and added to the Final EIR and details related to how Kern COG determines which projects are reasonably foreseeable were also addressed in the responses.*

- 5) **Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability** comments related to the PEIR raised concerns regarding future projects relying on or tiering from the programmatic PEIR and emphasized the need for project-specific environmental review and mitigation of localized impacts, particularly impacts affecting communities near goods-movement and transportation projects.

Summary Response: *The response clarified tiering under CEQA.*

Refinements: Since the release of the draft documents, Kern COG has made several refinements to the document that do not affect the analysis or conclusions in the PEIR. Some of the refinements were initiated by staff to correct typographical and other errors. The comment-initiated refinements are summarized below and will be detailed as applicable in Appendix H of the Final Draft 2026 RTP, in the Final PEIR, the Final 2027 FTIP and Final Conformity Analysis to be posted at www.kerncog.org/2026-rtp . All documents will be posted on September 4, 2026.

F. Next Steps & Conclusion

- **September 2, 2026** – TTAC/RPAC Considers Recommendation of Adoption of the 2026 RTP/SCS, PEIR, 2027 FTIP and Conformity documents
- **September 17, 2026** – Transportation Planning Policy Committee (TPPC) Board Considers Adoption of the 2026 RTP/SCS, PEIR, 2027 FTIP and Conformity documents
- December/Jan 2026 - ARB Determines if an Alternative Planning Strategy is Required
- **December 2026** – FHWA/EPA approves Conformity, FHWA/FTA approves FTIP
- **2027** – Kern COG updates its Public Information Policies & Procedures and the Regional Growth Forecast
- **2030** – Kern COG considers adoption of the 2030 RTP/SCS

Conclusion: The development and performance of the 2026 RTP/SCS, PEIR, 2027 FTIP, and Conformity documents, including public outreach, meet federal, state and Kern COG requirements. The Final PEIR was developed with expert consulting services including a CEQA attorney. The resulting planning documents balance extensive, bottom-up public input with an award-winning, measured, performance-based approach, providing an effective Plan and vision that advances the goals of the Kern COG Board, while facilitating project delivery. Staff recommends approval of this action item.

Attachments: RTP Executive Summary

ACTION:

Recommend to the Transportation Planning Policy Committee to adopt the FINAL 2026

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN/SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGY; FINAL 2027 FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM; FINAL PROGRAMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT; CORRESPONDING FINAL AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY ANALYSIS and RESPONSE TO COMMENTS. ROLL CALL VOTE.



DRAFT – May 2026

Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy Executive Summary



2025 Outsiders Kindergarten Transportation Parade – Bakersfield CA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ABSTRACT

This Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) establishes a comprehensive, multimodal vision for a safe, equitable, and sustainable transportation system serving the Kern, one-county region over a 20-plus year planning horizon. Prepared in accordance with the most recent guidelines adopted by the California Transportation Commission, the RTP identifies current and future transportation needs, system deficiencies, and constraints while advancing strategies to improve mobility for people and goods. The plan integrates land use, environmental stewardship, and transportation investment decisions to support regional and statewide goals, including economic vitality, public health, system resilience, and climate change mitigation. This comprehensive document incorporates required sections on Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), Congestion Management Program (CMP), growth forecasts, policies, financing, performance measures, public outreach and numerous other requirements. As a long-range policy document, the RTP communicates a grassroots vision providing a foundation for programming and funding decisions.

Consistent with state and federal requirements, the RTP presents a coordinated and balanced approach to transportation planning across all modes, including highways, transit, rail, aviation, goods movement, bicycle, and pedestrian systems. The plan is both action-oriented and fiscally informed, addressing near-term

(0–5 year) and long-term (15–20+ year) implementation horizons while maintaining internal consistency between policy priorities and financial constraints. Core elements of the RTP include identification of regional transportation issues, quantification of needs, and development of policies and strategies that guide decision-making and investment. These elements are designed to ensure a continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process that aligns regional priorities with statewide objectives and supports delivery of implementable transportation projects.

The RTP also reflects an inclusive and performance-based planning framework that incorporates stakeholder engagement, environmental considerations, and evolving mobility trends. Emphasis is placed on enhancing system safety, improving accessibility for disadvantaged communities, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and increasing transportation system efficiency and reliability. Through collaboration with local jurisdictions, state and federal agencies, tribal governments, and direct outreach to the public which has garnered input from over 10,500 residents, the RTP advances a grassroots, shared vision for a resilient and integrated transportation network. This approach ensures that transportation investments are responsive to regional needs while contributing to broader state and federal policy goals and regulatory requirements.

INTRODUCTION

Kern COG was established in 1970 with a joint powers agreement (JPA) between the eleven cities and the county of Kern, creating a governing body made up of elected representatives from each municipality and two of the County Supervisors. It is a federally designated

The Kern region's air monitoring system has demonstrated an 80% improvement in NOx emissions since 1980... In addition, the Kern region has outperformed the 2020 state greenhouse gas (GHG) target, and this plan shows we are on track to achieve the 2035 GHG target... for passenger vehicles and light-duty trucks

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and a state designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA). The JPA and these designations formally establish Kern COG's role in transportation planning. Preparing the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is one of Kern COG's primary federal and state roles. The RTP is a 24-year blueprint that establishes a set of regional transportation

goals, policies, and actions intended to guide development of the planned multimodal transportation systems in Kern. It has been developed through a federally required continuous, comprehensive, and cooperative planning process, and provides effective coordination between local, regional, state and federal agencies on a 4-year update cycle.

Major Issues

This continuous plan development process greatly advances the goals from prior cycles. For example, adopted concurrently with the RTP is the federal air quality conformity analysis demonstrating attainment of federal Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. The Kern region's air monitoring system has demonstrated an 80% improvement in NOx emissions since 1980, advancing federal conformity goals. NOx emissions are precursor gases in the formation of Ozone and Particulate Matter, health-based criteria pollutants.

In addition, the Kern region has outperformed the 2020 state greenhouse gas (GHG) target required by Senate Bill

Figure ES-1: 1st in U.S. All Electric Off-Grid Solar Truck Stop on SR 65 in Bakersfield, 50 Spaces – World's Largest Off-Grid EV Solar Charging Facility with 168 Spaces on SR 46 near Lost Hills



(SB) 375, and this plan shows we are on track to achieve the 2035 GHG target set by the California Air Resources Board (ARB) for passenger vehicles/light-duty trucks. The region's targets were set at 9 percent per capita reduction by 2020, and the 15 percent per capita by 2035 as compared to 2005. These targets are discussed in the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)

...goals for greater housing choices reflect low-income housing need while supporting directed transit planning and investment

found in Chapter 4 of this Plan.

Continued progress toward the state target and federal air conformity budgets will not be easy. For both conformity and the SCS, the simple reductions have been achieved and the region needs to fully implement the remaining strategies and measures identified in this plan such as zero emission charging infrastructure (See **Figure ES-1**) if these air emission goals are to be met.

The SB 375 SCS law also provides for closer integration of the RTP/SCS with the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) plan.

Developed on an 8-year cycle, RHNA goals for greater housing choices reflect low-income housing need while supporting directed transit planning and investment. Kern COG closely coordinated the RHNA and RTP/SCS development process using the same oversight committee for both. Local jurisdictions use the RHNA goal to identify locations to provide sufficient housing for all economic segments of the population and ensure that the state's housing goals are met. These goals also include efforts to provide more compact/affordable housing choices that support RTP/SCS investment in transit (See **Figure ES-2**).

In addition to coordination with air quality and housing goals, Kern COG addresses environmental issues in a Program Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR), prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), for the RTP. Individual transportation projects are preliminarily identified in the RTP; however, the Program EIR analyzes potential environmental impacts from a regional perspective, providing opportunities for streamlining the analysis required in project specific environmental documents.

Figure ES-2: Central Bakersfield Core Area Incentives Have Resulted in 1,300 Units in 10 years Supporting Transit Investment Along Planned Bus Rapid transit/Future Light Rail Corridors



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Listening to the Citizens and Stakeholders

Our region's continuous public participation process encourages participation at every stage of the planning process, and all meetings are actively promoted and open to the public. Community engagement and outreach are fundamental to the development of this

By nature, this plan represents the region's mutual vision for its future and was developed using grassroots, bottom-up approach, garnering input from over 10,500 residents at over 50 events, public meetings and surveys (online/ phone/text) with Spanish translation, across the region over the past 4 years

RTP/SCS. By nature, this plan represents the region's mutual vision for its future and was developed using a grassroots, bottom-up approach, garnering input from over 10,500 residents at over 50 events, public meetings and surveys (online/phone/text) with Spanish translation, across the region over the past 4 years. The community engagement process gathered residents'

input on their priorities for the region's long-term future, while balancing survey responses with more informed, yet perhaps less representative, responses at public events. The outreach featured four statically valid 1,200-person phone/text surveys with oversampling in disadvantaged communities. The outreach process extended from January 2023 through June 2026. The program provided numerous opportunities for community members, and local stakeholders, and local agencies to participate, including public workshops, community events, interactive and educational booths at festivals and fairs, online via the project website (www.kerncog.org/2026-rtp), statistically valid phone/text surveys, and presentations to various community groups (See **Figure ES-3**).

What we heard was that most residents want to maintain, fix and finish what we have. A discussion of Kern COG's extensive public participation activities is found in Chapter 4 of the RTP, and a Summary of Findings is documented in **Appendix C** of the RTP.

Figure ES-3: Over 10,500 Residents Participated in Over 50 Public Outreach Events and Surveys, Such as Events at an Arvin Church, Taft Festival and Wasco Police Activities League



OUR VISION: Maintain, Fix and Finish What We Have

In response to the extensive grassroots public input, the Kern COG RTP process has placed an emphasis on achieving air emission, safety, and economic goals while maintaining, fixing and finishing our transportation system. The intent of the SCS chapter 4 is to achieve the state's

The safe, secure, and efficient transportation systems will provide improved access to opportunities, such as education, jobs and healthcare.

emission reduction targets for automobiles and light trucks. The SCS will also provide opportunities for a stronger economy, healthier environment, and safer quality of life for all of Kern's diverse communities.

This RTP/SCS seeks to: improve economic vitality, air quality, community health, mobility and safety, while promoting the conservation of natural resources and undeveloped land, regional access to community services, increase energy independence, and increase opportunities to help shape our community's future.

Kern County is unlike any other region in California. Kern's large size and diverse valley, desert and mountain environs are dominated by agriculture, oil production, renewable energy, aerospace, military, recreation, transportation linkages and other activities that warrant unique and different approaches to address RTP/SCS goals. These economic pursuits are the basis for dispersed rural centers and strategic locations for developments within the county that are unlike other areas of the state. Accordingly, unique strategies are needed to support Kern's equity, economic, and environmental transportation goals. This uniqueness is reflected in the General Plans and programs of Kern County's local governments and the RTP/SCS.

This RTP/SCS supports an improved quality of life for our residents by providing more choices for where they will live, work, and play, and how they will move around. The safe, secure, and efficient transportation systems will provide improved access to opportunities, such as education, jobs and healthcare. Promoting bike and ped safety is one of many strategies being employed to achieve our vision (See **Figures ES-4 & -5**).

Figure ES-4: Active Transportation Program - Portable Mock City Bike Safety Training Kit



CHALLENGES/SOLUTIONS

Solutions for the Economy and Air Quality - Kern County continues to suffer from unemployment rates that are nearly double State average. In 2020, Kern County sank to the 2nd worst poverty rate after tiny Del Norte County at the northwest corner of the state, while the rest of the state has been recovering from the great recession

...every \$1 billion spent on roadway infrastructure creates 13,000 job years

and pandemic, state policies to combat climate change have slowed Kern's recovery. Those policies have curtailed groundwater pumping for agriculture, and new investment in oil production, two of Kern's primary economic sectors.

The Federal Highway Administration estimates that every \$1 billion spent on roadway infrastructure creates 13,000 job years while transit creates 40,000 job years of employment. This value is generated by direct construction, indirect construction suppliers and induced jobs in retail, services and other sectors that benefit from more efficient goods movement

(<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/otps/pubs/i mpacts/>). The induced jobs make up about 1/3rd of the total jobs. The plan's \$14 billion (see Chapter 5, Table 5-1), 24-year investment plan is projected to add 64,740 5-year job positions, increasing Kern's economic base, adding capacity to re-invest in an ever more efficient/cleaner transportation system, triggering an upward economic spiral for future generations.

Since the 1990s, the Kern region has achieved consistent improvements in the number of days exceeding federal standards for ozone and particulate matter, generally defined as "fine dust". In 2012, Kern demonstrated attainment of the 1-hour ozone standard and has made significant progress on the 8-hour ozone and PM2.5 standards. Advancing emission reduction strategies helps our region to make significant progress toward both federal and state air emission goals. Strategies such as improving transit, bike, walk, and housing options. For example, bike and ped projects are fully funded (see **Figure ES-4 & -5**).

Figure ES-5: 90% of Project Mileage in 30-Year Bike & Pedestrian Complete Streets Plan Delivered in Just 15 Years



Financial Challenges - Of all the challenges facing us today, there is none more critical than funding. With the projected growth in population, employment and demand for travel, the costs of our multimodal transportation system surpass projected revenues available from our historic transportation

... federal gas tax revenues have failed to keep up with inflation. Additionally, the increase in the number of electric and hybrid vehicles that pay significantly less gas tax per mile...

funding source – the gas tax. Maintaining the local transportation infrastructure is of critical importance for the entire region and was ranked as the highest priority based on public outreach. Funding from the federal gas tax has traditionally been used to support the maintenance of these facilities. Over time, however, federal gas tax revenues have failed to keep up with inflation. Additionally, the increase in the number of electric and hybrid vehicles that pay significantly less gas tax per mile traveled only exacerbates the problem. In 2005, Former Congressman Bill Thomas secured \$720M in federal appropriations

which leveraged additional state and federal grant funding totaling over \$1B in transportation infrastructure expenditures in Kern. However, these funds are now nearly expended and there are no new funding sources identified to replace these one-time funds (see **Figure ES-6**).

The 2017 state gas tax increase known as SB 1, is a temporary solution to this problem. When adopted in 2017, estimates were that by 2030 the tax on gasoline will diminish to the point that another transportation funding source will be needed because of the number of electric cars on the road. In addition, the tax increase was estimated to only bring in half what was needed to bring our roadways up to good condition and being just enough to keep the road system from getting any worse. Thanks to the gas tax increase and heroic efforts of local jurisdictions and Caltrans, Kern continues to see the road pavement condition index hover between 63 and 65 out of 100. A long-term, funding solution is needed.

Most regions in the state have taken the maintenance and improvement of their transportation systems into their own

Figure ES-6: 2024 Ribbon Cutting - SR 58 Centennial Connector Freeway Shaves-Off an Average of 12 Miles on Trips Between I-40 and the Northern San Joaquin Valley/Bay Area via I-5



hands and have become “Self-Help” counties, by passing a local ½ cent retail sales tax measure protected from state raids during economic downturns. The State has also identified a special fund of state gas tax revenue for regions that are Self-Help. Kern is the largest county in the

From 2019 to 2024 public transit services in Kern countywide saw a 47% decrease in passengers

state without a local sales tax for transportation and misses out on \$2 million per year from this special fund, even though our residents pay into it.

