



Kern COG **Annual Report** 2011-12

BETTER PLANNING. BETTER TRANSPORTATION.

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Kern COG **Annual Report** 2011-12

Member Agencies & Representatives



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Kern COG Chairman
Bakersfield Council Member

Arvin	Timothy Tarver
Bakersfield	Harold Hanson
California City	Nicholas Lessenevitch
Delano	Joe Aguirre
Maricopa	Gary Mock
McFarland	Manuel Cantu
Ridgecrest	Steven Morgan
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Tehachapi	Philip A. Smith
Wasco	Cheryl Wegman
Kern County	Jon McQuiston
Kern County	Ray Watson

Caltrans	Gail Miller
GET	Howard Silver
Joint Planning	Scott Kiernan
Policy Committee	

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. The Agency 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 2010-2011.

Staff

ADMINISTRATION

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Executive Director

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Financial Services Officer

Fasika Stowe
Administrative Assistant I

Robert Phipps
Director of Administrative Services

Laurie Collins
Executive Secretary

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Office Services Assistant

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Senior Planner

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Regional Planner III

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Planning Division Director

Ed Flickinger
Regional Planner III

Vincent Liu
Regional Planner III

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Senior Planner

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Regional Planner III

Linda Urata
Regional Planner III

Rebecca Napier
Regional Planner III

Rochelle Invina
Regional Planner I

Susanne Campbell
Regional Planner II

Angelica Banuelos
Administrative Assistant I

Raquel Pacheco
Regional Planner III

Troy Hightower
Regional Planner II

Ben Raymond
Regional Planner II

Executive Director's Report



Ahron Hakimi
Kern COG
Executive Director

After 27 years of working on the construction side of transportation projects, I'm seeing a whole new perspective on how our transportation network grows after only three months as Kern Council of Governments' newest Executive Director.

Allow me to introduce myself: My name is Ahron Hakimi. I was previously a supervising transportation engineer with Caltrans and continue to serve in the Army Reserve's Logistics Corps. For the last several years, I've worked with the Thomas Road Improvement Program (TRIP), a unique multi-agency coalition comprising the City of Bakersfield, County of Kern, Caltrans and Kern COG.

I first came to Bakersfield in 1991, working in the local Caltrans office and reporting to District 6 officials in Fresno. In 2003, I began working on joint projects with the city of Bakersfield. At TRIP, I was also a liaison among Bakersfield City Council members, Kern County supervisors, and state and federal legislators to ensure projects are being completed on schedule and within budget, including the Westside Parkway now under construction.

As a 27-year veteran of the Army Reserve, I've experienced combat tours in Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq, where I spent more than a year building new roads.

Now, my career in transportation has come full circle. While I've worked extensively with Kern COG over the years, I'm pleased to be a part of a planning process that considers what our region's entire transportation network will look like 20 or 30 years from now. With the Westside Parkway and Centennial Corridor projects, that future will include a true east-west freeway connecting State Route 58 and I-5, possibly as

a natural extension of Interstate 40, which now ends in Barstow.

The future also includes other projects to help strengthen our economy and serve our local businesses. Shortly, we'll have four lanes of expressway along Highway 46 near I-5 to the county line and four lanes all the way through Kern County on Highway 14. In Bakersfield, the future will include express routes on Golden Empire Transit District buses and even bus rapid transit, a service whose intent is to simulate the light-rail experience.

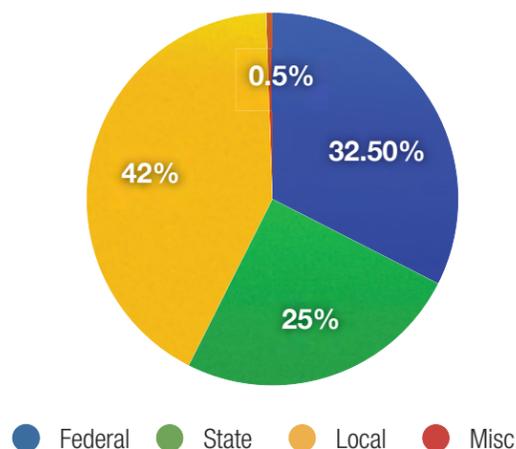
Speaking of rail, our long-term future may also include commuter rail from Delano to Bakersfield and an extension of Metrolink to Rosamond. We also anticipate more overpasses and underpasses to separate freight rail from car traffic and a host of other improvements envisioned as part of our planning effort. You are invited to help shape that vision by telling us what you think.

