



San Joaquin Council of Governments

Stanislaus Council of Governments

Merced County Association of Governments

Madera County Transportation Commission

Fresno Council of Governments

Tulare County Association of Governments

Kings County Association of Governments

Kern Council of Governments

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the San Joaquin Valley Greenprint?

The county-level and San Joaquin Valleywide Blueprint efforts over the past six years have focused primarily on urban and rural community development. One of the Blueprint's benefits is that it encourages more efficient development that conserves open space, farmland and environmental resources. But the Blueprint does not address the significant resource management opportunities and challenges in the over 97 percent of the Valley that consists of resource and open space lands. The San Joaquin Valley Greenprint proposes to fulfill this need. Its ultimate objective is to assemble the perspectives of the residents of the region into a shared vision, and to identify a series of strategies for the conservation and management of the region's land, water and living resources. The resulting "Greenprint" can then reinforce local efforts and serve as a guide to local, state, federal and private sector decision makers as they make choices about the future of the Valley's resources.

Phase 1 of the Greenprint will compile data, maps and other information describing the lands, waters and living resources of the region and the trends affecting them, and that document their public benefits. Resource management challenges and opportunities will be identified and documented along with existing resource preservation programs, policies and regulations. A State of the Valley report will be published and disseminated. Phase 2 will develop a shared vision and goals for resource management. It will identify and evaluate resource management options and strategies. Consensus strategies for resource management will be recommended. A Guide for Resource Management will be published and disseminated.

2. What is the need for the Greenprint?

The fact remains that population growth throughout the San Joaquin Valley will continue to pressure natural resources and threaten critical lands. Greenprint intends to come alongside local agencies and assist them with the challenges they face in these areas. It can assist efforts to secure funding for local agency programs and initiatives including, for example, the update of existing Habitat Conservation Plans or new HCPs, at the subregional level or perhaps even at the regional level. It can assist efforts to advocate on behalf of issues, including water issues, that are important to local agencies and the entire Valley. It can assist efforts to "gather and consider the best practically available scientific information regarding resource areas and farmland in the region" as required by SB 375 for consideration in the development of a Sustainable Community Strategy. All identified data sources will be considered for inclusion whether national, state, or local in origin. Wherever possible, local data will be considered the

more authoritative.

In addition, the Greenprint could lead to the potential development of a Regional Advanced Mitigation Program (RAM) for regional or subregional development projects in the San Joaquin Valley, thereby easing the regulatory burden on major projects. Greenprint strategies and best practices can be further defined and illustrated with case studies and other examples for inclusion in the Blueprint Planner's Toolkit, for reference and use by San Joaquin Valley local agencies.

3. Why is the Greenprint San Joaquin Valleywide? Shouldn't it be up to the individual counties if they so choose?

It is apparent that the Valley's significant challenges and opportunities with regard to land, water, and living resources are seldom respectful of jurisdictional boundaries. Greenprint's Valleywide focus recognizes this and provides an opportunity, particularly in its initial phase, to compile data and maps that illustrate this larger perspective. The Greenprint may also help achieve benefits for the Valley economy and quality of life not otherwise achievable by individual jurisdictions and organizations.

Any actions or policies implementing the strategies identified by the Greenprint will originate from the appropriate local jurisdiction. The Greenprint has no implementation or policy authority.

4. Whose idea was it to do the Greenprint project?

The creation of a San Joaquin Valleywide Greenprint was proposed by the San Joaquin Valley Blueprint Roadmap, accepted by the Regional Policy Council on August 31, 2011. The Roadmap states that successful implementation of the Blueprint suggests a companion strategy for conserving agricultural and open lands which make up most of the land in the Valley. Blueprint includes a set of 12 smart growth principles, all of which are relevant to the Greenprint but two of which are particularly important. The first is to preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas and the second is to support actions that encourage environmental resource management. The Regional Policy Council also approved the planning process to be followed for the Greenprint if awarded funding, which was subsequently secured.

5. How much will the Greenprint cost and where does the money come from?

Funding for the Greenprint comes from the State of California Strategic Growth Council (SGC), a cabinet level committee created in September 2008 (by SB 732) tasked with coordinating the activities of member state agencies. The SGC has numerous objectives but the ones most relevant to the Greenprint are to improve air and water quality, to protect natural resources and agricultural lands, and to assist state and local entities in the planning of sustainable communities and meeting AB 32 goals. The Greenprint received Proposition 84 funding in the amounts of \$275,000 from the SGC Round 1 and \$400,000 from the Round 2 competitive Planning Grant Program.