Furthermore, with recent declines in transit ridership and fare revenue due to the pandemic, the region’s transit operators continue to face major obstacles to providing frequent and convenient transit services. Local and regional public transit is available within and between sixteen Kern County communities and has been experiencing challenges. From 2019 to 2024 public transit services in Kern countywide saw a 47% decrease in passengers from 7.9 million to 4 million. New services such as zero emission bus

rapid transit (BRT), combined with Uber/Lyft style, curb-to-curb, on-demand, last-mile, micro-transit are promising but need funds to implement/operate (See **Figure ES-7**).

PLANNING FOR GROWTH

Population, Housing, Employment & Traffic Forecasts - Population in the 8,200 square mile County of Kern was estimated to be over 924,000 in January 2025. Growth since the pandemic has been nearly flat at 1/3rd of one percent per year or about 3,000 people annually according to the California Department of Finance. The Kern COG adopted 2022 RTP forecast, projects 10,460 people per year over the 24-year planning period. This equated to a total growth of 30 percent. The revised population growth estimate shows only 11 percent resulting in a total population of 1,017,200 by 2049. This significant reduction has been driven primarily by out-migration exceeding natural increase (births minus deaths). Recent trends show a large exodus of people leaving the major urban counties and moving to more suburban counties like Riverside, or out of state. The Kern region remains California’s eleventh most populated county ahead of San Francisco, but behind Fresno County.

Figure ES-7: Arvin All Electric Fleet – 6 Buses and 1 Dial-a-Ride Vehicle - Golden Empire Transit Now Operates 14 Hydrogen and 70 CNG Buses



According to the California Employment Development Department (EDD), the unemployment rate is close to double the state rate reaching a high of 18.7% during the pandemic and is currently a little over 9% for January 2026. Kern's continued high unemployment rate is partially due to the

To help mitigate the increased trucking, a \$100M trucking container depot and intermodal rail facility is under construction in Shafter. This is the only "BNSF Certified Site" in California marketed by the class one railroad.

slowdown in the oil and agriculture sectors.

Much of Kern employment is dispersed, such that, the Metropolitan Bakersfield area experiences a "reverse commute" whereby workers commute to outlying areas such as agricultural fields, food processing facilities, distribution/logistic centers, wind farms, oil fields, prisons, power plants, and military installations.

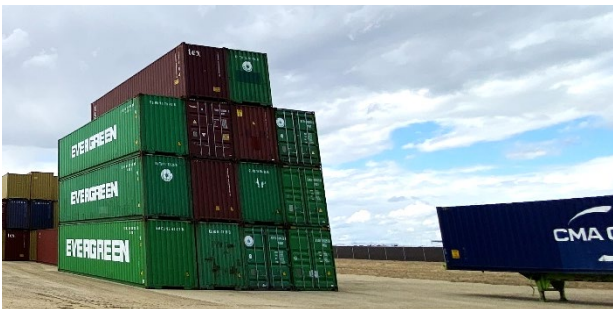
Goods Movement Increase - Kern has noticed a significant increase in trucking since 2018. According to the California Traffic Census, I-5 over the Grapevine has

seen truck traffic increase by 25% between 2018 and 2023. Warehousing and manufacturing square footage has doubled since the pandemic, in part due to a moratorium on new warehousing in the Inland Empire counties in Southern California. That warehousing demand has spilled over into the San Joaquin Valley, driving increased truck traffic.

To help mitigate the increased trucking, a \$100M trucking container depot and intermodal rail facility is under construction in Shafter (See **Figure ES-8**). This is the only "BNSF Certified Site" in California marketed by a class one railroad ([bnsf-premier-one-sheet-shafter-ca.pdf](https://www.bnsf.com/premier-one-sheet-shafter-ca.pdf)). The facility has a shipping price from BNSF to the ports of L.A./Long Beach and the Midwest that is competitive with trucking. Diverting these truck shipments to rail at Shafter reduces road-wear, emissions, congestion and traffic incidents on I-5 and 58 over the passes. Shipping by rail is 10 times more energy efficient and 7 times less polluting.

Regional Planning efforts such as the Kern Area Regional Goods Movement Operations (KARGO) Community Prosperity and Protection Study are identifying strategies to mitigate the negative effects of

Figure ES-8: April 2026 - 600 Plus Containers at Wonderful Company Shafter Container Depot Demonstrating Market for \$100M Intermodal Rail Yard Under Construction on BNSF Main line



goods movement in the region while enabling the economic benefits of high-tech jobs in resource processing, manufacturing, and logistics.

Land Use Development - Land use is one of the most important elements of effective transportation planning. Kern COG does

...the equity analysis has demonstrated that funds are being expended in a manner that benefits disadvantage communities better or as well as all communities countywide.

not have jurisdiction over land use planning, but the agency does advise and encourage dialogue among those involved in the decision-making process. The RTP/SCS and Regional RHNA were developed in consultation with local jurisdictions and are consistent with existing adopted general plans and zoning. Kern COG will continue to use the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to communicate with Kern cities and the county on issues of land use, transportation, and air quality to ensure that land use projects are environmentally sound.

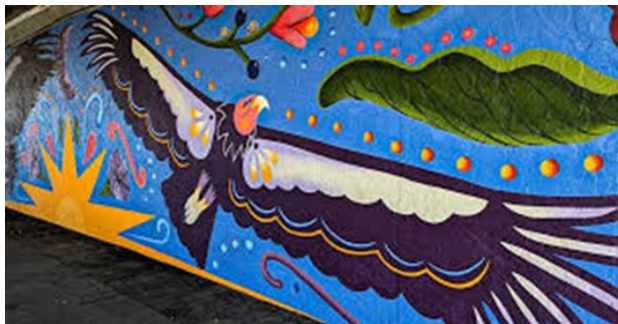
PLANNING SUCCESSES

Updated on a 4-year cycle, here are a few notable sustainable community successes from the implementation of past plans. Over 60 success stories are found in **Appendix E**.

Clean California Highway Murals – Using local artists and themes several major highway bridge ramps and underpasses were decorated with beautiful murals through a grant from the Clean California Local Grant Program provided by Caltrans. (See **Figure ES-9**)

Equity - Every RTP cycle since 1998 has included an Integrated Environmental Justice Performance Measure Analysis (see **Appendix D**). Each cycle the equity analysis has demonstrated that funds are being expended in a manner that benefits disadvantage communities better or as well as all communities countywide. This is in large part because of the grassroots public outreach effort that ensures that the projects in the plan are supported by all communities.

Figure ES-9: Clean California Local Grant Program – SR 204 Garces Circle Overpass Murals



Safety – Although safety has seen some challenges in recent years based on performance measures, the Kern Region has completed a joint update of safety plans for 9 jurisdictions in 2022, ensuring

77% of investments in this plan are for operations/maintenance, active transportation, & transit projects.

eligibility for Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds.

Telecommute Strategy – The Kern region has continued its strong support for telecommuting through its Commute Kern program. As demonstrated during the pandemic, over 35% of workers telecommuted up from 5% in prior years. Local statistically valid surveys indicate that approximately 10% of all workers plan to continue telecommuting after the pandemic, resulting in the single most

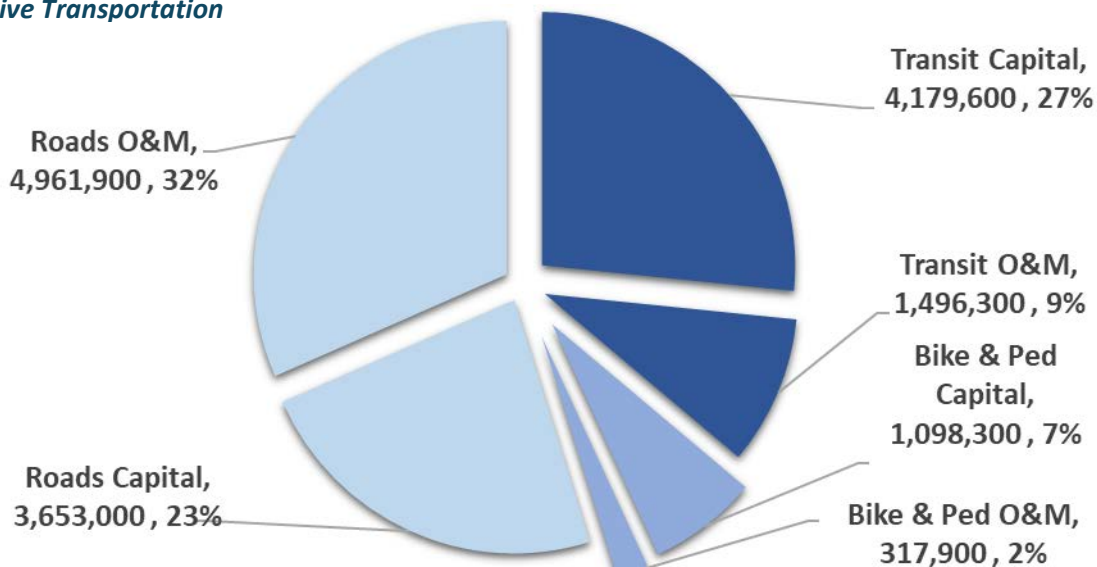
effective strategy for reduction of commute related traffic and emissions.

Longest Class I Car-Free Bike Trail in California – Started in 1976, Kern County has now completed the longest dedicated paved bike trail in the state extending 36.3 miles from Lake Ming to Lake Webb along the banks of the Kern River. The paved bikeway is used by commuters and recreational riders alike, promoting this plans sustainability and livability goals.

STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS

The RTP/SCS includes a forecast of reasonably available revenue over the next 20-plus years at \$15.7 billion (See Chapter 6). This RTP promotes a more efficient transportation system that calls for fully funding alternative transportation modes, while emphasizing transportation demand and transportation system management approaches for new capacity. 77% of investments in this Plan are for operations/

Figure ES-10: Investments by Mode 2026-2049 (\$ x 1,000) 77% for Operations/Maintenance, Transit & Active Transportation



maintenance, active transportation, and transit projects (See **Figure ES-10**).

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

The RTP fulfills multiple requirements with one document:

- Congestion Management Program
- Sustainable Communities Strategy & Rural Urban Connectivity Strategy
- Regional Housing Need Allocation
- Environmental Justice & Performance Measure Analysis
- Safety-Security Action Element

As the Congestion Management Agency, Kern COG prepares the federally required Congestion Management Program (CMP) which is integrated into Chapter 5 of the RTP. Through the Kern Regional Traffic Count Program, Kern COG monitors compliance with the congestion standards set in the CMP. The Program includes an innovative multi-model deficiency plan policy that looks at ways to improve mobility, such as HOV lanes to keep transit moving during peak congested periods. Note that since 2006, the number of segments on the CMP system that were showing congestion deficiencies has shrunk from 8 down to 1. This is primarily due to the slower population growth discussed above.

The SCS includes a Rural Urban Connectivity Strategy designed to ensure that rural economic sectors—agriculture, energy, tourism, military, and others—are not left out of efforts to provide for a more efficient transportation system.

To ensure consistency with the SCS, Kern COG engaged in the RHNA process concurrently with the development of the RTP. The RHNA is an 8-year document that provides low-income housing goals for each community in the region.

Recognized as a state best practice, the Kern RTP includes an innovative analysis with the Integrated Performance Measures Analysis for System Level, Smart Mobility Framework, Health Equity, Environmental Justice, and Title VI. The analysis includes Safety, and Ch. 5 includes the Safety-Security Action Element.

RTP GOALS

Figure ES-11 lists the 7 publicly vetted goals of the Regional Transportation Plan.

RTP SUMMARY HANDOUTS

The following handouts summarize this RTP/SCS benefits and assumptions.

Figure ES-11: Kern's 7 Long-Range Regional Transportation Planning 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; and
7. **Equity** – Ensure equitable distribution of the benefits among various demographic & user groups.

SUMMARY OF BENEFITS

2026 Regional Transportation Plan

The region represented by the Kern Council of Governments is projected to grow by more than 11% by 2049. To protect the quality of life for future generations, the 2026 RTP is presented as an economic development strategy as well as a transportation infrastructure and sustainability investment.

MOBILITY BENEFITS

- ✓ The plan improves overall mobility and provides needed congestion relief by maintaining, fixing and finishing what we have
- ✓ The plan fully funds maintenance of the transportation system while increasing funding for bike, pedestrian, and transit facilities
- ✓ Implementation of the plan will nearly double the number of homes within walking distance to quality transit. By integrating land use and transportation, more than 70% of homes will be near quality transit compared to less than 60% under older plans.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

- ✓ The Federal Highway Administration estimates that every \$1 billion spent on transportation infrastructure creates 13,000 job years of which 1/3rd can persist long after construction, generated by increased labor from better mobility and more efficient goods movement.
- ✓ This 24-year investment plan is projected to add over 64,740 5-year jobs) from construction, maintenance, and better mobility, and saves 21,000 additional existing jobs that would have been lost because of poor road conditions.
- ✓ The plan could ultimately add about 21,600 5-year permanent non-transportation sector jobs to the region, increasing Kern's economic base, adding capacity to re-invest in an ever more efficient transportation system, triggering an upward economic spiral for future generations.

HEALTH BENEFITS

- ✓ Improve air quality and public health by reducing all criteria pollutants, emissions and their precursors to meet national standards – oxides of nitrogen (Nox), reactive organic gasses (ROG), particulate matter (PM10), fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and Carbon Monoxide (CO).
- ✓ 4% or more reduction in health expenditures because of improved air quality.
- ✓ Promotes more active transportation by fully funding the Kern Active Transportation Plan and increasing funding for bike and pedestrian facilities by 700% over the 2011 RTP.

SUSTAINABILITY BENEFITS

- ✓ 20% reduction in farmland converted to urban/built-up uses outside city spheres of influence.
- ✓ 15% reduction in household water use providing a full range of housing choices
- ✓ 3% reduction in infrastructure costs by revitalizing existing communities compared to past plans

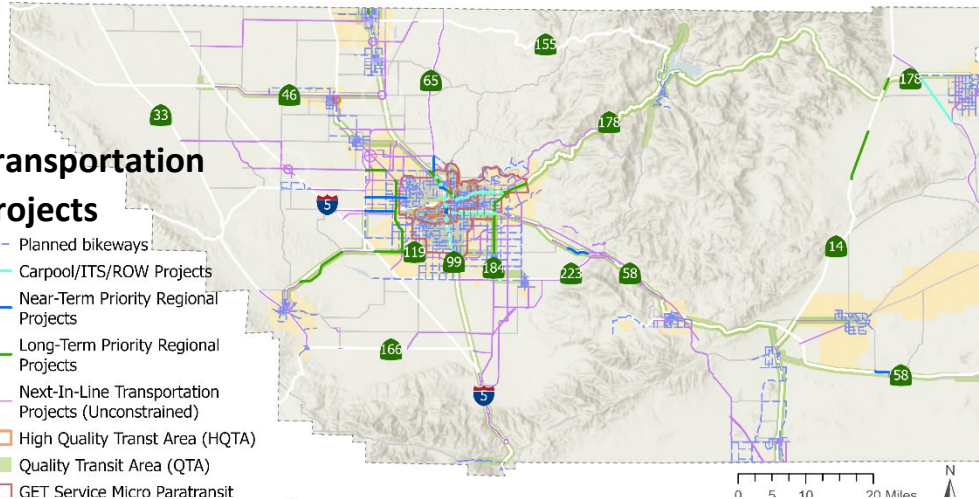


2026 Regional Transportation Plan

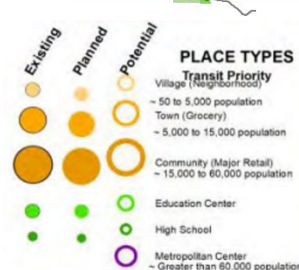
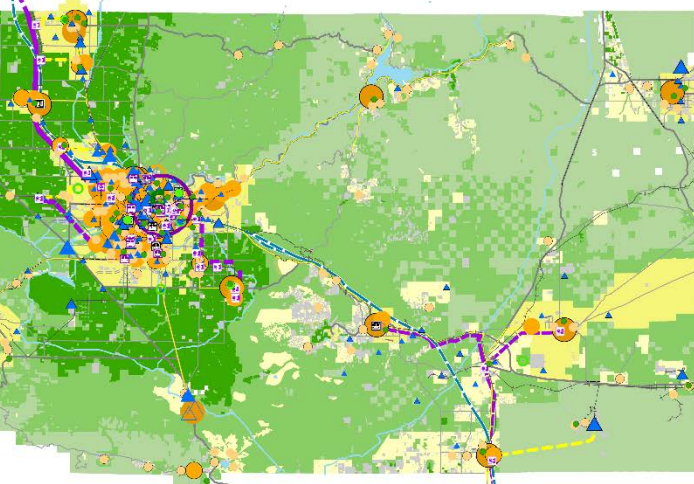
Reflecting diverse public input, the plan assumes projects that reflect a more efficient transportation system that will benefit the mobility, economy, health and sustainability of the region. Consistent with the prior plan, funding from traditional sources continue at historic rates as well as a slight increase in additional funding from potential new sources. Funding assumptions are updated every four years. Land use assumptions are based on local general plans with input from the public and the regional planning advisory committee.

