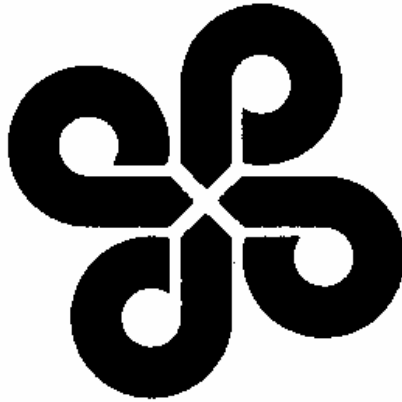


**Kings County
Association of Governments**

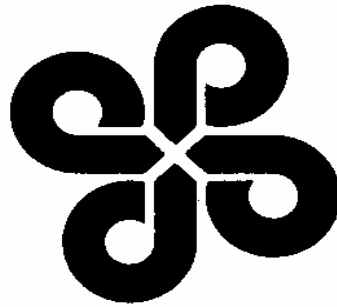


PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

**Adopted
January 23, 2008**

**Kings County
Association of Governments**

Public Participation Plan



Prepared by

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I. Introduction

Kings County Association of Governments (KCAG) is a regional planning agency committed to involving the general public in its planning activities. KCAG encourages the public's input in the planning process to ensure that community needs are met.

The "Public Participation Policy and Objectives" outlined in the Policy Element of the 2007 Kings County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) states that "*transportation facilities and services should meet the needs of all segments of the population. KCAG welcomes community comment and guidance in its transportation planning and decision making process*". According to the following stated objectives, KCAG will:

1. *Continue building an active citizen participation forum;*
2. *Seek representation from the entire community, including the elderly, economically disadvantaged, disabled, and traditionally underrepresented;*
3. *Hold public meetings at convenient times and places;*
4. *Seek public participation and 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.*

KCAG has developed this Public Participation Plan (PPP) document in order to address all aspects of public involvement, from the transportation planning aspect to disseminating of information. Public participation is a dynamic process that requires effective strategies to be tailored to fit both the subject matter and the audience. Effective public involvement requires building relationships with members and organizations in the community. While it is sometimes challenging to engage the public in regional transportation, this plan seeks to identify strategies to inform and encourage their participation. KCAG will strive to involve traditionally underserved persons such as low-income and minority households, the elderly, those addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Native American tribal governments and communities in the transportation planning processes.

This PPP outlines KCAG's purpose, responsibilities, and commitments to the public involvement process. This document is intended to give KCAG's staff, advisory committee members, and policy officials guidelines for providing public involvement opportunities and interagency consultation in the regional planning process. It contains policies, guidelines, and procedures that KCAG will use to encourage and engage greater public involvement in the various transportation and regional planning decision-making process.

A. Kings County Association of Governments

Kings County Association of Governments (KCAG) is a Council of Governments (COG) responsible for addressing problems of an inter-jurisdictional nature. Transportation is a major area of concentration. KCAG is a voluntary organization whose members are the County of Kings, the cities of Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford, and Lemoore.

KCAG serves as the state-designated regional transportation planning agency (RTPA) recognized by the State's Business, Transportation, and Housing Agency. KCAG is also a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) recognized by the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration and receives federal funding to conduct several activities required of MPOs. The primary functions of an MPO and RTPA include developing and updating a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), preparing a Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP), preparing a Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP), and administering the Transportation Development Act (TDA).

All RTPA activities are governed by the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC), which is the final approving authority for KCAG's transportation planning process. The TPC is a committee of the KCAG Commission and composed of members from each of the cities and county, and Caltrans District 6 representing the Director of the California Department of Transportation.

B. Physical Setting

Kings County is a rural county located in the south-central San Joaquin Valley, bordered by Fresno, Kern, Monterey, San Luis Obispo and Tulare Counties. Kings County includes 1,396 square miles with elevations ranging from 175 feet in the Tulare Lake Basin to 3,473 feet at Table Mountain in the extreme southwestern portion of the county. Kings County enjoys a predominantly agricultural economy and is one of the leading producers of dairy and cotton products in California. Two-thirds (613,373 acres) of the county's land area is level, irrigated farmland.

C. Demographic Profile

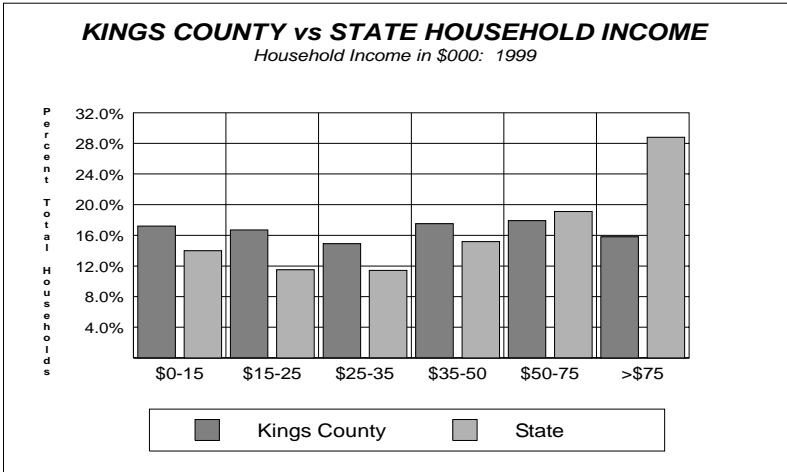
Kings County is one of the smaller counties in California in regards to population with 151,381 residents based on the 2007 California Department of Finance estimates. The average annual population growth rate is 2%. There are four incorporated cities in Kings County: Avenal, Corcoran, Lemoore, and Hanford. Hanford is the largest city in Kings County with an estimated 50,370 residents and is designated as the county seat. Lemoore has 24,098 residents, whereas Corcoran and Avenal have 25,417 and 16,737 residents respectfully. There are four unincorporated communities that include Armona, Home Garden, Kettleman City, and Stratford. A majority of the county's population resides in the northern one-third of the County.

