

ANNUAL REPORT 2008 - 2009



**Kern Council
of Governments**

Better Planning. Better Transportation



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KERN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Kern Council of Governments is a state-designated regional transportation planning agency and federally recognized metropolitan planning organization comprising elected officials and selected representatives from Kern County and the cities of Arvin, Bakersfield, California City, Delano, McFarland, Maricopa, Ridgecrest, Shafter, Taft, Tehachapi and Wasco through a joint powers agreement.

Kern COG sets transportation priorities, selects projects and distributes state and federal monies to its members to maintain, repair and support operations of

local roadways, public transportation and other transportation systems, and works with Caltrans to plan, select and construct major highway projects.

Kern COG also offers its members various services such as computer modeling and support, data gathering and population projections, as well as assistance applying for federal and state funds. The following is a summary, by section, of the agency's major activities during fiscal year 2008-2009. ■



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

With more construction projects under way than our region has seen in decades, along with a landmark freight movement study, Kern COG kept its focus on solutions that move us forward in 2008-09.

Despite a sour economy, our region has seen no fewer than six major transportation construction projects begin, end or continue construction during the last fiscal year, including:

BAKERSFIELD: Westside Parkway Phases 1 (Mohawk Street extension) and 2 (Mohawk Street to Coffee Road);

KERN COUNTY: State Route 46 widening - Segment 1 from State Route 33 to Brown Material Road;

KERN COUNTY: Seventh Standard Road widening from Coffee Road to Santa Fe Way.

KERN COUNTY: Laval Road/Interstate 5 interchange near the Grapevine; Bakersfield: Fairfax Avenue/State Route 178 interchange;

KERN COUNTY: Seventh Standard Road/State Route 99 interchange.

Each of these projects will improve traffic movement and safety in vital regional areas creating jobs and helping to move both people and freight more efficiently, which ultimately results in a stronger local economy.

Speaking of freight, Kern COG in 2008-09 joined San Bernardino Associated Governments on the first study to determine truck volumes, origins and destinations, and the kinds of goods flowing specifically along State Route 58 from Bakersfield to Barstow. The data comes from 11,300 one-minute surveys with truck drivers from two sites each

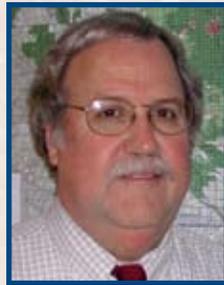
in both east and west directions in Boron and Keene. In addition, more than 260 commercial fleet operators were surveyed by phone regarding travel patterns.

In the near future, Kern COG will replicate this study on State Route 99 and Interstate 5. The information is increasingly important to both our region and the state as a whole. Goods movement data has eluded transportation planners even as trucks have accounted for a greater percentage of freeway traffic.

As with all our data and reports, the truck study can be found on our website at www.kerncog.org along with survey information, newsletters, project updates and a variety of other useful information.

Along that line, we're working harder than ever to keep you informed. We mailed more than 10,000 postcards in February and May in an effort to update our contact database. Announcements, events, new documents and public comment opportunities are being pushed directly to you via email and Facebook.