Kern COG will be hosting interactive activities at several community fairs and festivals through fall 2012 to find out how you want to see transportation funding spent. Should we put more money into road maintenance or buses? What about carpooling and freeway capacity? These are some of the questions we hope you're willing to answer. If you have other transportation-related ideas, I'd love to hear them. Drop me a line at ahakimi@kerncog.org or call 661-861-2191.

Thanks in advance for your participation. Together, we'll be able to create a transportation network that's both business- and commuter-friendly for generations to come.

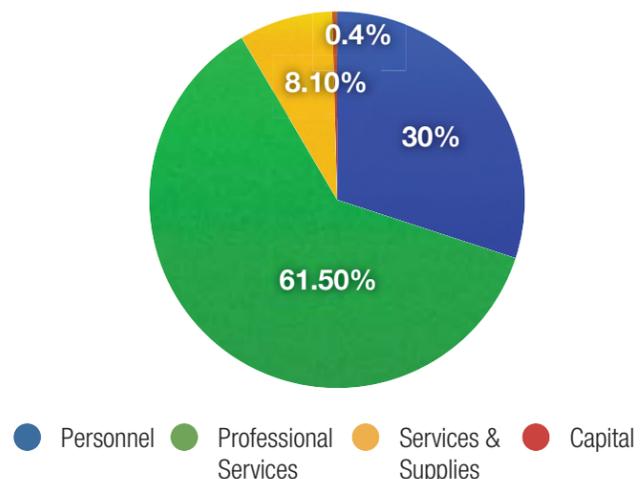
Revenue & Expenditures Fy 11-12

KERN COG AGENCY REVENUE SOURCES
FY 2011-2012



Description	Amount	Percent of Total
Federal	\$1,814,171.00	32.50%
State	\$1,393,172.00	25.00%
Local	\$2,345,960.00	42.00%
Misc	\$30,465.00	0.50%
Total	\$5,583,768.00	100.00%
Personnel	\$2,157,258.00	30.00%
Professional Services	\$4,419,353.00	61.50%
Services & Supplies	\$580,028.00	8.10%
Capital	\$30,300.00	0.40%
Total	\$7,186,939.00	100.00%

KERN COG AGENCY EXPENDITURES
FY 2011-2012



Kern Energy Watch



In an effort to improve energy efficiency throughout our county, Kern COG serves as the region's Energy Watch coordinator for local government operations. In 2011-12, Energy Watch initiatives resulted in tens of thousands of dollars in savings to cities and the County.

The Kern Energy Watch Partnership brings together three utilities – Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), Southern California Edison (SCE), and Southern California Gas Company (SCG) – with 11 local governments to upgrade municipal or county-owned facilities with the latest energy-saving technology.

The Partnership provides energy efficiency project assistance to its members, starting with facility audits. Eight government partners report on the progress of 77 energy efficiency projects. For example, the Plug Load Occupancy Sensor program installed more than 1,400 units countywide in local government offices, which should reduce energy bills up to \$70,000 annually. Since 2010, PG&E partner Staples Energy has served 690 business customers who will save 13.6 million kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity in nine communities.

The partners created a work plan based on achieving California Long Term Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan (CEESP) goals and objectives.

CEESP Goal Two: Building Codes

In May 2012, partners celebrated Building Safety Month—distributing literature, placing posters in local hardware stores, and advertising a prize giveaway in local newspapers.

Kern Region Energy Action Plans and CEESP Goal Three: Energy Action Plans

City partners and the County of Kern are conducting energy inventories for Energy Action Plans. The plans provide a roadmap to projects and strategies to deliver greater energy efficiency. Kern Energy Watch funds are used to coordinate inventory, planning, and outreach efforts. Participants started customizing their documents by selecting energy efficiency policies and strategies.

CEESP Goal Four: Energy Benchmarking

Benchmarking compares the efficiency of facilities greater than 5,000 square feet to similar facilities nationwide. Every Kern Energy Watch government partner received EPA benchmarking software training. Partners work with utility account representatives to identify projects that will improve facility scores. The top performing local government partners received awards at a special event in May 2012.

Outreach and Marketing

The Partnership developed the new brochure "Take 5 for Energy Conservation!", which offers energy saving activities that take less than 5 minutes. Among other activities, Kern Energy Watch participated in 21 events over 35 days and shared a booth at the Kern County Fair with Energy Upgrade California and Kern Home Energy Tune-Up.

