

**CHAPTER 12**  
**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGY**

Index:

1.0	Introduction .....	12-2
1.1	History	12-2
1.2	Legislation	12-2
2.0	Setting .....	12-4
2.1	The Kings County Region	12-4
2.2	Existing Framework	12-5
2.3	Blueprint	12-5
2.4	Naval Air Station Lemoore - Joint Land Use Study	12-7
2.5	Regional Housing Needs Allocation	12-7
3.0	Public Outreach.....	12-9
3.1	SB 375 Requirements for Public Outreach	12-9
3.2	Technical Advisory Committee	12-9
3.3	Stakeholder Working Group	12-10
3.4	Public Outreach Program	12-11
3.5	Member Agency Coordination	12-13
3.6	Equity	12-13
4.0	Development of the SCS .....	12-14
4.1	Scenario Selection	12-16
5.0	Coordination and Consultation with State Agencies.....	12-17
5.1	Strategic Growth Council (SGC)	12-17
5.2	Air Resources Board (ARB)	12-17
5.3	Tools and Methods	12-18
6.0	Performance Measures.....	12-19
6.1	Goals and Benefits	12-20
7.0	Next Steps.....	12-20

## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 History**

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is a planning document that partners local land use decisions, transportation planning, and housing into a comprehensive long range transportation plan. The RTP has been a requirement of federal law since the 1970's and as of 2008 is now a requirement of California state law. This document is the foundation for all transportation planning and programming in the Kings region and is the justification to the federal and state governments for any and all transportation funds.

### **1.2 Legislation**

The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) two-year surface transportation authorization bill was signed into law on July 6, 2012. It made major changes in the programmatic structure for both highways and public transportation, and included initiatives intended to increase program efficiency through performance-based planning and the streamlining of project development. It is the most significant reformation of the surface transportation program since the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991.

In 2001, in their publication *EPA Guidance: Improving Air Quality Through Land Use Activities*, the EPA proposed five land use form features that can affect travel activity and air quality. The five factors are density, land use mix (near amenities and connectivity), transit availability, pedestrian environment (including bicycling), and regional development patterns (development within metropolitan areas).

The recommendations of the EPA guidance have been substantiated in California law with the adoption of Senate Bill 375 (SB 375) (Steinberg, 2008). SB 375 builds on the existing regional transportation planning process (which is overseen by local elected officials with land use responsibilities) to connect the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from passenger cars and light duty trucks to land use and transportation policy.

Accordingly, SB 375 has three goals: 1) to use the regional transportation planning process to help achieve Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32) goals; 2) to use CEQA streamlining as an incentive to encourage residential projects which help achieve AB 32 goals to reduce GHG; and 3) to coordinate the regional housing needs allocation process with the regional transportation planning process.

AB 32 enlists cities and counties to participate in the statewide reductions of GHG by accomplishing eight requirements. Two of the requirements are associated with transportation: 1) utilize more fuel efficient vehicles and lower carbon fuels, and 2) implement land use strategies to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT). The AB 32 scoping plan relies on regional planning as required by SB 375 to help achieve necessary reductions from the transportation sector.

SB 375 requires actions primarily by state agencies and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). The following is a summary of the required actions:

#### State Actions:

1. The California Transportation Commission (CTC) will maintain Guidelines for travel demand models used in the development of Regional Transportation Plans (RTP).
2. The CTC will form an advisory committee and hold at least two public workshops before revising these guidelines.
3. The California Air Resources Board (ARB) will appoint a Regional Targets Advisory Committee (RTAC) to recommend factors and methodologies for setting GHG Reduction Targets. The RTAC will present their recommendations to ARB by December 31, 2009.

4. The ARB will exchange information on technical methodology with each MPO, Caltrans, and local air districts and respond with written comments prior to setting reduction targets. (See #1 MPO Actions).
5. ARB will take into account reductions in GHG from improved vehicle and fuel standards.
6. ARB will provide each MPO with GHG reduction targets for 2020 and 2035 by September 2010.
7. ARB is to review all MPO SCS (and the Alternative Planning Strategy (APS), if necessary) to determine if targets are achieved. A response is required within 60 days and the response is limited to “acceptance” or “rejection”.
8. ARB/RTAC will update targets every 8 years consistent with RTP updates until 2050.

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) Actions:

1. The MPO, prior to beginning the public participation for the SCS, will submit a description to ARB of the technical methodology it intends to use to estimate the greenhouse gas emissions from its SCS. (See #4 State Actions).
2. The MPO will hold at least two informational meetings within the region after the RTAC makes its recommendation to ARB to solicit and consider input of local elected officials on the SCS.
3. The MPO will adopt a Public Participation Plan for development of the SCS with workshops and public hearings. (Number of each depends on size of region).
4. The MPO may recommend an alternative reduction target (from the RTAC target) to ARB.
5. MPOs will adopt a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) to meet Regional GHG reduction targets as part of RTP update.
6. The MPO will quantify the reductions in GHG from the SCS and establish the difference from the ARB target.
7. To the extent that the SCS cannot meet the targets, an MPO will adopt an Alternative Planning Strategy (APS) showing how it would meet the targets. APS shall be a separate document from the RTP.
8. MPOs submit their SCS (and if necessary APS) to ARB for review.
9. MPO may consider financial incentives for cities and counties that have resource areas or farmland and, in counties with policies to direct new growth towards cities, for counties to address countywide service responsibilities.
10. Any combination of the eight MPOs in the San Joaquin Valley may work together to develop and adopt a multi-regional SCS.
11. MPOs will disseminate the methodology, results, and key assumptions of whichever travel demand models they use in a way that would be useable and understandable to the public.
12. Councils of Governments (COGs) will provide State Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) with data assumptions about the relationship between jobs and housing in the region, if available, and requires that HCD's determination of the aggregate regional RHNA reflect the achievement of a feasible balance between jobs and housing within the region.
13. COGs may request that HCD use population and household forecast assumptions from the region's RTP.
14. COGs allocation of the RHNA to individual cities and counties should be consistent with the SCS, provided that the aggregate regional RHNA is maintained and that every jurisdiction receives an allocation of housing need for very low- and low-income households.