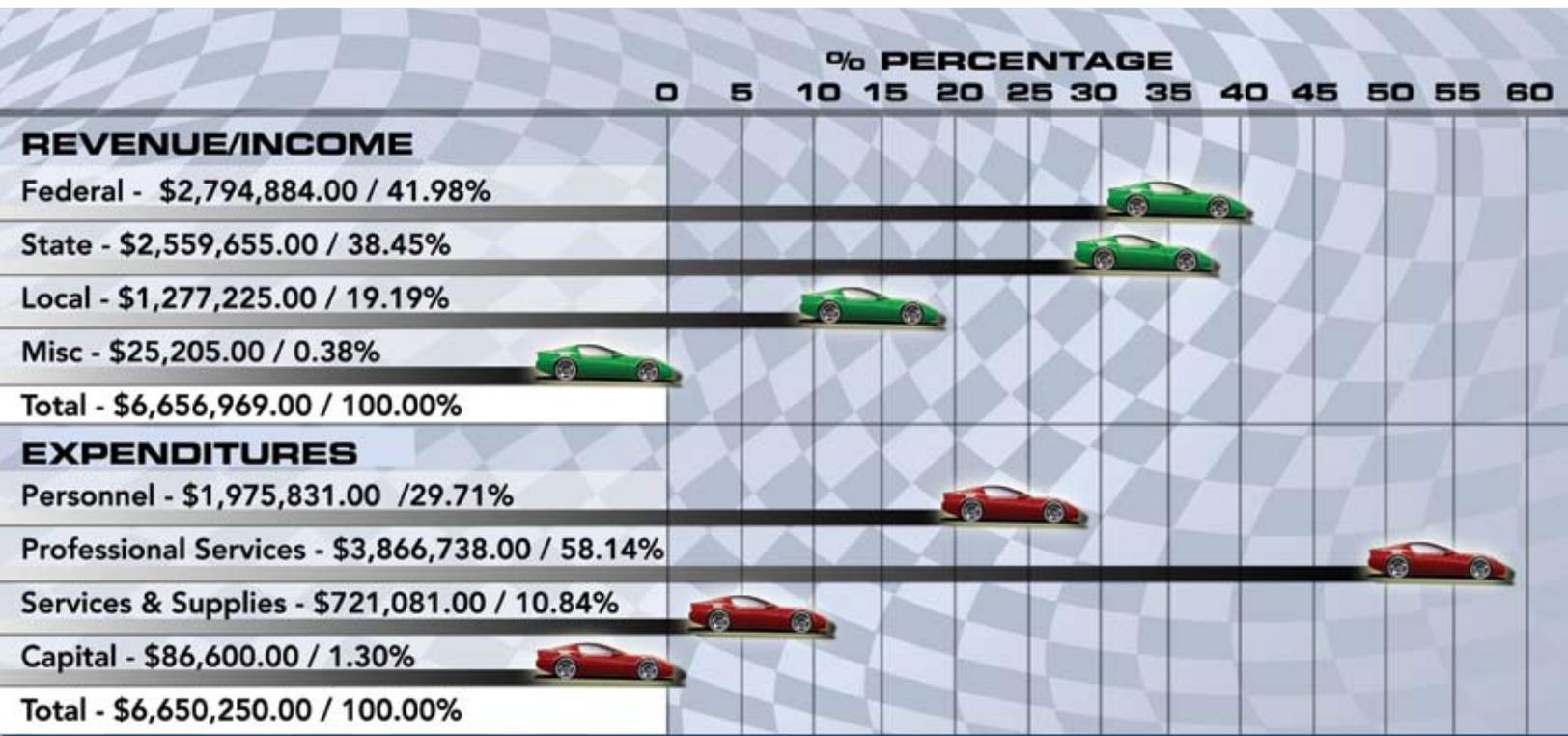
Kern COG's motto is "better planning, better transportation," which rings true even in these uncertain economic times. By maintaining our focus on regional priorities, we'll keep moving forward now and in the future.



Ron Brummett
Kern COG
Executive Director



2008-2009 KERN COG BUDGET



KERN REGIONAL BLUEPRINT

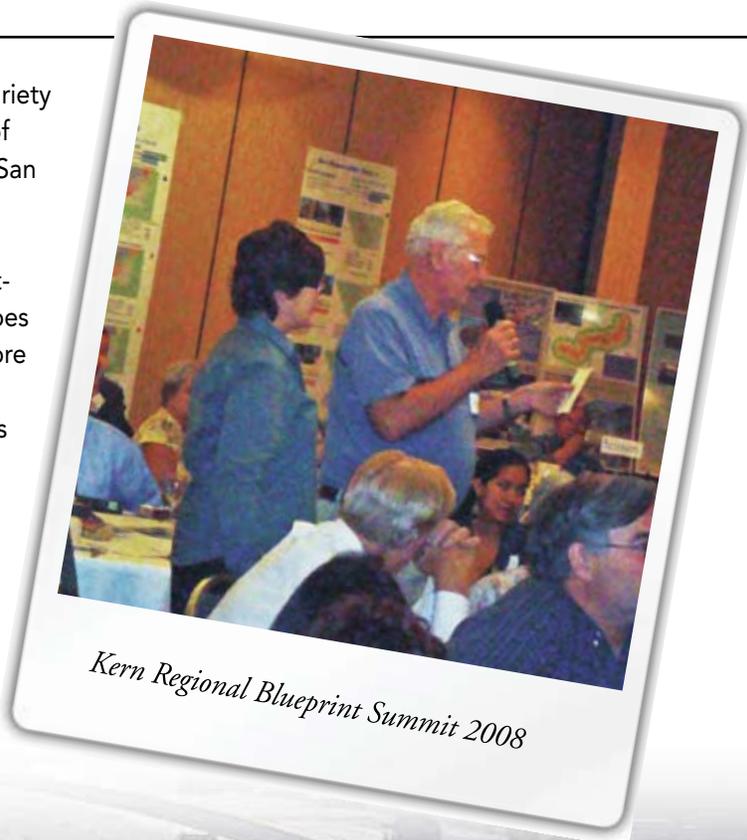
Kern COG's Regional Blueprint program, which encourages a variety of new development options, received approval from the Board of Directors in 2008-09, and was forwarded for consideration in the San Joaquin Valley scenario.