CommuteKern



Based on the number of people choosing to rideshare to work or school, Kern County residents are doing their part to help with air quality. CommuteKern.org, Kern COG's rideshare matching program, saw an increase of 28 percent in membership for the year.

Through Rideshare Week in October 2011, 377 commuters pledged to rideshare at least one day, a 55 percent increase over the number of pledges submitted in 2010. More than half of the people who chose to participate in Rideshare Week recognize the benefits of saving money, decreasing traffic and cleaning the air that they continue with ridesharing as a means of transportation.

CommuteKern spent 2011-12 educating Kern residents about the importance of sharing alternative commuting strategies. CommuteKern met with

more than 40 major organizations (with 100+ employees) to help them achieve trip reduction requirements established by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. These larger employer groups are now mandated to provide ridesharing resources to their employees. CommuteKern provided these employers with Rideshare brochures and flyers as well as an introduction to commuteKern.org, a FREE carpool matching software program.

Rideshare Week, which occurred October 3-7, 2011, is an annual statewide event designed to increase awareness about the benefits of using sustainable transportation such as carpooling, vanpooling, riding the bus, bicycling, walking and telecommuting. Staff worked with local media and businesses to help promote the activities of Rideshare Week and educate the community about the great prizes they would be eligible to win.



Community Survey

Things are looking up! Eighty-one percent of Kern County residents are at least "somewhat satisfied" with the quality of life in their communities and hold a generally positive attitude about their futures, according to the most recent Kern COG community survey. That's up 5 percent over 2012.

Since 2007, the 1,200-person, random telephone survey has annually examined attitudes about community growth, traffic, housing, government services and other quality-of-life issues throughout Kern County. With Kern's population expected to double to nearly 1.5 million people by 2040, Kern COG has conducted the surveys to determine residents' attitudes about how that growth should be addressed and what impact it will have on the region in general.

The 2012 survey assessed the importance of 40 issues in improving the future quality of life in Kern County. The information will be used to inform Kern COG's long-range Regional Transportation Plan. Some of the more notable findings include:

- Looking ahead to the next 20 years, 42 percent of the residents surveyed think the quality of life in their city or town will be "better," 26 percent think it will "stay about the same," and 26 percent think it will be "worse." This is the most positive outlook across all five years.
- Consistent with the results of studies conducted since 2007, roughly 3 out of 4 residents typically drive alone in their commute to work or school. However, this year's data was the lowest seen at 71 percent compared to a high of 77 percent in 2011, 2010 and 2008.
- Approximately 78 percent of the residents would consider a single-family home with a large yard and 84 percent would consider one with a small yard. In contrast, 52 percent of residents would consider a townhouse or condominium, and only 35 percent and 28 percent would consider an apartment or housing in a mixed-use building, respectively.

2011 Art Contest "Passenger Rail – Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow"



Kern COG celebrated train travel through its second annual art contest in 2011-12, providing \$1,500 in prizes to local artists who offered their perspectives on the theme "Passenger Rail – Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow."

Submissions covering the history of passenger rail travel were accepted through the Arts Council of Kern in graphic art, digital art, painting, photography, and sculpture. Artists were asked to depict the history of passenger rail and/or to speculate about its future.

Among more than 15 entries, the judges chose three local winners. Judges said Katherine Young-Beck's painting, "Passenger Rail Evolution", stood out with its elegant colors,



detail and three-dimensional look. First place in Digital Art was awarded to Scott McDonald for "Waiting to Catch the 714". The digital rendering of an original photomontage captured the dynamics of rail travel through space and time. Greg Hauss was awarded first place in Sketch Art. With his work, "Passengers", Hauss developed a thoughtful rendering of passenger rail over the past 150 years.

Contest awards were sponsored by: Granite Construction, Valley Clean Air Now, Kern Transportation Foundation, Wilson Paves and Associates, SAIC, Quad Knopf and the Arts Council of Kern. The winning artworks will be showcased and displayed in public buildings throughout Kern County and used at Kern COG outreach events.



Public Outreach

Nearly 300 residents throughout the region so far have helped prioritize long-term transportation and energy-related strategies through a series of Kern COG public workshops supporting its "Directions to 2050" Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS).

The first round of workshops ran from late March through June 2012. Workshops were held in: Arvin, Bakersfield, California City, Frazier Park, Delano, Greenfield, Lake Isabella, McFarland, Shafter, Ridgecrest, Rosamond, Taft, Tehachapi and Wasco.

The outreach program builds on the visions and growth principles developed for the Kern Regional Blueprint in 2008. The Blueprint program was designed to better link transportation and land use planning to accommodate expected population increases.

