## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS</td>
<td>xvii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. LAND USE/ CONSERVATION/OPEN SPACE ELEMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 NON-JURISDICTION LAND</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTRAINTS</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 SPECIAL TREATMENT AREAS</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 RESIDENTIAL</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 COMMERCIAL</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 INDUSTRIAL</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9 RESOURCE</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10 GENERAL PROVISIONS</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10.1 PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10.2 AIR QUALITY</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL, PALEONTOLOGICAL, CULTURAL, AND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10.4 WIRELESS COMMUNICATION FACILITIES</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10.5 THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10.6 SURFACE WATER AND GROUNDWATER</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10.7 LIGHT AND GLARE</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10.8 SMART GROWTH</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10.9 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10.10 OAK TREE CONSERVATION</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.11 GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING COMPATIBILITY MATRIX</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. CIRCULATION ELEMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 CIRCULATION OVERVIEW</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 HIGHWAYS</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE TO REVIEWER OF ELECTRONIC FILES:** To assist you in reviewing this electronic document, “bookmarks” and/or “links” have been provided for easier navigation between sections. When available, bookmarks are located in the panel to the left. Links are highlighted in **BLUE** in the Table of Contents. Clicking on either the bookmarks or links will take you to the selected item. This document may consist of multiple linked PDF files. If saving this document to your computer, you must save all corresponding files to a directory on your hard drive to maintain the manner in which these PDF documents are linked.
## 2.3.1 General Highway Travel Characteristic .................................. 89
## 2.3.2 Traffic Levels of Service (LOS) .................................................. 89
## 2.3.3 Highway Plan ........................................................................... 91
## 2.3.4 Future Growth ........................................................................ 94
## 2.3.5 Expressway, Arterial, and Collector Specific Plan Lines ............... 96
## 2.3.6 Vacation of Existing or Recorded Future Streets, Highways, or Public Easements .......... 98
## 2.3.7 Setback Deviation Studies ......................................................... 101
## 2.3.8 Safety Hazards of Fog and Dust ................................................. 103
## 2.3.9 Scenic Route Corridors .............................................................. 104
## 2.3.10 Congestion Management Programs ......................................... 107

### 2.4 Priority Focus Area Topic - Highways ........................................ 109

#### 2.4.1 Metropolitan Bakersfield .................................................... 109
#### 2.4.2 Tehachapi - Antelope Valley .................................................. 110
#### 2.4.3 Lake Isabella ................................................................. 112
#### 2.4.4 Ridgecrest - Indian Wells Valley ........................................... 114
#### 2.4.5 Mojave - Fremont Valley ....................................................... 117
#### 2.4.6 Tehachapi - Cummings Area .................................................. 119
#### 2.4.7 Taft Area ............................................................................. 122
#### 2.4.8 Delano - McFarland Area ...................................................... 124
#### 2.4.9 Lerdo Area .......................................................................... 127
#### 2.4.10 Rosamond - Willow Springs .................................................. 130
#### 2.4.11 Boron .................................................................................... 133

### 2.5 Other Modes ............................................................................. 135

#### 2.5.1 Trucks and Highways ............................................................ 135
#### 2.5.2 Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) ................. 137
#### 2.5.3 Rail and Highway Crossings .................................................. 140
#### 2.5.4 Transportation of Hazardous Materials .............................. 142

### 3. Noise Element

#### 3.1 Introduction ............................................................................ 145
#### 3.2 Noise Sensitive Areas ............................................................... 148
4. SAFETY ELEMENT

4.1 INTRODUCTION ...................................................................................... 152
4.2 GENERAL POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE, WHICH APPLY TO MORE THAN ONE SAFETY CONSTRAINT ....................... 155
4.3 SEISMICALLY INDUCED SURFACE RUPTURE, GROUND SHAKING, AND GROUND FAILURE .................................................................................................. 156
4.4 DAM FAILURE, FLOODING, AND INUNDATION ........................................... 161
4.5 LANDSLIDE, SUBSIDENCE, SEICHE, AND LIQUEFACTION ...................... 163
4.6 WILDLAND AND URBAN FIRE .................................................................... 171
4.7 KERN COUNTY EMERGENCY PLAN ......................................................... 175
4.8 CRITICAL FACILITIES AND HAZARDOUS BUILDINGS ............................ 177
4.9 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS ......................................................................... 180
4.10 ABANDONED OPEN SHAFTS AND WELLS ............................................ 181

