

CHAPTER 3: THE POLICY ELEMENT



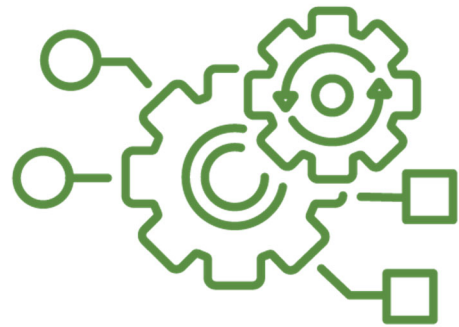
OVERALL GOAL; PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

This chapter seeks to establish a central goal to guide the Regional Transportation Plan and to define objectives and policies needed to meet the goal and to respond to the issues that KCAG must consider. State guidelines require RTPAs and MPOs to develop realistic goals, policies, and objectives to guide state and local planning efforts. The following definitions are prescribed:

A goal is the end toward which effort is directed; it is general and timeless.

A policy is a direction statement that guides present and future decisions on specific actions.

An objective is a result to be achieved by a stated point in time. It is capable of being quantified and realistically attained considering probable funding and political constraints. Objectives are successive levels of achievement in the movement toward a goal and should be tied to a time-specific period for implementation.



In compliance with these guidelines and the Federal Transportation Planning Factors as outlined in 23 U.S.C. §134(h), an overall goal is presented to cover all aspects of KCAG's transportation planning endeavors. The goals, objectives, and policies found in this plan were developed from a number of sources: various state documents, the prior editions and supplements to the Kings County Regional Transportation Plan, general plans of the cities and county, and the comments of the KCAG Transportation Policy Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, and the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council.

OVERALL GOAL

To develop a transportation system that encourages and promotes the safe and efficient development, management, and operation of surface transportation systems to equitably and safely serve the mobility and accessibility needs of people and freight (including meeting the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements, accessible pedestrian walkways, and bicycle transportation facilities) and foster economic growth

and development, while minimizing transportation-related fuel consumption, air pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions.

PROGRAM POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

Program Policy

Continue making full use of KCAG's decision-making forums, including their regular meetings, to examine alternative solutions to transportation needs and problems.

Program Objectives

1. Transportation decisions shall be made on the basis of the broadest range of Kings County area public interests.
2. KCAG shall provide clear and firm guidance to the California Transportation Commission, Caltrans, and local agencies on all transportation matters affecting Kings County.
3. Consider the California Transportation Plan (CTP) 2040 long-range policy framework to meet our future mobility needs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and foster continued collaboration between local and statewide level planning.
4. Transportation decisions shall include Transportation Systems Management (TSM) evaluations.
5. Public safety, retention and maintenance of the existing system, and system efficiency and resilience shall be used as criteria in evaluating projects.
6. Total route or system development shall be considered when selecting projects.
7. Funding sources for all transportation modes shall be identified, evaluated, and developed. With these, a complete system that is accessible, safe, and efficient shall be built.
8. Public and private transportation facilities shall be planned and developed consistent with overall growth and development policies contained in city and county general plans.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

Environmental Policy

The environmental consequences of transportation projects shall be taken into account. Of particular importance are impacts relating to air quality, energy use, noise, and changes in land use that negatively impacts land cover.

Environmental Objectives

1. Using Transportation System Management (TSM) evaluations, consider those alternative solutions that lessen environmental problems, yet serve transportation needs.
2. Seek to mitigate unavoidable adverse impacts associated with selected alternatives.
3. Use environmental documents such as Initial Studies and EIRs as decision-making tools.
4. Coordinate transportation control measures with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and the latest air quality attainment plan for the San Joaquin Valley.
5. Consult with lead agencies on projects having environmental effects, of statewide, regional, or areawide significance on transportation facilities.
6. Maintain modeling capability that will respond to state and federal reporting requirements and the need for accurately projecting travel demand in future years.
7. Conduct meaningful consultation with California Native American tribes for the protection of cultural resources in accordance with AB 52.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

Public Participation Policy

Transportation facilities and services should meet the needs of all segments of the population. KCAG employs an environmental justice approach to its public participation policy and procedures and welcomes community comment and guidance in its transportation planning and decision-making process.