Specific to the SCS, SB 375 requires that the SCS:

- Identifies future land use patterns;
- Identifies areas to accommodate long-term housing needs as well as 8-year housing needs;
- Considers resource areas and farmland;
- Identifies transportation needs and the planned transportation network;
- Sets forth a future land use pattern to meet GHG emissions reduction targets.

Although SB 375 requires consideration of land uses, transportation, and housing in concert, SB 375 does not infringe on the land use jurisdiction of the cities and counties. SB 375 states:

“Neither a sustainable communities strategy nor an alternative planning strategy regulates the use of land, nor, except as provided by subparagraph (J), shall either one be subject to any state approval. Nothing in a sustainable community’s strategy shall be interpreted as superseding the exercise of land use authority of cities and counties within the region”. (Government Code Section 65080(b)(2)(K))

“In preparing a sustainable communities strategy, the metropolitan planning organization shall consider spheres of influence that have been adopted by the local agency formation commissions within its region.” (Government Code Section 65080(b)(2)(G))

## **2.0 Setting**

### **2.1 The Kings County Region**

Kings County is one of eight counties that comprise the San Joaquin Valley, which is bounded on the west by the Coastal Range; the Sierra Nevada Mountain range to the east; the Tehachapi’s to the south; and Sacramento to the north. Kings County is located in the south-central portion of the Valley bordered by Fresno County to the north; Kern County to the south; Tulare County to the east; and Monterey County and San Luis Obispo County to the southwest. This geography creates the “inversion layer effect” that traps GHG and other air quality pollutants in the Valley.

Although KCAG is a metropolitan planning organization, having one urbanized area with a population of 50,000 or more, Kings County is a predominantly rural, agriculture-based County. The county covers 1,391 square miles with more than 90 percent of all land devoted to agricultural uses. Kings County population is 152,982 including the populations of two state prisons, the Native American Tribal Lands, and the Lemoore Naval Air Station (LNAS). Kings County has the highest percentage of land enrolled in the protected farm lands programs in California.

Kings County is comprised of four incorporated cities Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford and Lemoore, and four unincorporated communities Armona, Home Garden, Kettleman City, and Stratford. The county and four cities have coincidental restrictions on growth outside the primary urban boundaries of the cities.

In 1996, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency joined with several non-profit and government organizations to form the Smart Growth Network (SGN). Their 2010 report, *“Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities”*, states that rural areas, like the urban and suburban areas, want to achieve the best possible economic, social, environmental, and public health outcomes. In working toward that goal, the publication recommends three measures:

1. Support the rural landscape by creating an economic climate that enhances the viability of working lands and conserves natural lands;
2. Help existing places thrive by taking care of assets and investments such as downtowns, Main Streets, existing infrastructure, and places that the community values; and
3. Create great new places by building vibrant, enduring neighborhoods and communities that people, especially young people, don’t want to leave.

The American Farmland Trust (AFT) is a nonprofit organization established in 1980 to conserve the nation’s agricultural land and water resources. Its planners, policy experts, and agricultural specialists work cooperatively with the farm communities and government decision-makers to encourage better planning and land use policies – the kind that will minimize the loss of farmland and help maintain the economic viability of agriculture. In their report *“Saving Farmland Growing Cities”*, January 2013, they make six recommendations for sustainability and the preservation of farmland, as follows:

1. Avoid development of high quality farmland.

2. Minimize farmland loss with more efficient development.
3. Ensure stability at the urban edge.
4. Minimize rural residential development.
5. Mitigate the loss of farmland with conservation easements.
6. Encourage a favorable agricultural business climate.

KCAG and the RTP Stakeholder Working Group, in developing the 2014 RTP/SCS, considered the land use decisions of our local agencies as the foundation for sustainable development in our region, the direction of SB 375 to consider farmland transportation investments and farm to market transportation needs, and the recommendations of the reports noted above in developing the recommended scenarios through the public, our respective elected officials, and cities and county.

## **2.2 Existing Framework**

KCAG started our work on the Sustainable Communities Strategy with the same approach used for the Regional Transportation Plan since the 1970's. KCAG first sought out the information from the general plans of our member agencies. The policies and land use decisions in these plans form the foundation for our transportation planning. The information from the general plans becomes the latest planning assumptions (LPA) for our region. Of our five member agencies, three are involved in general plan updates and one is involved in an amendment to their general plan for zoning changes.

KCAG reviewed the general plans with our cities for consistent policy direction and land use patterns. The most striking policy that is consistent throughout the general plans of all of the agencies is that the primary goal is the preservation of farmland through minimizing its conversion to residential or even commercial development. The direction that all development occurs within the primary spheres of influence of the established urbanized areas was stated in slightly different manner, but was present in each of the plans.

Other themes that were found to be consistently represented in each of the general plans of the cities were: incentivizing infill development; providing amenities such as shopping and transit access; preserving open spaces near housing, particularly high density developments; encouragement of using a good housing mix with emphasis on higher density residential development near existing employment centers, commercial development and parks; and connectivity of neighborhoods to services and facilities.

The LPAs are fully discussed in Chapter 2. They include history and projections of population, the economic environment (also see RTP Chapter 5 for Goods Movement), and the principal land use policies (summarized above). For the existing transportation system, Chapter 4 explains the highways system, and Appendices 1A – 1F describe the transportation systems within each of the local agency jurisdictions.

For information on the non-motorized system, please see RTP Chapter 8 of this document and the KCAG 2011 Regional Bicycle Plan, available on our website at: <http://www.kingscog.org/planning.html>.

For information on the public transportation system, please see RTP Chapter 6 of this document and the Short Range Transit Plan, available on the KCAG website at <http://www.kingscog.org/transit.html>.

Both of these documents are included in the 2014 RTP by reference.

## **2.3 Blueprint**

The multi-jurisdictional Kings County Blueprint effort was initiated in September of 2005, when the KCAG Commission agreed to move forward with a joint grant application with the seven Councils of Governments (COGs) in the San Joaquin Valley. The grant was successfully awarded and an

unprecedented planning effort began. With both a regional Valleywide perspective and a local county focus, the Blueprint was the first significant land use planning effort to consider the future vision and important quality of life characteristics for 2050.

