

KERN REGIONAL BLUEPRINT PROGRAM TOWN HALL MEETING—PHASE 2

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

FRAZIER PARK December 11, 2007

I. INTRODUCTION

On Tuesday, December 11, 2007, Kern Council of Governments (COG) hosted a Town Hall Meeting for the Kern Regional Blueprint Program at the Frazier Park Recreation Building in Frazier Park. The purpose of the meeting was: (a) to educate participants about the purpose of the Blueprint; (b) to provide results of Phase 1 outreach efforts regarding the visions, values, and top issues for the future; and (c) to present and facilitate discussion and collect input about draft principles and draft illustrative “scenarios” for future growth.

Background

Kern COG is an association of city and county governments primarily created to address regional transportation issues. Its member agencies include the County of Kern and the eleven incorporated cities within the Kern Region and ex-officio members representing Caltrans, Golden Empire Transit District and the Congestion Management Agency.

The Town Hall Meeting is one of a series throughout the Kern Region as part of the Kern Regional Blueprint Program, which is designed to engage policymakers and citizens to create a regional vision and growth principles for the integration of transportation, housing, land use, economic development and environmental protection that will inform local decision-making and guide growth over the next 50 years. **The Kern Regional Blueprint is not a City General Plan or a County Specific Plan; it is a 2050 visioning project designed to complement other planning processes.** Elected officials from the county and each city throughout the Kern region will determine how their jurisdictions will accommodate the regional vision through local decision-making and planning efforts. The Kern Regional Blueprint will also be included as part of the Central California Blueprint Program, which will integrate the outcomes of the Blueprint programs from the seven other Central California counties.

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

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

Community Outreach

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

- Direct phone calls to a broad range of community-based organizations including business, social service, cultural, and other interests;
- Targeted mail and email of a project newsletter and meeting notice;
- Coordination with government agencies' outreach efforts and networks;
- Inserts in local and community-based newsletters and media publications;
- Media campaign.

These efforts will continue to build Kern COG's outreach database over time, leading to ever-expanding outreach measures in future phases of the process.

Town Hall Meeting Agenda and Format

The Frazier Park meeting was held from 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. at the Frazier Park Recreation Building, Glendale Trail & Park Drive in Frazier Park. Upon entering the meeting facility, participants signed-in and received a nametag and handout materials including an agenda, comment form, and evaluation form (handout materials may be found at www.kerncog.org). Approximately 17 community members representing residents, businesses, local government agencies, and community-based organizations attended the meeting.

Participants then reviewed the “open house” portion of the meeting, which featured display materials of local area maps and data related to existing conditions and future growth projections, as well as other general information from Kern COG. Becky Napier of Kern COG served as the meeting facilitator and initiated the meeting with brief welcoming remarks and an agenda overview. She then introduced Kern COG Assistant Director, Darrel Hildebrand.

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

Ms. Napier then reviewed the format of the small group discussions before convening participants to their small groups. After brief introductions among the participants, a facilitator at each small group table guided participants through a discussion of participants' reactions to the draft principles. As a discussion tool, the facilitators introduced a "card game," which is designed to allow participants to share their beliefs of how effective each principle would be in achieving the visions for future growth. The small group facilitators recorded participants' discussion points and the card game tallies during the small group discussion on flip chart pages, and participants also recorded comments on their own comment forms, all of which are summarized in the following pages of this report.

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

Ms. Napier then asked participants to reconvene in their small groups to review the scenarios and data in more detail, which were provided as handouts and on large posters at each small group table. She asked that each participant indicate their preferred scenario and to share their ideas and reasons as part of the small group discussion. The small group facilitators guided these discussions and recorded comments on the flip chart pages, and participants also recorded comments on their own comment forms, all of which are summarized in the following pages of this report.

Participants then reconvened in the large group format to hear brief summary reports from a volunteer from each group regarding the Draft Principles and scenarios. Ms. Napier facilitated the discussion and also recorded a summary of the reports on flip chart pages at the front of the meeting room.

The following pages summarize comments captured on the flip chart pages from the small group discussions, as well as those submitted by participants on comment forms. Original copies of these documents are on file with Kern COG.

II. DISCUSSION: DRAFT PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

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

Use compact, efficient development and/or mixed land uses

Participants expressed the opinion that well planned development is critical to meeting the goals of good environmental stewardship. Participants generally agreed development is limited by forest boundaries. Some participants thought allowing office space with apartments above would help create housing in town areas. One participant expressed the opinion that new developments such as Tejon Mountain Village and Falling Star are so spread out compact, efficient development and land use would not be possible. One participant lives in a Homeowners Association community and thought this principle was moot; therefore, requested the principle be deleted.

| ♣ Major effect | ♦ Moderate Effect | ♥ Small effect | ♠ No effect | X Delete |
|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 6 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 |





Provide a variety of housing choices

Participants generally agreed it was not important to the community to provide a variety of housing choices. One participant wanted to see more emphasis on the idea for co-housing for seniors.