Transportation Projects

- Planned bikeways
- Carpool/ITS/ROW Projects
- Near-Term Priority Regional Projects
- Long-Term Priority Regional Projects
- Next-In-Line Transportation Projects (Unconstrained)
- High Quality Transit Area (HQT)
- Quality Transit Area (QTA)
- GET Service Micro Paratransit



Future Land Use Assumptions



TO: Regional Planning Advisory Committee

FROM: Jay Schlosser, Executive Director

By: Rob Ball, Deputy Director/Planning Director
Ben Raymond, Regional Planner

SUBJECT: Regional Planning Advisory Committee Agenda Item: V.

UPDATE: SB 375 AND ADOPTION TIMELINE FOR THE 2026 REGIONAL
TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGY

DESCRIPTION:

An update on the activity related to Senate Bill (SB) 375 and the adoption timeline for the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS).

DISCUSSION:

This discussion provides an update on the activity related to the RTP and the SB 375 Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS). The report is updated regularly with the most recent developments listed first.

September 17, 2026 – Kern COG Board scheduled to adopt the 2026 RTP/SCS and associated documents.

September 2nd, 2026 – A staff report summarizing the comments received on the Draft 2026 RTP/SCS and its associated documents, along with staff responses, will be presented to RPAC and TTAC.

July-August 2026 – The public engagement process is complete and the public review period for the Draft 2026 RTP/SCS closed July 2, 2026. Kern COG received more than 30 written comment submissions, in the form of letters and emails, on the Draft 2026 RTP/SCS and associated documents. Staff is reviewing the comments and preparing appropriate responses for inclusion in the final adoption materials.

June 2026 – Continuing presentations on Draft 2026 RTP/SCS in Arvin/Lamont, Bakersfield, Mojave, and Tehachapi; presentation also at the Kern County Board Supervisors Meeting and at the Kern COG Board Meeting.

May 2026 – Provided presentations on Draft 2026 RTP/SCS in Arvin, California City, Delano, Maricopa, McFarland, Ridgecrest, Rosamond, Shafter, Taft, and at the GET Board Meeting.

April 7, 2026 – Coordination call with California Air Resource Board staff (CARB) to further discuss the Technical Methodology submitted by Kern COG in February.

March 23, 2026 – Kern COG staff had a coordination call with California Air Resource Board staff (CARB) to discuss the Technical Methodology submitted by Kern COG in February. Very limited clarifications were addressed and coordinated

February 27, 2026 – Submitted the 2026 Kern SCS Technical Methodology Version 2 to the California Air Resources Board (ARB).

December 10, 2025 – Received revised modeling protocol from the California Air Resources Board (ARB) to account for impact of the revocation of the ARB waiver for setting more stringent emissions than the rest of the nation.

November 13, 2025 – Concluded the 4-year outreach process engaging over 10,000 participants on the 2026 RTP SCS via statically valid phone/text surveys, fairs/festivals, workshops and more.

October 10 – November 13, 2025 – Completed 7 stakeholder outreach events on the RTP SCS engaging 300 participants. The effort garnered input from 7 stakeholder groups in the communities of Bakersfield, Taft, Delano, Ridgecrest, Arvin, Rosedale, and Wasco. The stakeholder groups included Bike Bakersfield, Taft Chamber of Commerce, Center for Race Poverty and the Environment, AkaMya Indian Culture Group, FARO Church/Arvin HS Students, Riverlakes Farmers Market, and Wasco Youth Police Activities League.

September 17-28, 2025 – Received input from over 1000 people at the Kern County Fair booth on the development pattern scenarios for the 2026 RTP.

August 6, 2025 – Kern Regional Transportation Modeling Committee met to review Kern Travel Model validation and documentation for the 2026 RTP/SCS. Information is posted on Kern COG website under RPAC agendas.

May 21st – June 4th, 2025 – Kern COG hosted four hybrid (in-person/online) community workshops and three online workshops collecting input on the KARGO Community Prosperity/Protection Study and Freight related projects for the RTP/SCS. Workshops were held in Arvin, California City, Keene, and Shafter.

May 13, 2025 – CARB formally adopted their determination that Kern COG's 2022 RTP/SCS, when implemented, would achieve the SB 375 Target Reductions by 2035. In June 2023, Kern COG received an email from CARB to notify that the 2022 SCS was "officially approved."

April 23, 2025 – SB 375 Target Setting Update – Kern COG staff is participating in a workshop hosted by ARB for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) to discuss SB 375 Target Updates and other SB 375 program-related items.

April 17, 2025 – Kern COG Annual Statistically Valid Community Survey was conducted in January. Survey results have been compiled and presented to the Kern COG board at the April Board Meeting. Results of the Annual Community Survey are available on Kern COG's website.

September 18th – 29th, 2024 – Kern COG collected input for 2026 RTP/SCS and collected input on transportation issues in the community at the Kern COG booth during the Kern County Fair.

July 24th – August 2nd, 2024 – Kern COG hosted four community workshops collecting input on the KARGO Community Prosperity/Protection Study and Freight related projects for the RTP/SCS. Workshops were held in Greater Arvin area (at the Tejon Indian Tribe Community Center), Delano, Rosamond, and Tehachapi.

June 28, 2024 – Kern COG submitted to the ARB the Kern COG 2026 SCS Technical Methodology and responses to their draft comments on the 2022 SCS. ARB staff responded that their final comments on the 2022 SCS are moving up their management reviews. As of July 22, the final comments have yet to be provided.

May 20, 2024 – Kern COG hosted an outreach roundtable for the Kern Area Regional Goods-movement Operations (KARGO) Study, which will feed into the 2026 RTP and include additional outreach events to collect input on the study and development of the 2026 RTP. Community based organizations and local/state agencies provided feedback on the outreach plan.

May 3, 2024 – Golden Empire Transit (GET) hosted a workshop on the Metro Bakersfield Moves – Long-Range Transit Plan (LRTP). The LRTP is a key input in the development of the 2026 RTP. During the outreach process for the LRTP, surveys collected public input for both the LRTP and the RTP.

April 18, 2024 – The Kern COG Board adopted the 2024-2050 Regional Growth Forecast. The Regional Growth Forecast establishes population forecasts for the horizon of the 2026 RTP.

February 20, 2024 – ARB provided another email re-confirming that they officially accept Kern COG's 2022 SCS, and provided a draft of 11 recommendations for the 2026 SCS. No estimate on when their final acceptance letter will be submitted.

January 9, 2024 and November 2, 2023 – ARB provided an email update on the status of Kern COG's promised 2022 RTP/SCS acceptance letter. A key upper management review person is not available this month pushing the issuance of the final letter into 2024, 7-months after ARB indicated acceptance of Kern COG's SCS in their June 13th email.

August 10, 2023 - At the quarterly SJV Inter-Agency Consultation meeting, ARB staff announced that the SCSs for Kern, Stanislaus, and Tulare COGs have been approved and will receive official documentation in September. Fresno and San Joaquin COGs have completed their reviews and are in the process of making some required board actions before they can receive their official approval. Kings, Madera, and Merced are still under review by ARB staff.

July 26, 2023 – 2026 RTP/SCS Roundtable Meeting was held for environmental, equity, business & industry groups on the public outreach process at Kern COG and included 14 representatives

from the Delores Huerta Foundation, Central California Asthma Collaborative, Sierra Club, Home Builders Association, Golden Empire Transit, Caltrans, County Public Works, and staff from the cities of McFarland, Taft, and Wasco.

June 15, 2023 – Kern COG Board approved the 2023 Public Involvement Procedures document after a 45-day public review. The document is online at <https://www.kerncog.org/policies/> .

June 13, 2023 – ARB staff emailed Kern COG and the California Transportation Commission that “the SCS is officially approved.” However, the final acceptance letter is still working its way through upper management reviews and will take several weeks before it is issued.

May 19, 2023 – ARB staff acknowledged receipt of the requested transmittal letter signed by the Kern COG Chair, and associated TPPC staff report. ARB staff indicated they would provide a status update by May 31, and try to meet Kern COG’s request for an expedited review by June 8, but that they could not commit to any date earlier than June 27.

May 5, 2023 - Kern COG submitted a draft Kern COG TPPC staff report and transmittal letter to ARB with a request for the Kern COG Chair to sign. Approved by the Board on May 18, 2023, the letter documents technical changes that do not affect the adopted RTP/SCS text or conclusions and includes updates from the November 2022 SCS technical data submittal per ARB guidelines.

May 1, 2023 – Kern COG circulated the draft Public Involvement Procedure for a 45-day public review ending June 15. The Executive Director and other San Joaquin Valley COG directors also met with ARB’s SJV representative, where staff indicated Kern was close to an acceptance finding for its SCS.

April 26, 2023 – Kern COG submitted to ARB a cover letter and revised technical methodology data submittal with all the requested updates since the November data submittal. ARB requested that it be approved by the Kern COG Board and have Kern COG’s chair’s signature.

April 17, 2023 – Kern COG web conferenced with ARB staff for the 14th time in 3 years to discuss the 2022 SCS technical methodology. ARB is required to provide their findings and recommendations 2 months after the submitted package from Nov. 29, 2022, is found complete.

February 17, March 29, April 7, April 14, 2023 – Kern COG web conferenced with ARB to further refine SCS modeling methodology and in February provided draft comments on the 2022 SCS.

January 20, 2023 – ARB responded to Kern COGs SCS technical methodology submittal from November 29, 2022 with questions. A meeting was held on January 24, 2023, to clarify questions.

December 16, 2022 – The 2022 RTP/Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) short range transportation program air quality conformity was federally approved.

November 29, 2022 – Kern COG submitted the technical methodology data package to the ARB.

July 21, 2022 - the Kern COG Board adopted the 2022 RTP/SCS and associated documents. The documents are available on the Kern COG website at <https://www.kerncog.org/category/docs/rtp/>.

Table 1 – 2018 & 2022 SB 375 Targets for the Kern Region

Per Capita GHG Reduction Target/	2020	2035
2022 RTP/SCS demonstration (July 21, 2022) w/ required off-model adjustments (2020 is pre-COVID)	-10.9%	-15.1%
2018 RTP/SCS demonstration (August 15, 2018)	-12.5%	-12.7%
Targets for 2022 RTP/SCS (set March 22, 2018, by ARB, effective October 1, 2018)	- 9%	-15%

March 22, 2018 - ARB adopted new SB375 Targets for the third cycle RTP/SCS to be effective October 1, 2018. Next ARB target setting will be during the 2022-2026 window.

Preliminary Timeline 2026 RTP/SCS

- ~~June 2023 – Update Public Involvement Procedure~~
- ~~July 2023 – Stakeholder roundtable process to vet outreach and performance measures~~
- ~~April 2024 – Regional Growth Forecast Update~~
- ~~June 11, 2024, Bakersfield Downtown Transit Ctr. – LRT Plan Update walk-up event~~
- ~~July-August 2024 KARGO Study RTP/SCS Freight Outreach Events~~
- ~~April 2025 – Annual Statistically Valid Community Phone Surveys~~
- ~~May 2025 – KARGO Study RTP/SCS Freight Outreach Events~~
- ~~August 6, 2025 – Transportation Modeling Committee Special Meeting~~
- ~~August 23-24, 2025 – 2026 RTP/SCS Outreach at Tehachapi Mountain Festival~~
- ~~August 29, 2025 – Mini Grants Applications Due~~
- ~~September 17-28, 2025 – 2026 RTP/SCS Outreach at Kern County Fair~~
- ~~September each year – Technical Assistance Requests to Kern COG Due~~
- ~~October 18, 2025 – 2026 RTP/SCS Outreach at Oildorado Days in Taft~~
- ~~Fall 2025 – Mini Grant Stakeholder Hosted RTP/SCS Workshops (see attached flyer)~~
- ~~Fall 2023 to Fall 2025 – Fairs/Festivals/Farmer's Market Outreach~~
- ~~Spring 2023 to Spring 2026 – RTP/SCS Public Outreach Process~~
- ~~Spring 2023 to Spring 2026 – Annual Statistically Valid Community Phone Surveys~~
- ~~May 8 to July 2, 2026 – 55-day public review process for RTP/SCS, congestion management plan, environmental document, air quality conformity, federal transportation improvement program.~~
- September 2nd, 2026 – Staff report summarizing the comments received on the Draft 2026 RTP/SCS and its associated documents, along with staff responses, will be presented to RPAC and TTAC.
- September 17, 2026 – Kern COG Board scheduled to adopt the 2026 RTP/SCS and associated documents.

Preliminary Timeline 2030 RTP/SCS

- September 23rd – Oct 4th, 2026 – RTP/SCS Outreach at Kern County Fair.
- Summer 2027 – Update Public Involvement Policies and Procedures
- Spring 2027 to Spring 2030 – RTP/SCS Public Outreach Process
- Summer 2030 – Kern COG Board Scheduled to adopt the 2030 RTP/SCS

ACTION: Information.

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VI. RPAC

September 2, 2026

TO: Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC) FROM:

JAY SCHLOSSER, Executive Director

BY: Rob Ball, Deputy Director/Planning Director
Rochelle Invina-Jayasiri, Regional Planner
Victoria Romero Valdivia, Regional Planner
Vincent Liu, Regional Planner

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SUBJECT: Regional Planning Advisory Committee Agenda Item: VIII.

**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY GRANTS/COG ASSISTANCE REQUESTS AND
FEEDBACK MONITORING DATA - EMAIL REQUESTS DUE FRIDAY, OCTOBER
2, 2026**

DESCRIPTION:

The 2026 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)/Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) includes a strategy to provide sub regional feedback on SB 375 travel reduction goals and provide technical assistance and grant writing assistance to help sub areas of the County that need it most. This is an annual process reviewed by the TTAC and RPAC.