The information from Kern's final report was included with the other seven COGs participating in the program to create an eight-county Blueprint. Blueprint encourages a mixture of housing types and densities, along with resource conservation, to encourage more sustainable growth in community plans.

On April 1, 2009 elected officials representing the eight COGs on the San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council adopted a list of growth principles as the basis for Blueprint planning in the eight counties and a preferred growth scenario intended to guide local jurisdictions as they update their general plans. That scenario calls for approximately 6.8 units per developed acre of residential housing.

County Boards of Supervisors and local city council members have discretion in whether to implement the preferred Blueprint growth scenario.

The COGs are developing a Valleywide final Blueprint report and an implementation toolkit for local jurisdictions.



Kern Regional Blueprint Summit 2008



KERN ENERGY WATCH PROGRAM

Kern COG assumed the utility-sponsored Energy Watch program for small governments and special districts in 2009 as part of a broader effort to reduce energy use throughout the region.

Kern Energy Watch is a joint partnership among Kern Council of Governments; utility providers; the County of Kern; cities and special districts within the region. The partners also coordinate with the Kern Economic Development Corporation and the Great Valley Center.

Working with local contractors, Energy Watch partnerships conduct “energy audits” and offer financing and equipment to upgrade residential, business and government buildings. The program aims to reduce energy consumption, expenses, and greenhouse gas emissions while conserving natural resources. These goals are achieved through outreach and education, equip-

ment retrofits and upgrades, and technical assistance.

By July 2009, 10 cities in the Kern region will have passed a resolution supporting Energy Watch. Through the resolution, each city designates a representative who will attend monthly partnership meetings, manage the city’s projects, coordinate with an energy watch audit team, and carry out projects recommended in the audit.

Kern COG will develop a comprehensive Kern Regional Energy Plan to increase program participation based on the area’s unique needs. The program also focuses on energy policies that promote efficiency practices, codes, and standards.



Kern Energy Watch aims to reduce energy consumption, expenses, and greenhouse gas emissions while conserving natural resources.

EASTERN CALIFORNIA BLUEPRINT PROJECT

Residents in Eastern California value the scenic beauty of their surroundings; strong sense of community, and small town atmosphere —characteristics they hope to maintain while also providing more and better jobs for future generations.

These were among the findings gleaned from four workshops in 2009 as part of the Eastern California Blueprint Project.

Designed to encourage policymakers and citizens to create a regional vision and growth principles over the next 50 years, the project examines conditions in five key areas – transportation, housing, land use, economic development and environmental protection – that will inform local decision-making and guide growth.

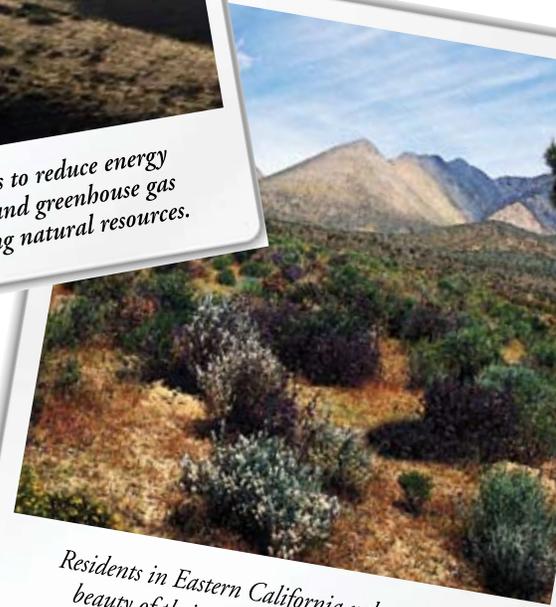
Kern Council of Governments is collaborating with Mono County Local Transportation Commission and Inyo County Local Transportation Commission to complete the Blueprint process, whose first phase includes examining visions and values and then moves on to developing growth principles and potential scenarios.

Phase I community meetings were

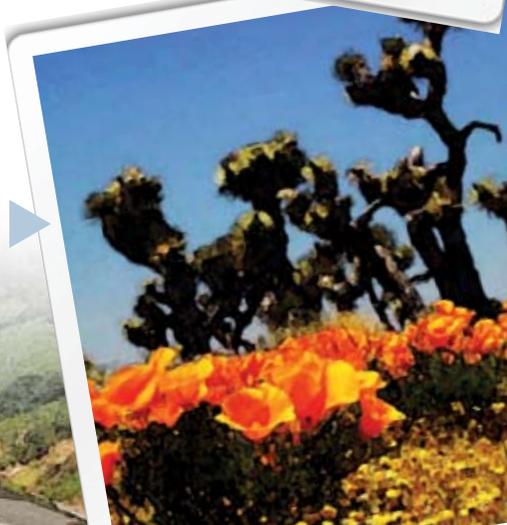
conducted in Lone Pine and Bishop on April 20, and Walker and Lee Vining on April 23, 2009.