There are two primary sources from which KCAG derives its demographic information. The California Department of Finance provides historical and annual data, with the U.S. Census Bureau providing information on both a decennial and ongoing basis with the American Community Survey.

According to the 2000 U. S. Census, Kings County has a demographic profile shown as follows:

White	41.6%
Hispanic	43.6%
Black	8.0%
Asian	3.0%
Native American	1.0%
Others	2.8%

The 2006 American Community Survey found the median income of households in Kings County to be \$43,178, with 22% of the people considered in poverty status. Of the total 39,702 households, 26.5% earned less than \$24,999, 28.5% earned between \$25,000 and \$49,999, and 45% earned more than \$50,000. The median age was 30 with 28% of the population under the age of 18 compared to 7% of the population 65 years and older. The graph below shows the comparison of income levels to California.



Source: 2000 U. S. Census

The educational attainment of Kings County varies from residents who did not finish ninth grade to those who have earned a graduate or professional degree. The 2006 American Community Survey identifies 70% of the population of twenty-five years and over as a high school graduate (including equivalency) or higher and 12% earning a bachelor’s degree or higher.

II. Legal Requirements

A. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), the largest surface transportation investment in our Nation's history was signed into law on August 10, 2005. SAFETEA-LU builds on the foundation of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). SAFETEA-LU guarantees \$244.1 billion for highways, highway safety, and public transportation.

In addition to reauthorizing the funding levels for the various federal transportation programs, SAFETEA-LU also established new transportation planning and programming requirements that emphasizes the importance of public involvement early and throughout the planning process. Specifically, SAFETEA-LU requires that KCAG provides citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, private providers of transportation, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on transportation plans and programs. Interested parties may include citizens, affected public agencies, representatives or public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, and representatives of the disabled. In addition, public meetings must be held at convenient and accessible locations/ times, visualization techniques must be used to describe plans, and public information must be easily accessible on the World Wide Web.

B. Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) has issued Regulations [23 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 450.316 (a) (1) (i-x) to guide the development of public involvement procedures to be used in the implementation of SAFETEA-LU. These regulations require that:

- (a) The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

(1) The participation plan shall be developed by the MPO in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:

(i) Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;

(ii) Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;

(iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;

(iv) Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;

(v) Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;

(vi) Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;

(vii) Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;

(viii) Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts;

(ix) Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation under subpart B of the part; and

(x) Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.

C. Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires the involvement of the community, in particular those with disabilities, in the development and improvement of services. Meetings and hearings must be held in ADA compliant buildings and facilities. In addition, special accommodations must be made to assist those with disabilities to participate in meetings, planning, and programming activities.

KCAG is in compliance with the ADA by having accessible formats and public hearings. Moreover, it consults with individuals from the disabled community and conducts outreach by maintaining an extensive mailing and email lists, developing contacts, and other means of notification to encourage participation in the planning process.

D. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires that transportation planning and programming be non-discriminatory on the basis of race, color, national origin or disability. The federal statute was further clarified and supplemented by the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 and a series of federal statutes enacted in the 1990s relating to the concept of environmental justice. Environmental justice is a term used to help ensure equal protection under the country's laws. 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 due to transportation projects. There are three principles that are fundamentally known as the core of environmental justice:

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states that "No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." KCAG, a designated metropolitan planning organization receiving Federal funding, is responsible for implementing Title VI and conforming to federal environmental justice principles.

E. Executive Orders

Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low- Income Population

An Executive Order was issued on February 11, 1994 by President William Clinton, which responded to the concerns of the public by organizing and explaining in detail the Federal government's commitment to promote environmental justice. It is entitled Executive Order 12898: *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*. This order requires that disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations be identified and addressed in order to achieve environmental justice. The Executive Order states that:

“Each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.”

A series of executive orders were established by the federal executive branch in order to further magnify the importance of environmental justice concurrently with Title VI, therefore providing a more detailed and productive policy that complies with environmental justice. The following executive orders include the Department of Transportation's Order 5610.2 in 1997; FHWA's DOT Order 6640.23 in 1998; and FHWA's memorandum on October 7, 1999, *Implementing Title VI Requirements in Metropolitan and Statewide Planning*.

Additional laws, regulations, and policies that embody environmental justice in order to ensure nondiscrimination are as follows:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA);
- Section 109(h) of Title 23;
- The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (URA);
- The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21);
- Other U.S. DOT statutes and regulations.

Kings County's transportation decision making includes an inclusive approach to consider the human environment and the adverse impacts transportation projects may have. It also looks at safety and mobility issues, which are key elements in achieving environmental justice. KCAG approaches and resolves transportation decision making by:

- Meeting the needs of all people.
- Planning transportation facilities that fit into communities.
- Increasing the involvement with the public.
- Analyzing potential impacts on minority and low-income populations by accessing, monitoring, and improving data collections.
- Connecting with other public and private programs to achieve common vision for communities.
- Preventing high and adverse impacts on minorities and low-income populations.
- Identifying and mitigate concerns that the public might have which benefit or affect communities and/or neighborhoods.

