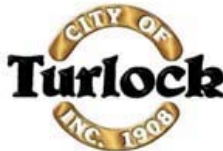




State of California: 1895

Source: Color Landform Atlas of the United States <http://fermi.jhuapl.edu/states/>



VISION TEAM MEMBERS

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THE VISION PROCESS

Dubbed the Countywide Visioning Project, the three-year visioning process involved city and county government officials, local business leaders and educators. The purpose of the process was to create a vision for the future of the Stanislaus County region based on collaboration and cooperation among local government bodies.

The visioning team developed draft visions that were distributed for public comment throughout the county. Based upon feedback from the surveys and other public forums, the visioning team revised the original vision statements. The following Cities/County Visions represent the culmination of the team's work.

CITIES/COUNTY VISION

for the Cities and County of Stanislaus, California

OUR CHALLENGE

With an existing county population of over four hundred thousand and predictions of another ten million people expected to arrive in the Central Valley from all over the world within the next thirty years, how will we in Stanislaus County cope with the scale, complexity and pace of these changes? We can succeed if citizens act now to endorse a set of shared visions that will serve as guiding principles for governmental and citizen actions now and in the future.

Below is a set of visions highlighting key factors that affect our ability to become the most desirable region in the Valley for investment, employment and residential living. In creating visions we understand that they represent the ideal condition and therefore may not be totally achievable. However, they will keep us focussed as we address the variety of issues, problems and opportunities that will arise incrementally over time. They will also serve as the barometer for assessing progress toward achieving our goals.

Following each vision are action statements that describe implementation steps for achieving the vision. The vision and action statements serve as interdependent guiding principles that, when combined, can lead to a regional plan of action.

LAND USE

VISION: We will demonstrate our resolve to produce a world class example of “DOING IT RIGHT” so that Stanislaus County remains blessed with a bounty of fertile land for agriculture. Population growth will be accommodated in communities of varying sizes ranging from larger metropolitan areas to mid-sized cities, to small rural towns and enclaves. Communities will plan, grow and evolve in a compact, efficient fashion. Large expanses of agricultural land and other open space will secure buffers between urban areas and preserve the beauty of views and vistas throughout the County.

Actions: The cities and County of Stanislaus will adopt general plans, policies and agreements that will achieve the following:

1. More compact and clearly defined urban boundaries that avoid unnecessary conversion of farmlands.
2. Protection of farmland outside the urban boundaries.
3. Expansion of city limits to include urbanized unincorporated areas that are substantially surrounded by a city.
4. Compact urban development which encourages redevelopment of blighted areas, “in fill” development of vacant and underutilized land, and a variety of affordable housing.
5. Urban limit lines, providing for areas of open space, agriculture, very low density, rural development, or green belts in which urban development cannot occur.
6. Tax and revenue policies that will support and encourage good land use decisions.
7. Transportation policies that support and implement the land use vision.

ENVIRONMENT

VISION: Our precious natural resources will be used wisely. The air will be healthy to breathe, the water pure to drink and sufficient for our needs. We will enjoy an abundance of open space and a diversity of plant and animal life that is sustained in a variety of natural habitats.

Actions: The cities and County of Stanislaus will protect and enhance the environment by:

1. Restoration of riparian environments and preservation of river corridors for public access and use including regional park facilities and trail systems.
2. Ensuring that environmental policies affecting the region are developed with the involvement of local governments in Stanislaus County.
3. Protection, conservation and development of water resources for local domestic use and irrigation.

ECONOMY

VISION: We will have a highly competitive, vibrant and diverse regional economy that provides economic opportunity for everyone close to home and results in both individual and regional prosperity.

Actions: A. The cities and County of Stanislaus will foster economic growth and develop a diversified economic base which provides maximum employment opportunities and jobs/housing balance, including:

1. Stanislaus County serving as a hub for large-scale business and financial services such as agribusiness and other regional-serving facilities in the northern San Joaquin valley. The economic strength of Stanislaus County will be enhanced by a strong central city.
2. New jobs in a variety of industries and at all wage levels.
3. Adequate housing for all residents of the County.
4. A competitive workforce prepared to meet the needs of a world class economy.
5. A tourist destination attraction highlighting the region's major products and natural resources.
6. Regional retail commercial centers along Highway corridors in urbanized areas.
7. Expansion of other major economic sectors which are compatible with agriculture.
8. Development of freeway-oriented industrial and commercial uses in the I-5 corridor at the Westley, Patterson, Crows Landing, and Newman interchanges to provide expanded employment centers for the residents of Stanislaus County. (See Government, Sections B.1. and B.2.)
9. Conversion of rural areas into large urban residential communities will be avoided. New residential development will be located within incorporated cities, Diablo Grande and other existing planned development communities.

