



San Joaquin Valley Blueprint Awards Announced

Three years ago, the eight regional planning agencies in the San Joaquin Valley came together in an unprecedented effort to develop a coordinated valley vision – the San Joaquin Valley Regional Blueprint. This eight county venture is being conducted in each county, and has recently been integrated to form a preferred vision for future development throughout the Valley to the year 2050.

In an effort to recognize plans, policies and projects that are “Blueprint friendly”, the Valley’s regional planning agencies created an awards program specifically designed for this purpose. Nominations were solicited from throughout the San Joaquin Valley for a number of categories. The judges reviewed the nominations and selected several for their efforts to reflect the Blueprint Principles. Because this was the first year of the program, the judges took the liberty of modifying some of the categories in order to better describe several of the nominations that were submitted.

The following awards will be presented by the Regional Policy Council at the Fall Policy Conference luncheon on October 2, 2009 in Fresno.

Award of Achievement
Community Plan - Unincorporated Community
Merced County ~ Hilmar Community Plan

Award of Achievement
Master Planned Community
Harlan Ranch ~ “A Clovis Community”

Award of Achievement
General Plan - Small Jurisdiction
City of Porterville General Plan

Award of Achievement
Community Plans - Unincorporated Community
Kings County General Plan ~ 4 Community Plans

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**Award of Merit**  
**General Plan - Small Jurisdiction**  
**City of Tracy General Plan**

**Award of Merit**  
**Master Planned Community**  
**Copper River Ranch**

**Award of Merit**  
**Sustainable Development Policies**  
**Kings County General Plan ~ Land Use & Resource Conservation Elements**

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Honorable Mention

~ City of Bakersfield Mill Creek ~
~ City of Tracy Growth Management Ordinance and Guidelines ~
~ City of Madera: Vision Madera 2025 ~
~ City of Shafter: OSIP (Oakland Shafter Inland Port) ~

The Blueprint Principles were used as the criteria to judge the submittals.

- Ø Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- Ø Create walkable neighborhoods
- Ø Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration
- Ø Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- Ø Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective
- Ø Mix land uses
- Ø Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas
- Ø Provide a variety of transportation choices
- Ø Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities
- Ø Take advantage of compact building design
- Ø Enhance the economic vitality of the region
- Ø Support actions that encourage environmental resource management

The Blueprint Awards program is sponsored by the San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council (representing the eight SJV COGs), the Central Section of Cal Chapter APA (American Planning Association), AIA (American Institute of Architects) San Joaquin Chapter and the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco.

The Award Judges represent several sectors:

Mayor Ann Johnston, City of Stockton
Fresno Council of Governments – Tony Boren, Executive Director
American Planning Association – Bruce O’Neal, AICP
American Institute of Architects – Dave Phillips, AIA
Federal Reserve Bank, San Francisco – Darryl Rutherford
Building Industry Association – Mike Prandini
Tejon Ranch – Barry Hibbard

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See project notes on following pages for more detail.

Award of Achievement
Community Plan - Unincorporated Community

Merced County ~ Hilmar Community Plan

The Hilmar Community Plan addresses all the Blueprint Principles. The Merced County General Plan, of which the Hilmar Community Plan is a component, fosters an urban centered concept. This requires new urbanization to be compact and developed within existing communities. The Hilmar Community Plan fosters compact building design by encouraging higher density residential development that reflects the plan's *Community Character and Design Guidelines*. These Guidelines provide standards for a variety of higher density residential types in order to support a traditional central business district that encourages pedestrian use, and puts less reliance on motorized vehicles. The overall impact of the plan will be to reduce the town's footprint into a more compact form of community development. By directing necessary residential, commercial, and industrial development to urbanized areas, economic growth and job creation is strengthened while adjacent farmland is preserved.

Award of Achievement
Master Planned Community

Harlan Ranch ~ "A Clovis Community"

Harlan Ranch Community is a mixed-use development that creates a variety of livable neighborhoods with a broad range of housing types and densities. Rather than applying a monotonous conventional pattern of similar intensity across the project site, the developer programmed a range of residential intensities from low density single family homes of 3.5 dwelling units per acre, to medium high density of 10.9 units per acre. New product types, including the garden court cluster and the alley load concept, were reintroduced to the Valley. This diverse range of housing types, as well as the project's strong pedestrian network of paths and trails, benefits the community in many ways by providing a choice to the consumer, while working toward adequately supplying market demand.

Award of Achievement
General Plan - Small Jurisdiction

City of Porterville General Plan

The Porterville 2030 General Plan seeks to establish a well-defined compact urban form, with neighborhood centers, improved open space amenities and streets and agricultural buffers. The hillside areas to the east of town are especially important to the attractiveness of the community and receive adequate attention in the General Plan. The Plan directs a majority of future growth eastward into the foothills that lie directly east of the community, away from the valley floor and prime farmland. It includes an agricultural "green belt" along the western and southern edges of the community as well as preservation of rocky hill and important archeological and environmental areas nearby. The Plan reestablishes downtown as the retail, cultural and entertainment core of the community where an active effort exists to preserve historical buildings and the historical architecture.