In all four meetings, plus the one held in Ridgecrest in 2008, participants praised the natural beauty of their surroundings, as well as the strong sense of community and small-town environment as characteristics they hope to protect. At the same, they recognize the lack of a tax base large enough to support community needs; little affordable housing for all income levels; few opportunities for youth after high school, and a need to balance economic vitality while maintaining the region’s rural character.

Most participants agreed they wanted to maintain the natural environment and open spaces; protect historical buildings and sites, and provide jobs and affordable housing for younger families.



Residents in Eastern California value the scenic beauty of their surroundings; strong sense of community, and small town atmosphere.



KERN COMMUTER CONNECTION - RIDESHARE 2008-2009

Kern Commuter Connection (KCC) brought employers together in 2008-09 to share alternative commuting strategies, and updated its carpooling software so users can better see their carbon footprint growing smaller with each daily trip.

KCC upgraded its commute tracker, which provides:

-  A more intuitive approach for tracking different commute types (bicycle, bus rides) as well as miles traveled;
-  Instantaneous statistics on emission reductions for the commuter;
-  The ability for commuters to track daily trips to see how ride sharing saves money and reduces pollution;
-  The ability to mix and match trip types throughout the month to represent all daily commutes.

Staff also worked with on promoting Clean Air Month activities in May. Working with the San



Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District; Golden Empire Transit; Kern Regional Transit; Bike Bakersfield; Project Clean Air; and the American Lung Association; the group promot-

ed healthy living activities with an extensive media campaign that encompassed radio, television and print media that ran from June through August throughout

the Kern region.

For Rideshare Week in October, KCC staff established the monthly Et Cetera workgroup for personnel directors to talk about transportation needs and solutions within their businesses. The speakers addressed air quality, vanpools, funding opportunities, tax incentives, and public transportation.

"THE SPEAKERS ADDRESSED AIR QUALITY, VANPOOLS, FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES, TAX INCENTIVES, AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION."

FEDERAL LOBBYIST FIRM HIRED FOR KERN COG



Kern County Supervisor Michael Rubio (right) and other delegates from the San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council meet with U.S. senator Barbara Boxer in February, 2009.

In June, Kern COG's Board of Directors hired a federal lobbyist for the first time in agency history to assist staff in developing legislative goals, navigating the congressional lawmaking process and making appropriations requests, among other services.

The Board also intends to hire a state lobbying firm to perform many of the same functions in California's Legislature.

The lobbying firm contracts are the centerpiece in a new legislative program the Board initiated to compete with larger metropolitan regions for a bigger slice of federal funding. Kern COG has joined its sister agencies throughout the San Joaquin Valley to exert more influence over state and federal lawmakers, including trips by city councilmembers and county supervisors to both Sacra-

mento and Washington, D.C.

By banding together on common legislative goals, the eight San Joaquin Valley counties have managed to carve out a \$1 billion earmark for State Route 99 in the Proposition 1B transportation bond of 2008. In addition, the coalition was able to defeat a state Senate bill that would have placed a transportation tax on goods coming from ports in Long Beach, San Pedro and Oakland through the Valley. Under the proposal, Valley counties received none of the revenue.

Kern follows other transportation planning agencies in Fresno, Merced, San Joaquin and Tulare counties that all employ lobbyists. One trip each is planned to Sacramento and Washington, D.C. annually for Board members to meet with legislative representatives and lay out Kern COG's policy goals.

CENSUS DATA MANAGEMENT

Kern Council of Governments is the state-designated Census Data Center for Kern County, distributing social and economic data to other government agencies, private businesses and the general public. During 2008-09 staff answered more than 1,500 requests for information.

Staff uses a variety of data sources to garner demographic information, including the Bureau of Labor Statistics, California State Department of Finance, Employment Development Department and the U.S. Census. Kern COG uses the demographic data in producing population forecasts, which are the basis for transportation planning.

In addition, staff typically answers more than 1,000 requests for information each year from simple community or neighborhood population counts to multilayered questions involving deeper analysis. Examples have included determining the population of existing and proposed library branches; projecting revenue from proposed sales tax increases to help pay for transportation funding; and helping schools and universities predict future enrollment by researching the birth rates in school areas.