5. ENERGY ELEMENT

5.1 INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................ 183
5.2 IMPORTANCE OF ENERGY TO KERN COUNTY .......................................... 184
5.3 PETROLEUM RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT .................................... 187
   5.3.1 URBAN/RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN PETROLEUM RESOURCES AREAS ......................................................................................... 188
   5.3.2 KERN COUNTY’S ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE ON THE OIL MARKETPLACE .............................................................................................................. 190
   5.3.3 WASTE DISPOSAL IN PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT .................. 192
   5.3.4 PETROLEUM TECHNOLOGY AND ADVANCEMENT .................... 194
   5.3.5 REUSE OF NONPRODUCTIVE PETROLEUM RESOURCE AREAS ......................................................................................................................... 195
   5.3.6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT .................................................................................................................... 197
   5.3.7 PROCESSING AND TRANSPORTATION OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS ............................................................................................................ 199
5.4 ELECTRICITY RESOURCES AND GENERATION ...................................... 201
   5.4.1 COGENERATION .................................................................................... 202
   5.4.2 WIND ENERGY DEVELOPMENT ......................................................... 203
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>MAP OF CALIFORNIA</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>KERN COUNTY GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS</td>
<td>xvi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>KERN COUNTY GENERAL PLAN AREA</td>
<td>xvii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>LAND USE DESIGNATIONS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>KERN COUNTY REGIONAL LOCATION AND PRIMARY HIGHWAY NETWORK SERVING KERN COUNTY</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>CIRCULATION ELEMENT DIAGRAM INDEX</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>CIRCULATION ELEMENT MAJOR ROADS AND HIGHWAYS</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>CIRCULATION ELEMENT ROUTES OF REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>CIRCULATION ELEMENT KERN REGION AIRPORTS</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>CIRCULATION ELEMENT RAILROADS AND SPURLINES</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>CIRCULATION ELEMENT ADOPTED COMMERCIAL HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SHIPPING ROUTES</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>OVERLAY CONSTRAINTS: SEISMIC, LANDSLIDES, AND STEEP SLOPES HAZARDS</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>EARTHQUAKE FAULTS</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>OVERLAY CONSTRAINTS: FLOODING AND SHALLOW GROUNDWATER</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>LAND SUBSIDENCE</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>KERN COUNTY DRAINAGE AREAS</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>WATERSHEDS AND BASINS</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>HAZARDOUS FIRE AREA</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

The General Plan is a policy document with planned land use maps and related information that are designed to give long-range guidance to those County officials making decisions affecting the growth and resources of the unincorporated Kern County jurisdiction, excluding the metropolitan Bakersfield planning area. This document helps to ensure that day-to-day decisions are in conformance with the long-range program designed to protect and further the public interest related to Kern County’s growth and development. The General Plan also serves as a guide to the private sector of the economy in relating its development initiatives to the public plans, objectives, and policies of the County.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS GENERAL PLAN

The purpose of this General Plan is intended to fulfill the following objectives:

- Encourage economic development that creates jobs and capital investments in urban and rural areas that benefits residents, businesses, and industries, as well as ensuring future governmental fiscal stability while encouraging new development to utilize existing infrastructure and services wherever feasible in the County’s urban areas.

- Adopt policies and goals that reflect the County’s on-going commitment to consult and cooperate with federal, State, regional, and local agencies to plan for the long-term future of Kern County.

- Ensure the protection of environmental resources and the development of adequate infrastructure with specific emphasis on conserving agricultural areas, discouraging unplanned urban growth, ensuring water supplies and acceptable quality for future growth, and addressing air quality issues.

- Revise the County’s General Plan to reflect ongoing activities, changes in laws and regulations, and demographic characteristics of the community to ensure that the interests of the County in the health, safety, and welfare of residents and visitors are reflected in current policies and goals.

- Maintain compliance with the provisions of State Planning and Zoning Laws as they relate to General Plan requirements.

GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FACING KERN COUNTY

Kern County is fortunate to have an abundance of natural resources, open space, productive farmland, an available labor market, and other features which are important to the County’s continued growth and economic prosperity. Kern County’s proximity to a large southern California urban area, coupled with the trend toward greater population growth within the Central Valley of California, will create development pressures, quality of life issues and rural-urban conflicts that will necessitate the use of a comprehensive long-term planning strategy for ensuring a healthy balanced relationship among the County’s
residents, resources, land uses, and public facilities. In recognition of the dynamic forces that will affect the County’s future growth, the Land Use, Open Space, and Conservation Element of the General Plan places specific emphasis on goals, policies, and programs that emphasize on managing economic growth, continuing natural resource and energy development, conserving agricultural areas, discouraging of unmanaged rural and urban development, ensuring adequate water supply for future urban growth, and addressing air quality issues as part of the land use planning process.

Promoting Managed Economic Growth

Kern County has a geographic orientation in California that is advantageous for continued economic growth. It is recognized that land use, circulation, changing economic circumstances, and other factors, are dynamic and may change over time due to changing market forces, economic factors and community needs. The County is strategically situated proximate to a large southern California urban area with available land, water, an available workforce, and resources that will provide for continued economic prosperity into the future. Major transportation facilities including north-south and east-west freeways, rail access, and a regional airport provide important attributes for the County’s future economic prosperity. Due to the County’s geographic diversity and available resources, opportunities exist for both rural and urban economic development.

Kern County has an approved economic development strategy that promotes a diversified economic base, as well as enhancing the County’s competitiveness in attracting new business and encouraging growth of existing businesses. The County’s Economic Development Strategy (prepared in 1999 by the Natelson Company, Inc.) and the adopted Economic Incentive Program help to promote economic growth and maintain a strong local economy.

Providing for Continued Agricultural Use

Agriculture continues to be Kern County’s most economically productive industry that contributes to the nation and world’s needs. Similar to the statewide trend, the County’s agriculture areas are facing increasing pressure to convert productive farmland to housing, industrial, and commercial development. The General Plan Land Use, Open Space, and Conservation Element incorporates policies and programs that recognize the importance of agriculture and the necessity to manage this resource for future use. The planning document also recognizes that tax and economic incentives available markets, and water are important factors to ensuring the long-term retention of agricultural use. The continued existence of large, contiguous areas of agricultural zoning, Williamson Act and Farmland Security Zone Programs, and the County’s adopted Right-to-Farm/Right-to-Business Resolutions acknowledge agriculture’s importance to the County.

Promoting Smart Growth Concepts to Effectively Manage the County’s Future Development

Kern County’s population is expected to exceed 1,088,600 people by the year 2020. As Kern County proceeds into the future, challenges will be faced in protecting the County’s quality of life, a healthy environment, and a vibrant economy. The Land Use, Open Space, and Conservation Element of the General Plan incorporates policies and implementation measures that are designed to avoid unplanned growth which causes traffic congestion, air pollution, and
premature farmland conversion. Measures incorporated in this planning document include provisions to evaluate agriculture and resource land conversion proposals to ensure that premature and unplanned urban development does not occur. Land use compatibility measures, air quality provisions, water conservation, and other policy and implementation programs are incorporated to ensure that the character of future urban growth effectively manages County resources while promoting a vibrant economy in the coming years.

Pursuit of smart growth concepts within Kern County addresses the questions of how best to plan for and manage growth, when and where new rural and urban economic development should be built and located, and how to provide and finance the infrastructure required for serving a growing population. In its broadest sense, smart growth means meeting the underlying demand for economic development, effectively managing the County’s agricultural, energy, and open space resources, promoting job growth and meeting housing demand by employing market sensitive and innovative land use planning concepts. The key elements of Kern County’s smart growth strategy include:

- Anticipating and planning for rural and urban economic development in an orderly and predictable manner;
- Establishing a long-term comprehensive land use plan that recognizes continued agriculture and energy use;
- Managing open space and environmentally sensitive areas in accordance with the requirements of local, State, and federal laws; and
- Promoting innovative land use planning concepts that maximize efficient land use, assure compatibility between land uses, reduce vehicle trips, and encourage master planned developments and communities.

Enhancing the Linkage between Land Use and Water Supply Planning

This planning document recognizes that the relationship between water supply and land use planning is important to promoting future growth and a strong economy for Kern County’s future. Recent State laws require local governments to ensure that development approvals occur with substantive, realistic assessments of the availability of a reliable water supply. The new laws require verification of sufficient water supplies as a condition for approving certain developments and compel urban water suppliers to provide more information on the reliability of groundwater for a long-term timeframe. Long-term water supply planning is important to ensuring that rural and urban economic growth can be accommodated into the future.