Public Participation Objectives

1. Continue building an active citizen participation forum.
2. Seek representation from the entire community, including the elderly, low income, persons with disabilities, and the census-identified environmental justice areas and disadvantaged communities of Kings County.
3. Hold citizen meetings at convenient times and places.
4. Seek citizen comments early in the planning process, preferably in the problem-identification stage of project preparation.
5. Work to create an atmosphere that encourages the expression of all viewpoints,

allowing both obvious and latent issues to be brought into the open.

6. Explore alternative methods of obtaining the public's views. Use surveys, make presentations to special interest groups, etc.
7. Keep local media informed of transportation issues and encourage their attendance at public meetings held by KCAG.

REGIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM GOALS, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

OVERALL HIGHWAY GOAL

Maintain, upgrade, and complete a regional system of roadways which is convenient, safe, and efficient, and which serves the needs of all users.



HIGHWAY SYSTEM POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

Highway System Policy

Maintenance shall be continuous to keep the regional highway system from falling further into disrepair. The system shall be upgraded and completed as revenues allow.

Highway System Objectives

1. Maintain and rehabilitate the regional system; reconstruct deteriorated road sections.
2. Provide safety improvements to reduce the number, severity, and probability of fatal and serious injury vehicle collisions.
3. Undertake new construction projects to upgrade and complete the regional system, and to close gaps in local and state highway systems.
4. Implement operational improvements (such as road widening, relief of parking congestion, traffic signals, passing lanes, and turn lanes) to maximize service and efficiency.
5. Carry out landscaping and maintenance projects to help make highways compatible with their surroundings.
6. Enforce local ordinances regulating oversize truck terminal access.
7. Work with Caltrans and local agencies to obtain right-of-way dedications at designated future interchanges and along mainline portions of state highways within the regional transportation system.

8. Petition the California State Legislature and the California Transportation Commission to adopt equitable laws and policies for apportioning fuel taxes and funding highway projects. Ensure that Kings County receives its fair share of available transportation dollars.
9. Work more closely with other Regional Transportation Planning Agencies in the area to foster coordinated highway facilities planning.

HIGHWAY SAFETY POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

Highway Safety Policy

Improve routes of regional significance to promote the safe operation of vehicular traffic, especially during high collision probability times such as times of heavy winter fog, night, etc.

Highway Safety Objectives

1. Assist night and especially fog driving by providing and maintaining highly reflective "fog" or edge striping, and center divider lines on routes of regional significance.
2. Provide adequate shoulder areas on all state highways and rural regional routes.
3. Install traffic control measures on roads and at intersections when such measures are deemed necessary in accordance with the California Uniform Traffic Control Device Manual.
4. Improve and maintain regional route road surfaces and drainage.
5. Widen or rehabilitate bridges where needed.
6. Provide adequate railroad grade protection devices.
7. Encourage the enforcement of posted speed limits.

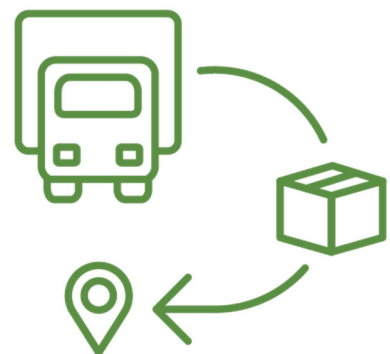
GOODS MOVEMENT POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

Goods Movement Policy

Support the efforts of the trucking and rail industries to transport commodities safely and efficiently.

Goods Movement Objectives

1. Designate and maintain regional and local truck routes to prevent major pavement deterioration on local streets and roads that are not designed for heavy truck traffic.



