

Chapter 1

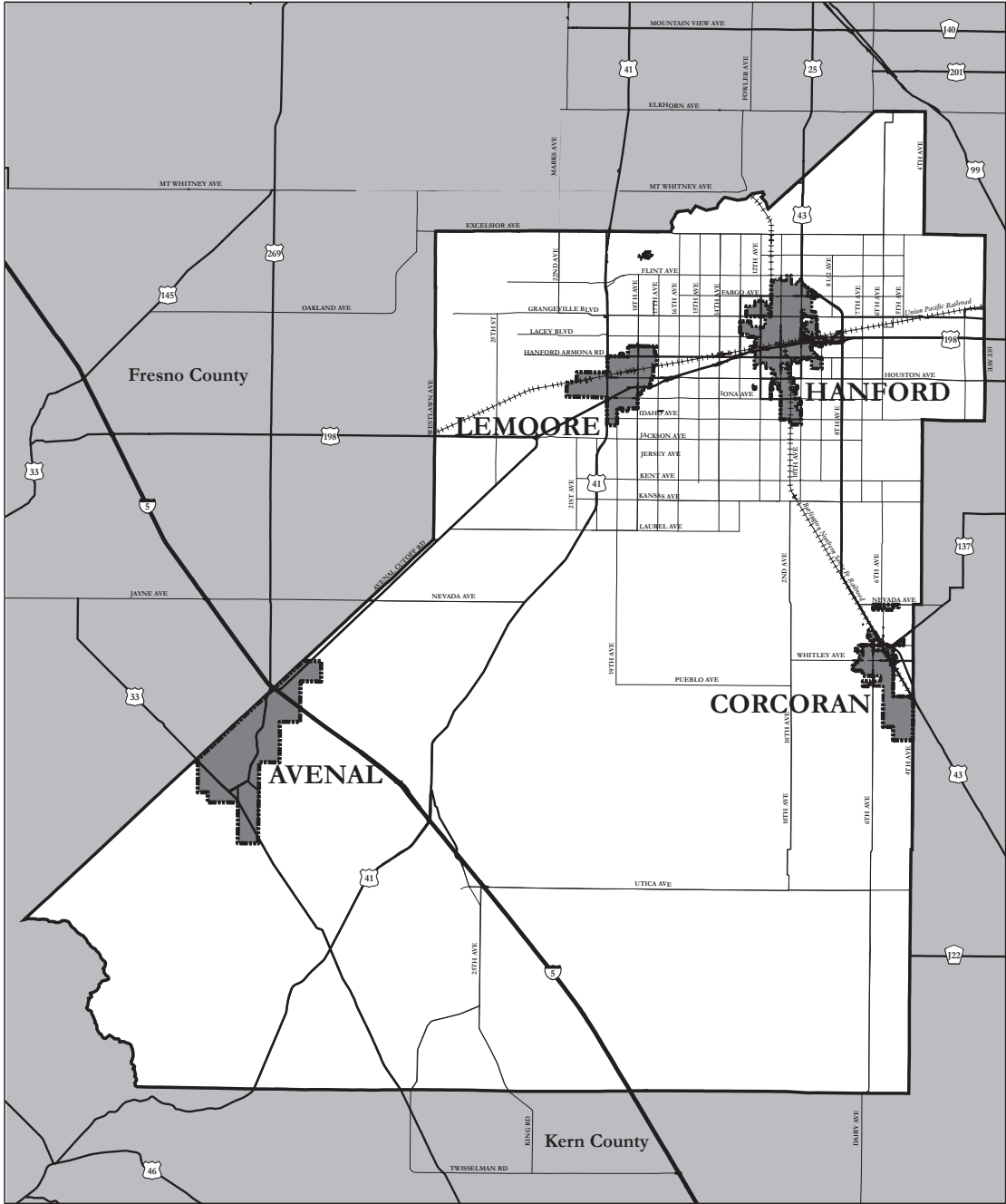
Introduction

A. Planning Context

Kings County is located within the agriculturally rich San Joaquin Valley, with Fresno County to the north and west, Tulare County to the east, and Kern County to the south. Created in 1893, Kings County was carved from the western portion of Tulare County and later added another 100 square miles from Fresno County. The Kings River, from which the County derives its name, runs along the northern edges and flows south towards the center of the County. Historically, this river flowed farther south to what was once the Tulare Lake. Water diversion and levies have since controlled flooding and dried the lake up. Now referred to as the Tulare Lake Basin, this area is extensively used for agricultural crop production.