DISCUSSION:

A 2-part strategy was proposed in the 2014 RTP/SCS, and continued in subsequent cycles, to help our member agencies voluntarily monitor their progress toward the region's air emission goals. The strategy also helps member agencies develop projects that will better compete for funding under policies that emphasize sustainability. Kern COG provides monitoring data along with technical assistance and grant writing assistance. The data provides sub-regional monitoring feedback and helps prioritize assistance using the regional travel model as part of this process.

COG Technical Assistance

The 2014 RTP was the first to contain an SCS as required by the state Climate Protection Act of 2008 (SB 375). Kern COG began work with member agencies on developing more sustainable projects and strategies immediately after the adoption of the 2008 Kern Regional Blueprint.

Since 2009, Kern COG has awarded over \$500,000 in technical assistance grants and/or staff time support to provide member agencies with resources to identify and implement projects that would further the goals of the 2008 Kern Regional Blueprint and now the SCS. Available funding for Kern COG technical assistance grants, and staff time support to assist member agencies in applying for the numerous grant resources vary from year to year based on need and resource availability. This program has helped fund:

- In kind staff-time match for sustainable community planning grants for modeling/public outreach
- Regional travel demand modeling and GIS mapping support
- community bike and complete street plans
- community visioning/design workshops
- 2D/3D community visualizations
- transportation impact fee programs
- general plan circulation element updates
- Early transportation project development planning studies

Member Agencies Email Sustainable Community Planning/Project Development Ideas to Kern COG by Friday, October 2, 2026

Under this Kern COG local government assistance program, staff can recommend technical assistance resources be prioritized for agencies with the greatest potential need (see monitoring section below). Requests may be made by email and should include a brief preliminary scope and budget regarding the planning level work needed. Agencies are encouraged to contact COG staff for assistance in developing the request for sustainable community strategy implementation and planning funds. Staff will provide assistance to member agencies in deciding which grant resources (see attachment 1) are most appropriate and effective. Please contact Rob Ball - 661-635-2902, rball@kerncog.org or Rochelle Invina-Jayasiri - 661-635-2908, rinvina@kerncog.org

Member Agencies Provided with Free Access to GrantFinder.com

Kern COG has secured GrantFinder software licenses on behalf of its member agencies, and local public transit agencies for the period ending May 31, 2027, which is renewed annually. GrantFinder (<http://grantfinder.com>) is a real-time database of federal, state, and private grant opportunities tailored to municipalities and nonprofits. The program allows users to tailor their grant searches to their needs. To receive access, the member agency may designate up to two users. GrantFinder training is available by request; Program contact: Irene Enriquez ienriquez@kerncog.org.

Prioritized Funding Policy for More Sustainable Projects

In November 2012 and most recently updated in April 2021, the Kern COG Board adopted the new project delivery policies and procedure (<https://www.kerncog.org/policies/>) to assist the region in promoting projects that better match the goals of the RTP/SCS. Dependent on the funding category, the procedure provides points for ranking projects for future funding. Up to half of the points go to projects that promote more sustainable/livable communities and lower air emissions. Since this policy and procedure update, Kern COG has funded park & ride facilities in California City and South Bakersfield, the Golden Empire Transit District has implemented a new/more convenient bus rapid transit, express bus and On Demand micro-transit network, and the City of Tehachapi has adopted the first city-wide “form-based-code” General Plan in California. These types of projects are proliferating in the region in part because Kern COG adopted project delivery policies.

Monitoring Data Feedback

The table in Attachment 2 shows the latest modeling of auto Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) per person (household population + employment by place of work) from the most recently adopted RTP. The total shows a 3.1 percent decrease in VMT between 2024 and 2049. All regions show lower VMT per capita household population + employment by 2049 compared to 2024. The following region has seen an increase in VMT compared to the prior 2022 RTP: Greater Taft.

This technical and grant writing assistance program RTP strategy will continue to be funded as planning funds and grants are available. Subject to the Board’s direction, Kern COG resources

may be prioritized to communities that may be showing difficulty in making progress towards reducing emissions and passenger vehicle travel. Grants and incentives are subject to state and federal funding requirements.

Action: Information and feedback: Member agency technical assistance requests are due to Rochelle Invina-Jayasiri RInvina@kerncog.org by October 2, 2026.

Attachments: Attachment 1 – Kern Sustainable Community Grant Resources – July 2026
Attachment 2 – 2026 RTP/SCS Change in Daily Auto Miles Traveled
Attachment 3 – Kern Sub Area Index and Vehicle Miles Traveled Maps

Attachment 1

Kern Sustainable Community Grant Resources (Updated July 2026)

Program	Program Description	Resource and Contact
Kern Council of Governments	Technical Assistance Program: Requests may be made by email and should include a draft scope, budget and timeline regarding the planning need. Agencies are encouraged to contact Kern COG staff for assistance in developing the request for planning resources and strategizing which sources are most appropriate. Awards are subject to available funding, need, and past geographic distribution of past awards. The awards will be used in developing the programming for next fiscal year's Kern COG Overall Work Program. Past awards have included: - Travel modeling and GIS mapping support technical support - In-kind staff time in data collection/outreach to help match a sustainable planning grant - Grant writing assistance - Community bike and complete street plans - Community visioning/design workshops - Transportation impact fee programs - General plan circulation element updates - Transportation project development planning studies To support grant applications Kern COG posts regional plans, resources and toolkits on the Kern COG website www.kerncog.org. For example: - Draft 2026 Regional Transportation Plan Chapter 4 – Sustainable Communities Strategy provides projects and strategies for implementing Kern region's efforts to reduce GHG emissions from passenger vehicles. - 2025 Electric Vehicle Charging Station (EVCS) Blueprint Update – Kern COG, its member agencies, and the Kern County community can take advantage of the numerous local, state, and federal funding opportunities for EV Chargin Stations. - Kern COG EV Charging Station Installation Resource List - 2023 Kern Medium-Duty and Heavy-Duty Zero-Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Blueprint features five high-impact sites which may serve as examples to follow. The five sites may be eligible for a new CEC funding. Check CEC website for funding opportunities.	Email Request to Rob Ball rball@kerncog.org or Rochelle Invina-Jayasiri rinvina@kerncog.org Due by Friday, October 2, 2026

	- 2018 Kern Regional Active Transportation Plan provides eligible bike and pedestrian projects for all jurisdictions in Kern. - 2020 Kern County Rural Alternative Transportation Plan provides transit ZEV projects for all outlying jurisdictions in Kern.	
San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Grants and Incentive Programs for Public Agencies	- AB 836 Clean Air Centers Pilot Program The Clean Air Centers Pilot Program provides funding to create Wildfire Smoke Clean Air Centers for Vulnerable Populations and establish a network of publicly accessible facilities with high-efficiency air filtration systems for valley residents who may not otherwise have access to clean air during wildfire events. - Alternate Fuel Mechanic Training Provides funds for mechanic education or training in alternative-fuel vehicles and infrastructure. - Bike Paths: Bikeway Incentive Program Provides funds to establish bicycle infrastructure such as Class I (Bicycle Path Construction), Class II (Bicycle Lane Striping), or Class III (Bicycle Route) projects. - Clean Alternatives to Fireworks Pilot Incentive Program Provides incentives for clean, non-firework alternatives in lieu of a portion or all of large-scale public fireworks displays celebrating the Fourth of July or New Year's Eve, or other celebratory public gatherings. - Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicle Program Provides monetary incentives to replace Class 6-7 on-road diesel and non-diesel Internal Combustion (IC) engine-powered trucks with zero-emission trucks. - Clean Vehicle Fueling Infrastructure Program Provides funds on a first-come, first-served basis for new stations, conversion of an existing fueling station, and expansion of stations for hydrogen fuel and electric battery charging stations for heavy-duty vehicles. - Charge Up! Electric Vehicle Charger Incentive Program Provides funds for public agencies, businesses, and property owners of multi-unit dwellings to purchase and install electric vehicle chargers for public use. - Emergency Vehicle Replacement Program Provides funds on a first-come, first-served basis to replace existing in-use emergency vehicles with new reduced-emission vehicles. - E-Mobility Commerce Provides funds to develop or expand electronic telecommunication services.	Grants Valley Air District - Some applications accepted year-round. Highlighted: Programs Currently Accepting Applications

	- Locomotive Program Provides incentive funds for the replacement of old high-polluting locomotives to new Tier 4 units. Alternative switcher locomotives include genset locomotives (multi-engine switcher) and electric-hybrid locomotives. - Plug in Electric Vehicle Resources Center Provides information about plug-in electric vehicles including available incentive funding, charging infrastructure and locations, and the District's activities to increase and sustain electric vehicles in the Valley. - Public Benefit Grants Program Provides funds to purchase new, alternative-fuel vehicles and infrastructure and develop advanced transit and transportation systems. - Public Transportation Subsidy and Park & Ride Lots Provides funds to subsidize transportation passes for bus, shuttle and commuter rail services. Funds are also available for the construction of park and ride lots. - Zero-Emission Landscaping Equipment Voucher Program Provides incentives for the replacement of landscape maintenance equipment to lawn care providers. - Zero-Emission School Bus Replacement Incentive Program Provides monetary incentives to replace existing yellow school buses that transport public school children to and from school with zero-emission school buses in disadvantaged or low-income communities.	
Eastern Kern Air Pollution Control District	- Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Rebate Program Apply within 30 days of purchasing a new, eligible ZEV. Up to \$4,000 funding available for purchase of a Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) with EPA Smog Score of 10. - DMV Grant Program Acceptable program projects (\$50k max. per project) include Paving Dirt Roads to reduce fugitive dust emissions caused by vehicle travel, Installation of EV Charging Station or CNG refilling stations, Alternative Fuel Mechanics Training, Public Education Courses, and Innovative Vehicle-Related Emission Reduction Proposals. Applications open annually in the fall. Check Eastern Kern APCD's website in late 2026 for the next round of funding.	Eastern Kern APCD Grants Contact: 661-862-5250 Some grant funds are distributed annually.

Kern County Air Pollution Mitigation Fund	For projects designed to reduce particulate or ozone air pollution in Kern. Administered by the Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment and Sierra Club. Applications may be active in 2027. Maximum funding requests vary by cycle.	KC Air Pollution Mitigation Fund
Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grants FY 2027-2028	The Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program includes Sustainable Communities Grants , Climate Adaptation Planning Grant , Strategic Partnerships Grants - Call for applications open in August 2026 and grant application deadline in October 2026. Applicants are encouraged to visit the California Grants Portal and subscribe to receive notifications about State funding opportunities.	Sustainable Transportation Planning Grants Caltrans
Caltrans Transportation Planning Resources	Website links to Upcoming Events; Major Outreach and Engagement; Key Transportation Plans; Tools and Analysis; Resources for Districts and Regional and Local Partners	Division of Transportation Planning Caltrans
Caltrans Active Transportation Program (ATP)	California Transportation Commission (CTC) ATP Cycle 8 Call for Projects opened March 19-20 and closed on June 22, 2026. - For MPO-directed funding, the Kern COG process follows the statewide application process, using that process to score projects for Kern COG consideration. Kern COG announces the ATP Cycle funding to its member agencies via email and in technical advisory committee meetings.	Active Transportation Program (ATP) Caltrans
California Dept. of Housing and Community Development (HCD)	The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has a list of housing programs that currently have funding available: - CalHome Program , Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) , Emergency Solutions Grants Program (ESG) , Encampment Resolution Funding (ERF) Program , Local Housing Trust Fund (LHTF) Program	Grants & Funding California Department of Housing and Community Development
California Dept. of Housing and Community Development	AHSC Program makes it easier for Californians to drive less by making sure housing, jobs, and key destinations are accessible by walking, biking, and transit. (Cont. nextpage)	California Department of Housing and

Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC)	AHSC Round 10 is processing on schedule. NOFA released in March 2026 with applications due on May 4, 2026.	Community Development AHSC
Strategic Growth Council (SGC)	SGC's grant programs promote sustainability, health, and equity across California. Find funding for affordable housing, transit-oriented development, open space conservation, and climate change resilience. Currently accepting applications.	Strategic Growth Council Grant Programs
California Natural Resources Agency	The California Natural Resources Agency Bonds and Grant unit administers various programs. They offer listserv registration for some program notifications. For instance, the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program is an annual program (no solicitation for 2026) offering grants to local, state and federal governmental agencies and to nonprofit organizations for projects to mitigate the environmental impacts caused by new or modified public transportation facilities.	CA Natural Resources Grant Programs
California Air Resources Board (CARB)	Air Quality Incentive Programs. Visit the website for eligibility requirements and due dates. - Community Planning and Capacity Building program supports transportation equity in disadvantaged and low-income communities with a focus on focus on early-stage planning and readiness activities. <i>Application period closed on February 10, 2026.</i>	Incentives California Air Resources Board
California Energy Commission (CEC)	The CEC offers a variety of funding opportunities to advance the state's transition to clean energy and transportation through technological innovation and efficiency. CALeVIP's Fast Charge California Project is launching two new project windows in October 2026 and February 2027. Get ready to apply for DC fast charger funding! - Fast Charge California Project Window 2 (October 7, 2026 – January 14, 2027) - Fast Charge California Project Window 3 (February 24, 2027 – May 27, 2027)	CEC Funding Opportunities
US Dept. of Energy	CA Incentives for Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy Alternative Fuels Data Center - Find transportation data and information about alternative fuels and advanced vehicles in California, including laws and incentives, fueling stations, and fuelprices.	Alternative Fuels Data Center California Laws and Incentives

US Department of Transportation (DOT) Federal Railroad Administration	Federal Railroad Administration – Grants & Loans - To develop safety improvements and encourage the expansion and upgrade of passenger and freight rail infrastructure and services, FRA supports the nation's rail network through a variety of competitive and dedicated grant programs.	US DOT Railroad Grant Program
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	Competitive Grant Funding List: - ADCMS - Advanced Digital Construction Management Systems: A program to promote, implement, deploy, demonstrate, showcase, support and document the application of advanced digital construction management systems, practices, performances, and benefits. - AID - Accelerated Innovation Deployment Demonstration Program: Provides grants to support the pilot/demonstration of innovations on projects, in areas such as planning, financing, operations, pavements, structures, materials, environment, and construction. - Advanced Transportation Technologies and Innovative Mobility Deployment (also known as Advanced Transportation Technology and Innovation (ATTAIN) Program): Provides grants to deploy, install, and operate advanced transportation technologies to improve safety, mobility, efficiency, system performance, intermodal connectivity, and infrastructure return on investment. - Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program: Funding beyond FY23 is subject to the availability appropriations; the program provides grants to construct safe and connected active transportation facilities in an active transportation network or active transportation spine and to develop plans for active transportation networks and active transportation spines. - Bridge Investment Program: Provides grants for projects to improve the condition of bridges and culverts and the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the movement of people and freight over bridges. - BUILD - Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development Grant Program: Provides grants for surface transportation infrastructure projects that will have a significant local or regional impact (aka Local and Regional Project Assistance). - Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grants Program (Community Charging): Provides grants for projects to develop electric vehicle charging and hydrogen, propane, and natural gas fueling infrastructure access along alternative fuel corridors throughout the	US DOT Grants Competitive Grant Funding List

	country, including in rural areas, low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, and communities with a low ratio of private parking spaces to households or a high ratio of multiunit dwellings to single family homes. - Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grants Program (Corridor Charging): Deploys publicly accessible EV charging infrastructure and hydrogen, propane, and natural gas fueling infrastructure along designated Alternative Fuel Corridors. - Congestion Relief Program: Provides grants to advance innovative, integrated, and multimodal solutions to reduce congestion and the related economic and environmental costs in the most congested metropolitan areas with an urbanized area population of at least 1 million. - INFRA - Nationally Significant Multimodal Freight and Highway Projects: Provides grants for multimodal freight and highway projects of national or regional significance. - MEGA - National Infrastructure Project Assistance Program: Provides grants to surface transportation infrastructure that are too large or complex for traditional funding programs that will have a significant national or regional impact. - Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects (NSFLTP): Provides grants to Tribes and Federal land management agencies to complete projects that will provide substantial benefits to their communities or parklands. - PROTECT: Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation Grants: Provides grants for activities that enable communities to address vulnerabilities to current and future weather events, natural disasters, and changing conditions, including sea level rise, and plan transportation improvements and emergency response strategies to address those vulnerabilities. - Reduction of Truck Emissions at Port Facilities Grant Program (RTEPF): Studies and provides grants to reduce idling at port facilities, including through the electrification of port operations. - Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A): Provides grants to support local initiatives to prevent transportation-related death and serious injury on roads and streets (commonly referred to as “Vision Zero” or “Toward Zero Deaths” initiatives). <i>The FY 2026 NOFO for this program closed on May 26, 2026.</i> - Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program: Provides grants to support projects that seek to reduce the number of wildlife-vehicle collisions, and in carrying out that purpose, improve habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic species.	
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California Grants Portal	The California Grants Portal (a project by the California State Library) is your one destination to find all grants and loans offered on a competitive or first-come basis by California state agencies.	CA Grants Portal
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Note that the above listing of programs is not comprehensive and are subject to change. The listing is intended as an example resource guide of programs that can help implement the Kern region's Sustainable Communities Strategy.

