

Vision 2020 at the Five-Year Milestone

“First Quarter” Progress Report

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Overview

The Community is moving forward... It has been five years since the Vision and Action Plan were handed back to the community for implementation. In the first "quarter" (five years) of the implementation of the Vision, much progress has been made. However, much is yet to be done in the next 15 years.

The community has embraced the Vision and taken on its implementation. There have been a number of major accomplishments -- some of which were planned, i.e. direct outgrowths of specific V2020 Action Plans; others of which were "unplanned" as community members have accepted the challenge to implement the Vision and taken the initiative to address Vision elements in new and creative ways.

A distinctive "Vision 2020 mindset" has emerged which will be instrumental in continuing progress toward the Vision. This mindset is characterized by

- a spirit of collaboration and working together to solve problems and implement solutions
- a "can-do" attitude
- a forward-looking perspective, with the Vision as the goal

It's time to reassess the path toward the Vision and re-prioritize action plans and strategies, taking into account what we've learned in the past five years, what's changed in our community and our state since the Vision was created, and focus on the critical few.

It is the *community* – the people of Bakersfield – who will determine and implement the action plans and achieve the Vision. Below is a summary of what we have accomplished so far.

Economic Development ***First Quarter Progress Report***

Greater Bakersfield's vision for economic development is that of "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..."

To achieve the vision, various public and private sector organizations have joined forces in a multi-disciplinary approach to economic development, which includes not only recruiting desirable business and industry, but also developing the community infrastructure to support 21st century business, ensuring an educated workforce, and assisting small business.

Selected Accomplishments:

- Adoption by the County of Kern and the City of Bakersfield of an economic development study as their guiding economic development strategy. Coordinated efforts by Kern Economic Development Corporation (KEDC) and Kern County Board of Trade are targeting specific industries with the potential to offer entry-level through high wage paying jobs and career ladders.
- Formation of Connecting Kern County to inventory and assess communication, connectivity and high-speed infrastructure and needs.
- Development of *Tomatoes on Steroids* program, designed to assist small and medium sized business in the areas of finance, workforce and information.
- Development of State of the County Economy Report, which is presented annually at the Kern Economic Summit. The report tracks a wide variety of indicators over time to measure progress and status on issues such as median income, housing affordability and poverty rates.
- Recognition that early reading and pre-school needs are vital to long-term economic development. In the summer of 2005, 500 four-year-olds participated in the innovative "Ready to Start" pre-kindergarten program in the Greenfield and Rosedale Union School Districts.

The Future:

- Implementation of strategies and initiatives in the Economic Development Plan, which incorporates ongoing collaboration and participation by private business, education and government.
- Continued expansion and broad support for new start-ups and growing existing business, especially to expand resources for them in the financing of business growth and new ideas.
- Aligning all education (K-16) with our economy and strategy to both support industry and better prepare our students for success in the workplace.

To view a detailed report of the Economic Development Vision and accomplishments, please see the "[Complete 1Q Progress Report August 2005](#)" on the Vision 2020 website at www.bakersfieldvision2020.com

Education and Lifelong Learning

First Quarter Progress Report

Greater Bakersfield's vision for education and lifelong learning is indicative of a community that values education for all its residents and has a comprehensive educational network that serves the needs of children and adults. The Vision 2020 process gave rise to ambitious plans to prepare young children for school, improve educational performance at all levels and raise the educational expectations and aspirations of all residents.

Over the past five years, the Vision 2020 process has helped raise the awareness of the importance of education, the knowledge of the issues facing education, and has increased the collaboration between educational institutions.

Selected Accomplishments:

- The Target Reading First Collaborative was formed and has been working for two years to introduce children to reading at an early age.
- A web site has been established to provide information about the Collaborative efforts. www.targetreadingfirst.org
- Greater collaboration among educational institutions has led to improved transition between grade levels.
- Teacher recruitment and retention strategies have been implemented and the teacher retention rate has improved to 90 percent.
- Several programs have been implemented to promote literacy among young children and school readiness, including "Building Blocks to Reading Success" and "Ready to Start."

