

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I. PURPOSE

The chief purpose of this Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is to show ways that transportation can complement regional goals and objectives. Transportation not only influences, but it is also affected by, local public policy planning for land use, infrastructure, housing, and economic development. Because the need exists to coordinate all facets of community structure, this plan takes into account a broad range of policy matters affecting transportation.

This plan is designed to comply with the 2010 California Regional Transportation Plan Guidelines adopted by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) in April 2010. It is expected to be used as a guide by state and local officials as they strive to upgrade the overall transportation system in Kings County. In addition, this plan is a data source and information document for the general public. As such, it will be of value as a decision-making tool to anyone having the desire to improve and benefit from an upgraded regional transportation system in Kings County.

II. REGIONAL SETTING

The study area includes all of Kings County's 1,396 square miles. Located in the south-central San Joaquin Valley, Kings County is bounded by Fresno, Tulare, Kern, Monterey, and San Luis Obispo counties. Elevations range from 175 feet in the Tulare Lake Basin to 3,473 feet at Table Mountain in the extreme southwestern portion of the county. Two-thirds (613,373 acres) of the county's land area is level, irrigated farmland.

III. BACKGROUND TO THIS PLAN

A. Participating Agencies

This 2014 RTP update was prepared by the staff of the Kings County Association of Governments (KCAG) with the assistance from each of its member agencies: the cities of Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford, and Lemoore and the County of Kings. The Santa Rosa Tachi-Yokut tribe was also consulted during the development of the RTP. Caltrans District 6 and the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District staff provided an invaluable service by furnishing helpful information, comments, and general support.

B. KCAG Organization

As a council of governments, KCAG addresses inter-jurisdictional public policy matters. Transportation is a major area of concentration. KCAG is a state-designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) recognized by the state's Transportation Agency (CalSTA) and a federally recognized Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). As an MPO/RTPA, KCAG prepares and maintains the Regional Transportation Plan, prepares the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP), and the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP). KCAG also reviews the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and other state transportation programs, monitors local public transit operations, and oversees federal transportation grant proposals. KCAG is also charged with administering the Local Transportation Fund (LTF) and State Transit Assistance (STA) fund.

