



Greater Bakersfield
VISION2020
“Our Future...Our Responsibility”



“Our Future...Our Responsibility”

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The goals and strategies identified in the Summary are those that provide the foundation for achieving long term goals and reflect a high level of energy and enthusiasm in the community. They are consistent with all of the input received throughout the process. Because all of the recommended strategies and actions are important to the long-term accomplishment of the Vision, the full body of work of the Vision Forces follows. As a result of integrating some of the items, some of the recommended strategies and actions may be located in sections other than where they were developed.



VISION2020 SUMMARY REPORT

January 2001

**GREATER BAKERSFIELD VISION 2020
“Our Future...Our Responsibility”**

“Our Future...Our Responsibility”

“Greater Bakersfield is a great place to live and work—boasting big city appeal with small town charm!”

Introduction:

This short statement is the Greater Bakersfield community’s vision of what we want our city to be in the year 2020. Behind this statement is a set of strategies and actions that, when implemented, will guide us to successfully reaching our vision.

This vision was created by an extraordinary effort of more than 13,000 residents over an 18-month period. Work to implement these strategies has already started.

In 1999, as we prepared to turn the century, a number of individuals and organizations in the Greater Bakersfield area looked ahead to the future of our community and neighboring areas. Many were asking what Greater Bakersfield will be like in the years ahead, how well our workforce will be prepared, and whether our citizens will be uniquely qualified to seize the opportunities created in the new century.

To leverage this future-looking momentum, a group of interested citizens came together, along with local, state and federal officials, to facilitate the creation of a long-term vision and action plan for our community. Greater Bakersfield Vision 2020, Inc. was formed with a goal to use a broad-based community effort to create a Vision for our community’s future and set in motion the plans to make that Vision a vibrant reality.

In the spring of 1999 a volunteer facilitation team began meeting to develop and facilitate an open and inclusive process to create and realize the Vision. The scope of the process was defined and Vision 2020 was introduced to elected officials at the September 13, 1999, joint meeting of the Kern County Board of Supervisors and Bakersfield City Council. It was introduced to the Greater Bakersfield community on September 14, 1999.



SUMMARYREPORT

What are Greater Bakersfield's strengths and weaknesses? What is our Vision of what we want our community to be in the year 2020? How do we achieve this Vision?

These three questions spawned a process that included thousands of people, tens of thousands of hours and the largest number of people in our area's history—representing a diverse cross-section of the community.

The process was divided into four phases. The first phase—**Planning**—was a four-month process that was completed in September 1999. It set the course for the Vision, defined the process, and generated a purpose statement and a process to achieve that purpose.

Phase II—**Assessment**—provided us a greater understanding and insight into our community. In the Assessment phase, completed in January 2000, more than 12,000 residents identified our community's major strengths and weaknesses during 37 community-wide meetings and forums on high school campuses, surveys, and mini-meetings.

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This was followed by the third phase—**Visioning**—which included 30 meetings, community-wide and on high school campuses, co-hosted by local elected officials. We were joined by more than 2,000 of our neighbors who helped us build upon a shared understanding of our strengths and weaknesses to develop a vision for the future. Over the five-month Visioning phase, completed in June 2000, we asked, "What do you want our community to be in 2020?" Throughout the entire Visioning process, there has emerged a remarkably high degree of consistency, unity, and alignment, across neighborhoods, of what people want our community to be. From this broad-based consensus, we have developed the major Vision elements—a comprehensive, integrated Vision for what we wanted our community to be by the year 2020.

Finally, in the fourth phase—**Action**—we developed the action plan to make our Vision a reality. In the action planning and final phase of this project, seven Visioning Forces (task forces), comprised of approximately 15 individuals each, developed the strategies and actions that will bring our Vision to life. A recommended lead organization was identified for each action based on the organization's specific expertise, resources or interest. Suggested timeframes were included for purposes of monitoring progress in accomplishing our Vision, and where feasible or meaningful, suggested funding sources were identified. The Vision 2020 Facilitation Team integrated the work of the Vision Forces into a comprehensive report "Greater Bakersfield Vision 2020: Our future...Our Responsibility."