The Future:

- Increase opportunities for career and technical education to offer students more choices and incentives.
- Continue to promote the importance of early childhood development and school readiness so that students enter kindergarten ready to learn.
- Continue to promote the importance of literacy as the most essential element of a quality education through the efforts of the Target Reading First Collaborative.
- Promote the idea that all students graduating from high school must be academically prepared to pursue the career, career training and/or post-secondary education of their choice.

To view a detailed report of the Education Vision and accomplishments, please see the "[Complete 1Q Progress Report August 2005](#)" on the Vision 2020 website at www.bakersfieldvision2020.com

Quality of Life

First Quarter Progress Report

The vision of "Quality of Life" in Greater Bakersfield encompasses environmental, esthetic and social concerns. The community envisioned itself as "forward-looking, friendly, safe and clean with esthetically pleasing physical surroundings that provide recreation and other family-oriented activities." In all, the community established more than 30 long-term strategies to improve the overall quality of life in Greater Bakersfield. Top priorities included attainment of air quality standards, planting of trees to create a "greener" community, providing safe and culturally diverse options for recreation and maximizing the Kern River.

Identified quality of life issues also included affordable housing for all; tolerance, inclusiveness and cultural diversity; activities and opportunity for youth and seniors; and support of the arts.

Selected Accomplishments:

- Heightened awareness of air quality issues through increased outreach and public education programs.
- Greater use of alternative fuel and low or zero emission vehicles in Bakersfield. San Joaquin Valley Clean Cities Coalition members indicate an annual growth rate in their fleets of 17 percent, which is the estimated rate needed to achieve the goal of 10 percent usage by the year 2020.
- The Tree Foundation has planted over 3,000 trees in public locations since 2002.
- An increase in the number of "pocket parks," including one at the new Amtrak station and Convention & Visitors Bureau office.
- An increase in cooperation and coordination of efforts within the arts community to improve local cultural and arts offerings.

The Future:

- Stress the development of a "walkable" community; encourage residential and shopping developments that are pedestrian-friendly.
- Create landscaped gateways, freeways and arterial roads. Increase freeway and entry point landscape standards.
- Adopt universal curbside household recycling, keeping costs reasonable for residents and business owners.

To view a detailed report of Quality of Life Vision and accomplishments, please see the "[Complete 1Q Progress Report August 2005](#)" on the Vision 2020 website at www.bakersfieldvision2020.com

DOWNTOWN
The Heart of the City
First Quarter Progress Report

Five years ago, the community established a vision of Downtown Bakersfield as "...an inspiring magnet for those who live, work, or play there and is truly the 'heart of the City'." The community envisioned a downtown that is safe, architecturally pleasing, and a thriving center of activity including business, retail, government, entertainment, and residential uses.

The vision for Downtown was brought into focus by a three-day planning Charrette in 2001, in which more than 135 local residents and business leaders worked with architects, planners and local officials to develop ways to bring the vision to life. A second Charrette was held in 2003 for the Old Town/Baker Street area.

Today, the heart of the city beats vigorously. Downtown is a greener, more vital and inviting place. Landscaping, lighting and streetscape projects have enhanced the look of the area and made it more pedestrian-friendly. The vision of mixed-use development is being realized through diverse types of housing, new commercial projects and restoration of historic structures. The City has made the continued improvement of downtown a matter of policy by incorporating Vision 2020 and Charrette concepts into City Council priorities.

Selected Accomplishments:

- A landscape ordinance was approved to increase the amount of shade coverage from 30% to 40% in parking lots.
- Wall Street Alley was completed.
- A new 40,000 square foot Aquatics Center and Ice Rink was constructed and opened in 2004.
- A new Visitor's & Convention Bureau was constructed.
- The Padre Hotel continues rehabilitation into apartments and retail shops.
- An 80-unit senior housing project on R Street was completed.
- The construction of 74 cottages north of the Bakersfield Museum of Art is expected to be completed by October 2005.
- 160 senior housing units on California Avenue and M Streets will be completed in 2005.