FIGURE 1-1

Location Map

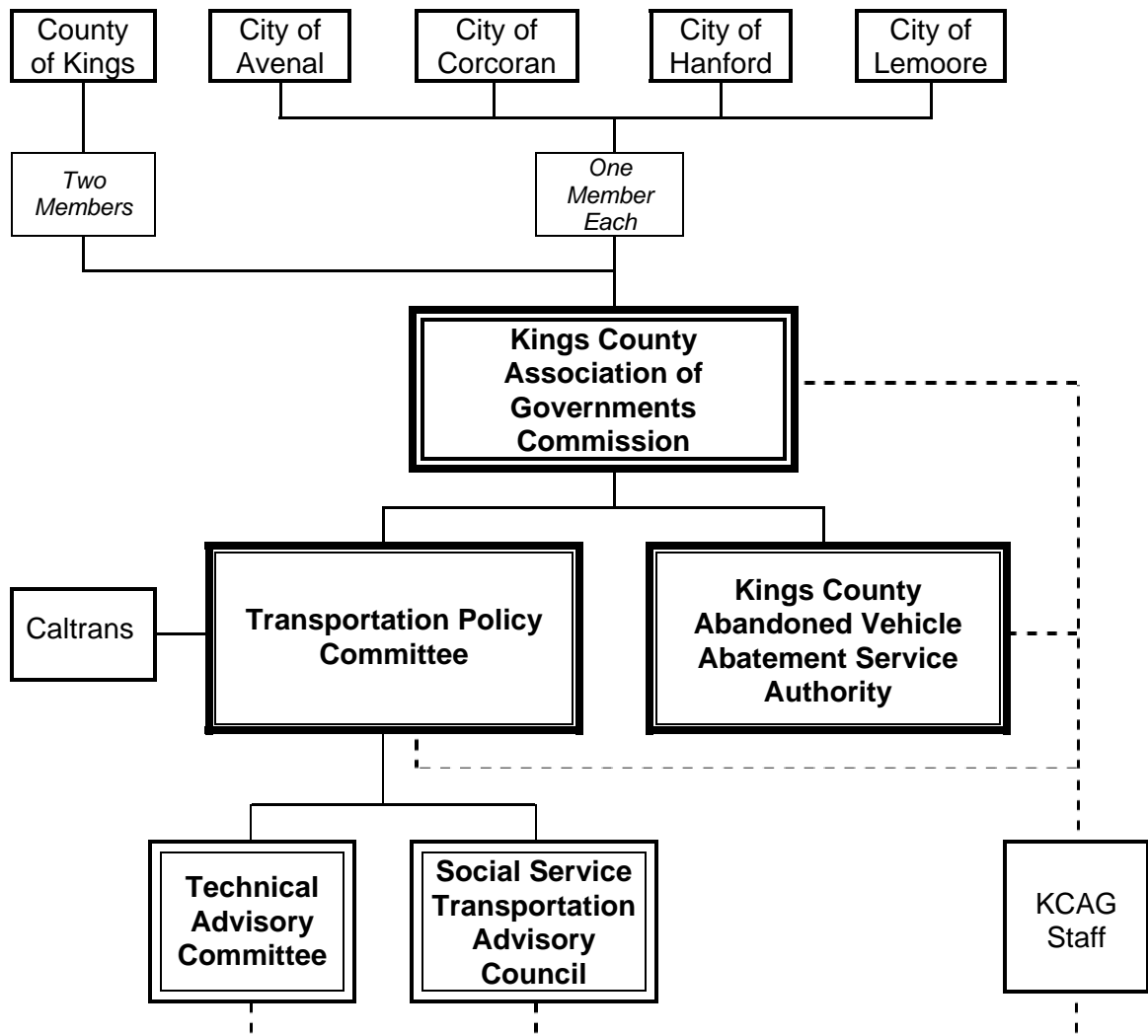


All RTPA activities are governed by the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) composed of local elected officials from each of the member agencies and the Director of Caltrans.

The TPC is advised by two committees: 1) A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) whose members include: KCAG staff, 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 Naval Air Station (LNAS) representative, a San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District representative, and a Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi Yokut Tribe representative; and 2) A Social Service Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) whose members include appointed representatives of social service providers and transit users. The SSTAC provides input to the RTPA on the transit needs of transit dependent and transit disadvantaged persons, including elderly, disabled, and low income persons. Other citizen committees are formed on an ad hoc basis by the TPC.

FIGURE 1-2

KCAG ORGANIZATION



IV. ORGANIZATION OF THIS PLAN

It is the intent of KCAG to produce an informative, readable, and persuasive document that provides a clear exposition of transportation needs and demands in Kings County. To do so, the following format is generally followed:

- A. Relevant socio-economic and transportation assumptions are stated. These are supported by inventories and forecasts.
- B. Emerging and recurring transportation issues are identified and evaluated.
- C. In response to the assumptions and issues, relevant objectives and policies are stated. These are the guidelines for decision making.
- D. To carry out the objectives and policies in light of the issues and assumptions, an implementation strategy for improvements is identified.
- E. Financial resources needed to cover the costs of recommended projects and programs are discussed.

V. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

This plan is a continuation of the transportation planning process that began in Kings County in 1975 with the adoption of the first Kings County Regional Transportation Plan. In general, that plan has provided a foundation for each of KCAG's subsequent RTP updates. Since today's political and economic climate bears little resemblance to that of 1975, this update examines the need for improved facilities and services, while acknowledging current budget constraints. Most importantly, this plan sheds new light on the need for specific major improvements to the regional highway system.

A number of other state and local plans were examined for consistency with this plan. For the most part, there were no areas where these plans conflicted with this document. There were several minor differences among other Regional Transportation Plans in the San Joaquin Valley, but no major policy conflicts. The plans reviewed include:

- 1. City of Avenal, 2004, Avenal General Plan and Environmental Impact Report
- 2. California Department of Corrections, 1994, EIR, Emergency Bed Project, California State Prison at Avenal
- 3. City of Corcoran, 2007, General Plan Update and EIR
- 4. County of Kings and City of Corcoran, 1997, Corcoran Area Plan
- 5. California Department of Corrections, 1994, EIR, Emergency Bed Project, California Substance Abuse Treatment Facility and State Prison at Corcoran
- 6. California Department of Corrections, 1995, EIR, California Substance Abuse Treatment Facility and State Prison at Corcoran
- 7. City of Hanford, 2002, City of Hanford General Plan
- 8. City of Lemoore, 2008, Lemoore General Plan and 2008 EIR
- 9. City of Lemoore, 1997, EIR, College Park at West Hills Development
- 10. County of Kings, 2010, Kings County General Plan and 2010 EIR