The Kings County Blueprint was spearheaded by KCAG staff who worked closely with the Cities of Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford, and Lemoore and the County of Kings. Naval Air Station (NAS) Lemoore also became a close partner in the latter part of the effort. The Blueprint effort was divided into several phases, each focusing on a specific aspect of the planning effort. The goal of Phase I was to identify the vision and values of Kings County residents and was driven by public participation. Phase II focused on the technical elements and featured land use modeling. Planning Directors from the member agencies were key in providing historical land use trends to define the “business as usual” and alternative land use growth scenarios. Phase III again looked to the public to provide guidance on how Kings County should aspire to grow through the year 2050. Throughout the development of the Blueprint growth scenarios, it was emphasized that these would in no uncertain terms supersede our member agencies’ local land use authority.

Two elements of the success from the Blueprint collaboration stand out above all others and include the extensive public outreach efforts and the adopted Kings County Blueprint Principles or smart growth strategies. KCAG conducted the most extensive local outreach effort to date in order to gather and subsequently integrate citizen feedback into our Kings County Blueprint products. The Kings County Blueprint Summary Document dated June 1, 2011 features in specific details the larger outreach effort that included meetings, workshops, multiple committees, and various presentations throughout the Kings County Region during this multi-year planning effort. The Kings County Blueprint Principles were developed by planners from the member agencies and NAS Lemoore that built upon and reflect the values of Kings County residents. The principles were adopted by the KCAG Commission on August 27, 2008 and include the following:

1. The cities and the County of Kings will retain local land use authority.
2. Direct future growth to existing urbanized areas within Kings County to ensure orderly and sufficient provision of services and infrastructure.
3. Concentrate urban growth within the Blueprint Urban Growth Boundaries for cities and Community Service Districts to minimize outward expansion into important farmlands.
4. Preservation of agricultural lands surrounding cities and communities shall serve as open space buffers that separate and maintain the individual identities and uniqueness of the cities and communities within Kings County.
5. Balance the countywide need for urban growth and economic development with reinforced preservation of the County’s prioritized agricultural resources.
6. Enhance economic development connectivity through transportation highway infrastructure improvements that focus on expanding State Route 198 and State Route 43 to four lanes through Kings County.
7. Improve air quality through enhanced commuter connectivity by implementing alternative transportation modes and enhancing existing modes, and supporting the continuation of Amtrak passenger rail service through Kings County on the existing BNSF alignment.
8. Create a range of housing alternatives and minimum and maximum densities that meet the changing needs of Kings County residents.
9. Protect the many natural resources and sensitive environmental habitats, such as the Kings River corridor and wetlands, from urban encroachment.
10. Provide for an encroachment-free operating environment for Naval Air Station Lemoore in coordination with the City of Lemoore and the County of Kings.

Since adoption of these Blueprint principles in 2008, several of our member agencies have either already successfully integrated many of these smart growth principles into their most recent General Plan updates or are now involved in an update process as noted below.

City of Avenal: Will begin an update process in FY 2014/15  
City of Corcoran: General Plan "Enhancement" to be completed July 2014  
City of Hanford: Currently in an update process  
City of Lemoore: Adopted May 2008  
County of Kings: Adopted January 2010

In recognition of the positive Blueprint related achievements to further demonstrate a forward progression in land use, Kings County jurisdictions received San Joaquin Valley Blueprint Awards. The County of Kings received an award for Achievement for Community Plans – Unincorporated Community "Kings County General Plan – 4 Community Plans" and a separate Award of Merit for Sustainable Development Policies "Kings County General Plan – Land Use and Resource Conservation Elements". The City of Avenal received an Award of Merit for Downtown Revitalization Projects - Public Infrastructure - Small Jurisdiction City of Avenal Street Improvements, and an Award of Achievement for Historic Preservation Avenal – Theater Restoration Project. The Kings region will continue to benefit from the proactive and smart growth planning policies of our member agencies and collaborative planning efforts such as the Kings County Blueprint.

### **2.3 Naval Air Station Lemoore Joint Land Use Study**

The Naval Air Station Lemoore Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) is another example of a multi-jurisdictional planning collaboration in the Kings region. The JLUS grant program encourages cooperative land use planning between military installations and the adjacent communities so that future community growth and development are compatible with the training and operational missions of the installation. For this JLUS planning effort, the study examined the existing and future planned land uses in the area surrounding Naval Air Station Lemoore, including the military training area. The study was designed to identify strategies to protect public health, safety, and the overall welfare while safeguarding the ability of the military installation to carry out services and necessary training.

Kings County Association of Governments (KCAG) was the JLUS study sponsor on behalf of the City of Lemoore and the Counties of Fresno and Kings, working in close partnership with the Naval Air Station Lemoore. KCAG was responsible for the leadership, coordination, and management of the overall grant as provided by the Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment.

The Naval Air Station Lemoore JLUS included fourteen public meetings and the development of two committees: a multi-jurisdictional Policy Committee consisting of elected officials from the City of Lemoore and the Counties of Fresno and Kings and ex-officio representation from Naval Air Station Lemoore; and a Technical Working Group consisting of stakeholders and community members. As detailed in the Final Report dated August 30, 2011, each jurisdiction has its own respective sub-section discussing the specific land use planning issues and concerns that were brought forward by the stakeholders or community members. The Final Report also includes recommendations for each jurisdiction that focus on addressing the areas of concern identified by the study analyses.

### **2.4 Regional Housing Needs Allocation**

SB 375 requires the SCS to "identify areas within the region sufficient to house an eight-year projection of the regional housing need for the region". The regional housing need projection is determined by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The SCS preferred scenario meets this requirement and supplies enough residential housing capacity by jurisdiction to meet the housing need of 10,220 units projected for the 1/1/2014 to 1/31/2024

period for the KCAG region by HCD. According to state housing requirements, the KCAG Commission adopted the RHNA methodology on April 23, 2014. On June 26, 2014, KCAG distributed a draft allocation of regional housing needs to each local government in the region based on the methodology adopted. The draft allocation includes the underlying data and methodology on which the allocation is based. Available housing capacity in each KCAG member jurisdiction is anticipated to be adequate to accommodate each jurisdiction's respective share of housing need as allocated by KCAG's adopted RHNA methodology.