| ♣ Major effect | ♦ Moderate Effect | ♥ Small effect | ♠ No effect | X Delete |
|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 1 |





Provide adequate and equitable services

Participants agreed there was a lack of health services within the community and this forced some citizens (seniors) to leave the area. Participants also cited recreational opportunities as key to the community's future ability to attract high quality residents. Participants expressed a need for cultural venues, recreation for children and senior housing. Some participants expressed the opinion that the middle school and high school should be relocated away from Interstate 5 due to air pollution from truck traffic. A few participants expressed a need for a cemetery.

|  Major effect |  Moderate Effect |  Small effect |  No effect | <i>X Delete</i> |
|--|---|--|---|-----------------|
| 9 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |





Use and improve existing community assets and infrastructure

Participants generally agreed this principle was very important. Some thought improved infrastructure would increase property values and desirability. Others expressed a need for paved streets and improved water systems. Some participants expressed the desire for a sewer system. A few participants expressed the opinion that quality infrastructure was not implemented from the start and it would be difficult to fix now. One participant expressed the opinion that valley air pollution combined with pollution from Interstate 5 will make the area undesirable.

|  Major effect |  Moderate Effect |  Small effect |  No effect | <i>X Delete</i> |
|--|---|--|---|-----------------|
| 8 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 |





Provide a variety of transportation choices

Participants expressed the opinion that topography and geography limit use of bicycles and walking and any other options would be disruptive to the mountain lifestyle. Some participants identified a need for light rail or transit to link the community to metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles so people could use it to get to and from work. Participants also expressed the opinion the current transit bus schedule is inconsistent and not convenient; therefore, the bus is empty. One participant thought planned new developments were spread out and would limit transportation options.

|  Major effect |  Moderate Effect |  Small effect |  No effect | <i>X Delete</i> |
|--|---|--|---|-----------------|
| 2 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 0 |





Enhance economic vitality

Participants generally agreed this principle was important to the future of the community. Participants also agreed that job opportunities were limited in the area. Participants expressed the idea of concentrating on ecotourism and recreation to enhance the economy.

|  Major effect |  Moderate Effect |  Small effect |  No effect | <i>X Delete</i> |
|--|---|--|---|-----------------|
| 6 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 0 |





Conserve energy and natural resources, and develop alternatives

Some participants thought this principle would have little effect because the community is surrounded by public land with severely restricted regulations on the environment. Some participants expressed the opinion there was an inability of government to influence the “common good”.

|  Major effect |  Moderate Effect |  Small effect |  No effect | <i>X Delete</i> |
|--|---|--|---|-----------------|
| 8 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 |





Conserve undeveloped land and spaces

Participants agreed that preserving open space would limit local air pollution and that limited water would not be depleted. Participants agreed development is encroaching on the area and the community will be changed forever. Participants also expressed the desire to maintain the rural character of the community and value the “view shed”. Participants also identified a need to protect Native American cultural, historical and sacred sites.

|  Major effect |  Moderate Effect |  Small effect |  No effect | <i>X Delete</i> |
|--|---|--|---|-----------------|
| 11 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Increase civic and public engagement

Participants cited a lack of and/or poor representation of the community at the state and county level. Participants recognized that a unified group will have more influence, but apathy is the biggest problem.

|  Major effect |  Moderate Effect |  Small effect |  No effect | <i>X Delete</i> |
|--|---|--|---|-----------------|
| 8 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

Missing principles

Participants identified the following missing principles:

- Air pollution from Interstate 5
- Price of gasoline

III. DISCUSSION: DRAFT SCENARIOS

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

- **No change**, or maintaining development patterns as projected in today's local land use planning policies
- **Some change**, or some increase in compact development
- **Moderate change**, or a moderate increase in compact development
- **Major change**, or a major increase in compact development

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

Major Change (1)

The participant who selected the major change scenario expressed the opinion that infill is a great idea. They also thought current developers would crush them and by 2050 the area would be an ordinary suburban community.

Moderate Change (2)

Participants who selected the moderate change scenario thought there was a necessity for more "green" lifestyles. They also expressed the opinion there would be a move toward more compact development out of necessity, but the mountain lifestyle would still be desirable.

Some Change (6)

Participants who selected the some change scenario thought increased density would occur in the Frazier Park/Cuddy Valley area.

No Change (2)

Participants who selected the no change scenario expressed the opinion that the market will dictate continued development of single family housing in this area.

ADDITIONAL ISSUES AND COMMENTS

Participants provided additional comments during the small group discussions and via comment cards.

- Effect of post peak oil in the decades ahead will change our world irrevocably.
- Scarcity of water and lack of political will to preserve this unique area will change our lives.
- Social effects of immigration (not a negative) need to be discussed.
- We don't want any more growth, compact or otherwise.
- This is just another waste of taxpayers dollars and will end up as a report collecting dust on a shelf.