Executive Order 13166: Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency

Executive Order 13166 states that people who speak limited English should have meaningful access to federally conducted and federally funded programs and activities. It requires that all federal agencies identify any need for services to those with limited English proficiency and develop and implement a system to provide those services so all persons can have meaningful access to services.

Kings County Association of Governments (KCAG) will provide translation services for persons when requested at least seventy-two hours in advance. As both our KCAG Technical Advisory Committee and KCAG Commission meet on a Wednesday, the KCAG office should be contacted by 4:00 p.m. on the Friday prior to the meeting. This information, including the contact phone number, is included on all KCAG meeting agendas.

F. The Brown Act

The Ralph M. Brown Act, also known as the “Open Meeting Law”, governs the meetings and actions of governing board members of local public agencies and their created bodies. In essence, the Brown Act ensures that local government bodies are open to the public. The Act also extends to any committee or other subsidiary body of a local agency, whether permanent or temporary, decision-making or advisory, which is created by such a governing board. The Brown Act sets minimum standards for open meetings relative to access to public, location of meetings, notice posting, agenda distribution, and public input. The public agency may adopt reasonable regulation ensuring the public’s right to address the agency, including regulation to limit the total amount of time allocated for public testimony. KCAG and its committees all adhere to these requirements involving proper noticing, access and ability to address the Board and committees.

Due to time constraints, unscheduled comments by the public may be limited to five minutes in length. KCAG encourages interested citizens to provide written copies of presentations to the Board/ Committees, particularly if the statement is too long to be presented in its entirety. Citizens unable to attend the meeting may submit their concerns and ideas in writing to staff, who will then present the comments to the respective Board/ Committee in either a written or oral format.

G. Public Utilities Code § 99238.5

The Transportation Development Act (TDA) also known as the "Mills-Alquist-Deddeh Act" was established by the State Legislature in 1971. The TDA provides one of the major funding sources for public transportation in California. Section 99238.5 addresses the role of public participation in the unmet transit needs finding process. It also requires a public hearing.

- (a). The transportation planning agency shall ensure the establishment and implementation of a citizen participation process appropriate for each county, or counties if operating under a joint powers agreement, utilizing the social services transportation advisory council as a mechanism to solicit the input of transit dependent and transit disadvantaged persons, including the elderly, handicapped, and persons of limited means. The process shall include provisions for at least one public hearing in the jurisdiction represented by the social services transportation advisory council. Hearings shall be scheduled to ensure broad community participation and, if possible, the location of the hearings shall be rotated among the various communities within the advisory council's jurisdiction. Notice of the hearing, including the date, place, and specific purpose of the hearing shall be given at least 30 days in advance through publication in a newspaper of general circulation. The transportation planning agency shall also send written notification to those persons and organizations which have indicated, through its citizen participation or any other source of information, an interest in the subject of the hearing.

- (b). In addition to public hearings, the transportation planning agency shall consider other methods of obtaining public feedback on public transportation needs. Those methods may include, but are not limited to, teleconferencing, questionnaires, tele-canvassing, and electronic mail.

III. Development of the Public Participation Plan

KCAG staff began consulting with a range of interested parties as required by the SAFETEA-LU legislation prior to drafting its Public Participation Plan. KCAG staff met with the Technical Advisory Committee, Social Services Transportation Advisory Council, Transportation Policy Committee, referenced SAFETEA-LU guidelines, and met with representatives from the Federal Highway Administration. The Santa Rosa Tachi-Yokut tribe was also consulted during the development of the RTP, as members of the Technical Advisory Committee. Throughout the five month Public Participation Process, KCAG staff summarized current activities and asked for suggestions on improvements that could be made.

In addition, to the various meetings, KCAG developed and distributed the 2007 Public Participation Survey to a vast array of interested parties to determine the best methods to improve public engagement and strategies to solicit comments. To inform the greater public of the survey and to encourage responses, a newspaper article appeared in the Hanford Sentinel and a news release was printed in the Lemoore Advance.

The survey consisted of ten questions which was both mailed out and available on the KCAG website for thirty eight days. Questions ranged from having interested parties select the preferred method of notification about upcoming meetings to identifying the most convenient time to attend meetings. There were a total of fifty four completed surveys collected. Survey questions and answers can be found in Appendix C. KCAG staff was available to meet with interested parties throughout the entire Public Participation Plan process.

A. What We Heard From the Public

Throughout the development of the Public Participation Plan, KCAG used four key questions to prompt a discussion on the best ways to engage the public in KCAG's decision making process. Those questions and answer summaries are immediately following. In addition, KCAG has provided information on how these insights from the public will be applied to public outreach strategies.

1. *What is the most effective method of informing the public about opportunities in transportation and regional planning decisions?*

The public distinguished that newspaper articles are the best strategy to inform the public about opportunities in transportation and regional planning decisions. KCAG will continue to work with and build relationships with the local journalists so that newspaper articles will continue to be a primary source of information for the public. In addition, the surveys also identified public meetings, public notices in newspapers, newsletters, and the KCAG website. KCAG is currently committed to those strategies and will continue to improve where appropriate. Furthermore, the following strategies of which KCAG is currently not utilizing were noted, including radio, posters on transit buses, and television. When appropriate in the future, these strategies may be employed.