Attachment 2 – How Sub Areas of Kern County are Doing on Reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled

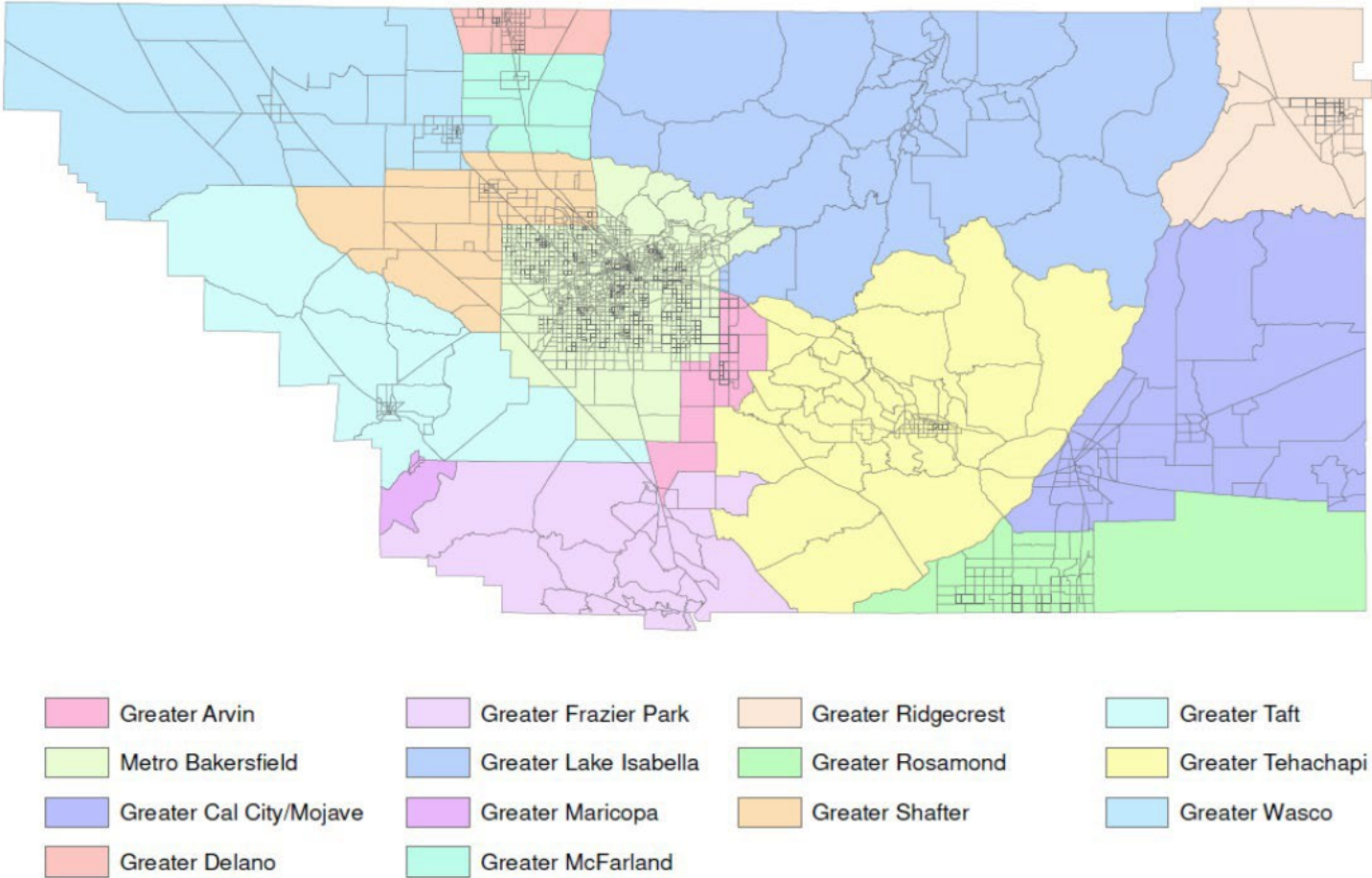
2022 RTP Change in Daily Auto Miles Traveled Compared to the Old Plan

Data Source: 2026 RTP Modeling		RSA Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)			Persons = Hhold. Pop. + Empls. (by place of work)			VMT Per Person (pop. + emps.)			% Change from Base 2024		Progress
		2024	2049 Old Plan	2049 Plan	2024	2049 Old Plan	2049 Plan	2024	2049 Old Plan	2049 Plan	2024 & 2049 Old Plan	2024 & 2049 Plan	Compar- ed to Old Plan
Regional Statistical Areas (RSA)		(miles x 1,000)			(persons)			(miles/person)			(percent)		
1	Greater Taft	1,098	1,206	1,185	27,769	31,786	30,185	39.53	37.93	39.27	-4.1%	-0.7%	3.4%
2	Greater McFarland	875	981	1,074	19,018	21,701	24,373	46.00	45.22	44.08	-1.7%	-4.2%	-2.5%
3	Greater Wasco	1,503	1,643	1,558	39,123	46,682	45,221	38.41	35.20	34.44	-8.4%	-10.3%	-2.0%
4	Greater Tehachapi	1,276	1,437	1,357	41,812	47,322	46,301	30.51	30.36	29.32	-0.5%	-3.9%	-3.4%
5	Greater Bakersfield	13,711	15,120	14,730	822,222	912,274	912,203	16.68	16.57	16.15	-0.6%	-3.2%	-2.6%
6	Greater Cal City/Mojave	1,182	1,470	1,145	26,711	35,160	28,451	44.26	41.80	40.24	-5.6%	-9.1%	-3.5%
7	Greater Lake Isabella	738	717	673	20,492	21,298	20,098	36.04	33.66	33.51	-6.6%	-7.0%	-0.4%
8	Greater Ridgecrest	1,197	1,246	1,183	48,540	52,196	51,537	24.66	23.88	22.95	-3.2%	-7.0%	-3.8%
9	Greater Frazier Park	1,051	2,682	2,692	18,820	57,727	60,323	55.84	46.46	44.63	-16.8%	-20.1%	-3.3%
10	Greater Shafter	2,064	2,701	2,676	49,165	70,034	74,963	41.97	38.56	35.70	-8.1%	-14.9%	-6.8%
11	Greater Arvin	782	876	881	23,391	25,844	26,806	33.41	33.88	32.85	1.4%	-1.7%	-3.1%
12	Greater Delano	1,882	2,033	2,036	53,533	56,031	58,535	35.15	36.29	34.77	3.2%	-1.1%	-4.3%
13	Greater Maricopa	49	47	45	1,548	1,519	1,496	31.65	30.77	30.15	-2.8%	-4.7%	-2.0%
14	Greater Rosamond	1,875	2,064	1,946	37,153	42,524	41,606	50.47	48.54	46.76	-3.8%	-7.4%	-3.5%
Countywide total/average		29,282	34,222	33,182	1,229,296	1,422,099	1,422,100	23.82	24.06	23.33	1.0%	-2.0%	-3.1%
Gateways		29,570	32,762	32,451									
All Travel		58,852	66,984	65,632									

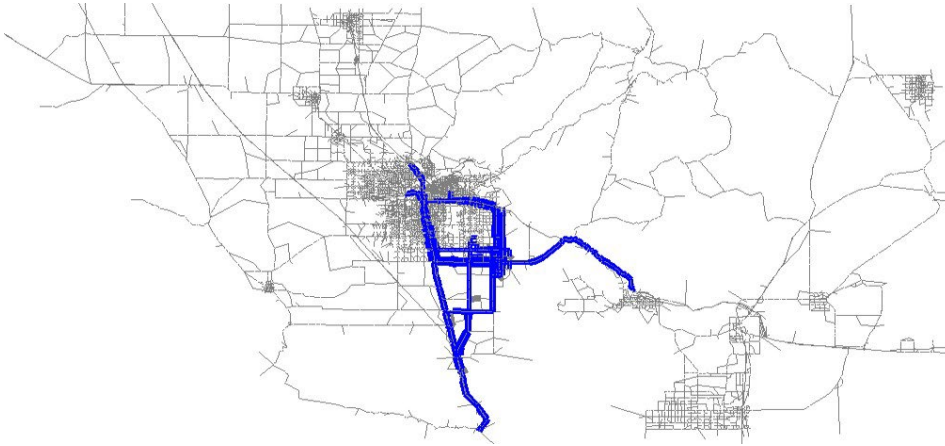
Attachment 3 – Map of Sub Areas

Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZs) by Regional Statistical Areas (RSAs)