Kings County is comprised of four cities (Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford, and Lemoore), four community service areas (Armona, Home Garden, Kettleman City, and Stratford), and a few other smaller community pockets. Altogether, 129,461 people live in Kings County, according to the 2000 Census. Of this population, approximately 79,033 people live within the cities of Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford and Lemoore. An additional 7,704 people live within the unincorporated communities of Armona, Home Garden, Kettleman City, and Stratford. The Lemoore Naval Air Base houses 5,749 naval personnel, while the Santa Rosa Rancheria is home to 517 Tachi Yokut Indians on 170 acres of tribal land. The two State prisons, located within Avenal and Corcoran, house 6,561 inmates and 11,313 inmates respectively. The remaining 18,584 Kings County residents live in the unincorporated rural areas.

Access through the County and to other major outside destinations is provided through a network of highways and railroads. While Interstate 5 and Highway 99 provide routes to major cities such as Los Angeles and San Francisco, State Route 41 connects the valley with the Central Coast. Highway 198 also travels east to the Sequoia National Forest. The County's vast transportation network has placed a key role in its economic development. Agriculture remains the predominant landscape of Kings County, and is evidenced in the approximately 84% (749,100 acres) of the County presently being used for agriculture. Of the land used for agriculture, 96% is in the Agricultural Preserve Program and under either a Williamson Act or Farmland Security Zone contract. The agricultural industry within Kings County is well diversified with production of field crops, seeds, fruit & nuts, vegetables, apiary products, livestock & poultry, and other related products. However, according to the Kings County Ag Commissioners' 2001 Agricultural Crop Report, the dairy industry has become the county's leading commodity, followed by cotton (second) and cattle (third).



Source: Kings County,
Census TIGER/Line Data GIS 2000.



-  County Boundary
-  City



Figure 1
Regional Location

B. Methodology

1. Purpose and Statutory Authority

The Housing Element is mandated by Section 65580 to 65589 of the Government Code. State Housing Element law requires that each City and County identify and analyze existing and projected housing needs within their jurisdiction and prepare goals, policies, programs and quantified objectives to further the development, improvement, and preservation of housing. To that end, State law requires that the housing element:

- Identify adequate sites to facilitate and encourage the development, maintenance and improvement of housing for households of all economic levels, including persons with disabilities;
- Remove, as legally feasible and appropriate, governmental constraints to the production, maintenance, and improvement of housing for persons of all income levels including persons with disabilities;
- Assist in the development of adequate housing to meet the needs of low and moderate income households;
- Conserve and improve the condition of housing and neighborhoods, including existing affordable housing;
- Promote housing opportunities for all persons regardless of race, religion, sex, marital status, ancestry, national origin, color, familial status, or disability; and
- Preserve for lower income households the publicly assisted multi-family housing developments within each community.

Kings County's 2003-2008 Housing Element is designed to comply with Section 65580 of the California Government Code. The Housing Element is organized into the following major chapters:

- 1) Analysis of the demographic, housing, and special needs characteristics and trends in Kings County jurisdictions (Chapter 2).
- 2) Review of potential market, governmental, and environmental constraints which impact Kings County jurisdictions ability to address its housing needs (Chapter 3).
- 3) Analysis of land, financial, and organizational resources available to address the housing goals in Kings County (Chapter 4).
- 4) Evaluation of City and County accomplishments toward meeting the goals and objectives of the prior 1992 Housing Element (Chapter 5).
- 5) Housing strategy to address Kings County's identified housing needs, including housing goals, policies and programs (Chapter 6).

2. Data Sources

In preparing the Housing Element, the preparers consulted various sources of information. Wherever possible, Census 1990 and 2000 data was used as the baseline for all demographic information. Secondary sources supplemented information from the 2000 Census where available and reliable.

- Demographic and economic data from the 2000 Census, special needs surveys, California Employment Development Department, Kings County Economic Development Corporation, Bureau of Economic Analysis, and Census of Agriculture
- Housing characteristics from the 2000 Census, Kings County Board of Realtors, Housing Conditions reports from each jurisdiction, USDA Rural Housing Office, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and various internet sites
- Special needs population data and characteristics from the 2000 Census, Lemoore Naval Air Station, Kings/Tulare Continuum of Care, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and Tulare/Kings County Office of Education.
- Constraints data from the zoning ordinances and general plans of each jurisdiction, the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act database, development cost surveys, and responses to surveys regarding infrastructure capacities and usage.
- Housing resource information from the Kings County Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan, land inventory data from the County's Geographic Information System and housing production records from the County's building permit system.