6. Will the Greenprint result in increased taxes or additional regulations on myself, my property, or my business?

There is neither the desire nor the ability on the part of the San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council, the Greenprint Steering Committee, and the project staff and consultant to increase taxes or impose additional regulations. Indeed, project reports and recommendations will not establish public policy or override local land use decision making, and will respect private property rights. Rather, the intent of the Greenprint is to deepen our understanding of the land, water and living resources in the region and assure that those resources continue to benefit the region economically and environmentally for future generations.

7. Isn't the Greenprint attempting to address too many important issues? Shouldn't it be more focused in order to be useful?

It is the challenge of all of us in the San Joaquin Valley who care about the Valley's natural resources to make Greenprint as useful as possible. The Greenprint is indeed ambitious. It is intended to focus on agricultural lands; habitat and lands providing ecological benefits; hazardous areas (floodplains and wildland fire-risk areas; parks and recreational lands; scenic, historic, and culturally and geologically significant areas; and urban/rural edges. However, flexibility will be maintained throughout the planning process. For example, the survey, an early project task, asks the question: What can we do to make the San Joaquin Valley Greenprint useful? Another question asks: What are one or two results/outcomes that you would like to see from the Greenprint? Still another question asks: What are one or two results/outcomes that you would NOT like to see from the Greenprint? Each of these questions is designed to insure that Greenprint reflects local values and is responsive to local needs. Ultimately, Greenprint will focus efforts and resources on those challenges and opportunities that are identified in response to the survey, from follow-up targeted interviews, from elected officials, and from other sources.

8. What is the Greenprint schedule?

The San Joaquin Valley Greenprint will have at least two phases. Phase 1 will take about 12 months and concentrate on fact-finding and information gathering, as noted above. Funding for Phase 1 has been awarded and the contract with the Information Center for the Environment (ICE) at U.C. Davis, the Greenprint consultant, made and entered into on April 27, 2012. The contract is in effect until June 30, 2013. Funding for Phase 2 has been approved by the SGC but not yet awarded. The Greenprint Steering Committee will define specific Phase 2 tasks and deliverables and the timeline for completion this fall.

Despite the hardships caused by the current economic challenges, this "pause" presents an opportunity for the Greenprint to inform local policies that will be in place when the economy recovers. Because of this time-sensitive opportunity, ICE will be attempting to deliver the products listed below as early as possible. The dates below are contractual requirements, but many of the documents will be released before these dates.

Deliverables:

1. 10/2012 (and updated as needed) A comprehensive online glossary of terms, names, techniques used by the Greenprint and applying to the technologies, policies, and strategies identified by the Greenprint.
2. 12/2012: A report identifying the current and historical resource management policies, documents, and the regional benefits from effective and efficient stewardship of the region's resources.
3. 8-9/2012: An initial survey, open to the public to solicit input on what the priorities of the Greenprint should be, and what products from the project can be most effective in informing local policy formation.
4. 12/2012: A report summarizing the findings of the initial survey and recommending follow on actions to be taken.
5. 6/2013: A completed and operational website with a dynamic map, data, and document archive including the ability for the public to provide comments and feedback on the contents. While the final deliverable is the conclusion of the contract, we expect the site to be operational in a usable, "Beta" version much earlier in the contract.
6. 11/2012: Initial collection of currently available data identified as important based on the survey will be available for project use and viewable on an online mapping system.
7. 3/2013: Draft thematic maps identifying the principle natural resource management issues identified in the survey will be made available.
8. 6/2013: Final thematic maps with the principle resource management issues identified will be made publicly available.
9. As needed, with a minimum of three meetings to be held: Stakeholder outreach and technical working group meetings.
10. 6/2013: Final report to be known as a "State of the Valley" describing the challenges and opportunities presented by the richness and demands on the valley's natural and working landscapes.

9. I'm interested in the Greenprint. How can I stay informed of its progress? How can I be involved?

Throughout the process, public officials, property owners, interest groups, technical experts and the public will be invited to participate so that the final product reflects a broad range of inputs and consensus on the future of the Valley's lands, waters and living resources. Advisory committees will be formed to focus on specific resource management issues. Opinion surveys and open meetings will be used to gather ideas and information about public preferences. A web site has been created at www.valleyblueprint.org/greenprint.html to provide up-to-date information on progress and products, and to encourage public feedback. Your own ideas about how to broaden and deepen participation are welcome.

The Fresno Council of Governments, which manages the Blueprint, is also responsible for managing the Greenprint. For further information on the San Joaquin Valley Greenprint please contact:

Clark Thompson, Senior Regional Planner
Fresno Council of Governments
(559) 233-4148 ext. 203
clarkt@fresnocog.org