2. *What is your preferred method of notification about upcoming meetings?*

The public noted that the preferred method of notification about upcoming meetings is email, followed by mailing including either a letter or flyer. KCAG will continue to utilize these strategies to notify the public.

3. *When is it most convenient for you to attend meetings during the work week?*

Overwhelmingly, the public told us that the most convenient time of day during the work week for them to attend meetings was between 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. The second substantial option was between 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. Very few individuals noted that the lunch hours of 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. or after 6 p.m. in the evenings was a good time to attend meetings. KCAG will make every effort to schedule meetings between the hours of 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. or as otherwise suggested by the individual committee members.

4. *How would you like KCAG to share detailed or complicated information with you?*

The majority of the surveys indicated that email would be the best method to share detailed or complicated information with the public. Mailings, newsletters, presentations by KCAG staff, and the website were also identified to a much lesser extent. KCAG will continue to make significant use of email in addition the other options noted as strategies for public participation.

IV. Public Outreach Techniques

KCAG utilizes a variety of public participation strategies to communicate and encourage interaction with the public. At a minimum, the public is notified of monthly Technical Advisory Committee and Transportation Policy Committee meetings. The general public is invited to attend these meetings. Meeting announcements are posted at the KCAG office, at the meeting location, local newspapers, and the KCAG website.

A. KCAG Website

The Internet has become one of the most widely available and used forms of communication. KCAG has recognized this fact and has established its own presence on the Internet: <http://www.countyofkings.com/kcag>. One of the major roles of KCAG listed on the website's home page "is to provide for citizen involvement in the planning process and provide technical services to member agencies". The KCAG website has become one of the principal means to encourage and facilitate citizen involvement in planning.

The KCAG website provides a wealth of information from meeting agendas and minutes; planning and programming documents; and other accessible documents. Some of the documents that the public can access include the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Federal Transportation Improvement Plan (FTIP), Transit Development Plan (TDP), Regional Bicycle Plan, and the Regional Housing Needs Plan. In addition, the website is also a handy reference for statistical information such as the Regional Directory, local 2000 Census data, traffic counts, abandoned vehicle abatement (AVA) program, commonly used acronym descriptions, rideshare information, air quality conformity status, and links to an assortment of Federal, State and local government agencies.

B. The Interchange Newsletter

Another effective means of public outreach is KCAG's newsletter, *The Interchange*. This quarterly publication contains articles and features of current issues and projects that KCAG is involved with. Moreover, it serves as a valuable informational tool to present transportation planning to the general public. The newsletter is circulated by mailing and email lists and is also accessible to the public over the KCAG website. Copies are also available at KCAG's offices.

C. Public Notices and Press Releases

The Brown Act requires the announcement of any public meeting where a decision could be made or that may be attended by more than one elected official. KCAG regularly posts the agendas of upcoming Transportation Policy Committee, Transportation Advisory Committee, and Social Service Transportation Advisory Committee meetings at least 72 hours in advance. Public notices and press releases are regularly issued to local newspapers including the Hanford Sentinel, Lemoore Advance, the Avenal Progress, and the Corcoran Journal.

KCAG normally publishes public hearing notices in local print media for Federal Transit Act (FTA) program of projects, RTP, FTIP, and RTIP adoption and amendments, in addition to the Transportation Development Act (TDA) unmet transit needs process. Concerning the TDA process specifically, public notices are published in both the English and Spanish languages in the Corcoran Journal. As Federal funding programs are developed, notifications are sent out to eligible agencies and the public, informing them of the appropriate manner in which projects may be submitted for consideration.

In addition to legal notifications, KCAG has an enhanced participation process whereby citizen groups and individuals can seek membership on appropriate committees. An extensive agenda mailing list contains many interested parties who then can review the agenda and determine for themselves if there are any issues upon which they wish to interact with the agency. In addition to these, there are public notices and the required public hearings prior to the adoption of the FTIP.

When vacancies occur on citizen advisory committees, such as the SSTAC, a press release will generally go out to various local media (newspaper, radio and television) to generate public interest. Flyers and posters are also used to invite public participation, such as with the unmet transit needs process. In addition, press releases are sent to local media to announce upcoming meetings, activities and to provide information on specific issues being considered by KCAG and its committees.

D. Public Meetings/ Workshops

When appropriate, KCAG will schedule public meetings or workshops to share information or gather comments from the public. Meeting locations and times will be scheduled in an effort to be the most convenient for the participants in that respective community. KCAG is open to co-hosting workshops with community groups or other governmental agencies as opportunities become available. KCAG will also utilize existing regularly scheduled events, such as City Council or Planning Commission meetings in member agencies jurisdictions. Special events such as the Kings County Fair and other community activities may also provide opportunities for KCAG to connect and encourage communication with the public.

To engage the public a variety of public meeting techniques will be explored. Formats may include an informal open house, speaker presentations with questions and answer periods, or break out sessions. KCAG makes use of a variety of visualization techniques including maps, charts, photographs, table top displays, and other illustrated formats.

To inform the public of upcoming meetings and workshops flyers, emails, news releases, newspaper articles, word of mouth, and direct mailings will be utilized. Future advertising opportunities as suggested by the public may include television, radio, posters on transit buses, and “stuffers” in utility bills and or local newspapers. KCAG will take advantage of any of the aforementioned opportunities to involve the public in the various programs and projects.