Award of Achievement
Community Plans - Unincorporated Community

Kings County General Plan ~ 4 Community Plans

Kings County has recently completed its 2035 General Plan, which includes individual community plans for the unincorporated communities of Armona, Home Garden, Kettleman City and Stratford. The primary focus of each community plan is to integrate smart growth principles into community revitalization efforts that aim to create or strengthen a centralized community core. New “mixed use” land use designations are integrated along with prioritization of centralized services and pedestrian connectivity in each community core. Open space corridors were designated to enhance the quality of life for residents and increase the use of alternative forms of transportation. Compact residential growth and infill development are strong themes within each plan. The plan also provides a range of densities that allow for a variety of housing options. Areas for future community growth are defined in each plan to ensure compact, centralized growth occurs in a phased and balanced manner that prevents the untimely conversion of prime agricultural land.



Award of Merit
General Plan - Small Jurisdiction

City of Tracy General Plan

Tracy created new Elements in its General Plan, including a *Community Character Element*, a *Public Facilities Element* and an *Economic Development Element* that work together to guide future development. With the Land Use Element, these Elements have become the key to creativity and ingenuity in the development of the city. Policies allow for measured development within Tracy’s Sphere of Influence, but also sharply focus on downtown and existing commercial centers and neighborhoods. Key to managing the growth of Tracy is a strong policy framework supporting infill and downtown development with maps and policies that identify “secondary growth areas”, away from prime farmland, subservient and adjacent to areas within the existing city limits. A “level playing field” was created when all future development areas were required to first undergo comprehensive infrastructure master planning that tied them together both in space and time: development moves forward with a clear understanding of the required services, opportunities for joint use infrastructure, and costs associated with development of the whole of the future development areas.

Award of Merit
Master Planned Community

Copper River Ranch

The vision for Copper River Ranch was to create a community where residents could live, work and play. Thus, a wide array of land use designations from multi-family, single family, custom lots, retail, offices and open space, available to the entire Fresno community, exist within the project. The community has been designed with an eight mile network of regional and project trails that connect the residential, commercial and open space areas.

Two other Blueprint oriented aspects of the project are its inclusion of NEV lanes for Neighborhood Electric Vehicles and the City of Fresno’s first tertiary level wastewater reclamation facility. This facility provides wastewater treatment services not only to Copper River but also to the surrounding community. One hundred percent of the facility’s reclaimed water will be used within the project boundaries to irrigate landscaped and park areas.

**Award of Merit
Sustainable Development Policies**

Kings County General Plan ~ Land Use & Resource Conservation Elements

Kings County has recently completed a comprehensive update to its General Plan. While the update included all seven of the mandated elements, the nomination for a Blueprint Award was limited to the Land Use and Resource Conservation elements, as these are the two driving elements within the plan that define where future growth may occur and provide a strong long-term plan for the preservation of agriculture. The key themes in the Land Use and Resource Conservation elements are:

- Ø ***Environmental Responsibility*** – *preservation/enhancement of natural resources while living within the limits imposed by available resources*
- Ø ***Community Revitalization*** – *protection of Kings County's special character*
- Ø ***Quality of Life*** – *maintaining an outstanding quality of life for Kings County residents*

Because the timeline on the General Plan update coincided with Blueprint outreach activities, many new policies and land use changes in the Plan resulted from the public participation associated with the Blueprint process.

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**Honorable Mention**

**~ City of Bakersfield Mill Creek ~**

Mill Creek is unlike any other amenity in Bakersfield. Once a fast moving canal in a dirt ditch surrounded by dilapidated cyclone fencing, it is now a natural looking creek meandering through downtown Bakersfield, linking housing, commercial, entertainment and recreational venues with a safe and healthy path. This new path and waterway have created usable open space through a very dense portion of Bakersfield.

**~ City of Tracy Growth Management Ordinance and Guidelines ~**

In May 2009, the Tracy City Council adopted a Growth Management Ordinance (GMO) and Guidelines that directly implements the city's General Plan. The Plan promotes infill development while accounting for new development in expansion areas. This new GMO is the strongest infill policy that the City has had since the GMO was first adopted in 1987. The ordinance directly establishes downtown development as the priority among competing developing areas.

**~ City of Madera: Vision Madera 2025 ~**

Recognizing the challenges that projected population growth would bring, the City of Madera initiated an extensive public discussion to develop a vision and action plan for the next 20 years. This community-wide effort, the ***Vision Madera 2025*** program, was conducted over nearly two years and involved hundreds of citizens representing dozens of community interests including business, environment, neighborhood, social service, healthcare, education, government and many others.

**~ City of Shafter: OSIP (Oakland-Shafter Inland Port) ~**

The Oakland-Shafter Inland Port (OSIP) is an innovative infrastructure project located in the city of Shafter. The project will provide an intrastate short-haul, freight rail expressway service connecting the Port of Oakland with the San Joaquin Valley. The inland port will consist of integrated multi-modal transportation resources including:

- Ø Intermodal rail transfer and trans-loading facilities;
- Ø Industrial warehouses and distribution centers; and
- Ø Related freight transport logistics and services.

The project will result in fewer trucks on Bay Area and San Joaquin Valley freeways and is projected to have a significant and positive impact on air quality.