2. Where needed, widen regional highways to accommodate them to heavy truck traffic.
3. Support enforcement of local truck route ordinances.
4. Develop plans to mitigate congestion on local streets and at intersections where heavy truck traffic occurs.
5. Support efforts to require all trucks carrying hazardous materials to have a manifest, including identification and instructions for handling materials in case of spills. Also support efforts to improve hazardous waste containers so that spillage or leakage does not occur.
6. Support truck weight fees that equitably provide for the highway maintenance costs resulting from heavy trucking.
7. Encourage the improvement of railways with the end purpose of increasing the efficiency of goods movements.
8. Support the installation of automatic grade protection devices at all grade crossings.
9. Improve rail grade crossings as needed to improve traffic flows.
10. Encourage the efficient movement of goods through California ports.
11. In concert with Caltrans, the California Highway Patrol, and local jurisdictions, restrict roads available for hazardous waste trucking to mitigate potential adverse effects associated with transportation.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

REGIONAL TRANSIT GOAL, POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

Regional Transit Goal

Provide safe, secure, coordinated, and efficient public transit systems that can reasonably meet the needs of residents.



Regional Transit Policy

Encourage and support the development of a safe, efficient, effective, and economical public transit system.

Regional Transit Objectives

1. Continue operating the Kings Area Regional Transit (KART) and Corcoran Area Transit (CAT) systems to provide dependable services for those living in Kings

County's urbanized areas who have "unmet transit needs" which can be met at a cost KCAG determines to be reasonable.

2. Provide assistance to social service agencies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of coordinated transportation services for their clients.
3. Encourage transit operators to minimize transit system operating costs by increasing ridership through the following examples:
 - a. Implement route and schedule modifications.
 - b. Implement equipment and maintenance improvements.
 - c. Implement an aggressive marketing program to improve the image of public transit.
 - d. Follow up on comments of the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC).
4. Research, create, and support incentives to increase transit ridership.
5. Follow recommendations included in the KCAG Kings County Transit Development Plan.
6. Assist eligible claimants, both public and private, in applying for federal transportation grants.
7. Encourage the practice of ridesharing/vanpooling as an alternative to single occupant vehicle commuting.
8. Utilize the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council to identify unmet transit needs of the transit dependent.
9. Encourage development of a transit system that interconnects and coordinates with other modes of transportation (e.g. passenger rail, intercity bus, multi-jurisdictional transit, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian facilities, etc.).
10. Encourage and support the enhancement of transit services as a transportation control measure to improve air quality.
11. Support the coordination and consolidation of transit services where appropriate through the development and implementation of the Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan.
12. Develop cohesion and cooperation among transit operators that will result in efficient and accessible transit service between and within communities.

13. Support and encourage a network of fast, convenient, high quality transit services that are competitive with the cost and time to driving alone during peak periods.
14. Encourage employers to offer incentives, such as awards, flexible hours, and financial incentives for employees who use transit for their work commute.
15. Coordinate Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technologies amongst transit agencies to ensure systems compatibility and to enable the use of uniform regional passes and other fare media.
16. Encourage and support the transition to an all zero-emissions transit fleet.

INTERCITY RAIL AND BUS POLICY

Intercity Rail and Bus Policy

Preserve an effective and convenient intercity public transportation system of regularly scheduled bus and rail services.

Intercity Rail and Bus Objectives

1. Monitor and respond to all legislation that could impact bus or rail services in Kings County. Continue the use of KCAG as the forum through which public discussion on bus and rail matters is formalized into public policy recommendations.
2. Work with adjacent RTPA's and Caltrans to unify regional support for keeping and upgrading intercity bus and rail services through membership in the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority.
3. Continue Federal and State support of the Amtrak San Joaquins trains.
4. Support aggressive marketing programs for Amtrak trains and intercity buses.
5. Seek to coordinate local transit service schedules with those of intercity modes.
6. Support the programming of grade crossing improvements to increase the speed and safety of intercity rail services.
7. Ensure that possible upcoming changes to intercity bus and rail network continue to effectively serve Kings County residents.

AVIATION GOAL, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

OVERALL AVIATION GOAL

A fully functional and integrated air transportation and airport system that is complementary to the regional transportation system.



GENERAL AVIATION POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

General Aviation Policy

Promote the development and maximum utilization of public and private airports to provide for county and regional general air transportation needs.