V. Plans with Specific Public Participation Requirements

KCAG develops and updates a number of planning and programming documents that are made available for public review and comments. Specific documents, such as the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) must satisfy federal statutory requirements. Specifically, the RTP and the FTIP are required to be available for early and continued opportunities for public participation throughout the development of the plans.

All planning and programming documents produced by KCAG undergo a thorough review by local, state, and federal technical staff, local citizens, local government bodies, and Caltrans. KCAG encourages public participation and comments from the public, interested parties, and resources agencies in the development of their plans. Once these documents are reviewed and approved, copies are made available by KCAG and are posted over the KCAG website. Some of the key publications that KCAG produces include:

A. Regional Transportation Plan

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is the principal long-range planning and programming document developed by KCAG that prioritizes and guides the transportation development in Kings County over the next twenty five years. The RTP is the comprehensive plan for transportation investments (transit, highway, local roads, bicycle, and pedestrian projects) and establishes the financial foundation for how the region will invest in its surface transportation system. The Plan identifies how much money is available to address critical transportation needs and determines the policies on how projected revenues are to be spent. Therefore, the RTP establishes the region's goals, policies, and objectives for meeting current and future transportation mobility needs.

The RTP is developed in coordination with each city in Kings County, the County of Kings, Caltrans, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, transit operators, and citizen groups. The document contains three basic elements: Policy Element, Action Element, and Financial Element. The RTP is updated at least once every four years to reflect affirmed or new planning priorities and changing projections of growth and travel demand, based on a reasonable forecast of future revenue available to the region.

- **RTP Update**

This is a complete update of the existing long-range regional transportation plan as prepared pursuant to state and federal requirements. RTP updates include extensive public consultation and participation over many months. RTP updates also generally require an amendment to the Federal Transportation Improvement Program and a new Air Quality Conformity Analysis.

- **RTP Amendment**

An amendment is a major revision to a long-range RTP, including adding or deleting a project, major changes in project costs, and/ or design concept and scope (e.g., changing project locations). Changes to projects that are included in the financially unconstrained portion of the RTP do not require an amendment. An amendment requires public review and comment, demonstration that the project can be completed based on expected funding, and/ or a finding that the change conforms to air quality requirements. Amendments that require an update to the air quality conformity analysis will be subject to conformity and interagency consultation procedures.

- **RTP Administrative Modification**

This is a minor revision to the RTP for minor changes to project/ project phase costs, funding sources, and /or initiation dates. An administrative modification is a revision that does not require public review and comment, demonstration that the project can be completed based on expected funding, nor a finding that the change is consistent with federal transportation conformity requirements.

B. 2007 Regional Transportation Plan Update

KCAG began the 2007 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update in an effort to be SAFETEA-LU compliant by July 1, 2007. KCAG made an extended effort to increase consultation and cooperation with Federal, State, and local resource agencies and tribal governments as documented in the 2007 RTP.

Consultation occurred with various Federal, State, and local resource agencies. Although SAFETEA-LU was signed into law in 2005, it wasn't until the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) was published in the Federal Register in June of 2006, that large scale efforts to understand the planning implications were initiated. KCAG staff participated in many of the federally-sponsored webcasts and panel questions that occurred in June through August of 2006. KCAG staff also participated in the San Joaquin Valley 2007 Regional Transportation Plan Workshop in August 2006. Meeting agendas to these and other local meetings can be seen in Appendix D.

Consultation with various public and local agencies representatives as members of the KCAG Technical Advisory Committee was also undertaken. The Santa Rosa Tachi-Yokut tribe has a representative member on this committee and was included in the public participation process. The Committee's responsibilities were to provide direction on various issues related to the development of the 2007 RTP. The group was essential in identifying and prioritizing RTP improvement projects and reviewing and commenting on the various plan elements. The general public is invited to attend the KCAG Technical Advisory Committee meetings. Meeting announcements are posted at the office, in local newspapers, and the KCAG website.

On February 7, 2007 a public meeting was held at the Kings County Government Center where RTP maps were on display for review and comment. Specifically, the maps identified short range and long range highway capacity projects in addition to State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) candidate Projects. Comment cards, writing utensils, and a comment card box were provided directly next to the maps. KCAG staff was on hand to answer any questions. There were no RTP comments submitted.

KCAG sent out a news release to all area news media announcing the availability of the draft RTP for review and comment. Copies of the draft plan were also available at all branch libraries within Kings County. The draft 2007 RTP was accessible on the KCAG website.

As federally stipulated, public hearings were noticed and held before the KCAG Transportation Policy Committee regarding review of the 2007 RTP. The general public is invited to attend the Transportation Policy Committee meetings. Meeting announcements are posted at the KCAG office, meeting location, local newspapers, and the KCAG website. Copies of all notices, person/ agency comments, and the KCAG responses are on file at KCAG.

C. Federal Transportation Improvement Program

The Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) implements the policy and investment priorities expressed by the public and adopted by KCAG in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). In this respect, public comments made as part of the RTP are reflected in the FTIP as well. The FTIP covers a four-year timeframe, and all projects included in the FTIP must be consistent with the RTP. The FTIP is a comprehensive listing of Kings County surface transportation projects- including transit, highway, local roadway, bicycle and pedestrian investments- that:

- receive federal funds, or are
- subject to federally required action, or are
- regionally significant, for federal air quality conformity purposes.

The FTIP includes a financial plan that demonstrated there are sufficient revenues to ensure that the funds committed (or “programmed”) to the projects are available to implement the project or project phases. Adoption of the FTIP also requires a finding of conformity with federal transportation air quality conformity mandates.