3. Relationship to the General Plan

State law requires the 2003-2008 Housing Element to be consistent with the general plans of the cities of Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford, Lemoore and the County of Kings. Policies and programs set forth in the 2003-2008 Housing are consistent with policies and programs in other chapters of the respective general plans. Jurisdictions will ensure consistency between the Housing Element and other General Plan Elements so that policies introduced in one Element are consistent with other Elements. At this time, the Housing Element does not propose significant changes to any other Element of the City's General Plan. However, if it becomes apparent that over time changes to any Element are needed for internal consistency, such changes are made by the Planning Commission and City Council.

C. Community Involvement

State law requires local governments to “make a diligent effort to achieve public participation of all economic segments of the community in the development of the housing element, and the program shall describe this effort” (Section 65583 (c)(5) of the Government Code). To that end, each jurisdiction has provided venues for residents, interested parties, and elected officials to recommend housing strategies and comment on the 2003-2008 Housing Element.

1. Public Workshops and Hearings

Public participation and review of the 2003-2008 Housing Element involved four stages. Each of these stages resulted in various changes and modifications to the Housing Element.

- 1) Public review in each of the four cities and in three community services district;
- 2) Review by the State Department of Housing and Community Development;
- 3) Review of environmental documentation prior to public hearings;
- 4) Public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council of each city and the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors of Kings County.

The Kings County 2003-2008 Housing Element is a consolidated Housing Element for the cities of Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford and Lemoore and the unincorporated areas of Kings County. Workshops, joint study sessions, and public hearings were held in four jurisdictions and workshops were held in three rural communities. **Chart 1-1** details the schedule of public workshops and hearings during the update process.

CHART 1-1
PUBLIC WORKSHOPS/HEARINGS
FOR THE 2003-2008 HOUSING ELEMENT

Jurisdiction	Public Meeting and Workshop	Planning Commission Review	City Council/Board of Supervisors Adoption
Avenal	October 6, 2003	March 1, 2004	March 11, 2004
Corcoran	September 15, 2003	March 8, 2004	March 17, 2004
Hanford	September 16, 2003	March 9, 2004	March 16, 2004
Lemoore	September 22, 2003	March 8, 2004	March 15, 2004
Unincorporated	September 19, October 22 and 23, 2003	March 1, 2004	March 25, 2004

Notices for each meeting were made in accordance with applicable requirements set forth in the Government Code and the California Environmental Quality Act.

2. Community Outreach

Each of the jurisdictions made additional efforts to solicit comments from developers, nonprofit service providers, elected officials, fair housing providers, and other interested parties regarding programs included in the Housing Element. To publicize these meetings, each jurisdiction advertised local newspapers, mailings, cable television, fliers, and direct contact with agencies believed to be interested in the 2003-2008 Housing Element update.

As part of the Housing Element update process, Kings County jurisdictions invited numerous nonprofit organizations, developers, government agencies, and other interested parties to attend public workshops on the Housing Element. A sample of agencies is listed below.

School Districts

- Armona Union Elementary School District
- Corcoran Unified School District
- Hanford Unified School District
- Lemoore Unified School District
- Reef Sunset Unified School District

Government Agencies

- USDA Rural Development
- U.S. Dept. Housing and Urban Development
- The Housing Authority of Kings County
- Kings County Children & Families Commission
- Public Guardian/Veterans Service

Nonprofit Organizations

- Kings Partnership for Children
- Kings Community Action Organization
- Kings/Tulare Area Agency on Aging
- Self-Help Enterprises

Major Employers

- CA State Prison-Corcoran
- J.G. Boswell Co.
- CA. Substance Abuse Treatment Facility
- Corcoran District Hospital
- LNAS Navy Family Housing

Fair Housing Agencies

- California Rural Legal Aid
- Center on Race Poverty & Environment
- Local Fair Housing Office
- Legal Services of Visalia

Developers/Builders

- Proteus
- Spradling Construction
- Building Industry Association of Kings County

Comments received from agencies were incorporated in the 2003-2008 Housing Element prior to submittal to the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). HCD subsequently reviewed and provided additional comments, incorporated herein and approved on February 6, 2004. Each jurisdiction duly noticed and circulated a Negative Declaration for the 2003-2008 Housing Element to appropriate local and state agencies prior to public hearings before the Planning Commissions, City Council, and Board of Supervisors.