This latest round of public outreach recognizes that circumstances have changed over the past four years and asks community residents whether their growth priorities are also different, including such topics as economic

vitality and equitable services; open space and natural resource conservation; housing choice; transportation, energy and others.

Workshop participants played a card game in which several potential strategies were considered under each growth principle, such as adopting a business-friendly approach to regulation to support economic vitality. Players are asked to rank the strategies from those they like most to least. The results will be reflected in the "Directions to 2050" transportation plan and also provided to local elected officials and staff for possible inclusion in future general plan updates.

Anyone wanting to comment on the Regional Transportation Plan or participate in the priority-setting activity can log onto www.directionsto2050.com where the same information is available online.

A second round of public workshops is scheduled for fall 2012 and is expected to further refine the most popular strategies.

New Transportation Projects



Kern COG's Board of Directors in April 2012 approved a list of 73 new transportation projects over the next three to four years, ranging from road maintenance to solar arrays and new buses, totaling \$43 million throughout Kern County.

The Board approved \$18 million in federal Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) revenue for 20 road resurfacing and reconstruction projects in nine cities and the County of Kern. Golden Empire Transit was awarded \$1 million in federal Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality revenue for solar panel improvements to keep a natural gas fueling station operating without interruptions. Other categories among the 43 Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality funded projects include: pavement of dirt shoulders throughout the

County of Kern; traffic signalization synchronization in Bakersfield; new buses for transit services throughout Kern County; and a new park-and-ride lot in California City.

Board members also approved 10 transportation enhancement projects at \$4.8 million. The Transportation Enhancement Program finances pedestrian and non-motorized improvements, including sidewalks, landscaping and bicycle lanes. Tehachapi will use the funding for bicycle and pedestrian paths, while Taft will pay for Rails-to-Trails along its linear parkway. Other projects include beautification improvements to State Route 43 in Wasco and sidewalk improvements to Bernard Street in Bakersfield.



Status Report On Major Projects

Two new, major highway expansion projects began construction within the Kern region during 2011-12, joining two others already being built or near completion totaling \$469 million in improvements.

Please go to: www.kerncog.org/docs/progress_report_201207.pdf for additional information about the status of these projects and other projects not discussed here.

1. Regional projects completed in 2011-12

- State Route (SR) 46: Segment 1, SR 33 to Brown Material Road, widen to four lanes – completed in early 2012.
- SR 46: Segment 2, Kern County Line to Kecks Road, widen to 4 lanes – completed in early 2012.

Total: \$145.8 million

2. Regional projects under construction in 2011-12

- SR 46: Segment 3, Kecks Road to State Route 33, widen to four lanes – estimated completion by early 2014.
- Westside Parkway: Phases 2 through 5, Truxtun Avenue to Allen Road, construct new freeway estimated completion by late 2012.

Total: \$254 million

3. Regional projects that began construction in 2011-12

- SR 99: SR 119 to Wilson Road, widen freeway to eight lanes – estimated completion by late 2014.
- Westside Parkway: Phase 6, Allen Road to Heath Road, construct new freeway – estimated completion by late 2014.

Total: \$69 million

Public Transportation Plans

Kern COG embarked on three transportation development plans for California City, Delano and Tehachapi in 2011-12 to improve public transit options for city residents.

Transportation development plans are used to support safe, efficient and economical transit systems through techniques that encourage greater public use; provide affordable transportation alternatives; reduce traffic congestion; improve air quality; and support transportation-friendly development.

Kern COG, California City and Kern County staff partnered to examine California City's public transit service. The plan presented a summary of the existing dial-a-ride service; defined the system's goals and service standards; and presented a five-year service, capital and financial program. It recommended extending service hours in the evening; increasing fares moderately to help match rising operational costs; employing a marketing plan to promote available services; and exploring special dial-a-ride service to camp sites.

Delano operates the second largest public transportation service in Kern County, including a citywide fixed-route system along with city and rural

dial-a-ride service.

Delano's plan included input from city, Kern COG and Kern County staff, as well as community stakeholders through on-board surveys, stakeholder meetings, phone-surveys, and Internet outreach.

The plan recommended reducing the number of buses each hour; recruiting qualified drivers; investigating a lower contract rate for regular maintenance; improving on-time performance; developing a marketing program; launching a new Bakersfield College route; and other changes to improve service.

The Tehachapi area also has a dial-a-ride system operated by Kern Regional Transit and is served by regional fixed-route transit services via the East Kern Express, which travels to Mojave and Lancaster before returning to Bakersfield.