KCAG is currently in the process of preparing the 2014 RHNA Plan, scheduled for adoption by January 2015. Available residential capacity in each jurisdiction must be sufficient to accommodate at minimum that jurisdiction's share of the regional housing need and KCAG's RHNA allocation plan will need to allocate housing units within the region consistent with the development pattern of the SCS. Figure 12-1 shows the identified housing need by jurisdiction, including very low and low income categories, in the draft RHNA allocation.

**FIGURE 12-1**

**DRAFT REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ALLOCATION DISTRIBUTION**

Regional Housing Need Allocation Phase 2: by Income distribution										
Jurisdiction	Very Low <sup>(2)</sup>	% of Total	Low <sup>(3)</sup>	% of Total	Moderate <sup>(4)</sup>	% of Total	Above Moderate <sup>(5)</sup>	% of Total	Total Housing Need	%
Avenal	145	22.70%	108	17.00%	115	17.90%	271	42.40%	639	100%
Corcoran	215	22.70%	161	17.00%	169	17.90%	401	42.40%	946	100%
Hanford	1097	22.70%	821	17.00%	865	17.90%	2049	42.40%	4,832	100%
Lemoore	677	22.70%	507	17.00%	534	17.90%	1267	42.40%	2,985	100%
Uninc. County	186	22.70%	138	17.00%	147	17.90%	347	42.40%	818	100%
<b>Total County<sup>(6)</sup></b>	<b>2,320</b>	<b>22.70%</b>	<b>1,735</b>	<b>17.00%</b>	<b>1,830</b>	<b>17.90%</b>	<b>4,335</b>	<b>42.40%</b>	<b>10,220</b>	<b>100%</b>
2011 Inflation- Adjusted Dollars Kings County Median Household Income - \$48,838 <sup>(1)</sup>										
<sup>(1)</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2007-2011 American Community Survey S1901 Income in the Past 12 Months (In 2011 Inflation- Adjusted Dollars) <sup>(2)</sup> Very Low = 50% of Maximum County Median Income (\$14,652 to \$24,419) <sup>(3)</sup> Low = 80% of Maximum County Median Income (\$24,420 to \$39,070) <sup>(4)</sup> Moderate =120% of Maximum County Median Income (\$39,071 to \$58,606) <sup>(5)</sup> Above Moderate = County Median Income (\$58,607 and above) <sup>(6)</sup> Regional Housing Needs Determination dated January 22, 2014, Department of Housing and Community Development										



### **3.0 Public Outreach**

#### **3.1 SB 375 Requirements for Public Outreach**

SB 375 requires the preparation of a public participation plan specifically for the SCS outreach prior to the development of the SCS. This requirement may be met by amending the existing federally required participation plan or by creating a supplemental participation plan. KCAG chose to adopt a supplemental document to our existing participation plan. The Supplemental Public Participation Plan (PPP) was adopted in June, 2013. A copy of the 2013 Supplemental Public Participation Plan is posted online at [www.KingsRegionalVision.com](http://www.KingsRegionalVision.com).

The 2013 Supplemental PPP established strategies for public outreach to encourage the active participation of a broad range of stakeholder groups in the planning process including, but not limited to, affordable housing advocates, transportation advocates, neighborhood and community groups, environmental advocates, representatives from the home building industry, broad-based business organizations, landowners, commercial property interests, all population sectors, and homeowner associations. These stakeholder groups were not only solicited to participate in our public workshops, but were the foundation for the membership of the RTP Stakeholder Work Group.

KCAG participated in the Valley wide SCS public outreach program, *Valley Visions*, a collaborative effort among the eight metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) located in the San Joaquin Valley. The *Valley Visions* outreach program received funding assistance from a Proposition 84 grant that was used to support a regional modeling effort as well as enhanced outreach. KCAG customized the *Valley Visions* materials developing a locally branded *Kings Regional Vision* outreach program.

SB 375 requires counties with a population of 500,000 or more to hold at least three workshops. Though our population is substantially smaller, KCAG held three public workshops in the cities of Hanford, Lemoore, and Kettleman City during the first phase of the outreach effort and an additional three workshops following the release of the draft RTP and SCS, in the cities of Corcoran, Hanford/Lemoore, and Avenal. Public hearings will also be held at two KCAG Commission meetings prior to the adoption of the RTP and SCS.

#### **3.2 Technical Advisory Committee**

The KCAG Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) membership consists of: county and city public works and planning directors, city managers, county administrative officer, Caltrans District 6 staff, a Kings County Area Public Transit Agency (KCAPTA) representative, a Lemoore NAS representative, a San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District representative, a Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi Yokut Tribe representative, Kings County Environmental Health Department representative, and a California Highway Patrol representative. All meetings are open to the public and provide an opportunity for public comment. The TAC provided valuable information regarding land use policies and insight into the local needs of KCAG member agencies that were used to develop the RTP and SCS.

To ensure compliance with state law, the TAC was provided informational updates regarding the requirements of SB 375 at all meetings beginning in January of 2011. In addition, the group was also made aware of the requirements of AB 32, specifically the transportation sector contributions to green house gas emissions specified in AB 32 and SB 375. The TAC was regularly provided with monthly updates and information regarding KCAG's ongoing public outreach effort and the development of the scenarios for the 2014 RTP and SCS element.

The TAC provided guidance and input regarding the scheduling of the development of the RTP, SCS, and Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) documents and the core components of each. The group received monthly updates on the progress of the outreach efforts with the general public and the RTP Stakeholder Work Group.