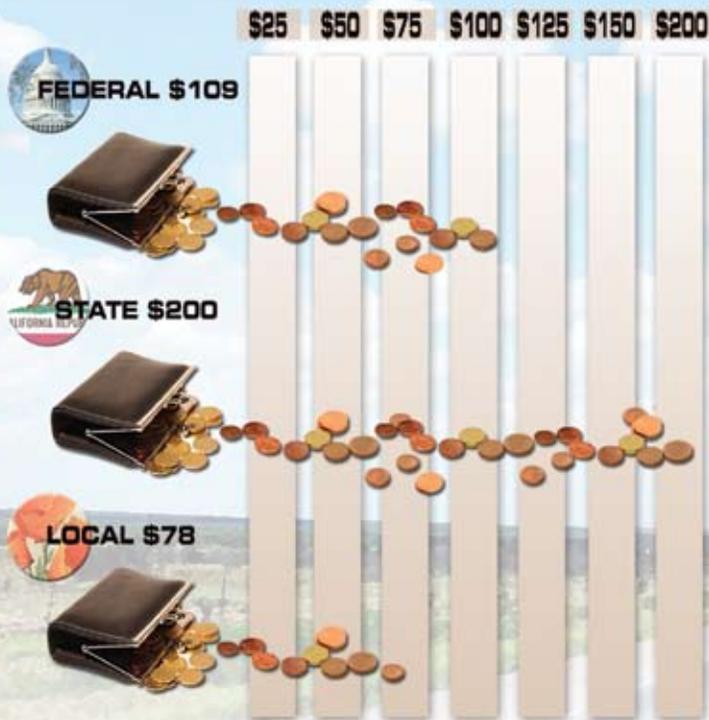
Kern COG also serves as the federally designated Home Mortgage Disclosure Repository for the region. In this capacity, the agency maintains records of mortgage customers' social characteristics to ensure lenders don't refuse loans or "redline" entire neighborhoods because of racial or income considerations.

Much of the agency's information resources are available through www.kerncog.org, including links to other information sources.

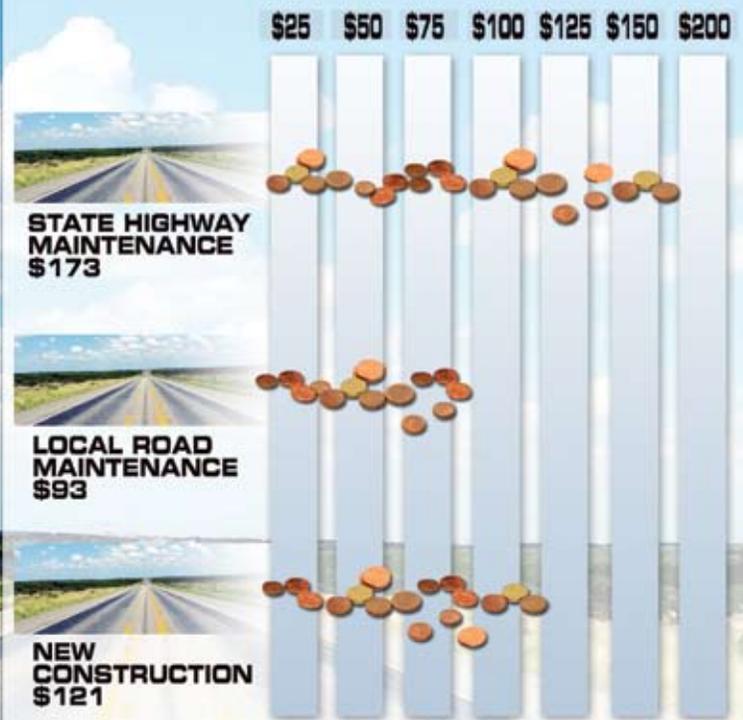


TRANSPORTATION FUNDING FOR 2008-2009

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION FUNDING (IN MILLIONS)



REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS (IN MILLIONS)



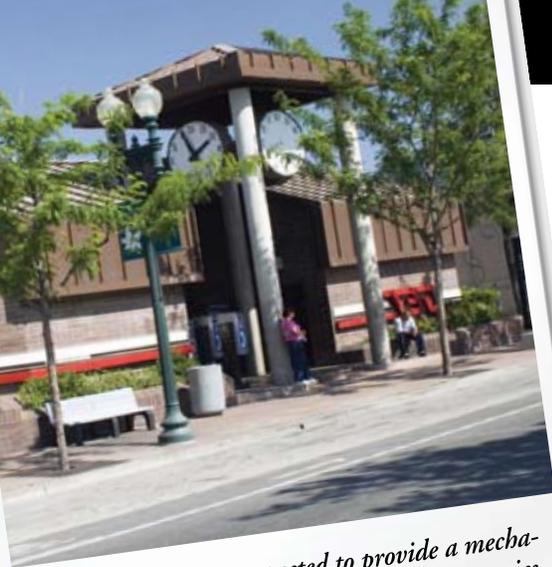
BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION

Kern Council of Governments programmed more than \$700,000 in 2008-09 for non-motorized transportation projects in the Kern region, including bicycle and pedestrian safety courses, paths and other projects under the state's Transportation Development Act-Article 3 program.