The FTIP is updated every two years, with amendments occurring as needed. Amendments of various types based on project specifications, can be achieved through types 1-5. FTIP updates are generally considered similar to the Type 5 amendment as described below, following a similar public participation process. For FTIP Amendments, FHWA identifies five types, each with specific participation requirements.

Expedited Project Selection Procedures (EPSP) allows eligible projects to be moved between FTIP fiscal years as long as the project cost and scope do not change. KCAG is federally authorized to utilize EPSP without additional State or Federal approval actions.

Federal rules allow MPOs to group or combine project that are not considered to be of appropriate scale for individual listing. Such grouped projects are often referred to as “Lump Sum Project Listings.” KCAG uses this ability to program lump sums within the FTIP. Such projects may be grouped by function (e.g., bike lanes), work type (e.g., maintenance), or geographical area. KCAG may include within lump sum listings projects included in various programs such as the State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP), Emergency Repair, Hazard Elimination Safety, Safe Routes to Schools, Section 130 Grade Crossings, and Highway Bridge. Once grouped, the MPO is required to maintain outside of the FTIP, a detailed list of the projects contained in each group.

MPOs are also required to publish an annual listing of projects for which federal funds have been obligated in the preceding year, that is also to include pedestrian and bicycle projects. KCAG prepares the annual report and informs the public that the annual listing of projects is available for public review at the KCAG office and located on the KCAG website. KCAG also provides this information to local agency partners through our standing committees. Notification will be sent to FHWA confirming that KCAG has fulfilled the annual listing of federal obligations requirement.

Amendment Type 1 Administrative

Administrative amendments include minor changes to project cost, schedule, scope, or funding sources. Administrative amendments require action by KCAG and approval by Caltrans. Federal agencies are notified, but do not take approval action on Type 1 Amendments. Public notification of an administrative amendment is posted on KCAG’s website at the time of action and subsequently posted on Caltrans website after Caltrans’ approval.

Amendment Type 2 Formal Amendment- Funding Changes

Type 2 amendments primarily include project cost changes that are great than 20% of the total project cost or \$2 million, whichever is higher. These amendments require approval by KCAG, Caltrans, and FHWA/FTA. Publicly accessible notification of a Type 2 formal amendment is posted on KCAG’s website prior to action and distributed to local agency partners through KCAG’s standing committee. KCAG will consider public comments on the amendment prior to approval action.

Amendment Type 3 Formal Amendment- Exempt Projects

Type 3 amendments primarily include adding or deleting projects that are exempt from regional air quality emissions analyses. These amendments typically include transit or safety projects. These amendments require approval by KCAG, Caltrans, and FHWA/FTA. Public notification of a Type 3 formal amendment is posted on the KCAG website and distributed to local agency partners through KCAG's standing committees. KCAG will consider public comments on the amendment prior to the approval action.

Amendment Type 4 Formal Amendment- Conformity Determination that Relies on a Previous Regional Emissions Analysis

Type 4 amendments primarily include adding or deleting projects that have already been appropriately modeled for air quality purposes as part of the RTP. In this case, the federal approving agencies can use a previous analysis of the project's impact on air quality for approval purposes. Type 4 amendments may be accompanied by an RTP amendment to maintain consistency. The FTIP amendment and RTP amendment follow the same public process. Type 4 amendments require approval by KCAG, Caltrans, and FHWA/FTA. Public notification of a Type 4 formal amendment includes:

- Legally noticed 30 day public comment period;
- Legally noticed public meeting;
- Posting of amendment information on KCAG's website during the public comment period;
- Publishing amendment information as part of the following publicly available KCAG agendas: Technical Advisory Committee and Transportation Policy Committee;
- Consideration and response to public comments received during the comment period.

Amendment Type 5 Formal Amendment- Conformity Determination and New Regional Emissions Analysis

Type 5 amendments are the highest level amendment and primarily involve adding or deleting a new project that must be modeled for their air quality impacts, or significantly change the design concept, scope, or schedule of an existing project. These amendments are accompanied by a new Air Quality Conformity Document that demonstrates conformity with applicable air quality requirements, and if applicable, an RTP amendment to maintain consistency. The FTIP amendment, Air Quality Conformity documents, and RTP Amendment (if applicable) follow the same public process. Type 5 amendments require approval by KCAG, Caltrans, and FHWA/FTA. Public notification of a Type 5 formal amendment includes:

- Legally noticed 30 day public comment period;
- Legally noticed public meeting;
- Posting of amendment information on KCAG's website during the public comment period;
- Publishing amendment information as part of the following publicly available KCAG agendas: Technical Advisory Committee and Transportation Policy Committee;
- Consideration and response to public comments received during the comment period.

C. Public Participation Plan

The Public Participation Plan outlines the strategies that KCAG will use to engage the public in the process of transportation and regional planning decisions. KCAG will periodically review the plan to evaluate its effectiveness in promoting the public participation process. While minor changes may occur from time to time, any major changes or revisions will be subject to a 45-day public review period and public hearing. At a minimum, the Plan will be comprehensively reviewed every four years, or in the year preceding the adoption of an RTP update.