KCAG requested meetings with each of the cities' and the county's planning departments to review their current general plans and supplementary land use documents. Each jurisdiction, having been influenced by the regional Blueprint process, displayed promotion and facilitation of smart growth concepts appropriate for a rural agrarian area. The general plans reflect the recommendations of the Smart Growth Network and the American Farmland Trust. The RTP and SCS are intended to support the development of a transportation network that complements the local land use planning decisions.

Each jurisdiction was invited to provide an overview of their general plan to the RTP Stakeholder Working Group during the scenario development process. Following the development of the proposed scenarios, KCAG requested meetings with each jurisdiction again to review and compare the recommendations for compatibility with the local general plans.

### **3.3 Stakeholder Working Group**

KCAG formed a Stakeholder Working Group that included representation from affordable housing advocates, transportation advocates, neighborhood and community groups, environmental advocates, home builder representatives, broad-based business organizations, landowners, commercial property interests, and homeowner associations. KCAG also invited representatives of other segments of the population of Kings County, such as our agricultural community, goods movement, Native American Tribe, senior citizens, bicyclists, economic development interests, public health, elected representatives (at the local, state, and federal level), education, and the Lemoore Naval Air Station to help develop the alternative scenarios for the RTP - SCS. (The complete membership list is included in the introductory pages of the RTP).

The Stakeholder Working Group held seven publicly noticed and open meetings to develop the scenario inputs. The stakeholder-provided inputs and guidance for the development of the alternative scenarios were then reviewed by agency staff for consistency with existing and evolving general plans and finally incorporated into the RTP itself for public review. The Stakeholder Working Group then held two meetings to review the SCS after the modeling and writing had been completed and the results from the public workshops were available.

For the development phase, the RTP Stakeholder Working Group was provided with information about the RTP, SB 375, general plan and land use information (provided by local agencies), information obtained through the public workshops, visualization of growth applications and how they can be implemented with the current local agency general plans, and of their mission (as outlined by SB 375). ARB also provided the Stakeholder Working Group with a presentation on the ARB role in the development of the targets, some advice and recommendations, and the SCS evaluation process that ARB conducts.

For the review phase, the Stakeholder Working Group was presented with the completed SCS chapter and the modeling information. The group was also presented with statistical information (including the preferences) resulting from the public workshops.

### 3.4 Public Outreach Program

KCAG developed and implemented a comprehensive outreach program to support the development of the RTP and SCS. The program built on the *Valley Visions* effort by customizing materials and then enhancing the program to meet the Kings County region's unique needs.

#### Branding

KCAG established *Kings Regional Vision* as the overall brand for the RTP and SCS effort. A complete graphic suite was developed and used throughout the outreach process to identify this effort as a unique planning process.



#### City Council and Board Presentations

Presentations were made to the Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford, and Lemoore City Councils and the Kings County Board of Supervisors in December of 2013 to outline the proposed RTP and SCS planning process and outreach program, and again in May of 2014 to present the four alternative scenarios. In all cases, PowerPoint presentations and support materials were made available at the meetings and online for public review. Elected officials were given opportunities to make comments and ask questions. There were also opportunities for public comment.

#### Community Presentations

A substantial number of Kings County residents do not regularly attend City Council, Board of Supervisors, or other public meetings and workshops. KCAG took its workshop program(s) on the road and made a series of more than a dozen interactive presentations at local Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, local Chambers of Commerce, and other community groups as part of this process. The consultant team also reached out to a broad spectrum of local groups and stakeholders, giving each the opportunity to schedule presentations for their members. This included the Kings County Farm Bureau, West Hills College, and the Tachi Indian Tribe among others.



#### Website and eBlasts

Given the high number of residents, businesses, and stakeholders that utilize the internet and social media, KCAG created a project website, [www.KingsRegionalVision.com](http://www.KingsRegionalVision.com), where information about the RTP and SCS process was readily available. The site has had more than 1,500 visits since its launch in December of 2013. It contains all meeting materials and background on the planning process and provided opportunities for public comments and questions.



KCAG compiled a comprehensive email database of stakeholders and high propensity voters. More than 6,000 people from all four cities and the County regularly received emails regarding upcoming presentations, workshops and engagement opportunities. The list was monitored and revised throughout the outreach process.

### Collateral Materials

Bilingual collateral materials included project overview and frequently asked questions handouts in addition to presentation materials. Copies of the materials were made available at all public workshops and presentations and could be accessed from the project website.



### Intercept Interviews

Members of the KCAG consultant team visited senior centers, transit stations, and other locations to solicit feedback on regional transportation needs and priorities throughout the county. This included visits to local farmers markets.

### Media Relations

News media received a series of press releases at key milestones to promote meetings and engagement opportunities. The media list included all local news papers, radio stations, and ethnic media.



### Outreach to Hispanic, Senior and Youth Populations

Kings County is home to a large Hispanic population. As part its outreach program, KCAG provide several opportunities for Hispanic participation including special workshops and presentations at the Kettleman City Family Resource Center, Valley LEAP, and local Catholic churches.

Members of the consultant team also reached out to local school districts and made site visits to talk with seniors at the Armona Senior Center, the Avenal Nutrition Center, the Lemoore Senior Center, and the Corcoran Nutrition Center.



### Workshops

As noted above, two rounds of workshops were held as part of the development of the RTP and SCS; the first to establish regional priorities and vision and the second to review the proposed scenario alternatives. All workshops were publicly noticed and then promoted through email blasts to more than 6,000 stakeholders and local residents, news releases, verbal notices at the KCAG Technical Advisory Committee meetings and Stakeholder meetings, and at local City Council, Board of Supervisors, and KCAG Commission meetings. In addition, workshop information and materials were posted on the Kings Regional Vision website.



All workshops included PowerPoint presentations explaining the planning effort, live interactive click polling to engage the audience, appropriate maps, displays and other materials as needed. All presentations were provided in both English and Spanish.

### **3.5 Member Agency Coordination**

The SCS builds on existing land use plans from KCAG's member agencies and as per SB 375, may not supersede local land use decisions. KCAG worked closely with member agencies to incorporate current and evolving land use plans into the SCS document. This included coordination with tribal lands via the Tachi Indian Tribe and federally controlled land at the Lemoore Naval Air Station. Public agencies were also invited to provide baseline planning and land use information to the RTP Stakeholder Working Group as previously noted and were given the opportunity to analyze how the recommendations of the public and Stakeholder Working Group fit with their general plans and would affect future land use decisions.