Community	Project	Funding
Arvin	Sycamore bike lanes	\$28,436
Kern County	Beardsley School sidewalks	\$61,166
Kern County	Calloway Drive sidewalks	\$44,000
Kern County	Oswell Street sidewalks	189,750
Lake Isabella	Lake Isabella Boulevard sidewalks	\$119,000
Ridgecrest	Drummond Avenue, Norma Street, Ward Avenue sidewalks	\$159,488
Tehachapi	South Side Valley Boulevard bike path	\$170,172
total		\$772,012

The Article 3 program is funded through one-quarter cent in state sales taxes collected in Kern County. The program has been instrumental in helping to fund such projects as the Taft Rails-to-Trails facility, the Ridgecrest Bowman Road Bike Path and the very popular Kern River Bikepath in Metropolitan Bakersfield.





The transit plan is expected to provide a mechanism for defining the area's needs and strategies for building an improved system.

METRO-BAKERSFIELD TRANSIT SYSTEMS STUDY

Kern COG's Board voted in 2008-09 to provide \$225,000 to fund a long-range (20-year) transit plan for metropolitan Bakersfield that establishes the system and service improvements necessary to address future transportation needs. The project is in collaboration with Golden Empire Transit District.

The plan will provide public agency staff and elected officials with data about the relationship among population growth in metropolitan Bakersfield, transit ridership demand and available funding. It will also evaluate current operations and efficiencies.

The plan is expected to provide a mechanism for defining the area's needs and strategies for building an improved system, including such services as express routes; reduced headway times and other operational improvements.

It will also assess other modes of transportation in the metropolitan area, including services for the elderly and disabled, services to other cities in the county; and coordinated airport and rail transportation.

The project should begin in January 2010 and be completed by June 2011.

TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In May 2009, Kern COG adopted a Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan targeting needs and gaps in transportation services to low-income, elderly and disabled residents.

Many of the plan's recommendations involve the federal Job Access/Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom (NF) programs, which fund projects of direct benefit to those who have the most trouble reaching their destinations. Those projects can include:

-  Fixed route extensions or shuttle services to job sites;
-  Late night and weekend transit service;
-  Car loan programs;
-  Accessibility improvements to transit and stations;
-  Accessible taxis;
-  Volunteer driver programs.

Kern COG will distribute about \$460,000 in JARC and NF funds by September 2009. Another call for projects will begin in late September 2009 and offer eligible public and private transportation providers approximately \$900,000.

FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION FUNDING

In May 09, Kern COG received the "City of Taft Transit Development Plan 2009," a five-year blueprint to assist Taft officials in developing a more efficient and effective public transit system.

The Taft Plan recommended introducing a combination fixed-route service accompanied by a dial-a-ride program for the elderly and disabled to the area. The new services would operate from 7:15 a.m. to 8:40 p.m. during the week and from 8:15 a.m. to 5:10 p.m. on Saturday.

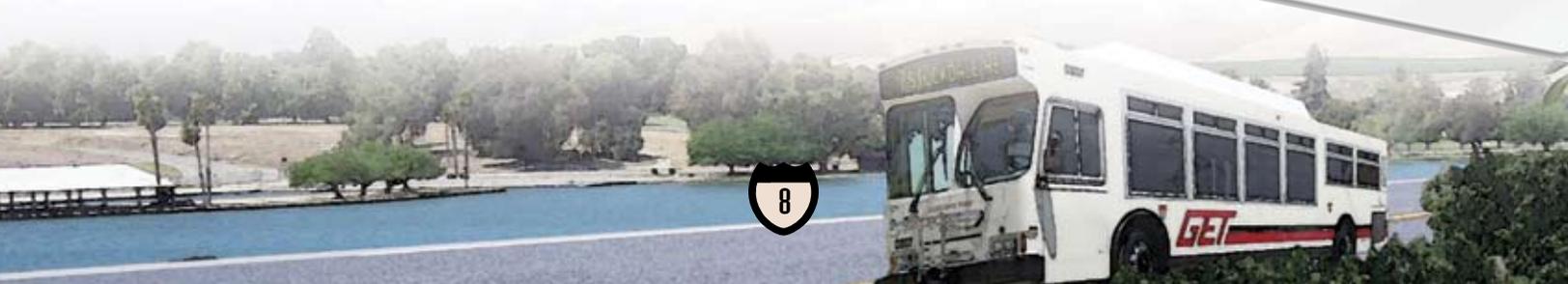
The Plan also recommended other service improvements, including fixed-route service to nearby Maricopa; new bus shelters; and a performance measurement system to monitor system effectiveness.