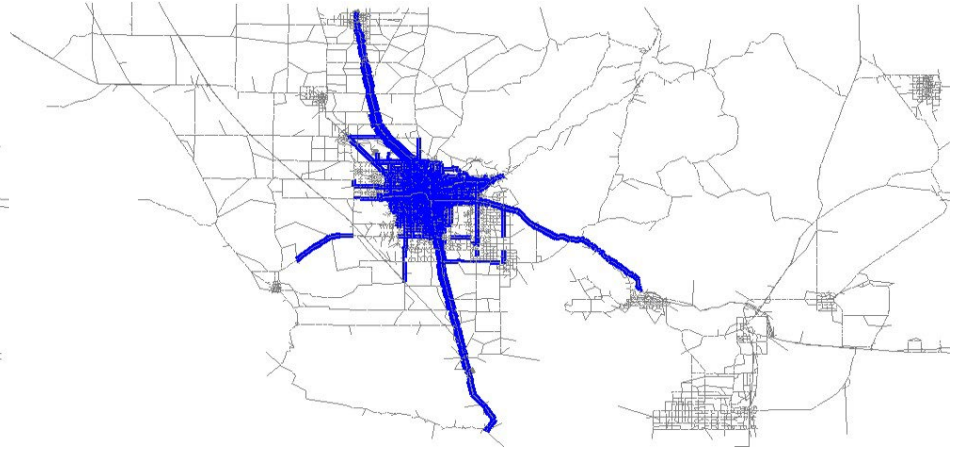
Kern Sub Areas



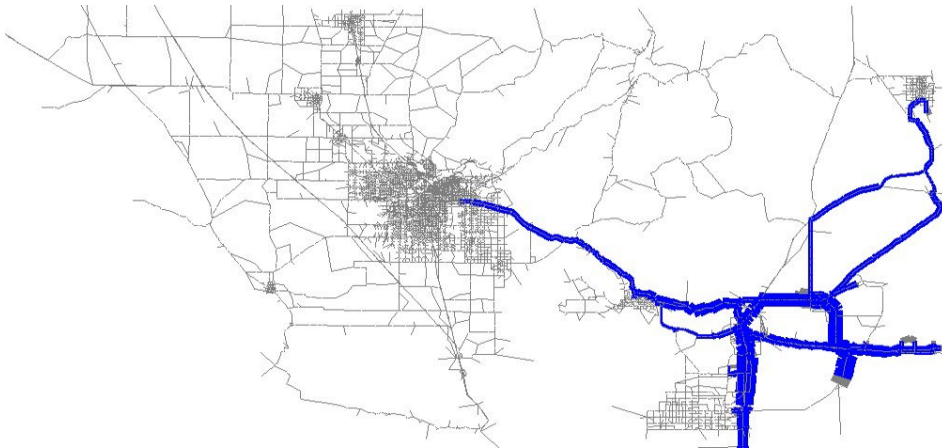
Greater Arvin



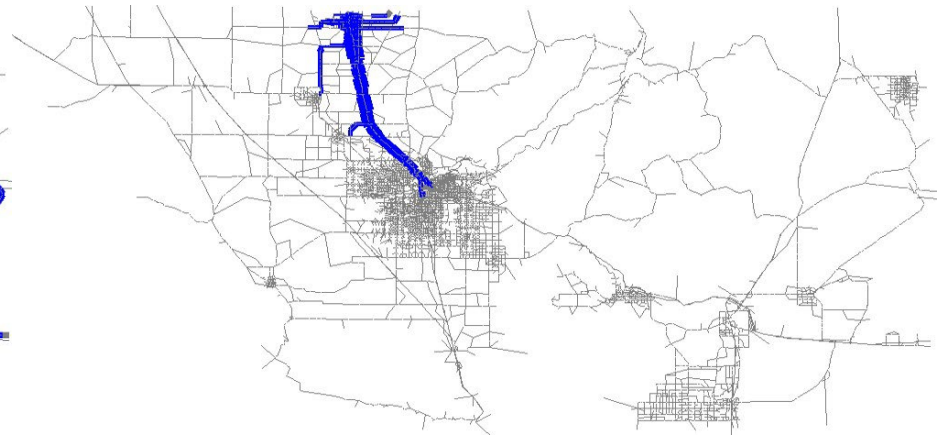
Greater Bakersfield



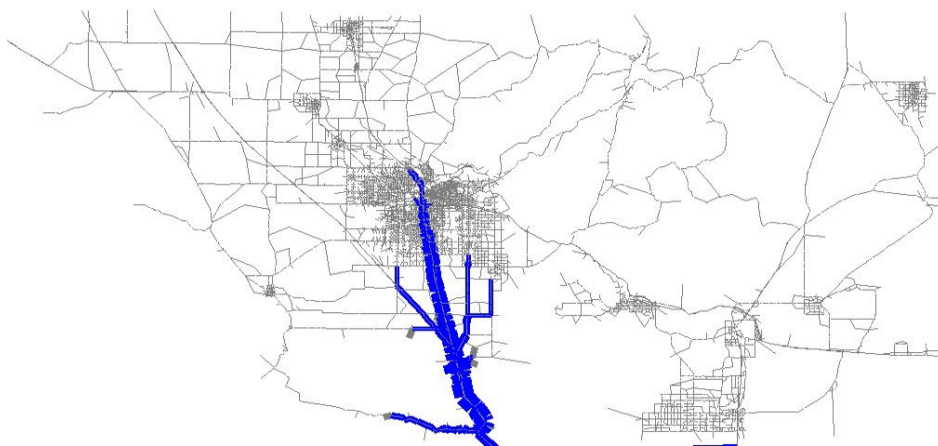
Greater California City / Mojave



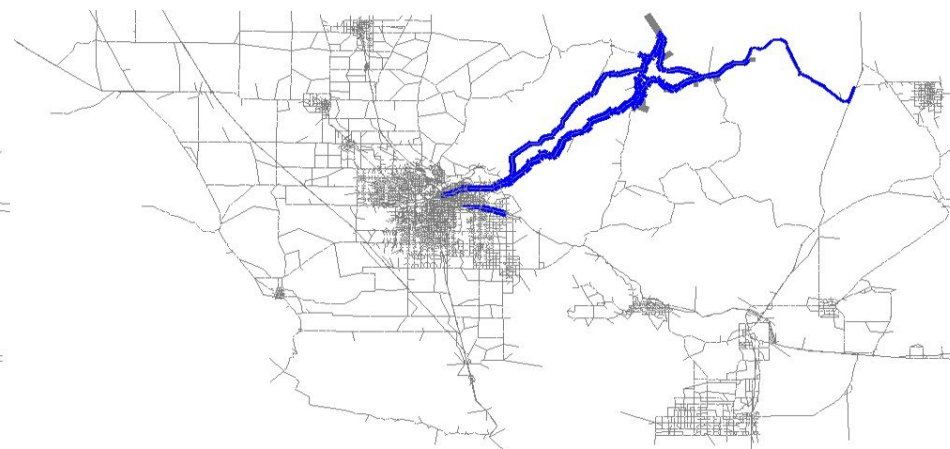
Greater Delano



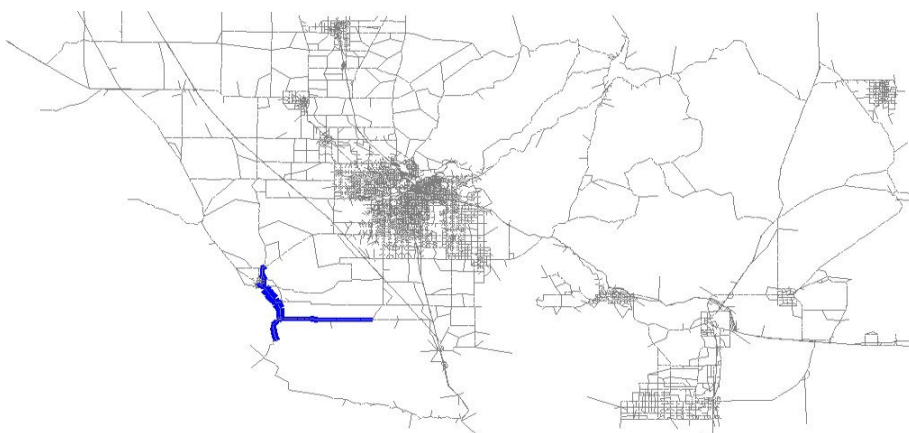
Greater Frasier Park



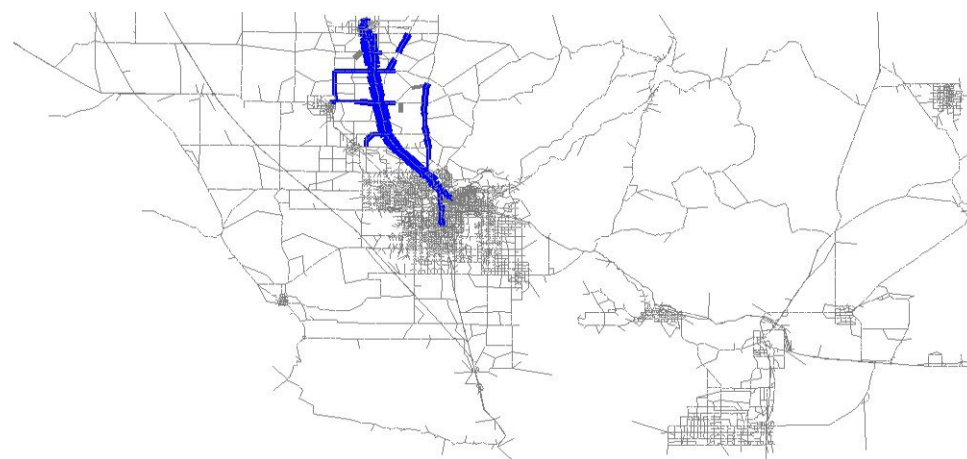
Greater Lake Isabella



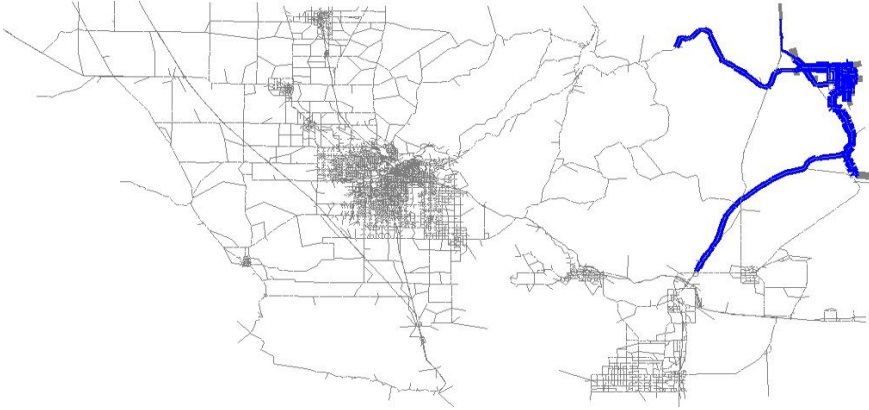
Greater Maricopa



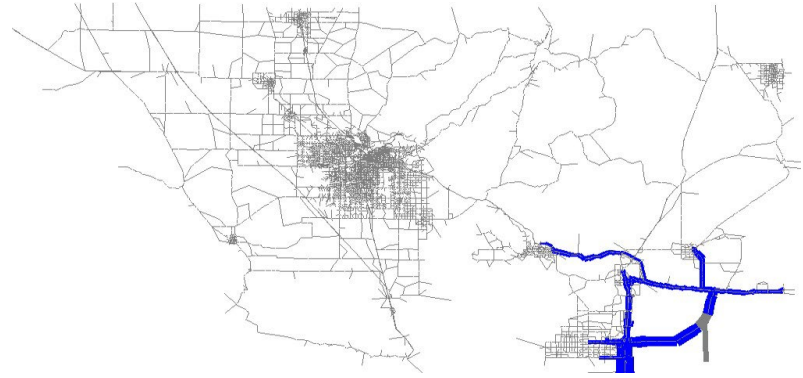
Greater McFarland



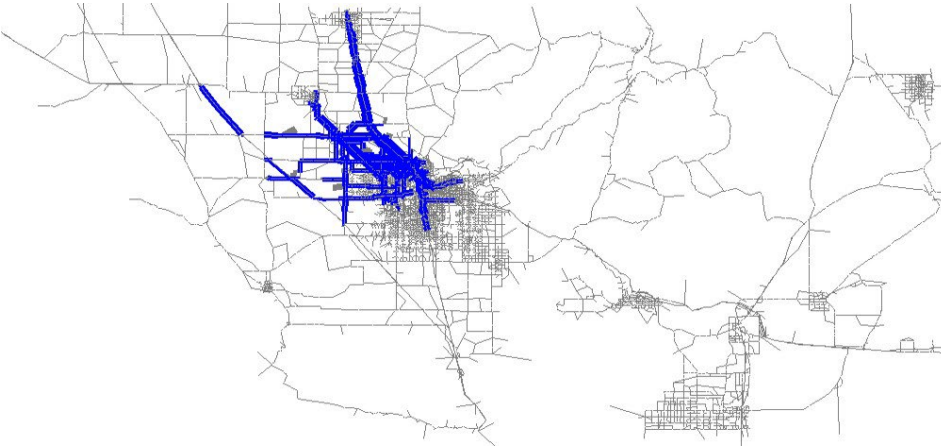
Greater Ridgecrest



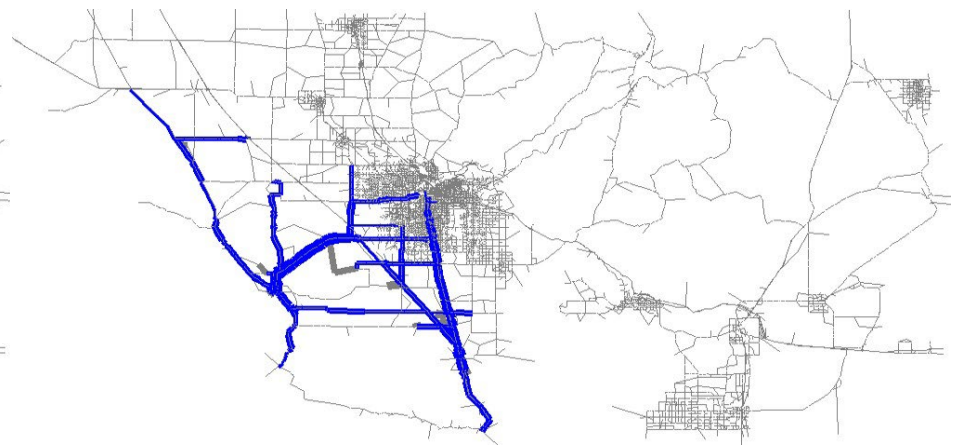
Greater Rosamond



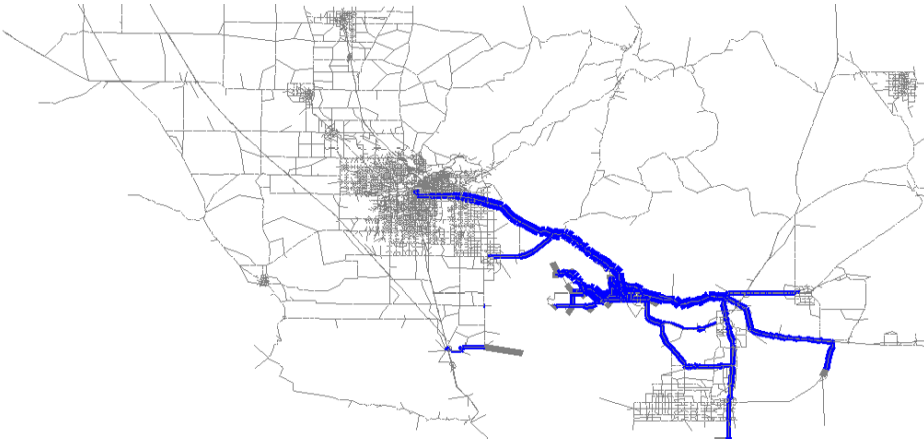
Greater Shafter



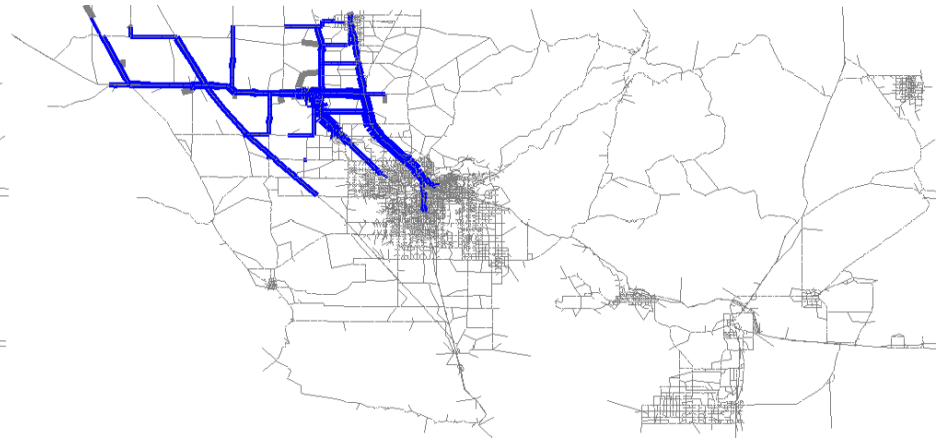
Greater Taft



Greater Tehachapi



Greater Wasco





VII. RPAC

September 2, 2026

TO: Regional Planning Advisory Committee
FROM: Jay Schlosser, Executive Director
By: Karl Davisson, Regional Planner

SUBJECT: Regional Planning Advisory Committee Agenda Item: VII.

CIRCULATION UPDATES: TRUCK ROUTES

DESCRIPTION:

In response to state requirements that all cities and counties adopt truck routes, Kern COG examined truck routing throughout the Kern region. The KARGO studies provide a regional framework of solutions to this issue.

DISCUSSION:

In 2024, the State Legislature enacted AB-98, which requires all cities and counties in California to update the circulation element of their general plans to include designated truck routes. The purpose of AB-98 is to improve goods-movement efficiency, reduce conflicts between heavy-duty trucks and local traffic, and provide greater statewide consistency in how truck routes are planned and managed. The statutory deadline for compliance is January 1, 2028.

Following the passage of AB-98, the Legislature adopted SB-415 as a clean-up bill to address implementation challenges identified by local jurisdictions. SB-415 provides an alternative compliance path by allowing cities and counties to designate truck routes through the adoption of a local ordinance rather than a full general plan amendment. This streamlined process is available to most jurisdictions statewide, including all jurisdictions within the Kern region. SB-415 also revised the compliance timelines based on population thresholds. Cities with populations over 50,000 and counties with populations over 100,000 must comply by January 1, 2028, while cities with populations under 50,000 have until January 1, 2030.

Regional Studies

To assist local jurisdictions in meeting state requirements, Kern COG recently completed the KARGO studies—a set of three comprehensive analyses focused in part on goods movement and heavy-duty truck routing throughout the Kern region. These studies evaluated regional freight flows, identified areas with recurring truck-routing conflicts, and presented a menu of strategies to improve safety, mobility, and efficiency. The studies also emphasize coordination across

jurisdictional boundaries, recognizing that truck movements typically span multiple cities and unincorporated areas.

Collectively, the KARGO studies offer a data-driven regional framework that member agencies can use when developing or updating their truck-route systems. KARGO Phase 2 specifically includes recommended designation criteria and other elements that can directly support compliance with AB-98 and SB-415. The KARGO studies can be found at <http://www.kerncog.org/KARGO>.

Policy Direction

In acknowledgment of the value of the KARGO studies, the Kern COG Board adopted Resolution 26-23, encouraging member agencies to utilize the findings and recommendations as a resource during their truck-route planning efforts. The resolution is intended to promote consistency across the region and ensure that local actions align with regional mobility and goods-movement goals.

Next Steps

Agencies preparing to meet the AB-98 and SB-415 requirements may consider the following actions:

- Reviewing existing circulation elements and truck-route ordinances for compliance gaps.
- Evaluating truck-movement patterns using the KARGO study data and maps.
- Coordinating with adjacent jurisdictions to avoid conflicting or disconnected route designations.
- Developing or updating truck-route ordinances using the guidance contained in the studies.
- Preparing public outreach materials to inform residents, businesses, and freight stakeholders of proposed route changes.

These steps will assist jurisdictions in meeting state-mandated deadlines while ensuring consistency with regional transportation goals.