### **3.6 Equity**

#### Setting

Kings County as an agricultural area consists of a mix of population types (with 11.7% senior citizen, 65.8% self-identified as minority, and 42.6% with a primary language other than English). The average annual income is more than 20% below the statewide median, with 19.3% of the population earning below the poverty line, and unemployment figures are consistently double that of the state level. These facts make any analysis of the distribution of benefits and burdens of the transportation investments in Kings County difficult.

#### Definition

Environmental Justice (EJ) is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. It is the identification and assessment of adverse effects of programs, policies, or activities on minority and low-income population groups. KCAG's goal is to ensure that all people, regardless of race, color, national origin or income, are protected from disproportionate negative or adverse impacts of transportation projects and that all populations share in the benefits of transportation improvements in Kings County.

#### Analysis

For our purposes, environmental justice refers to equity in the distribution of benefits and costs arising from transportation policies, programs and projects included in the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the 2015 Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP).

KCAG adopted a Public Participation Plan (PPP) in FY 2007-08, to include the practices of environmental justice. KCAG updated the program in 2011, and created a supplement to the 2011 update for the development of the 2014 RTP/SCS. The PPPs include enhanced outreach approaches to Environmental Justice populations to meet state and federal principles and to eliminate participation barriers to active participation in all populations.

KCAG's transportation decision making process has an inclusive approach to consider the human environment and the adverse impacts that transportation projects may have. This agency also looks at safety and mobility, which are key elements in achieving environmental justice.

The environmental justice impacts analyzed include: human health and safety, economic development, society and culture, and natural environment. The projects and programs included in the RTP and FTIP will not have a disproportionately adverse affect on the low-income or minority populations of Kings County.

In response to Title VI and Environmental Justice requirements, KCAG has placed an increased emphasis on reaching out to and soliciting input from the historically underserved populations in

Kings County (i.e. low-income, minority, Native American, elderly, and persons with disabilities) , as detailed in the Environmental Justice chapter of this document.

#### **4.0 Development of the SCS**

In developing the SCS, KCAG first reviewed and applied the legislative requirements to our process. Consideration of the setting and priorities of our region followed next; primarily, preserving productive farmland and taking advantage of the smart growth advances made by the local agencies in their planning processes as a result of the Blueprint effort.

The SCS outreach plan was implemented as detailed by the Supplemental PPP and to the KCAG Technical Advisory Committee. KCAG obtained land use information from the local agency general plans and from meetings with those agencies that afforded meeting opportunities.

KCAG implemented the Supplemental PPP in regards to public outreach, holding three public workshops and establishing a holistic RTP Stakeholder Working Group. The Stakeholder Working Group was provided with all of the SB 375 legislative requirements, land use information, and polling results from the public workshops prior to beginning their work of developing the scenarios. The Stakeholder Working Group was provided with maps, lists, and visualizations of how the elements could work together to develop scenarios that meet the GHG reduction targets and would be compatible with the work that the local agencies have done in advancing their local planning.

##### **The Scenarios:**

##### **A. Scenario No. 1: Historical Trend – No changes from the 2008 SB 375 base year**

This scenario is based on the land use planning, transportation programs, and projects from 2008. This scenario does not include the advances made through the Blueprint Principles that individual local agencies have or are in the process of integrating into their respective general plan documents.

##### **B. Scenario No. 2: The RTP/SCS Scenario with 10-15% transit investment**

This scenario is based on the scenario recommendations of the RTP Stakeholder Working Group. The recommendations take into account local agency general plan updates and future updates that integrate the San Joaquin Valley Blueprint Principles and are consistent with general plans that integrate changes after the 2008 base year. The recommendations are shown in two different categories for Land Use and Transportation, as follows:

##### **Land Use recommendations**

##### **I. Increased connectivity of housing to commercial and community facilities**

This recommendation called for the cities to use development designs and standards that open residential areas to walkability and bikeability to facilities. Suggestions for this recommendation included open-ended cul-de-sacs.

##### **II. Encourage a mix of housing types in the urban centers (infill) with increased densities**

The inclusion of varied housing types in the same development to effectively use all of the land and to provide housing options in different areas for different family types is the foundation of this recommendation.

III. Encourage mixed use development

In addition to placing different housing types in the same development, this recommendation suggests that the urbanized areas also consider mixed-use zoning in order to allow residences and business to occupy the same area or building.

IV. Create a jobs/housing balance and/or proximity

The Stakeholder Working Group recommended focusing development either near job clusters or along transit commuter routes to improve the travel options and access particularly for low income workers.

**Transportation recommendations**

V. Increased investment in bicycle and pedestrian facilities with a concentration around schools and businesses

The benefits provided by walking or riding a bicycle are realized in increased physical activity, improved health, and improved air quality. The Stakeholder Working Group focused on providing more bicycle and pedestrian facilities around schools and between residential neighborhoods and frequented destinations such as community and commercial facilities.

VI. Increased investment in public transportation with concentrations and connectivity, and rural transit centers

The focus of the recommended investment is directed to the transit dependent population, particularly in the outlying unincorporated communities and the City of Avenal – away from the urbanized centers of the county.

VII. Encourage/incentivize the development of infrastructure for and the implementation of alternative fuel vehicles in government and private business

In some cases, such as the provision of public safety and public services, a reduction in vehicle miles traveled is just not available as an option. In these situations the use of fuel and vehicle technology to reduce the emissions from passenger cars and light duty trucks is the best alternative. The Stakeholder Working Group recommended establishing charging stations at all governmental facilities and finding funding that would permit incentivizing the same infrastructure at the locations of private business for electric vehicles. The Stakeholder Working Group also encourages the continuation of the conversion process for government fleet cars and light duty trucks to Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) with the appropriate refueling infrastructure developed.