11. California Transportation Commission, 2010, Regional Transportation Plan Guidelines
12. KCAG, 2011, Kings County Regional Transportation Plan Update
13. KCAG, 2013, Kings County Federal Transportation Improvement Program
14. KCAG, 2014, Kings County Regional Transportation Improvement Program
15. KCAG, 2011, Kings County Regional Bicycle Plan
16. City of Lemoore, 2001, City of Lemoore Bikeway Plan
17. KCAG, 2009, Kings County Transit Development Plan
18. KCAG, 2001 Social Service Transportation Provider Inventory
19. KCAG, 2008 Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan
20. County of Kings, 1989, Kings County Hazardous Waste Management Plan
21. KCAG, 1988, Urban Service Areas Policy Plan
22. KCAG, 1979, Airport Systems Study
23. City of Hanford, 2010, Hanford Municipal Airport Master Plan
24. City of Hanford, 2010, EIR, Airport Master Plan Improvements
25. U.S. Department of the Navy, 1992, NAS Lemoore Master Plan
26. U.S. Department of the Navy, 1983, Air Installation Compatible Use Zones Study, NAS Lemoore
27. U.S. Department of the Navy, 1998, Final EIS for Development of Facilities to Support Basing US Pacific Fleet F/A-18E/F Aircraft on the West Coast of the United States
28. Caltrans, 1998, Central California Aviation System Plan
29. Caltrans, 2009, California Aviation System Plan, Capital Improvement Plan, 2010-2019
30. Caltrans, 1998, 1999, The California Aviation System Plan, Policy, Inventory, Forecast and Capital Improvement Program Elements
31. Caltrans, 1994, Draft Summary Report, Los Angeles - Bakersfield High Speed Ground Transportation Preliminary Engineering Feasibility Study
32. California Intercity High Speed Rail Commission, 1996, Summary Report and Action Plan, Executive Summary
33. California High Speed Rail Authority, 2005, Final Program EIR/EIS for the Proposed California High-Speed Train System
34. Caltrans, 2008, California State Rail Plan, 2007/08 - 2017/18
35. Caltrans, 2007, San Joaquin Corridor FY 2007-2008 Business Plan

36. San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, 1992, 1991 Air Quality Attainment Plan, San Joaquin Valley Air Basin
37. SJVAPCD, 1994, Transportation Control Measures Program
38. SJVAPCD, 1994, Revised 1993 Rate of Progress Plan
39. SJVAPCD, 1995, Draft Revised Post 1996 Rate of Progress Plan
40. SJVAPCD, 1994, Ozone Attainment Plan
41. SJVAPCD, 1994, Serious Area PM-10 Plan
42. SJVAPCD, 1997, Proposed PM-10 Attainment Demonstration Plan
43. SJVAPCD, 2003, Proposed 2003 PM-10 Plan
44. Council of Fresno County Governments, 2011 Regional Transportation Plan
45. Kern Council of Governments, 2011 Regional Transportation Plan
46. Madera County Transportation Commission, 2011 Madera County Area Regional Transportation Plan
47. Merced County Association of Governments, 2011 Regional Transportation Plan Update
48. San Joaquin County Council of Governments, 2011 Regional Transportation Plan
49. Stanislaus Council of Governments, 2011 Stanislaus Area Regional Transportation Plan
50. Tulare County Association of Governments, 2011 Regional Transportation Plan
51. Tachi Yokut Tribe of the Santa Rosa Rancheria, 2001, Transportation Planning Study, Interim Report

VI. MOVING AHEAD FOR PROGRESS IN THE 21st CENTURY (MAP-21) COMPLIANCE

A. Introduction

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. MAP-21 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.

This section discusses the development of the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and provides an overview of how KCAG and the San Joaquin Valley as a whole coordinated the development of the 2014 RTP.

B. Chronology

In preparation for the 2011 RTP, the eight San Joaquin Valley (SJV) Metropolitan Planning Organizations coordinated with the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA), and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) on the technical aspects and the federal requirements related to the RTP. The Valley MPOs also began the coordination with the California Air Resources Board (ARB) to prepare for the state requirements established by Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32), the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, and Senate Bill 375 (SB 375), the California Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008, and how they would affect the 2011 and subsequent RTPs.