General Aviation Objectives

1. See that the existing countywide airport system is maintained and upgraded. Where warranted, use federal, state, local, or private funds to carry out improvements.
2. Ensure that public expenditures for airport development are consistent with demonstrated public demand.
3. Support the retention of scheduled passenger air service at Fresno and Visalia to provide convenient and dependable links to major commercial airports.
4. Airport improvements, in particular at the Lemoore Naval Air Station, shall be protected by coordinated city or county land-use regulations in aviation easements. Such easements should be used to minimize the nuisance effect of airports on their surroundings, and to prevent the encroachment of uses that are incompatible with air operations.
5. Follow the recommendations of the Kings County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan and the Hanford Municipal Airport Master Plan.
6. Recognize and allow airstrips necessary for servicing agricultural needs.
7. Support increases in aviation capital improvement funds and sources for rural general aviation public use airports.

AVIATION LAND USE POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

Aviation Land Use Policy

Work with local agencies to ensure compatible land uses around existing airports to reduce noise and structure conflicts.

Aviation Land Use Objectives

1. Support the Kings County's Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan and the local airports in their efforts to ensure compatible land uses around airports.
2. Support the local airports in their attempts to acquire the land surrounding the airports.
3. Support noise abatement procedures around the local airports.

HANFORD AIRPORT POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

Hanford Airport Connectivity Policy

Maintain alternative modes of transportation to and from the Hanford Municipal Airport.

Hanford Airport Connectivity Objective

1. Support local transit service to and from the Hanford Municipal Airport.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

Active Transportation Policy

Improve the existing transportation system to better accommodate bicycles and pedestrians as well as automobiles and trucks; improve public awareness of and competence in bicycle use; and improve public and private sector responsiveness to bicycle and pedestrian transportation.



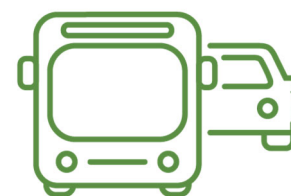
Active Transportation Objectives

1. Provide a well-developed, safe, and convenient, intermodally-connected system of bikeways complete with support facilities.
2. Ensure that future development supports and facilitates the expansion, improvement, and maintenance of the bikeway system.
3. Provide on-going bicycle safety education and information programs.
4. Implement bikeways that will connect major employers, educational facilities, and recreational areas.
5. Encourage partnerships between private, non-profit, governmental and citizens groups to implement bicycle and pedestrian improvements.
6. Fund road maintenance that will also provide better roads for bicycles.

7. Correct roadway surface and hazards on bikeways.
8. Provide theft-resistant parking facilities at high-use destinations.
9. Eliminate physical barriers to bicycle travel.
10. Encourage enforcement of bicycle traffic laws.
11. Keep the freeway sections of State Route 198 closed to bicycles to prevent children from playing on the freeway.
12. Start public awareness programs to increase acceptance of the bicycle.
13. Integrate bicycle and pedestrian considerations into local planning agendas.
14. Encourage local jurisdictions to implement complete streets and other multi-modal concepts as outlined by the California Complete Streets Act of 2008 (AB 1358), as well as Caltrans Director's Policy (DP)-37.
15. Encourage the use of bicycle and pedestrian modes of transportation to enhance air quality and improve human health.
16. Implement the projects identified in the current "Kings County Regional Active Transportation Plan".
17. Utilize the Bicycle Advisory Committee in the prioritization and programming of bicycle improvements.
18. Consider future funding mechanisms to mitigate VMT and fund active transportation infrastructure.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

State planning guidelines suggest that TSM objectives be time-specific and quantified. This is to allow year-by-year analysis of progress toward TSM targets. These requirements apply to Transportation Management Agencies (TMA). Kings County Association of Governments (KCAG) is not a TMA and is not required to participate in the Congestion Management Program (CMP).



Because of this distinction, the objectives in KCAG's program are not themselves quantified or time-specific. Staff acknowledges that

Kings County, although considered a small urbanized area based on population, is very rural and its transportation improvements are small in scale compared to those of larger urbanized areas. While Kings County's size does not preclude TSM planning, it does make it hard to set realistic or meaningful target figures. The attainment of TSM objectives can be documented by periodic studies of the effectiveness of TSM measures in future RTPs.

SYSTEM MAINTENANCE POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

Maintenance Policy

Maintain and improve the quality of the existing transportation system.

