



About the Planners Toolkit

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Introduction [Top](#)

Rising to meet the San Joaquin Valley's most pressing issues, the eight Regional Transportation Planning Agencies representing the eight counties within the San Joaquin Valley came together in 2005 to initiate the San Joaquin Valley Regional Blueprint planning process. The San Joaquin Valley Blueprint Planning Process brought together Valley residents, decision-makers, and other stakeholders to create a vision for land use and transportation to guide growth in the San Joaquin Valley over the next 50 years and ensure the San Joaquin Valley remains a desirable place to live. The Valley Blueprint is a vision for the future of the San Joaquin Valley, in which less land is consumed for development, more resources are preserved for future generations, distinctive communities are enhanced, and more travel choices are available. After adoption, the Valley Blueprint Vision and [12 Blueprint Smart Growth Principles](#) [1] were presented to and endorsed by Valley cities and counties. The [San Joaquin Valley Blueprint Planning Process Summary](#) [2] report provides an overview of the first four years of the San Joaquin Valley Blueprint (2005-2009), including the key players and participants, and the results of the Valleywide planning effort.

In 2009 the Valley COGs, together with their partners, began the implementation phase of the Valley Blueprint process. The Valley Blueprint will be implemented in two primary ways: 1) through collaborative local and regional programs and planning processes; and 2) through on-the-ground projects built primarily by private sector developers. Blueprint implementation will require change to many local land use policies and regulations. To assist local government partners, the Planners Toolkit was created to provide needed resources to cities and counties to incorporate Blueprint principles and concepts into local plans, policies, ordinances, and processes.

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The Planners' Toolkit is a comprehensive resource of California planning law and case studies, templates, and other resource materials. The Toolkit is intended to meet the broad range of planning needs of communities throughout the San Joaquin Valley and facilitate positive change in through sound, sustainable planning. It recognizes that to achieve the regional Vision for the Valley requires local action.

The [12 Blueprint Smart Growth Principles](#) [1] underlie the ideas that drive the Toolkit. Used over time, the tools can promote patterns of growth and development that preserve open space and farmland, maintain resources for future generations, enhance distinct communities, and provide more travel choices.

The Toolkit is built on the idea that a multitude of smart growth resources already exist. Many organizations throughout California and the country have developed smart growth initiatives, strategies, plans, and ordinances. Instead of reinventing these resources, the Planners' Toolkit gathers the best and most appropriate examples for use in the San Joaquin Valley. There is no one-size-fits-all formula for creating communities that are sustainable; however, the Toolkit provides tested strategies, plans, policies, and ordinances that local governments can use to initiate

change and generate substantial returns on investment.

The Toolkit is a dynamic online resource with new tools and case studies added on a regular basis. This format allows the Toolkit to be maintained as a flexible, contemporary, and relevant resource. The Toolkit will never be fully complete. As conditions change and new challenges and ideas emerge, new tools will be necessary. Likewise, as communities update their plans and adopt new ordinances, individual tools will be updated with new case studies, templates, and other resources. This will allow the Toolkit to evolve and expand over time.

We encourage you to browse the online tools to see what smart growth strategies can be most helpful to your community. Or provide your experiences to help promote the San Joaquin Valley Blueprint Vision for the San Joaquin Valley over the next 50 years.

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The Planners' Toolkit includes dozens of specific tools and techniques organized around the [12 Blueprint Smart Growth Principles](#) [1]. Tools are specific concepts or strategies that provide information, examples, and models that assist local planners develop and implement Smart Growth plans, ordinances, and processes. Each tool is identified with one or more 12 Blueprint Smart Growth Principle icons that indicate which of the principles it helps to implement. Each tool includes a brief description, three to five case studies and templates, and a list of other resources:

- **Case Study.** A case study is an example of the experiences other planners and communities have had when developing or implementing Smart Growth strategies, plans, or ordinances. Case studies typically describe the sequence of events, the end results, and an evaluation of what did and did not work. Case studies provide valuable insight into the experience of others and allow the user to learn from the problems or mistakes made by those who went before them. Case studies may include examples that are similar to templates. Case studies are particularly helpful if the user is less clear on what s/he needs to do and could benefit from understanding the range of available options and what has worked for others in similar circumstances.
- **Templates.** A template is a file or form to be used as a starting point for a new document. Some templates will have spaces or blanks to be filled with information unique to the city or county for which the template is used. Other templates are examples of documents that can be used as guides. All templates are documents used successfully by other cities and counties. Planners and other agency staff can use a template as either a starting point or a form to be completed. Templates are particularly useful if the user already knows what s/he needs to do and just wants a good format with which to start.
- **Other resources.** These are links to additional sources of information, data, and examples that can be accessed to learn more about a tool. Other resources typically include publications (e.g., books, journals, magazines) and web-resources (e.g., agency and organization websites). In some instances, other resources include links to other toolboxes and workbooks that describe a tool in detail and provide additional case studies, templates, and resources. Other resources provide a starting point for a user who wants to do a lot of research before deciding how to approach their task or project.

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The Toolkit is intended to use the ideas, experiences, and input of its users. While intended for local planning staff, the Toolkit is designed to also be accessed by community members and decision-makers. Through its interactive interface, the Toolkit asks that its users participate in the continued success of the Toolkit by rating the usefulness of existing tools and contributing new content. Each tool includes a place for users to critique and suggest modifications to existing tools and [recommend new case studies, templates, and other resources](#) [3]. The Toolkit also includes a place to [request development of new tools](#) [4] and to submit applicable content.



About the Planners Toolkit

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A joint initiative of San Joaquin Valley Councils of Governments representing each of the region's eight counties, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, the Great Valley Center, and the Fresno State Community and Regional Planning Center

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Links:

- [1] <http://toolkit.valleyblueprint.org/smart-growth>
- [2] http://valleyblueprintorg.alias.strangeocode.com/files/SJVBR_Summary_Final_2010-09-22.pdf
- [3] <http://toolkit.valleyblueprint.org/tools/submit>
- [4] <http://toolkit.valleyblueprint.org/tools/request>