ACTION:

- 1) Per SB-415, jurisdictions with populations greater than 50,000 must update their circulation elements by January 1, 2028. Jurisdictions with populations less than 50,000 must update their circulation elements by January 1, 2030.
- 2) Per Kern COG Board Resolution 26-23, jurisdictions should consider the KARGO study's mapped truck routes and circulation plans when updating local circulation elements.

Attachments:

1. Resolution 26-23
2. KARGO Phase 2 maps (6) of suggested truck routes and circulation changes.

BEFORE THE KERN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
STATE OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF KERN

Resolution No. 26-23

In the matter of:

RESOLUTION OF THE KERN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS BOARD RECEIVING AND FILING THE KARGO COMMUNITY PROSPERITY AND PROTECTION STUDY (PHASE III), AND ENCOURAGING MEMBER JURISDICTIONS TO INCORPORATE ITS FINDINGS INTO LOCAL GENERAL PLANS AND CIRCULATION ELEMENTS

WHEREAS, the Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG) is the regional transportation planning agency responsible for coordinating transportation planning and policy across Kern County; and

WHEREAS, Kern COG has led the Kern Area Regional Goods-Movement Operations (KARGO) initiative to assess and plan for the continued growth of goods movement industries while addressing transportation safety, infrastructure resilience, and community impacts; and

WHEREAS, the KARGO initiative includes multiple phases, including:

- Phase I: Integrated Circulation Study
- Phase II: Sustainability Study
- Phase III: Community Prosperity and Protection Study is also known as KARGO C-CAMS; and

WHEREAS, the Community Prosperity and Protection Study is funded by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) through its Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program, which supports planning efforts to improve transportation system resilience, enhance safety, address climate-related vulnerabilities, and advance projects that promote economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and equitable outcomes for communities; and

WHEREAS, the Phase III Community Prosperity and Protection Study evaluates transportation conditions, climate vulnerabilities, economic trends, and community concerns to identify transportation strategies and prioritized improvements that:

- Improve goods movement efficiency
- Enhance system resiliency
- Support economic development
- Reduce impacts on local and disadvantaged communities; and

WHEREAS, the Study identifies and prioritizes regional transportation investments, including safety goods movement corridors, Green-Pass truck routing networks, and multimodal improvements intended to improve freight mobility and reduce conflicts within communities; and

WHEREAS, the Study includes supporting maps, technical analysis, and implementation strategies that provide a regional framework for transportation improvements and truck route planning across Kern County; and

WHEREAS, the Study is intended to serve as a long-term planning and implementation framework to guide future transportation investments and coordination among Kern COG, local jurisdictions, and partner agencies; and

WHEREAS, State legislation, including Senate Bill 415 (SB 415), requires local jurisdictions to adopt or update designated truck routes within their circulation elements by January 2028; and

WHEREAS, the KARGO Phase II and Phase III studies provide the technical basis, recommended networks, and supporting maps that can assist local jurisdictions in complying with these statutory requirements; and

WHEREAS, the Study's findings provide a defensible, Countywide framework that supports coordination of truck route planning and regional goods movement improvements; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

The Kern Council of Governments Board hereby:

1. Receives and files the KARGO Community Prosperity and Protection Study (Phase III), including all supporting technical analyses, maps, and implementation strategies.
2. Recognizes the Study as a regional planning framework that supports coordinated goods movement, transportation resiliency, economic development, and community protection throughout Kern County.
3. Encourages all member jurisdictions to review and consider the Study's findings, recommendations, and maps when updating local planning documents, including:
 - General Plans
 - Circulation Elements
 - Truck Route Networks
4. Encourages jurisdictions to incorporate the Study's recommended truck routes and network improvements, as appropriate, to support compliance with State requirements under SB 415, including adoption of designated truck routes by January 2028.
5. Supports the use of Study findings and maps as a technical and policy foundation for:
 - Establishing or modifying truck routes
 - Improving regional freight mobility

- Reducing truck impacts on local communities
 - Advancing safety and resiliency improvements
6. Affirms that the Study provides a coordinated regional basis for future transportation planning, funding, and project development efforts, including those led by Kern COG and partner agencies.

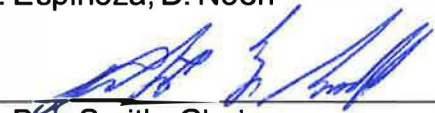
ADOPTED, SIGNED, AND APPROVED THIS 18th Day of June 2026.

AYES: B. Smith, M. Hawkins, B. Osorio, S. Gorman, P. Smith, G. Reyna, D. Couch, C. Parlier,
C. Parra, M. Warney, P. Vallejo, A. Williams

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: O. Calderon, C. Morse, S. Ayon, P. Espinoza, D. Noerr



Bob Smith, Chairman
Kern Council of Governments

ATTEST:

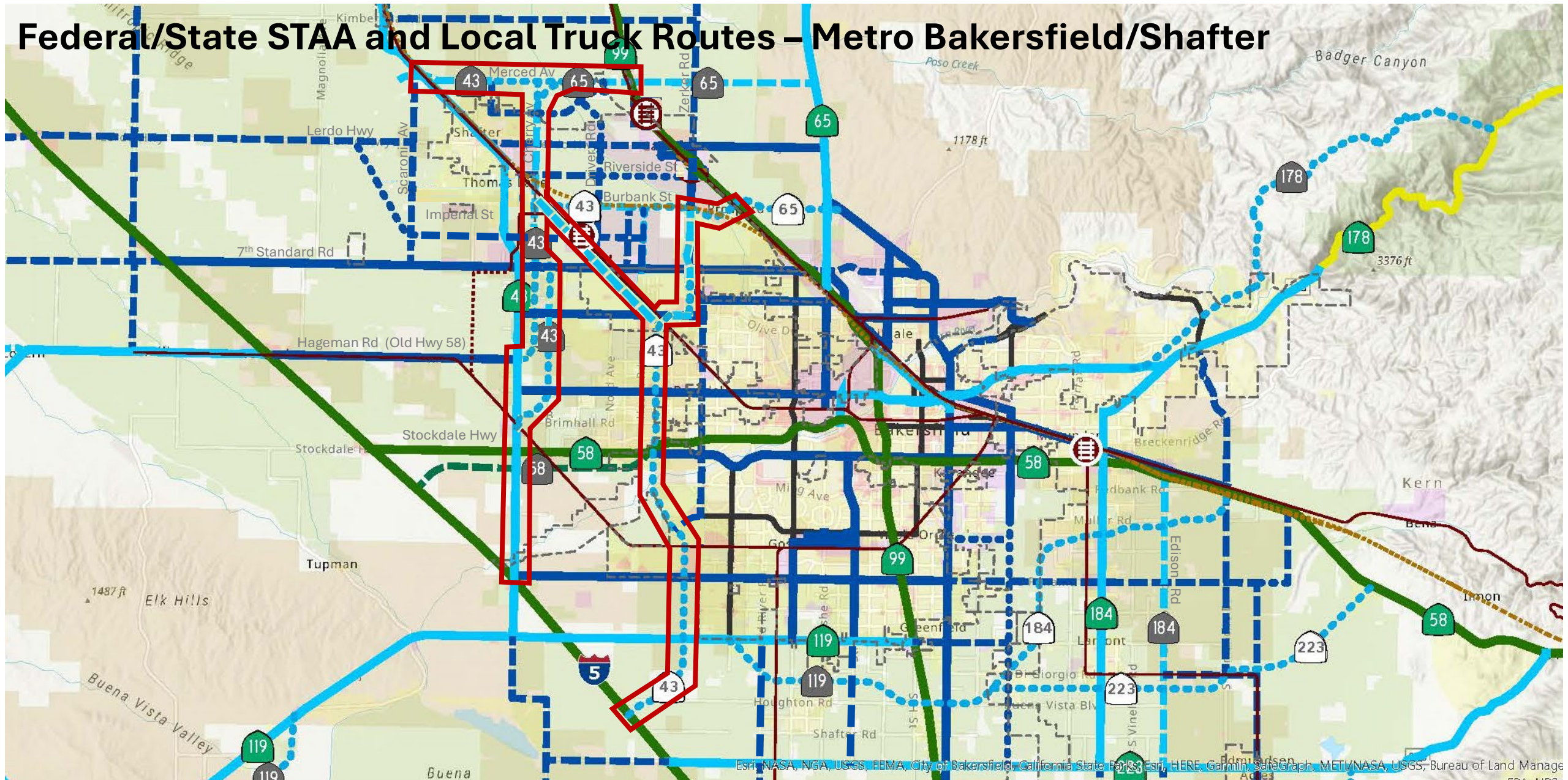
I hereby certify that the forgoing is a true resolution of the Kern Council of Governments duly adopted at a regularly scheduled meeting on the 18th day of June 2026.



John Sclosser
Executive Director
Kern Council of Governments

Date: June 18, 2026

Federal/State STAA and Local Truck Routes – Metro Bakersfield/Shafter



W Urban Corridor Greenpass Alignments

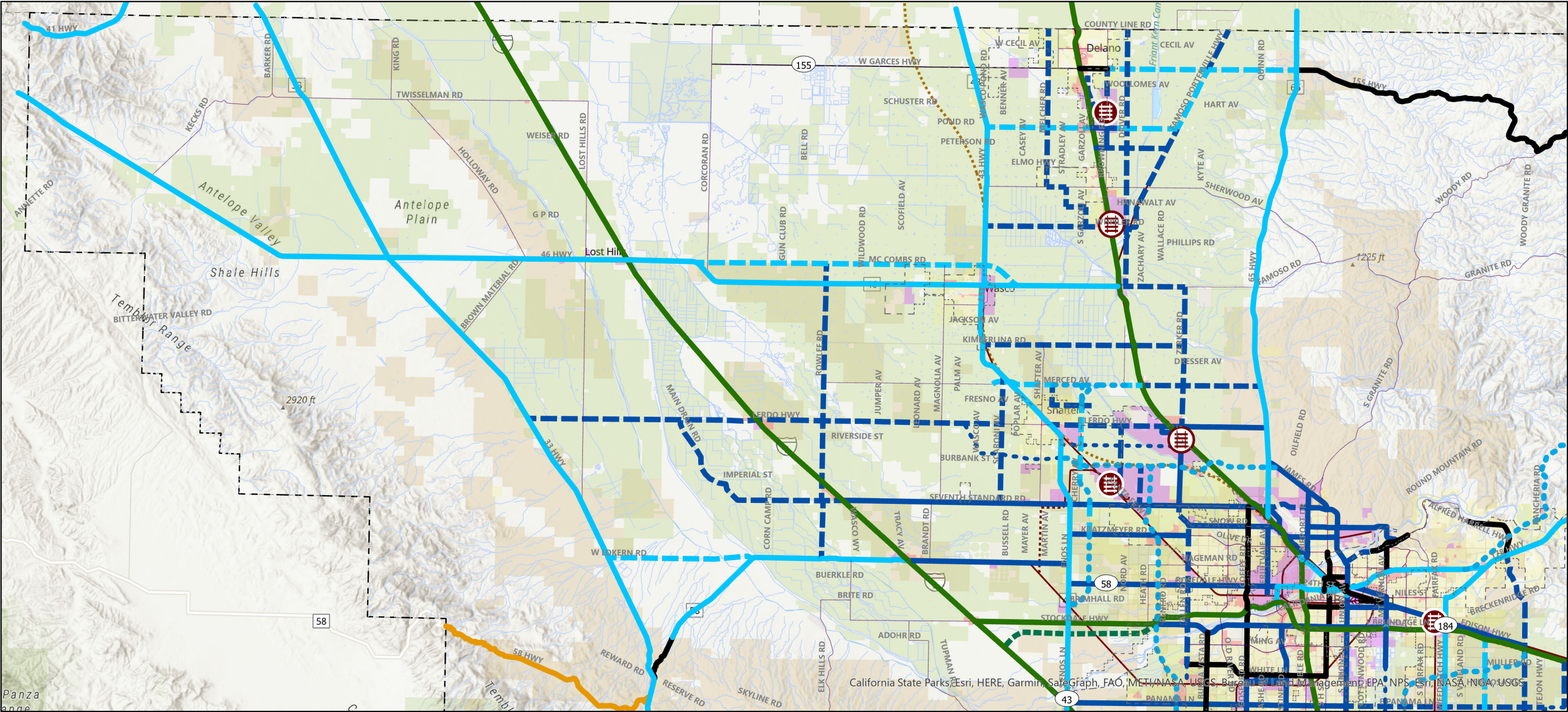
DRAFT 10-21-25

6 Miles



Existing	Candidate	Future		Legal Routes	Potential Highway Phases	Rail	Intermodal Freight Hub	Combined General Plan Land
			National Network (STAA)	65' CA Legal Route	Existing	Existing Rail	Existing	Residential
			State Terminal Access (STAA)	65' CA Legal *KPRA Advisory	Phase 1	Future Rail	Potential	Commercial
			Local (STAA)	Other Major Local Arterials	Phase 2	High Speed Rail Alignment		Agriculture Production
								Oil Production

T-2 NW Kern - Truck Routes Suggested Updates

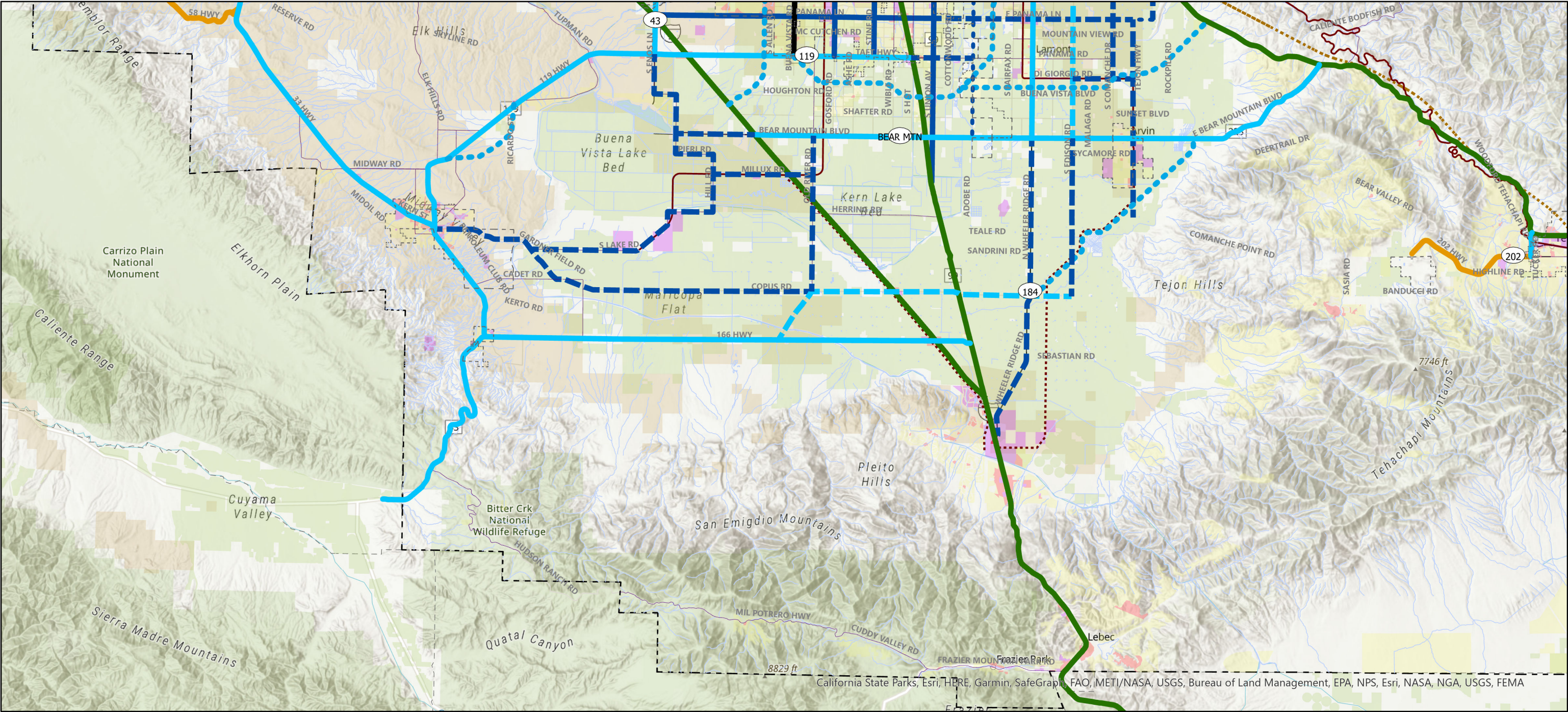


9 Miles



Existing Candidate Future			Intermodal Freight Hub			Combined General Plan Land Use		
National Network (STAA)			Existing			Residential	Commercial	Industrial
			Potential			Agriculture Production	Oil Production	
State Terminal Access (STAA)			Future Rail					
			High Speed Rail Alignment					
Local (STAA)								
65' CA Legal Route								
65' CA Legal *KPRA Advisory								
Other Major Local Arterials								
Other Roads								