The Taft plan was significant for its focus on two independent public transit services: Taft Area Transit and Kern Regional Transit.

Additionally, the plan posed a solution to the lack of public transit service in Maricopa by recommending a cost-effective joint venture service agreement between Taft and Maricopa officials.



Taft's Transit Development is designed to create a more efficient transit system for the city.



LONG-RANGE PLANNING & TRANSIT

TRUCK STUDY

A new Kern COG-sponsored study in 2009 is helping to provide the most accurate, detailed information to date about commodity transportation in the Kern region.

Kern COG has joined San Bernardino Associated Governments and recently completed the first study to determine truck volumes, origins and destinations, and the kinds of goods flowing specifically along State Route 58 from Bakersfield to Barstow.

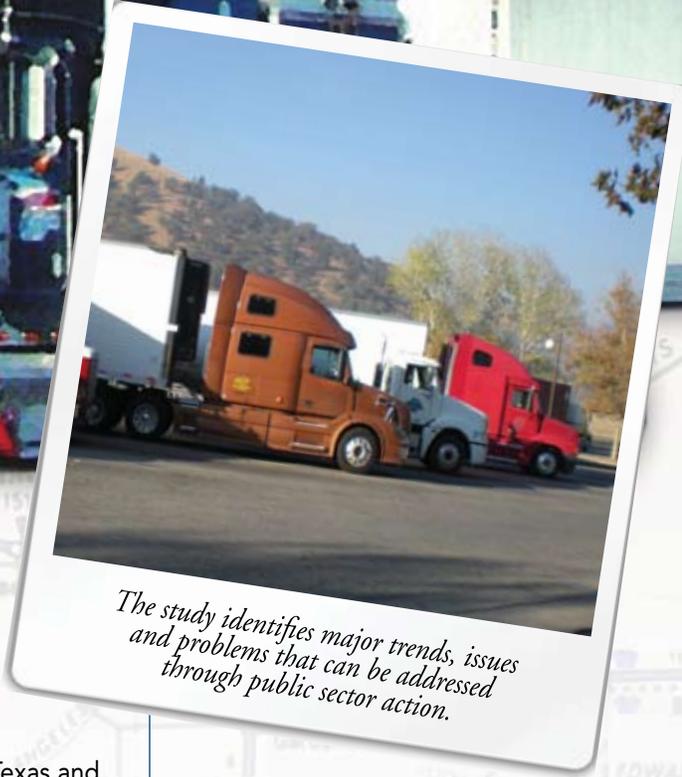
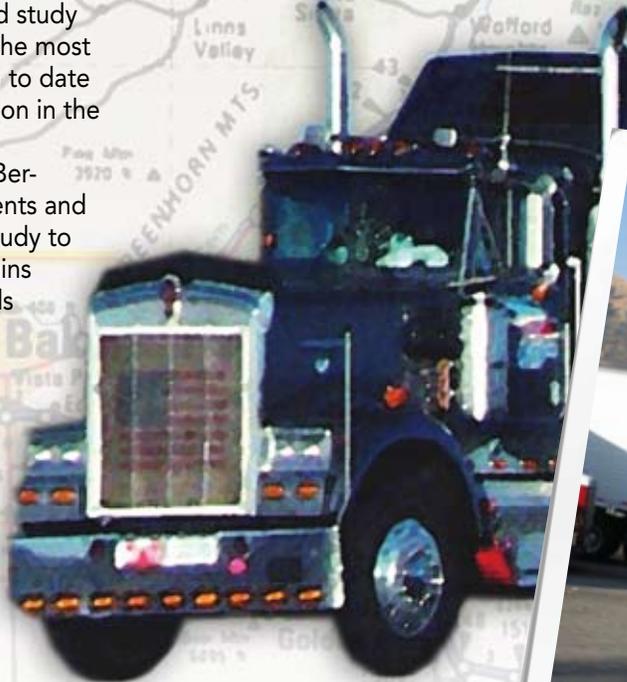
The data comes from 11,300 one-minute surveys with truck drivers from two sites each in both east and west directions in Boron and Keene. Surveys were collected during periods in the fall and spring of 2008. In addition, more than 260 commercial fleet operators were surveyed by phone regarding travel patterns.

KOA Corporation compiled the survey findings and reported on the results at the May 2009 Kern COG Board meeting. Some of the major findings include:

There were no significant variations in general truck patterns between the spring and fall.