Kings County Association of Governments

Public Participation Plan

Appendix A

Agency and Organizational Contacts

Agency and Organizational Contacts

<p>Armona Community Services District California Air Resources Board California Environmental Protection Agency California Highway Patrol California Office of Historic Preservation California Regional Water Quality Control Board California State Lands Commission Caltrans District 6 Central Valley Regional Center City of Avenal City of Corcoran City of Hanford City of Lemoore College of Sequoias- Hanford Federal Bureau of Land Management Federal Bureau of Reclamation Fresno Bee Fresno Council of Governments Hanford Community Development Hanford Sentinel Home Garden Community Services District Kern Council of Governments KFSN- TV Kings Area Rural Transit Kings County Area Public Transit Agency Kings County Bicyclists Kings County Board of Supervisors Kings County Children and Families Commission Kings County Commission on Aging Kings County Farm Bureau Kings County Job Training Office Kings County Planning Kings County Public Health Kings County Public Works Kings County Water District Kings Partnership for Children Kings Rehabilitation Center Kings View Mental Health Kings Waste and Recycling Authority Lemoore Advance Lemoore Naval Air Station Madera County of Transportation Commission Merced County Association of Governments MV Transportation Native American Heritage Commission Proteus San Joaquin Council of Governments San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Santa Rosa Rancheria</p>	<p>Stanislaus Council of Governments Stratford Public Utilities District Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners Tulare County Association of Governments U. S. Army Corps of Engineers West Hills College - Lemoore</p> <p>Local Businesses:</p> <p>Agusa Inc. Baker Commodities, Inc. Beco Dairy Automation Inc. Blair Air & Ground Britz Fertilizers Inc. Bud's County Monument Buttonwillow Warehouse Company California Bio-Productex, Inc. Camfil Farr Company Cemex Central Valley Meat Co. Inc. Champi Fencing Chemical Waste Management, Inc. Con Agra Foods Del Monte Food Di Prima Excavation Excelsior Farming Exopack Fegundes Agri Business Genesis Foods Gibson Gates Golden Valley Harvesting Hansen Ranches/ Hansen Equipment Helena Chemical Co. International Paper Iron Industries Inc. J. G. Boswell Company Keenan Farms Kings Waste and Recycling Authority Lacey Milling Co. Lakeland Dusters- Aviation, Inc. Leprino (East and West Facilities) Marquez Brothers International, Inc. Morgan & Slates Netto Ag. Inc. Penney-Newman Milling Co. S.K. Foods Valley Pump & Dairy Systems Verdegall Brothers Inc. Veterinary Pharmaceuticals, Inc. Viking Ready Mix Co. Inc. Virtus Nutrition Warmerdam Packing Western Farm Service</p>
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**Kings County Association of Governments
Public Participation Plan**

Appendix B

KCAG Committees

1. Transportation Policy Committee

The KCAG Commission governs all RTPA/ MPO activities. The Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) is a committee of the KCAG Commission. The KCAG Commission consists of one member from Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford, and Lemoore and two from the County. The TPC is comprised of the regular KCAG Commission plus the director of Caltrans, District 6. TPC and Commission meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday of every month. The KCAG Commission reaffirms all actions taken by the TPC.

2. Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee's (TAC) primary responsibility is to review all issues which the KCAG Commission will consider and to provide technical input for the decision making process. Members of the TAC are comprised of county and city public works and planning directors; city managers; county administrative officers; and Caltrans District 6 staff. In addition representatives of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District; Lemoore NAS; the Santa Rosa Rancheria of the Tachi Yokut Tribe; California Highway Patrol; Kings County Department of Environmental Health; and the Kings County Area Public Transit Agency serve as ex-officio members of the TAC. TAC meetings are regularly scheduled for the 2nd Wednesday of every month.

3. Planner's Blueprint Roundtable

The Planner's Blueprint Roundtable serves in an advisory capacity during the San Joaquin Valley Blueprint Planning Process. This group is made up of planners from each of the member jurisdictions. The Planner's Blueprint Roundtable provides technical expertise as related to Blueprint matters.

4. Blueprint Roundtable

The Blueprint Roundtable serves in an advisory capacity during the San Joaquin Valley Blueprint Planning Process. Specifically, this group represents the local perspective of Kings County Blueprint Activities. The group includes representation from KCAG member jurisdictions, education, agriculture, public health, economic development, and other members from the community.

5. Social Service Transportation Advisory Council

The KCAG Social Service Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC) was created in 1988 when amendments to the Transportation Development Act (TDA) required each regional transportation planning agency (RTPA) to form SSTACs. Members of the SSTAC are appointed by the KCAG Transportation Policy Committee. According to Section 99238 of the California Code of Regulations, the SSTAC must consist of the following members:

- One representative of potential transit users who are 60 years of age or older;
- One representative of potential transit users who are handicapped;
- Two representative of the local social service providers for seniors, including one representative of a social service transportation provider, if one exists (i.e.: K/T AAA, KCAPTA);
- Two representatives of local social service providers for the handicapped, including one representative of a social service transportation provider, if one exists;
- One representative of local social service provider for persons of limited means;
- Two representatives from the local consolidated transportation service agency, if one exists, including one representative from an operator;
- Additional members may be appointed by the transportation planning agency.

The main purpose of the SSTAC is to serve as an advisory body to the KCAG TPC regarding the transit needs of the elderly, handicapped, and low-income citizens. One of the key responsibilities that SSTAC members have is to participate annually in identifying transit needs, review, and recommend action to the KCAG TPC on transit needs and advise the RTPA on any other major transit issues including the coordination and consolidation of specialized transportation services. Identification of transit needs is accomplished by reviewing the testimony given at a public hearing to be held by the TPC or to solicit input from the group each member represents.