Air Quality’s Role in Land Use Planning

Because of Kern County’s unique geographic location, air quality regulations will play a significant role in the development of new economic growth. Approximately 1/2 of Kern County is located within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin and the remaining 1/2 is within the Mojave Desert Air Basin. The San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District and the Kern County Air Pollution Control District are two agencies having responsibility for managing and permitting existing, new, and modified sources of air emissions to ensure conformance
with federal, State, and local standards for air quality. The California Air Resource Board (CARB) has primary jurisdiction to control pollutants from motor vehicles. Kern County’s nonattainment status for various air quality emissions will continue to play a role in the permitting of various land uses into the future. Air quality policies and programs are incorporated into the Land Use, Open Space, and Conservation Element to ensure that air quality mitigation is a consideration in the location and permitting of various land uses in Kern County.

Kern County’s Importance in Energy Development

Kern County is widely recognized as significant to California’s energy development. The County produces a substantial portion of California’s oil and natural gas. Kern County ranks third in total wind power generation in the State. The County also has substantial electric and hydroelectric generation capacity, untapped geothermal and solar resources, and abundant municipal and agricultural wastes with energy potential. Recognizing the importance of energy development, Kern County has an adopted Energy Element that is incorporated as a part of the General Plan. The Energy Element and supportive policies and programs in the Land Use, Open Space, and Conservation Elements focus on the County’s continued role in facilitating energy development activities. Future energy development will continue to play a significant role in Kern County’s development and economic prosperity.
WHAT IS A GENERAL PLAN?

In California, State law makes a General Plan the foundation and central feature of the local planning process. Each County and each City is required to prepare, adopt, and maintain a General Plan to govern the physical development of all the land area under its jurisdiction. The purposes which are intended to be served by a General Plan include the following important functions:

- The identification of the community’s physical development goals and goals relating to environmental, economic, and other factors.
- The incorporation of policies for maintaining or improving the character of existing developed uses and for guiding the location and nature of future development in order to ensure that the community’s goals are achieved.
- The consideration of aspects of local conditions affecting physical development and change in order to ensure that problems and opportunities are analyzed and addressed adequately within the context of local, regional, Statewide, and national goals and policies.
- The provision of information to the citizens of the community about the planning and decision-making process of the local government.
- The description of procedures and measures intended to improve the coordination of local government actions affecting the development of the community.

Local planning and land use regulation stem from the two main categories of legal powers granted to counties and cities by the State Constitution: corporate powers and police powers.

Corporate power is the authority to collect revenues (from bonds, fees, taxes, and assessments) and to spend these monies to provide services and facilities (such as roads, water and sewage facilities, parks, etc.). Police power is the authority to regulate citizen behavior (including the use of private property) in order to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the public. Land use planning, zoning, land division, and building regulation comprise exercises of the police power. A General Plan, in legal and conceptual terms, guides the exercise of police power through zoning and land division regulation and the exercise of the corporate power through the provision of capital facilities and improvements.

A General Plan is a type of constitution governing the physical growth and change in the community. No land division, parcel map, conditional use permit, or rezoning can be approved unless it is found to be consistent with the adopted plan. Public works projects proposed by local government agencies and by special districts must be reviewed by the appropriate local planning agency having jurisdiction over the location involved to determine project conformance with the General Plan.

A General Plan is defined as a long-term planning document by California law. It attempts to identify the character of future conditions and needs as a basis for determining a rational basis for current policy. It also sets long-term policy as the framework within which individual day-to-day decisions can be made in a consistent fashion. The range of a
General Plan is usually set at 15 to 25 years, although this is not to be viewed as an end-point, but as a means of providing a general direction to guide shorter-term decisions.

A General Plan is not a static document. It must be reviewed on a regular basis and revised as the requirements or goals of the community evolve and change. Day-to-day decision making, as well as the requirements of law, demand that the information and projections on which the plan is based must be maintained in an up-to-date and current valid form.