Critical Strategies and Actions

The Vision Forces identified more than 100 strategies and hundreds of specific actions necessary to reach the Vision. All of these are in the full report. Using community input the Vision Forces identified the critical, high-priority strategies that provide the foundation for achieving long-term goals or reflect a high level of energy and enthusiasm in the community. These high-priority strategies are consistent with all of the input received throughout the process and are presented here, with the associated Vision element, for focused action.

The actions associated with these critical, high priority strategies, as well as all of the recommended strategies and actions, can be found in the full body of work of the Vision Forces in the comprehensive report “Greater Bakersfield Vision 2020: Our Future...Our Responsibility.”

Our Vision for Economic Development

Greater Bakersfield is...

a community with a well-balanced economic base that provides diverse and stable employment opportunities with private and public sectors working together to enhance economic vitality. We are a community that provides entry level and vocational opportunities while developing our workforce to meet the changing needs of a dynamic economy. Our business-friendly community embraces well-planned economic growth and encourages a broad range of high quality employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

- ***Attract new types of businesses consistent with our Vision.***
- ***Create a post-graduate Research and Development partnership with industry and universities.***
- ***Align the offerings of higher education with the needs of the new economy.***
- ***Develop a system-wide workforce preparation program, pre-kindergarten through University system that integrates quality academic instruction, relevant vocational education, and workforce responsibility skills (soft skills).***



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Our Vision for Education and Life-long Learning

Greater Bakersfield is...

a community that places priority on education and life-long learning and education. Our businesses and agencies work together to ensure responsibility for the success of our students. We recognize the vital link between education and the prosperity of our community and residents through vocational education and training opportunities for those individuals entering or re-entering the workforce. Our community offers a smooth transition from early childhood education through postgraduate training and recognizes the importance of higher education. We offer a broad range of opportunities that meet the needs of a new economy. All children in our community have an opportunity to learn from the same set of high performance standards.

- ***Establish core competencies and standards of achievement for each K-12 grade in all subject areas.***
- ***Recruit, develop, and retain the best and brightest teachers and administrators, improve accountability, and reward superior performance and professional growth.***
- ***Engage parents as active participants and champions of their children's education.***
- ***Target reading skills first.***
- ***Evaluate and implement structural changes to improve student performance.***
- ***Achieve seamless transition between grade levels.***
- ***Change public policy to increase funding for vocational education and utilize diverse funding sources to build technological training programs in our community college, state university and private institutions.***



Our Vision for Our Quality of Life

Greater Bakersfield is...

symbolic of the “American dream” with a family-friendly environment and affordable housing for all. We are an inclusive, culturally diverse, and tolerant community that welcomes and celebrates all people. Our community is forward-looking, friendly, safe and clean with esthetically pleasing physical surroundings that provide recreation and other family-oriented activities. Our community attracts and supports businesses and organizations because of our clean, healthy air and many diverse offerings of arts and culture for the enjoyment of all. We are a community that takes pride in our museums, theaters, and live musical entertainment. We maximize the use of trees, greenbelts, and water throughout the community, through the extensive use of walking and bike paths, neighborhood parks, and landscaped transportation corridors. And, we have maximized the river through the use of water elements that serve as cultural and recreational resources. Our youth are actively engaged in the development of our community. Our community serves as a model for quality, affordable childcare. We value and provide opportunities for our senior citizens.