VIII. Intelligent Transportation Systems such as traffic light synchronization on arterials and channelization to reduce and avoid congestion

The occurrence of non-productive vehicle idle (stop-and-go or congested traffic) results in the highest level of emissions on the emissions-speed charts. In order to reduce vehicle idle time at intersections, the Stakeholder Working Group recommended a program of intelligent transportation technologies such as synchronized traffic lights that will keep vehicles moving at a more productive/steady pace and reduce emissions.

**C. Scenario No. 3: Intensified Transit - with 30% investment**

This scenario includes all of the land use and transportation recommendations of the previous scenario with a higher level of investment in transit.

**D. Scenario No. 4: No-build - All transportation development and construction stops**

This scenario assumes that there will be zero transportation investments through the year 2040. This is commonly used as a scenario option during this sort of planning process.

These scenario recommendations were returned to the local agencies to evaluate in reference to their general plans. All agencies responded that these recommendations were consistent with their general plan policies.

Additionally, KCAG received information from the City of Lemoore Planning/Public Works that there had been a shift of intended land use in the western edge of the city. An area (around the western terminus of Bush St.) was a planned development of 270 single family residences and 29 multifamily units. As a result of the Joint Land Use Study, the city made an agreement with NAS Lemoore to relinquish a portion of this land as resource land. While 50 of the single family homes would remain, 29 multifamily units and the remaining 220 single family homes would be relocated to other areas within the city's primary sphere. Per direction by the City of Lemoore, the 29 multifamily units would become part of an ongoing development at the southwest corner of Industry and 19 ½ Ave. and the single family homes would become part of a revised planned development in the northeast area west of 17th Ave. As a result of changing the zoning in this area, increasing the density of the development by reducing the lot size from 10,000 square feet to 6,000 square feet each, 42 additional homes will be added to this development. Two other areas around the Lemoore Ave. and Cinnamon Dr. intersection have been rezoned from light industrial and office to mixed use and will absorb the remaining relocated single family homes. Because these homes are being relocated to areas closer to commercial and community facilities, they provide reductions in vehicle miles traveled and a corresponding reduction of GHG emissions. This change in housing locations can be shown in the model.

**4.1 Scenario Selection**

The SCS inputs were provided to the travel demand model consultants for processing. The results of the data with the draft of this chapter were presented in three public workshops and two Stakeholder Working Group meetings. After an explanation of the SCS, the data, and the chapter content, the attendees of each meeting were asked to rank the four scenarios (Historical Trend, Moderate Transit Investments, Substantial Transit Investment, and No Investment) in their ability to achieve the goals of the RTP (Mobility and Accessibility, Environmental Quality, Safety and Health, Sustainable Development Pattern, and System Preservation) and also to rank the scenarios in order of their preference.

For the goals of Mobility and Accessibility, a Sustainable Development Pattern, and System Preservation, Scenario No. 2 was a clear preference. For the Safety and Health goal, Scenarios No. 2 and No. 3 were equally preferred and for the goal of Environmental Quality, Scenario No. 3 was preferred. When asked to take all of the information (ability to meet the ARB reduction targets, pattern of investment, ability to best meet the goals, and compatibility with their own priorities), Scenarios No. 2 and No. 3 were equally selected by the attendees.

Due primarily to the impact that the Scenario No. 3 investment pattern would have on system preservation, the KCAG Transportation Policy Committee chose Scenario No. 2 (10-15% transit investment with the associated land use recommendations) as the preferred Scenario for the final Sustainable Communities Strategy.



## **5.0 Coordination and Consultation with State Agencies**

### **5.1 Strategic Growth Council (SGC)**

Created by Senate Bill 732, the Strategic Growth Council (SGC) is a cabinet-level committee representing Business, Consumer Services and Housing, Transportation, Natural Resources, Health and Human Services, Food and Agriculture, and Environmental Protection, combined with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research to coordinate activities that support sustainable communities emphasizing strong economies, social equity, and environmental stewardship.

The SGC manages several grant programs within the state. The SJV MPOs and local agencies have benefited from the grant programs that the SGC manages, such as:

Urban Greening Grant Program -  
Hanford, East Downtown Streetscape Project, \$73,597

Model Incentives Grant Program –  
San Joaquin Valley MPOs Model Improvement Program: \$2,500,000

Sustainable Communities Program -  
San Joaquin Valley Blueprint Roadmap Program: \$1,000,000

San Joaquin Valley Greenprint, Modeling, and SCS Completion Project \$1.0 million

Kings County Association of Governments – County-wide Climate Action Plan \$385,000

These grant funds have helped the San Joaquin Valley and our local Kings Region agencies accomplish projects or plans that will ultimately improve the ability of the areas to grow smarter and with less expense to the local governments for the future population growth projected in our region.

### **5.2 Air Resources Board (ARB)**

Collaboration with the ARB began before SB 375 was signed into law. SB 375 required the formation of the Regional Targets Advisory Committee (RTAC) that included a representative chosen from the MPO Directors Committee of the Regional Policy Board. The first coordination meeting between KCAG and the ARB was held in December of 2009. At this meeting both KCAG and ARB expressed the desire to work collaboratively throughout this new and challenging process.

This collaboration continued throughout the process, with an ARB Staff member included on the KCAG RTP Stakeholder Working Group. Frequent exchanges of information to establish the methodologies that would be used to measure the GHG reductions also took place between the Valley MPOs and ARB. These coordination and consultation efforts culminated in the final "San Joaquin Valley GHG Quantification Technical Methodology" submitted to ARB February, 2014 on behalf of the eight SJV MPOs.

ARB Staff took the time needed to understand the unique travel pattern characteristics in the San Joaquin Valley. The first step of this process was to develop new travel models for each of the Valley MPOs that better capture interregional and intraregional trips. The Model Improvement Program (MIP) funded by Proposition 84 funds was completed in 2012 and will be further detailed in the subsequent section. In addition, the San Joaquin Valley planning and technical staffs have developed a consistent emission modeling methodology with ARB's emission modeling software EMFAC2011 to complete all of the SB 375-related emissions analyses.