According to California Government Code, Section 65302, a General Plan must include seven elements: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and a safety element. Six of these seven mandated Elements and the Energy Element of the Kern County's General Plan are contained in this document. The individual Land Use, Conservation, and Open-space Elements' goals, policies, and implementation measures have been combined into one comprehensive element. The seventh mandated element, the Housing Element, will remain a separate but interrelated document for ease of future updating and use. The elements contained in this document and the topics embodied by each are briefly summarized below.

- The **land use element** designates the type, intensity, and general distribution of uses of the land for housing, business, industry, open-space, education, public buildings, and grounds, waste disposal facilities, and other categories of public and private uses.

- The **conservation element** addresses the conservation, development, and use of natural resources including water, forests, soils, rivers, and mineral deposits.

- The **open-space element** details plans and measures for preserving open-space for natural resources; the managed production of resources, outdoor recreation, public health and safety; and the identification of agricultural land.

- The **circulation element** is correlated with the land use element and identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities.

- The **noise element** identifies and appraises noise problems within the community and forms the basis for land use distribution.

- The **safety element** establishes policies and programs to protect the community from risks associated with seismic, geologic, flood, and wildfire hazards.

- The **energy element** provides policies and implementation measures that address energy development and resources within the County. In order to ensure that energy goals, policies, and implementation measures are contemporary with current issues, the Energy Element will be periodically updated to be consistent with current energy trends.

- The **military readiness element** will address the impact of new growth on military readiness activities. This element will be developed as a separate program and incorporated as a chapter of this General Plan.
GENERAL PLAN MAPS

Government Code Section 65302 states that a General Plan “…shall consist of a statement of development policies and shall include a diagram or diagrams and text.” The diagrams or planned land use and circulation maps are updated during the General Plan Amendment cycles, which occur four times per year in accordance with State law. Maps and text amendments are continuously reviewed to ensure that there are no inconsistencies between the planned land use and circulation maps and the policy text of the General Plan.

The General plan maps indicate the type, intensity, and distribution of land use and circulation throughout the majority of the unincorporated portion of the County. Territories within incorporated cities or under State or federal jurisdictions exercise land use controls that are separate from those of the County of Kern. The Kern County General Plan is interrelated and compliments the land use plans and programs undertaken within these non-jurisdictional areas.

The map scales used generally do not permit precise designations smaller than 2 ½ acres on the six 1:24,000 scale “Priority Area” maps or smaller than 40 acres on the Countywide 1:100,000 scale plan maps. Because of the map scale limitations, every church, institutional, commercial, or residential use that may exist in areas designated for other uses cannot be shown, nor should it be interpreted as recommending or requiring their removal. In these cases, for the purpose of consistency, approved Kern County Zoning Ordinance districts are fully authorized and consistent. While General Plan Amendments may not be necessary in these instances, findings of consistency with the goals, policies, and provisions of this General Plan must be made for zone changes.

The Priority Areas defined and mapped in this fashion are as follows:

- **Isabella (East and West) Priority Area**: The areas of Lake Isabella, Kern River Valley, and Greenhorn Mountain.

- **Ridgecrest Priority Area**: The areas depicting almost all of the Indian Wells Valley.

- **Tehachapi (East and West) Priority Area**: The area situated generally south and east of Keene to Stallion Springs and Sand Canyon, respectively.

- **Taft Priority Area**: The area from Buena Vista Lake, west to Fellows, and from Maricopa north to the former Elk Hills Petroleum Reserve (Oxy Elk Hills).

The significant variations in terrain, climate, geographic, and environmental factors that are evident in Kern County are recognized on the General Plan maps by the definition of three regions in which different standards and approaches to physical development were considered appropriate. These regions are as follows:

- **Valley Region**: The southern San Joaquin Valley below an elevation of 1,000 feet mean sea level (MSL).

- **Mountain Region**: The westernmost and central portion of the County above the 1,000 foot MSL contour in the valley and western region of the County and west of the primary alignment of the Los Angeles Aqueduct in the eastern
County, including the southernmost portion of the County.

- **Desert Region**: The eastern section of the County east of the primary alignment of the Los Angeles Aqueduct.

It is important to note that the General Plan maps cannot reflect the quality and character desired in a particular land use designation except in general terms. The maps do not illustrate every existing exception from one land use category depicted, even though such uses may be recognized as acceptable and permanent uses. Thus, the maps indicate the predominant use of land in each area and do not preclude existing or future minor deviations from the overall pattern as may be permitted by the Kern County Zoning Ordinance variance and modification procedures.