The coordination of the MPOs continued through the preparation of the 2011 RTP and into a valley-wide model improvement program for each of the MPOs. The program is divided into four phases. In the first phase, the less than 200,000 population MPOs received minor upgrades to the models and the larger MPOs received additional sensitivity and options to recognize a broader spectrum of land use and transportation changes.

C. AB 32 and SB 375

Although AB 32 did not have a direct effect on the transportation plans, SB 375 is a supplement to AB 32 that directly impacts the plans. SB 375 requires that each metropolitan planning organization prepare a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) as an integrated element of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) that is updated every four years. The SCS is intended to show how integrated land use and transportation planning can lead to lower greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from passenger vehicles and light duty trucks. See Chapter 4 for the SCS.

D. Continuing Partnership

In 2010, the Valley was awarded a \$1 million grant from the Strategic Growth Council for valleywide model improvements to meet the requirements of AB 32 and SB 375. The Strategic Growth Council is charged with, among other things, making Proposition 84 funds available for data gathering and model development necessary to comply with SB 375.

The eight SJV MPOs have also continued to work cooperatively in the development of their planning and programming documents. KCAG and the other MPOs routinely participate in an Interagency Consultation (IAC) process that includes the MPOs, FHWA, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Caltrans, the Air District, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and have held workshops to coordinate the development of the 2014 RTPs and 2015 FTIPs.

VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

In June 2013, KCAG adopted a Supplemental Public Participation Plan to the comprehensive KCAG Public Participation Plan adopted on December 7, 2011, to meet the requirements of SB 375. The Supplemental Public Participation Plan carried out the following public participation process:

- Consultation with various public and local agency representatives who are representatives of the KCAG Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was undertaken. The Committee's responsibilities were to provide information about their general plans and land use decisions to help develop a foundation for the 2014 RTP. The agencies were also asked to identify their priorities for RTP improvement projects and review and comment on various RTP elements. Meetings were also requested with each of the four cities and the county planning departments to gather the above information.

- At each meeting of the KCAG Technical Advisory Committee, since January 2011, there was a discussion of the current influences to the RTP effort (climate change, greenhouse gases, AB 32, and SB 375). The TAC members were informed about the process, the approach to the project, and the timeline of the development of the 2014 RTP.
- KCAG acquired a Public Outreach Consultant through standard procurement procedures to assist in the public participation process. The consultant and KCAG staff hosted public meetings and met with the city councils and Board of Supervisors for each of the member jurisdictions and provided a presentation on the entirety of the 2014 RTP and answered questions from the councils, board, and the public.
- KCAG staff formulated a focus group, the RTP Stakeholder Working Group, to gather, review, analyze, and formulate the information from the local agency general plans and the desires expressed by the local residents at the outreach workshops into inputs for the Sustainable Communities Strategy Scenarios.
- KCAG staff then requested meetings with the four cities and the county planning departments to provide them with the information from the Stakeholder Working Group and to ask them to review the inputs and compare them with their general plans and land use policies for consistency.
- After the Stakeholder Inputs were evaluated, the travel demand forecasting model was utilized to develop the conformity and greenhouse gas reductions data associated with the scenarios.
- When the model data was received the draft Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) scenarios were made public. KCAG sent out a news release to all area news media announcing the availability of the draft RTP and SCS scenarios for review and comment and provided copies at all branch libraries within Kings County. The draft 2014 RTP documents were also placed on the KCAG website to provide widespread review and to allow comments from many agencies, groups, and individuals.
- KCAG held noticed public workshops to explain the scenarios and to provide an opportunity for the public to comment on the scenarios. KCAG staff attended city council meetings for the four cities and the Board of Supervisors meeting to provide the same information as was provided to the public.
- Public hearings were noticed and held before the KCAG Transportation Policy Committee regarding review of the 2014 RTP. The general public is invited to attend the KCAG Transportation Policy Committee meetings and meeting announcements are posted at the KCAG office, local newspapers, and the KCAG website. Copies of all notices, persons/agency comments, and the KCAG responses are on file at the KCAG office.

The KCAG outreach efforts for the development of the documents resulted in comments received from member agencies, several divisions of Caltrans, the Environmental Protection Agency, the California Department of Energy, and the Federal Highways Administration.