Service recommendations included: increasing the fare structure to meet rising operations costs; marketing and education programs to generate new ridership; and reducing service by two hours each weekday.

Unmet Transit Needs

Kern COG administers funding to 15 public transit services in 11 incorporated cities and unincorporated Kern County, which together provide an estimated 8 million trips each year. Public transit users have a voice in what services should be provided.

Kern COG annually holds a public hearing each year to determine what unmet transit needs exist. Although Kern COG makes the final determination for whether an unmet transit need is financially reasonable to provide, public hearings are held in each city and through the County of Kern as well.

The hearings allow transit-dependent users unable to travel to Bakersfield an opportunity to participate near their homes. This process also allows local elected officials to hear from the residents they serve, which puts a face on the public transit issues in their service area.

Kern COG's next unmet transit needs public hearing is scheduled for September 20, 2012 in the agency's Board room, 1401 19th Street, Suite 300 in Bakersfield.



Goods Movement Strategy For Kern County

Using data from prior freight truck studies and other sources, Kern COG in 2011-12 developed a Goods Movement Strategy to rank future capital improvements that will assist traffic flows on major truck routes.

Kern COG's project team met with local trucking fleet managers to better understand the major truck routes used by fleet operators and to get input on where improvements should be prioritized. Recommendations for improvements were mapped and documented in the final report.

Based on an inventory of all planned highway and freeway capacity improvements, the Strategy analyzed projects on Highways 46, 58, 65, 99, 119, 155, 178, 184, 223 and Interstate 5. Projects contained in the Thomas Roads Improvement Program will address several key goods movement issues on Highway 58 in Bakersfield.



From 2008 to 2009 railroads with short freight runs abandoned approximately 4,000 miles of rail infrastructure, almost 25 percent of all regional rail lines in the U.S., according to a new Kern COG-commissioned study.

Like many industries, regional railroads that ship less than 1,000 miles have suffered from the economic downturn. Once a line is abandoned, with the track sold for scrap and the property converted for other uses, it's almost impossible and extremely costly to re-establish rail. Transportation experts nationwide look to freight rail as a major resource to improve air quality and reduce congestion on crowded roads and highways.

Kern County Passenger Rail Projects

Driven by progress on the California High-Speed Rail project in 2011-12, Kern COG turned its attention to other passenger rail services that may evolve from having a high-speed train in four to six years.

Kern COG prepared a Commuter Rail Feasibility Study to determine if a commuter service from Bakersfield to Delano was feasible through Amtrak or other means. The study concluded that commuter service was technically feasible using surplus Amtrak trains and existing Burlington Northern-Santa Fe tracks. The service would

In addition, Bakersfield's Westside Parkway project, now under construction, will create a high-capacity route between Mohawk Street and Allen Road. The Centennial Corridor project, which will tie Highway 58 to the Westside Parkway, is anticipated to provide much-needed traffic capacity from the western end of Highway 58 at the Highway 99 interchange.

The project focused several elements, including:

1. Proposing roadway improvement projects that improve goods movement and connectivity (such as truck lanes, and off-ramp improvements);
2. Proposing future truck-related capital improvements through 2035;
3. Developing alternative truck routes that may be necessary in the future;
4. Providing overall data and information analysis to inform a future goods movement strategy for the San Joaquin Valley; and
5. Determination of impacts on goods movement of transportation projects in the region.

Kern County Rail Study Phase II

Kern COG's Phase II Rail Study examines the important role short-line railroads play in the transportation system and analyzes the economic sustainability of each rail line in Kern County. The study has identified at-risk areas along the current system, including the Arvin Subdivision – which connects to the larger Union Pacific/Burlington-Northern Santa Fe line – that may lose 12.4 miles to abandonment. In 2011, Kern COG profiled rail operations in its Phase I Rail Study.

Fortunately, Phase II also offers steps Kern COG can take to preserve these important transportation corridors, such as working to preserve abandoned lines for multi-purpose use, like linear parks, and partnering with individual communities and economic development agencies to prevent abandonments in the first place.



need to attract an estimated 200 to 300 employees each day along the corridor to be financially feasible and to significantly improve traffic congestion and reduce air pollution.

Kern COG is also monitoring efforts among 11 counties to assume administrative control of Amtrak's San Joaquins service from Bakersfield to Oakland and Sacramento. Legislation designed to reduce management and operation costs of the Amtrak San Joaquins, Assembly Bill 1779 has passed in the Legislature and is awaiting the governor's signature.