**KERN COUNTY POPULATION TRENDS**

The population of the entire County increased by 22 percent from 1990 to 2002, while the unincorporated areas increased by approximately 2 percent. While the total County population is increasing rapidly, this growth is occurring predominantly in the incorporated cities rather than in the unincorporated County areas.

Numerous undeveloped residentially designated areas already existing in the unincorporated area of the County provide a supply of land sufficient to accommodate predicted population increases provided adequate infrastructure is available.

The rate of population increase and the demand for space that is created within the unincorporated areas of the County addressed in the plan can be accommodated. Areas that have value for resource production, or have constraints, or are too remote for substantial development were excluded from consideration for growth. Locations that are suitable and desirable for development are a small proportion of the overall 8,202 square miles (5,249,359 acres) under County jurisdiction. Substantial resource designated areas still exist within the plan to accommodate future population increases projected for the County.
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE METROPOLITAN BAKERSFIELD GENERAL PLAN

The 408 square miles Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan is a separate but interrelated land use planning program within Kern County (see Figure 3). Further information on planned land uses, policies, and implementation programs for the unincorporated portions of the metropolitan plan area can be obtained by consulting the Metropolitan Bakersfield General Plan.
GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS

Issue

The General Plan is intended to be a long-range guidance document for making land use decisions related to the County’s future growth. It is recognized, however, that land use, circulation and other issues are dynamic and may change over time due to changing market forces, economic factors, changing laws, and community needs.

The adopted Kern County General Plan is designed to accommodate revisions and amendments to the policies, land use map, and elements. This will be necessary in the future to assure that the Plan continues to be relevant to changing conditions, economic needs, and public attitudes. These anticipated Plan amendments must be administered in a manner consistent with State regulations. Section 65358 of the California Government Code prohibits the County from making more than four amendments to each of the mandated General Plan elements during any calendar year. Amendment requests are grouped in four General Plan “windows” conducted by the Board of Supervisors each year. Section 65860 establishes a further requirement that the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance be consistent.

Goal

Provide a process to ensure that land use, circulation, and other decisions are made within the framework of a comprehensive plan while providing a process to facilitate a General Plan revision and updating program consistent with the provisions of State law.

Policies

1. All requests to amend the Kern County General Plan shall be grouped into one of four annual amendment cycles, each cycle constituting a single amendment action to the General Plan. Public hearings for each amendment cycle shall be scheduled as follows:
   a. Where applicable, Planning Commission shall consider amendment requests as soon as they can be scheduled following completion of the CEQA process.
   b. The Board of Supervisors shall consider all amendment requests at one of four public hearings as established by the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors.

2. Requests to amend the General Plan may be made by the Board of Supervisors, Planning Department, cities, quasi governmental bodies, and private individuals or groups.

3. Each request by an individual or group must provide at the time of filing:
   a. A completed application form.
   b. A completed environmental assessment application including any required special studies as determined by the Kern County Planning Department.
c. A statement of justification that addresses all aspects of the amendment and considers all applicable elements to the General Plan.

4. Plan amendment requests shall not be accepted where a final decision for disapproval on any previous similar request has been made within one (1) year.

5. All amendment requests shall be reviewed by the Planning Department in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and procedures established by the Planning Department in accordance with Government Code Section 65350 and 65358.

6. The Planning Department shall prepare a report to provide the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors with a basis for reviewing an amendment request. This report should include:

   a. An analysis of the request being considered.

   b. A determination as to whether the request is consistent with the objectives and policies of the General Plan.

   c. An analysis of whether adequate infrastructure exists, now or in the foreseeable future to support the amendment request.

   d. An analysis of whether factors exist with regard to the project site and/or neighboring properties, which preclude the existing planned use of the property.

   e. An analysis of whether the request is for a land use designation where a similar or more intense designated landuse is found within a distance of 300 feet in urbanized areas, or a half mile in agricultural or rural areas and adequate infrastructure exists to support the project.

7. Any decision of the Planning Commission on a request to amend the General Plan shall constitute a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. However, the Planning Department may augment the Planning Commission’s recommendation with information that occurs subsequent to the Planning Commission hearing.

8. Any proposed amendment within incorporated city’s Local Agency Formation Commission designated Sphere of Influence shall be referred to the affected city for review and comment prior to any public hearing by the County.