The Future:

- A federal courthouse project is in the bidding process with the federal government. Two downtown sites are being considered along with a third site.
- The City, the County and Kern COG have reached consensus on a downtown location for a high-speed rail station.
- The Mill Creek project (from Golden State freeway to California Avenue) is awaiting \$3 million in federal grants.
- Continue to encourage mixed-use development that includes a diverse mixture of housing retail and commercial uses.

To view a detailed report of accomplishments in the Downtown area please see the "[Complete 1Q Progress Report August 2005](#)" on the Vision 2020 website at www.bakersfieldvision2020.com

Community Planning & Transportation *First Quarter Progress Report*

Planning for the growth of Greater Bakersfield in a logical, coordinated and manageable way was a top priority identified in the vision process for community planning and transportation. The community envisioned itself as one with “a clear set of development and land use policies that discourage urban sprawl and leapfrog development into prime agricultural lands.” Having learned from the mistakes of the past, the community stressed the need for cooperation among City and County policy makers, private developers and state and federal authorities to develop a well-planned community. The community has recognized the link between transportation and land use, and is more attentive to how one influences the other.

Over the past five years, the Vision 2020 ideal of collaboration has been achieved in a number of ways. City and county development policies are more complementary than ever before. The entities have cooperated to adopt a shared vision for our region’s highway network and, along with the Kern Council of Governments, reached consensus on a downtown location for a high-speed rail station. Policies are now in place to discourage leapfrog development, encourage infill development in blighted areas, and safeguard business, residential and agricultural interests.

At the time of the visioning process, few people could have imagined the boom in development that is currently underway in Greater Bakersfield. However, thanks to the spirit of the vision, Great Bakersfield is poised to meet the challenges it presents.

Selected Accomplishments:

- The County of Kern and the City of Bakersfield have updated the Bakersfield Metropolitan General Plan, reflecting a new Route 58. Both entities adopted Alternative 15 and a systems approach for future roads and freeways.
- The City and County Specific Plan identifies a South beltway that is pending Caltrans Route Adoption Process.
- Funding was obtained for a new airport terminal and runway extension was completed.
- Kern County Citizens for Quality Transportation was formed. The mission of this a broad-based group is to identify additional revenue sources to fund local transportation infrastructure needs.
- Universal trash collection was passed in Kern County to help prevent illegal dumping. Scheduled curbside bulky waste pickup has been initiated.

The Future:

- The need for additional funding for local transportation infrastructure is a high priority. Kern County Citizens for Quality Transportation is leading the effort, which currently focuses on advocating a ½-cent local sales tax to generate the funds needed to build and maintain a quality network roads and highways.

To view a detailed report of accomplishments in the Community Planning & Transportation area, please see the “[Complete 1Q Progress Report August 2005](#)” on the Vision 2020 website at www.bakersfieldvision2020.com

Youth and Family

First Quarter Progress Report

Issues of youth and family life were woven throughout the original Vision 2020 report. However, as the community mobilized to develop and implement strategies, Youth and Family emerged as a separate element. Fifteen strategies originally identified by the Education, Quality of Life and Community Planning Vision Forces have been pulled together to be addressed by the Youth and Family Vision Force.

Efforts over the past five years have concentrated on providing leadership development opportunities for young people and increasing and publicizing free and low-cost recreational opportunities for families.

Selected Accomplishments:

- The City Police Department has implemented community-oriented policing throughout the city to enhance neighborhood safety.
- Bakersfield Police Department has assigned 13 officers to various schools.
- The Youth Leadership Bakersfield program has been implemented by Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce to develop future community leaders. 2005 marks the 4th year of the program.
- The City of Bakersfield has created a Recreation and Parks master plan.
- 1,200 students attended the 2004 Leaders-n-Life Youth Conference, planned by youth for youth.
- Youth exiting the foster care system are receiving support in housing, education and job training through collaborative efforts.
- The Kern County 4-H hosted a "Local Conversation" as part of a national conversation to find ways to improve the future of youth.
- The Child Care Council has completed a community-wide needs assessment to identify childcare needs throughout Kern County.
- East Bakersfield Community Coalition is now providing activities such as Cub Scouts and ESL classes at the Sheriff's sub-station in East Bakersfield.