6. Bicycle Advisory Committee

The Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) was established to organize and promote bicycle use and safety as it relates to the Kings County Regional Bicycle Plan. This group serves in an advisory capacity to KCAG staff during updates of the Regional Bicycle Plan. The BAC membership is comprised of planning and public works staff, bicycle facility users, schools, law enforcement officials, and other interested citizens.

7. Kings County Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Service Authority

KCAG is also the Kings County Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Service Authority (KCAVASA). In 1996, the KCAG Commission directed staff to develop an Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Program and Plan for Kings County. The County Board of Supervisors and the City Councils of all four incorporated cities (Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford, and Lemoore) adopted the required resolutions approving the AVA Program Plan, and Procedures and authorized a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) to establish KCAVASA. The resulting Kings County AVA Plan was submitted to the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and approved by the CHP later that year. A one dollar vehicle registration fee is collected and distributed to member agencies based on a formula, which includes the number of vehicles abated and each agency's population and geographic area.

The KCAG Commission also serves as the Board of Directors of KCAVASA with one voting member for each jurisdiction. The responsibilities of the Board of Directors are to manage the financial affairs of the Authority, review and approve quarterly claims for reimbursement, submit annual reports to the California State Controller's Office, and disburse funds to claimants. The KCAVASA Board meets quarterly.

Kings County Association of Governments
Public Participation Plan

Appendix C

**Public Participation Plan Invitation
Letter and Survey Results**

September 4, 2007

Dear Kings County Stakeholder:

Kings County Association of Governments (KCAG) is requesting your assistance in the development of a Public Participation Plan. As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Kings County, KCAG is responsible for complying with federal transportation legislation. In August of 2005 the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act- A Legacy for Users or SAFETEA-LU was signed into law. SAFETEA-LU mandates additional public consultation requirements that will encourage public involvement in the early phases of the transportation planning process.

KCAG is developing a Public Participation Plan with the involvement and contribution of Kings County stakeholders. This Plan will detail the guidelines that KCAG will follow to notify and engage the public throughout various transportation and regional planning decisions.

Please take just a few minutes to fill out the enclosed survey. While this survey is brief, the information will be most valuable to KCAG. For your convenience, a prepaid and addressed envelope has been included to return the survey to KCAG. If you would like to schedule a face to face meeting with KCAG, please mark question #6 on the survey and include your contact information on #9.

KCAG staff will follow up with organizations that have not submitted their survey by Friday, September 28, 2007. Please contact Chris Lehn for additional information by email clehn@co.kings.ca.us or phone at 559.582.3211 extension 2677. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

KINGS COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

Terri King, Executive Director

enclosures

KCAG Public Participation Survey 2007

Thank you in advance for taking a few minutes to complete the survey below. The information collected will be incorporated into the 2007 KCAG Public Participation Plan. Unless otherwise indicated, select only one option per question. Please contact Chris Lehn if you have any questions at clehn@co.kings.ca.us.

1. Please select the category that best describes your organization?

- 4 public transportation/ transit service
- 1 freight transport service provider
- 1 senior citizen care/ advocacy
- 2 disabled citizen care/ advocacy
- 6 business community
- 1 education
- 1 bicycle/ pedestrian advocacy
- 0 environmental
- 19 local government agency
- 5 state government agency
- 4 federal government agency
- 10 other (please specify) Newspaper, Agriculture, Construction, and Recycle Center

2. What is the most effective method of informing the public about opportunities for involvement in transportation and regional planning decisions? (Select all that apply)

- 16 radio
- 23 public notices in newspapers
- 21 public meetings
- 16 KCAG website/ Internet
- 37 newspaper articles
- 13 other (please specify) Direct Mailings, Newsletter, Posters on Buses, TV, Local Elected Officials, mailers

3. What is your preferred method of notification about upcoming meetings?

- 20 mail (letter or flyer)
- 33 email
- 2 KCAG website/ Internet
- 5 phone call
- 7 ad in newspaper
- 0 other (please specify)

4. When is it most convenient for you to attend meetings during the work week?

- 16 8-11 a.m.
- 8 11-1 p.m. (with lunch)
- 29 1-5 p.m.
- 6 6 p.m. or later
- 1 weekends
- 1 other (please specify) September 3, 2007

5. How would you like KCAG to share detailed or complicated information with you?

- 30 email
- 16 mail
- 6 newsletter
- 5 KCAG website/ Internet
- 8 presentations by staff
- 1 other (please specify) Meetings with staff

6. What is your preference for providing comments to KCAG?

- 40 email
- 8 mail
- 12 face to face meeting
- 3 fax
- 2 other (please specify) Phone meeting

7. Would you like to comment on the draft 2007 Public Participation Plan when it becomes available?

- 28 Yes, I would like to comment.
- 26 No, I would not like to comment.

8. Would you like to receive the results of the 2007 Public Participation Survey?

- 41 Yes, please let me know when the results are available.
- 12 No, I am not interested.

9. Please fill in the following information if you would like to be added to any of KCAG's mailing lists or if you would like to schedule a meeting as checked on question #6.

Name/Title: _____
 Email/Phone: _____
 Mailing Address: _____

10. Please include any additional comments below.

Thank you for your participation. Please mail your survey to KCAG by Friday, September 28, 2007.

**Kings County Association of Governments
Public Participation Plan**

Appendix D

Public Participation Process Documentation