Almost 48 percent of the trucks surveyed are based in the state of California. Of these, almost 57 percent are based in San Joaquin Valley region versus 32 percent from Southern California. After that, percentages for other regions drop off significantly.

More than a third of all eastbound trips (35 percent) originating in California stayed in California. Arizona and Nevada were the next most common destinations, followed by Texas.



The study identifies major trends, issues and problems that can be addressed through public sector action.

Similarly, about 35 percent of westbound trips originate in California with the next states being Arizona, Texas and Nevada.

Sand, gravel, rock and asphalt were the most common commodities being hauled by local drivers on SR-58 with multiple trips per day. The usage is typically highest during summer and virtually halted during winter.

The study identifies major trends, issues and problems that can be addressed through public sector action. The report is the first of its kind in California, and will be used to refine and modify future data collection efforts to aid in the freight movement planning process.

Kern COG is replicating the State

Route 58 study on State Route 99 and Interstate 5. Goods movement data has eluded transportation planners even as trucks have accounted for a greater percentage of freeway traffic.

The two studies will help planners determine what kinds of freeway capacities are needed to accommodate the logistics industry and whether other transportation modes, such as freight trains, are better suited for the job.

TRANSPORTATION MODEL

In April 2009 Kern COG completed a four-year-long update of its computerized transportation model, which can now more accurately predict traffic volumes during morning, noon, and evening rush hours as well as off-peak times of day.

The update was part of an agreement among officials with the City of Bakersfield, consultant Parsons Group, and Kern COG. By combining resources, Parsons was able to incorporate the latest transportation modeling assumptions from the Thomas Roads Improvement Project (TRIP) into the regional transportation model.

TRIP's \$640 million for federal demonstration projects includes five corridors with several environmental studies. This partnership saves money by synchronizing modeling for TRIP's environmental documents and Kern COG's regional air quality conformity analysis.

The new model also bolstered the number of transportation analysis zones or TAZes, which the model uses to display traffic in given areas, from 1,100 to more than 1,700. The majority of new TAZes were concentrated in Bakersfield to improve the accuracy of trip assignments. In addition, the new model subdivides actual traffic counts for four periods of the day.

NEW LAND USE MODEL USED IN REGIONAL BLUEPRINT

Now Being Evaluated for Compliance with SB375 Climate Change Regulation

Kern COG has developed a computerized, regional land-use model that relies on proximity to infrastructure (interchanges, utilities, rail, etc.) to generate population attractors for future development.

The model is intended as a tool to compare development scenarios with varying population densities. It uses population and employment forecasts to generate digital maps of general plans that distribute growth for each land-use designation. The areas closest to existing infrastructure fill up first.

City and County planners working on Kern COG's Blueprint Planners

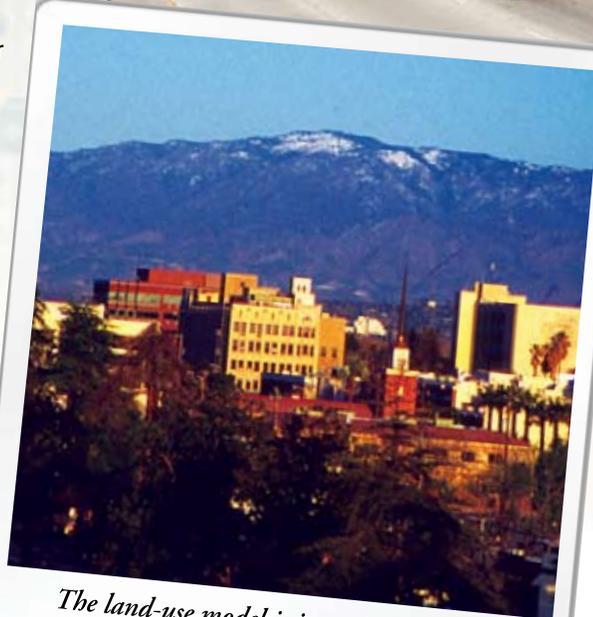
Roundtable provided the information and feedback to generate a growth model for the entire region that all jurisdictions could accept.

The modeling looked at four progressively more dense development scenarios for 2050. Results indicated that with greater density came savings to agricultural land, resource areas, air quality, water, energy use, public health, and greenhouse gas emissions.

A scenario of about 19 people and six households per acre was selected through Kern COG's Regional

Blueprint process as an ideal for the region.

Kern COG staff is now working with local government planners to perform future modeling for 2020 and 2035 in an effort to meet existing state climate change regulations.



The land-use model is intended to compare development scenarios with varying population densities.



Better Planning, Better Transportation

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