The Future:

- Provide greater choices for those in need of quality childcare facilities.
- Continue to provide consistent safety and law enforcement throughout Greater Bakersfield.
- Continue to assure broad-based recreation programs in all neighborhoods of Greater Bakersfield.
- Perpetuate the family-friendly culture of our city through intergenerational activities; include activities for single parents and their children

For more on the status of the vision for youth and family, see the ["Complete 1Q Progress Report August 2005"](#) on the Vision 2020 website at www.bakersfieldvision2020.com

IMAGE
"How We See Ourselves"
First Quarter Progress Report



When the residents of Greater Bakersfield envisioned their community's image in the year 2020 they wanted to be known around the state and the nation as a thriving, friendly and diverse place to work and live, and as "a community that has a positive perception of itself." However, there was no denying that Bakersfield had an image problem...and part of the problem was right here at home.

Improving Bakersfield's image is more than a matter of local pride. Our image affects our ability to attract new business, tourism and new residents.

A research firm was hired to conduct a baseline study of Bakersfield's image among business decision-makers and travelers. The researchers also studied how local residents themselves felt about their community. It became clear that improving our city's image would require work both internally and externally. The complete consultants' report is available online at <http://bakersfieldvision2020.com/actionplanprogressreports.html>

A marketing consulting firm was hired and the new Bakersfield brand, "Bakersfield: Life as it Should Be," logo and tagline were developed. A brand strategy and marketing toolkit were developed and are now available for use by local businesses, schools, organizations and individuals to project a positive and consistent image of Greater Bakersfield. The materials in the toolkit include a logo, print ad, a usage manual and photo collections.

The Future:

- The Image Vision Force will continue the ongoing campaign to educate residents and businesses about the brand strategy and the tools available to help positively promote Bakersfield.
- A "company store" has been developed for purchase of promotional material and a website has been developed specific to the brand. Visit the store at www.bakersfieldlifeasitshouldbe.org.

To view a detailed report of the Image Vision and accomplishments, please see the "[Complete 1Q Progress Report August 2005](#)" and the "Bakersfield Life As It Should Be Toolbox" on the Vision 2020 website at www.bakersfieldvision2020.com

Health and Well-Being ***First Quarter Progress Report***

Although not a part of the original Vision 2020 report, a Health and Well-Being subcommittee subsequently completed community wide meetings and the development of strategies for a healthier community. A new Vision Force was created to refine the strategies and action items as well as to monitor the progress.

Ten priority health issues were identified:

Air Quality	Need for Health Care Professionals
Obesity	Cancer
Teen Pregnancy	Drugs
Cardiovascular Disease	Health Curriculum K-12
"Medical Home"	Sexually Transmitted Diseases

The Health Vision Force has focused on reducing obesity in the community with two goals:

- Decrease Childhood Obesity so that 80% of children maintain a healthy weight level
- Increase the percentage of adults at a healthy weight level in Kern County to 60%.

Selected Accomplishments:

- Formation of Get Moving Kern, a nutrition and physical activity community coalition, including the following organizations: *Healthy Start/Americorps, Kern Family Health Care, Bakersfield City School District, Health Net, Kern County Health Department, Delano Regional Medical Center, Stewart Title, Mercy Hospital, Glinn & Giordano Physical Therapy, American Cancer Society, Community Action Partnership of Kern, Panama-Buena Vista School District, Standard School District, Kern County Superintendent of Schools, Lamont/Weedpatch Partnership, American Heart Association, 5 A Day, United Way, Clinica Sierra Vista*
- GetMovingKern.org web page under development

The Future:

- Continue and expand current strategies on obesity
- Plans to include a major marketing campaign and healthy community programs

For a complete report of the Health and Well-Being visioning process, please see the "[Complete 1Q Progress Report August 2005](#)" on the Vision 2020 website at www.bakersfieldvision2020.com