New Non-Motorized Projects Funded

Kern Council of Governments in 2011-12 programmed more than \$658,000 for new, non-motorized transportation projects, including new bicycle lanes, sidewalks and safety programs.

The County of Kern was awarded \$270,000 (payable in two funding cycles) to build Class II bicycle lanes on Oak Creek Road from Koch to Deaver Lane in Mojave. The bike lane will separate bicycle and pedestrian traffic from cars and trucks to improve safety.

Bakersfield was awarded funding for three bicycle lane projects. Striping and signs will be installed on White Lane from Union to South "H" Street at a cost of \$34,300. Hughes Lane will have bike lanes installed from White Lane to Wilson for \$36,600. Meanwhile, Monitor Street will have additional bicycle lanes from Hosking to East Pachecho at a cost of \$67,100. These three projects will improve bicycle facility network by eliminating gaps in the system and improving safety.



In 2011-12, Kern COG began work on a new plan that recommends adding more than \$46 million of bicycle facilities throughout the region, along with several other street amenities including new bike parking facilities, pedestrian walkways and bus turnouts.

The Kern County Bicycle Plan and Complete Streets Recommendations were completed in August 2012. The document proposes 664 miles of new bikeways, including more than 300 miles of bike lanes and 230 miles of bike routes over approximately 20 years. It also calls for education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation programs. Examples include public awareness campaigns, public bike sharing programs, targeted bicycling enforcement, and annual bicycle counts.

The plan focuses on Kern's unincorporated areas, including communities adjacent to Bakersfield, the Greater Tehachapi area, Kern River Valley, Tejon Mountain Village and the Indian Wells Valley. Kern COG's Board will consider



The County of Kern will build a pedestrian path along the west side of State Route 184 from DiGiorgio to Collison near Lamont. Allocated \$261,000 over the period of three years, the project will take pedestrians off the shoulder of Highway 184, a busy, high-speed road with a poor record of accidents involving pedestrians.

The city of Shafter was awarded more than \$184,000 to make sidewalk improvements along Santa Fe Way from Myer to Tulare Streets.

Funding also continues for the McFarland Pedestrian Improvement project, and for Taft's Rails-to-Trails Project. Taft was awarded funding to install a bike rack at the Oil Driller Monument. Wasco and Maricopa were provided resources to pay for bicycle and pedestrian safety programs.

Funding for the projects comes from California's Transportation Development Act Article 3 Program, which uses a fraction of state sales tax dollars to pay for bicycle- and pedestrian-related improvements.

Kern County Bicycle Plan And Complete Streets Recommendations

adopting the recommendations in October 2012.

Today, there are more than 55 miles of bicycle facilities in the unincorporated parts of Kern County, including the Kern River Bike Path, the region's premier bicycle facility. The plan's authors noted that improvements such as roadway widening, lane narrowing, lane reconfiguration, and parking restrictions could significantly improve safety and the overall travel experience for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Complete Streets Recommendations include consideration of all travel modes, including cars, buses, bicycles and walking. While much of Kern's infrastructure was not designed to accommodate every type of travel, and a variety of policies also create barriers to the complete streets concept, the plan suggests there are abundant opportunities to adopt complete streets through maintenance and updating policies and standards.

Kern 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 2011-12 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.



Visualizations

Kernville is the latest community to see what future development might look like and how it will interact with the rest of the neighborhood through Kern COG's visualization program.

The visualization program uses two- and three-dimensional imagery to strengthen public participation in the planning and project delivery process. Using these graphic display tools, viewers are able to see what a neighborhood, vacant lot or development area might look like with additional foliage and decorative lighting; wider sidewalks and crosswalks; on-street parking; more transit availability and other amenities. The latest visualization illustrates this concept of "Complete Streets" in the center of Kernville.

Two-dimensional visualizations depict the project area's transformation by

showing multiple images, beginning with a look at existing development and ending with the final conceptual building or buildings. Three-dimensional animations are conceptual flythrough/walkthrough video clips that help the viewer visualize what the area could be like if principles from the Kern Regional Blueprint were implemented. The Blueprint sought to more closely tie land use and transportation planning to include principles such as mixed-use development, a variety of housing choices and greater public transportation infrastructure.

City officials have already used the visualizations to demonstrate concepts of specific, general or redevelopment plans and to attract interest in future development. All completed visualizations can be viewed on the Kern COG webpage under the Regional Blueprints section.