T-3 SW Kern - Truck Routes Suggested Updates

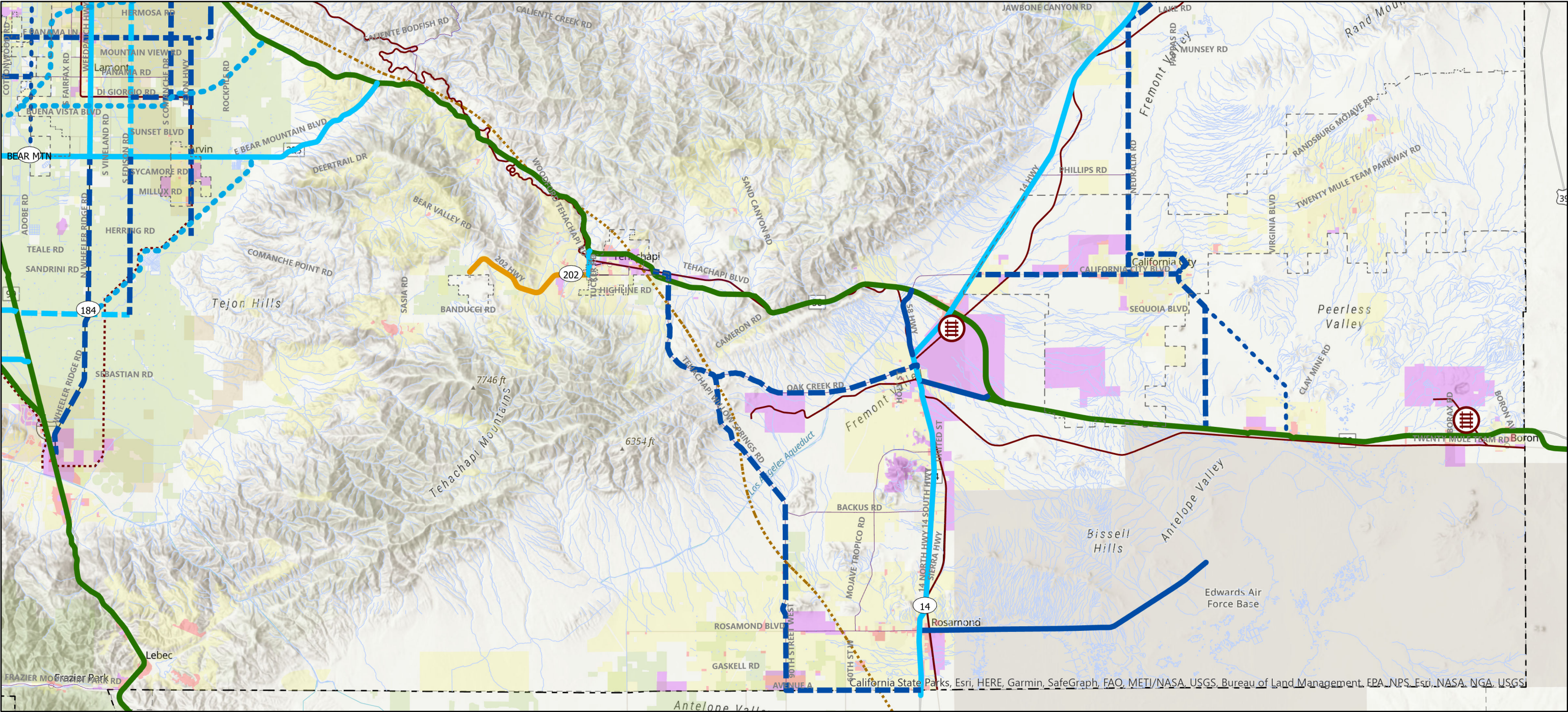


9 Miles



Existing 	Candidate 	Future 	National Network (STAA) 	65' CA Legal Route 	Existing Rail 	Intermodal Freight Hub Existing Potential	Combined General Plan Land Use Residential Commercial Industrial Agriculture Production Oil Production
State Terminal Access (STAA) 	Local (STAA) 	65' CA Legal *KPRA Advisory 	Other Major Local Arterials 	Future Rail 	High Speed Rail Alignment 		

T-4 SE Kern - Truck Routes Suggested Updates



9 Miles



Existing Candidate Future

- Existing: Solid green line
- Candidate: Dashed green line
- Future: Dotted green line
- National Network (STAA): Dotted green line
- State Terminal Access (STAA): Dashed blue line
- Local (STAA): Dotted blue line

- 65' CA Legal Route: Solid black line
- 65' CA Legal *KPRA Advisory: Solid yellow line
- Other Major Local Arterials: Solid grey line
- Other Roads: Dashed grey line

- Existing Rail: Solid dark red line
- Future Rail: Dashed dark red line
- High Speed Rail Alignment: Dotted brown line

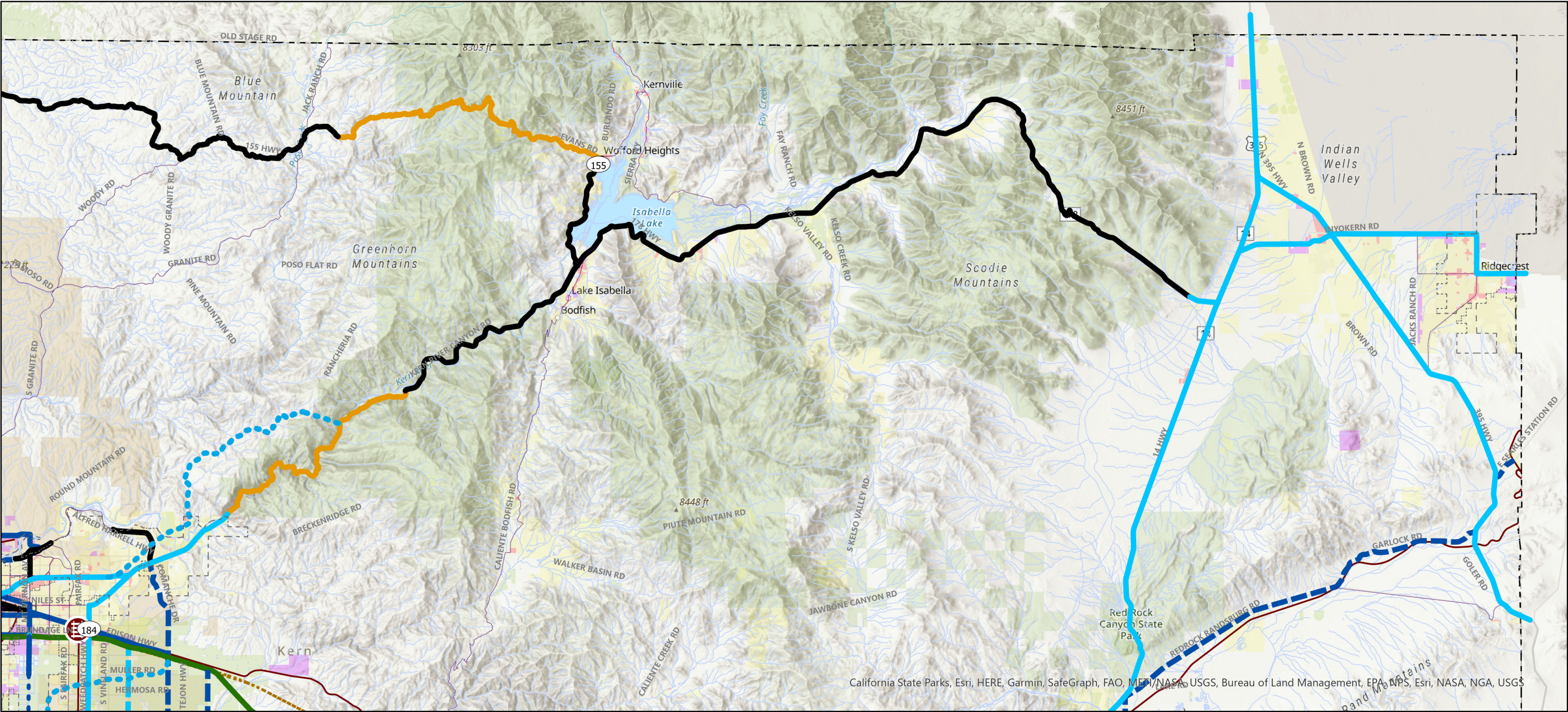
Intermodal Freight Hub

- Existing: Red circle with a cross
- Potential: Red circle with a cross and a dot

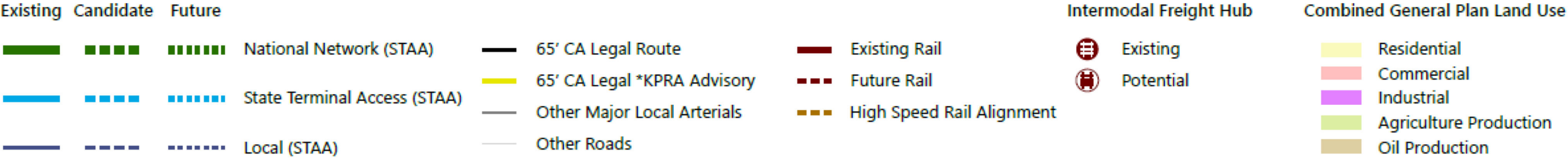
Combined General Plan Land Use

- Residential: Yellow polygon
- Commercial: Pink polygon
- Industrial: Purple polygon
- Agriculture Production: Green polygon
- Oil Production: Brown polygon

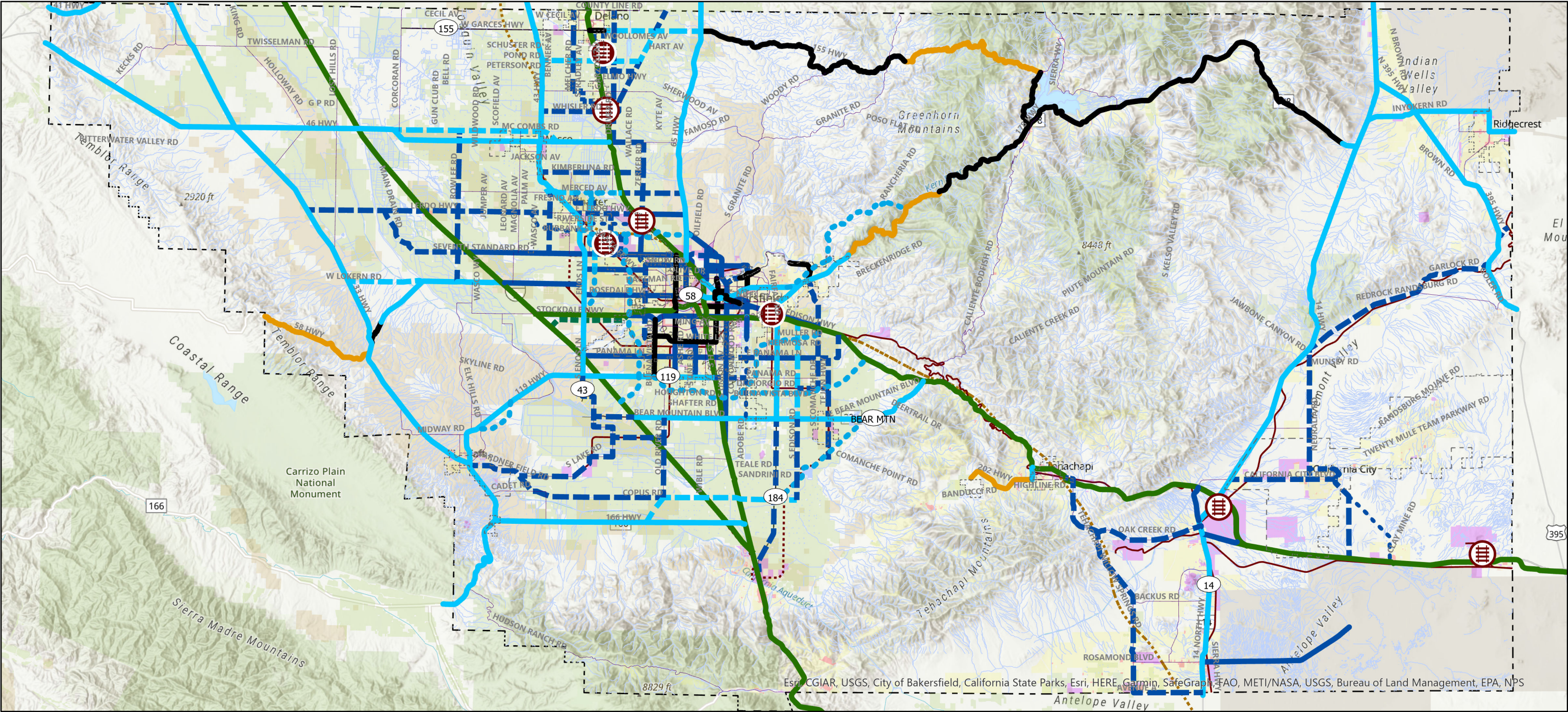
T-5 NE Kern - Truck Routes Suggested Updates



9 Miles



T-6 Kern Region - Truck Routes Suggested Updates



17 Miles



Existing Candidate Future

- Existing: Solid green line
- Candidate: Dashed green line
- Future: Dotted green line
- National Network (STAA): Solid green line
- State Terminal Access (STAA): Dashed green line
- Local (STAA): Dotted green line

- 65' CA Legal Route: Solid black line
- 65' CA Legal *KPRA Advisory: Solid yellow line
- Other Major Local Arterials: Solid grey line
- Other Roads: Dashed grey line

- Existing Rail: Solid dark red line
- Future Rail: Dashed dark red line
- High Speed Rail Alignment: Solid brown line

Intermodal Freight Hub

- Existing: Circle with horizontal lines
- Potential: Circle with vertical lines

Combined General Plan Land Use

- Residential: Yellow square
- Commercial: Orange square
- Industrial: Purple square
- Agriculture Production: Green square
- Oil Production: Brown square