- ***Promote and support youth councils throughout the community.***
- ***Provide consistent safety and law enforcement throughout Greater Bakersfield.***
- ***Attain air quality standards.***
- ***Increase tree shade canopy to 30% and the number of trees in Greater Bakersfield from 1 million to 3 million by 2020.***
- ***Leverage Proposition 12 and 13 funding to create a greenbelt corridor along the Kern River with a bike path from Lake Ming to Buena Vista Lake.***
- ***Develop a cultural/museum master plan incorporating the museums, a new performing arts center and Metro Park.***
- ***Assure broad-based recreation programs in all neighborhoods of Greater Bakersfield at area parks, schools and community based organizations.***
- ***Keep water in the Kern River year-round through Beach Park.***



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Our Vision for Downtown: The Heart of the City

Downtown Bakersfield is...

an inspiring magnet for those who live, work or play there and is truly the “heart of the city”. It is architecturally pleasing, with an emphasis on the use of water that provides an attractive backdrop for public art and sculptures, concerts and other cultural activities. It has a safe atmosphere that stimulates activity in a 24-hour downtown—a thriving center of activity including business, retail, government, entertainment, and residential uses. Our downtown boasts a collection of neighborhoods, each with its own unique aspects and is a place that captures our rich historical heritage.

- *Encourage mixed use development that includes a diverse mixture of housing, retail and commercial uses.*
- *Develop a River Street to become a center for community activities and outdoor enjoyment.*
- *Encourage the Charrette process to develop design concepts for the downtown area and get it translated along with this Vision into an official downtown plan.*

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Our Vision for Community Planning

Greater Bakersfield is...

a community with a clear set of development and land use policies that encourage in-fill development, while discouraging urban sprawl and leapfrog development into prime agricultural lands. Our community encourages a high level of inter-agency cooperation leading to utilization of the most efficient and cost effective services. Our community maintains its small town characteristics while encouraging well-planned growth. We value distinct neighborhoods and actively pursue preserving the character of those neighborhoods. We actively seek to revitalize blighted areas and our community is visually pleasing for the benefit of residents and visitors. It is a place where all residents take pride in their neighborhoods.



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- *Provide consistent urban services within defined metropolitan area.*
- *Provide property owners with incentives to create in fill or redevelopment.*
- *Require non-contiguous development to provide all necessary infrastructure or provide economic disincentives through variable fees.*
- *Develop policies for specific incentives for residential in fill in blighted areas.*
- *Provide stricter code enforcement to help maintain neighborhoods and increase visual standards.*



Our Vision for Transportation

Greater Bakersfield is...

a community that is proud of its efficient, environmentally friendly transportation system that serves all areas of the community. As an international gateway with a modern airport, our community is connected to major cities in California through a high-speed rail system.

- *Create additional revenue sources to increase priority for state and federal transportation funding.*
- *Increase pedestrian pathways and bike routes.*
- *Encourage joint metropolitan transit policies/goal consensus between City, County and the public.*
- *Provide a long-term plan for airport infrastructure.*

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Our Vision for Our Image—“How We See Ourselves”

Greater Bakersfield is...

a community that has a positive perception of itself. Our community is seen as a destination place for business and tourism based on its reputation. We are perceived as a thriving metropolitan area with a small town atmosphere and big city amenities. We are a community known for our friendliness, family-oriented atmosphere and diversity.

- Create a process and structure to ensure focus and completion of activities in a collaborative fashion to measurably improve the image of Greater Bakersfield among internal (residents) and targeted external audiences.

Where Do We Go From Here?

The Vision for Greater Bakersfield is achievable because it represents what our residents want as witnessed by the broad base of individuals and organizations who have stepped forth to serve as ushers and stewards of the process. Greater Bakersfield is filled with “can-do” people who will work together with a “can-do” attitude to make it all happen.

Many in the community have already begun to implement certain elements of the Action Plan, while other elements are in development for near term implementation. Implementation of some elements will take, at times, unprecedented collaboration between individuals and organizations that remain steadfastly committed to the long-term Vision of this great community.

To encourage success in implementing the Action Plan, Greater Bakersfield Vision 2020 Inc. will continue, with the specific purpose of championing, encouraging and monitoring the Action Plan’s implementation by the community.

And so it is with great honor and pride that we present the Vision 2020 Action Plan to all the citizens of our great community!

The full body of work of Bakersfield Vision 2020 may be viewed on our website at www.bakersfieldvision2020.com

