

Tulare Co. set to map its future

Public urged to attend meeting today about planning through 2050.

By Sarah Jimenez / The Fresno Bee

02/06/07

Valley Blueprint 2050 workshops

Tulare County's meeting starts at 5 p.m. today at the Visalia Convention Center, 303 E. Acequia Ave., Visalia. Registration is at 4:30 p.m.

Kings County's meeting begins at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday at the Kings County Government Center administration building's multipurpose room, 1400 W. Lacey Blvd., Hanford. Registration is at 5 p.m.

RSVP for either meeting at emata@vprtechnologies.com or call VRPA Technologies (559) 271-1200. Walk-ins are welcome at both meetings.

VISALIA — Tulare County residents have an opportunity today to share their visions of the Valley's future and shape planning through 2050.

The Tulare County Association of Governments, or TCAG, is asking people to share their quality-of-life priorities during a 5 p.m. meeting today at Visalia Convention Center.

The meeting is part of the San Joaquin Valley Blueprint process — an eight-county project to address transportation and land-use issues during the next several decades.

Kings County will hold its blueprint meeting Wednesday. Fresno County held its meeting last month.

Information from all eight counties' public meetings will be compiled into one plan, said Elizabeth Wright, TCAG associate regional planner.

The idea is to fold the regional plan into each county's general plan — a road map for future growth.

The state is urging counties to launch regional planning and is using money from bonds approved in November as incentive for regions that comply with plans, Wright said.

So far, Valley counties' top issues are similar — transportation and air quality are on the lists — but the "level of intensity" varies, Wright said.

Tonight's meeting will allow Tulare County residents to rank their priorities through interactive technology that immediately shows results on a large screen.

"As TCAG, this isn't our plan," Wright said. "We want this to be everyone's plan. We want everyone to give input on what's important."

Christina Lehn, blueprint project manager for Kings County, said data recently released from the state Department of Finance shows the Valley is home to some of the fastest-growing counties in the state.

That's why it's important residents "consciously" make a decision about how and where growth happens, she said.

"This is our chance to make some decisions for the future," she said. "If we don't make some choices now, the growth is going to choose our future for us."

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