### 5.3 Tools and Methods

#### Modeling

Beginning in 2010, the eight Valley MPOs undertook a joint process to improve their travel demand modeling capabilities to help meet SB 375 requirements. This process was known as the San Joaquin Valley Model Improvement Program (MIP). Between 2010 and 2012, staff from each of the eight MPOs participated in monthly meetings with a team of technical consultants to upgrade the models and modeling processes. To enhance coordination efforts, staff from the Air Resources Board and the University of California Berkeley listened in on the monthly MIP meetings of the MPOs and technical consultants.

KCAG will utilize three main tools to estimate GHG emissions for their 2014 RTP/SCS:

1. Scenario Modeling – Land Use Model (varies by MPO);
2. MIP transportation model; and
3. EMFAC 2011 emissions factor model.

In the simplest terms, the scenario inputs and the local agency land use information are fed into the modeling software (1 and 2). The resulting data related to the interaction of land use and transportation and its effect on vehicle miles traveled is then provided as an output. This new output is subsequently entered into the EMFAC 2011 air quality modeling software, which measures the actual GHG reductions.

KCAG utilizes a four--step model for the size of our region. However, due to the capabilities of the model, the only measures that will show in the modeling data are changes in land use that move housing units out of one area and into another or the frequency of transit stops on a given route.

The GHG reductions that KCAG has been able to show from the modeling of the four scenarios are:

**FIGURE 12-2**

**GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION REDUCTION SCENARIO RESULTS**

Scenario		GHG Reductions		VMT Reductions	
		2020	2030	2020	2035
ARB GHG Targets		5.00%	10.00%		
Business as Usual	1	5.13%	12.02%	-5.99	-12.11
15% Transit Scenario	2	5.16%	12.07%	-6.02	-12.14
30% Transit Scenario	3	5.22%	12.09%	-6.02	-12.17
No-build	4	No value	No value	No value	No value

#### Off-Model Adjustments

Similar to other traditional four-step travel demand models, the KCAG model is not sensitive to the impacts of land use changes that do not shift housing from one area to another, transit changes that do not affect frequency but may affect ridership, transit hubs, Transportation Demand Management/Transportation Systems Management (TDM/TSM) projects such as Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), bike and pedestrian projects, and rideshare programs. In these instances, KCAG will rely on “off-model” techniques based on literature reviews, collaboration with other MPOs, and consultation with ARB’s Policies and Practices Guidelines.

Examples of professional tools for estimating travel and GHG reductions based on transportation and land uses have been provided by the Washington State Department of Transportation, USEPA, and FHWA. These sources identify tools for estimating GHG reductions based on land use and development, vehicle technologies, commuting patterns, and non-motorized travel.

For transportation projects in California, the ARB has developed the “*Methods to find the Cost-Effectiveness of funding Air Quality Projects*”. The reductions in vehicle miles traveled and reductions in congestion (VMT equivalents) from investments in transportation improvements using the calculations established in this guidance then can be directly translated into reductions in GHG. For the four year cycle of the 2015 FTIP, the number of vehicle miles traveled reduced through programmed bicycle/pedestrian projects will be more than 100,000/year, VMT equivalents reduced through TDM/TSM will be more than 4.0 million/year, and the number of miles reduced through transit improvements are more than 2.0 million/year. These transportation-specific reductions that result in more than 6.4 million miles/year of the more than 473 million miles/year that are estimated to be driven by year 2020 can be translated into GHG reductions.

Additional reductions of GHG can be shown through the other tools such as changes in density only (i.e. from low density to low-medium or medium density, from commercial to mixed use), for changes in zoning (i.e. adding mixed use zones, or increasing density in existing zones), changes in land use connectivity (walkability/bikeability in neighborhoods and to nearby facilities), additional pedestrian or bicycle facilities (i.e. new facilities, bike facilities in industrial areas), additional transit routes (i.e. new routes, additional stops at existing routes, circulation routes within a city), and other transit improvements such as first-last mile connectivity for transit (i.e. bike racks on buses and at stops).

The Kings region will continue to benefit from the proactive and smart growth planning policies of our member agencies and collaborative planning efforts such as the Kings Regional Blueprint. The Blueprint Principles are an excellent example of the local planning that allows the base case to show the level of GHG emission reductions.

## 6.0 Performance Measures

Performance Measure	Description
Preservation of Agricultural and Resource Lands	The agricultural component of Kings County is part of America’s best producing farmland and part of the culture of the San Joaquin Valley. It is the desire and the goal of every decision making body to preserve it.
Environmental, Economic Opportunities, and Equity in access	The basic components of Sustainability.
Reduce Emissions	Meet not only the GHG reduction targets, but also the air quality improvement requirements of the state and federal air quality acts.
Improve Public Health	Increased active transportation options, improved community health outcomes through a decrease in obesity and diabetes and an improvement in cardiovascular health.
System Preservation	Maintain system pavement and bridges, improve system reliability, mobility, and safety. Implement appropriate elements of “fix-it-first” approach.
Economic Development	Consider Jobs/housing balance and proximity, commercial corridors and clusters, commute patterns, transit corridors, and highway access improvements

## **6.1 Goals and Benefits**

Provisions in SB 375 include opportunities for the CEQA process, when certain conditions are met, as an incentive for implementing projects that are consistent with this SCS. Generally, there are two types of projects for which CEQA requirements can be streamlined, once the MPO adopts an RTP and SCS that meet the greenhouse gas targets established by the California Air Resources Board:

- Residential/mixed use projects streamlining (Public Resources Code Section 21159.28)
- Transit priority projects streamlining (Public Resources Code Sections 21155-21155.3)

KCAG will continue to work with our member agencies to seek CEQA streamlining benefits as applicable to the specific projects.

## **7.0 Next Steps**

Implementation of the RTP/SCS will carry on in the form of delivering transportation projects designed and selected in the RTP to achieve, to the extent practicable, the modeled and off-model improvements in air quality and reductions in GHG emissions from passenger cars and light duty trucks. This SCS chapter will be subject to all future RTP updates as mandated every four years. KCAG looks forward to improving the RTP/SCS process and prolonging the stakeholder communication exchange for future updates.