Maintenance Objectives

1. Shorten the travel time required to move people and goods on the existing system.
2. Lower travel costs required to move people and goods on the existing system.
3. Increase the safety of the existing system.
4. Improve the personal security of persons using the existing system.
5. Improve the comfort and convenience of the existing system.
6. Enhance the reliability of the existing system.

SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

System Improvement Policy

Increase the efficiency and minimize the cost of the existing transportation system.

System Improvement Objectives

1. Seek to reduce dependency upon the automobile for single occupant vehicle commuting by encouraging carpooling.
2. Encourage use of Kings County's transit system.
3. Facilitate pedestrian and bicycle travel.
4. Find cost-effective ways to upgrade the existing system.
5. Minimize the operating costs of the existing system.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

Environmental Improvement Policy

Minimize the undesirable environmental impacts of existing transportation facilities and services.

Environmental Improvement Objectives

1. Reduce noise and vibration caused by the existing system.

2. Reduce air quality impacts caused by the existing system.
3. Reduce the amount of energy consumed by users of the existing system.

SOCIETAL IMPACTS POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

Societal Impacts Policy

Promote desirable and minimize undesirable social and economic impacts of the existing transportation system.

Societal Impacts Objectives

1. Provide adequate transportation services to the disadvantaged and transit dependent at a reasonable cost.
2. Provide reasonably priced public transit.
3. Minimize neighborhood impacts caused by transportation improvements.
4. Complement the long-range land-use policies of local general plans.

TRANSPORTATION TECHNOLOGY AND AUTOMATION (NEW SECTION, 2022)

Transportation technologies are being developed at an increasingly rapid pace. These technologies range from automated driving systems (AV), connected vehicles (CV), enhanced traffic controls (V2I), personal/cloud-informed software informing Mobility as a Service (MAAS), Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), micro-mobility, electro-mobility, and improved broadband internet connectivity. New technologies will help improve traffic flow, improve safety, reduce mobile source GHG emissions, and enhance efficient energy use.



GENERAL TECHNOLOGICAL READINESS POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

Technological Readiness Policy

Prepare for new technology systems by incrementally installing and upgrading existing communications and traffic signal systems.

Technological Readiness Objectives

1. Maintain and support regional and statewide Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) plans and Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) plans and programs.

2. Encourage the installation of broadband fiber optic lines as part of roadway rehabilitation and improvement projects.
3. Support the expansion of high-quality broadband to all residential community areas of Kings County as well as schools and businesses.
4. Support roadway design features that facilitate autonomous vehicle-to-infrastructure communications.
5. Upgrade traffic signal software and communication systems using the latest statewide standard protocols as needed.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE READINESS POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

Electric Vehicle Readiness Policy

Support planning, analysis, and implementation of electric charging infrastructure systems.

Electric Vehicle Readiness Objectives

1. Support state/national efforts to expand access and quantity of electric charging stations by applying for grants and other funding and coordinating with statewide objectives.
2. Support and coordinate with conversion efforts of local, regional, and state-owned vehicle fleets, local and regional transit vehicles, and other transportation systems.
3. Support regional and local efforts to plan for electric vehicle charging infrastructure, use case identification, fleet analysis, travel analysis, public health, and equity analysis.
4. Monitor and support the impacts and enhancements to local transportation systems, trails, guideways, and other facilities which could result in improved usage of Light Electric Vehicles (LEV), including e-bikes, e-taxis, scooters, and other electric vehicles.

MOBILITY AS A SERVICE (MAAS) AND TRANSPORTATION NETWORK COMPANY (TNC) READINESS POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

MAAS and TNC Policy

Support planning, analysis, and impact evaluation of Mobility as a Service (MAAS) technologies including cloud-based informatics, Transportation Network Companies (TNC), and other software-based transportation efficiency solutions.

MAAS and TNC Objectives

1. Monitor and respond to impacts on and improvements to transportation systems from cloud-based transportation information applications which affect mobility (e.g.-Waze).
2. Gather travel data associated with usage of TNC ridesharing applications and vehicle sharing organizations and companies and incorporate such data into regional travel models and system usage forecasts and associated plans.
3. Support the education and dissemination of information on coordinated access, mobility, ticketing, payment, and scheduling of trips and trip chains through improved communication mobility technology services.