B. The cities and County of Stanislaus will develop policies to maintain a strong agricultural economy including:

1. Preservation of farming, food processing and agricultural business services.
2. Ongoing research and analysis of the agriculture industry in order to sustain it as a major economic engine and source of employment.

C. The cities and County of Stanislaus will adopt policies and practices to take full advantage of advances in communication technologies including:

1. Establishment and maintenance of a state-of-the-art network serving all areas of the county.
2. Use of technology to engage citizens more actively in public issues and to improve inter-agency communication.
3. Establishment of sites and services to attract technology-based business.

TRANSPORTATION

VISION: We will have an efficient, integrated transportation system that provides internal and external linkages and facilitates economic growth.

Actions The cities and County of Stanislaus will develop a regional transportation system that will include the following:

1. A countywide expressway system with connector roads to provide access to other regions and to enhance mobility within Stanislaus County.
2. An efficient, well-coordinated countywide public transportation system. Bicycle and pedestrian trails linking neighborhoods and regional bikeways using existing public rights of way.
3. Development of the abandoned military airfield at Crows Landing, including air cargo facilities to expand the market for Stanislaus County agricultural products.
4. Enhancement of major regional air passenger service at the Modesto Airport.
5. A system of rail passenger services including inter-urban light rail and access to interregional commuter rail services.

EDUCATION

VISION: Everyone, especially our children, will have opportunities to stimulate the mind, inspire the spirit and develop healthy bodies

Actions: All the educational institutions of Stanislaus County will provide:

1. Facilities that will adequately accommodate the growth in student population.
2. Pre-school and childcare facilities that address the needs of both parents and children.
3. An education at all levels taught by competent and qualified instructors for the student to achieve academic success or to exercise choice whether it be occupational, vocational, apprentice, or literacy training programs as options for career success.
4. A workforce capable of meeting the needs of employers by providing graduates with core skills, a proper work ethic, and the ability to learn new skills.
5. Affordable and accessible continuing education programs for adults.
6. Academically-competitive college/university preparatory students who gain admission to the nation's best schools.
7. A safe environment on all campuses in compliance with existing law.

COMMUNITY

VISION: Stanislaus County will contain diverse, interesting and unique social and cultural characteristics that strengthen the bonds within and between our communities, preserve local identity and enhance regional pride. Individuals and groups will commit to contributing to the well being of their community.

- Actions:*
- A. The cities and County of Stanislaus will support local and regional cultural, library, recreation and parks facilities which provide a unique and rich quality of life, including:*
 - 1. A wide variety of cultural events, including the performing and visual arts, in modern facilities.
 - 2. Community and regional facilities for community recreation including sports complexes for soccer, softball, baseball, track and field, etc.
 - 3. A responsive, customer-oriented countywide library system.
 - B. The cities and County of Stanislaus support a positive socio-economic environment that will include the following:*
 - 1. All cultures fully incorporated into the social and economic fabric of the region.
 - 2. An integrated system of community and social services focused on cooperative efforts among public, private and volunteer organizations to provide a “safety net” for those in need.
 - 3. A network of satellite medical and social services in the outlying communities.

GOVERNMENT

VISION: Our local governments will govern based on the principle of stewardship. Elected officials and government employees will hold public resources and processes in trust for citizens and they will act in service of citizens and the community, not in self-interest.

- Actions:*
- A. The cities and County of Stanislaus will collaborate and cooperate in conducting the public’s business, including:*
 - 1. Developing service delivery strategies such as contracting out or consolidating duplicated services in cases where benefits to customer service, efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability would be realized.
 - 2. Agreement on a countywide framework for implementation of the land use and transportation visions.
 - B. The cities and County will be sustained by reliable funding sources for essential public services, and will collaborate to accomplish:*
 - 1. Revenue investment agreements among cities, special districts, and the County which:
 - a. Encourage cooperation on economic development projects of benefit to the entire region;
 - b. Encourage good land use decisions;
 - c. Address differences in financial capacity while providing sufficient resources to meet basic responsibilities.
 - 2. A broad based regional financing system for regional serving capital projects (transportation, recreation, cultural facilities and flood control projects).

PUBLIC SAFETY

VISION: Recognizing that public safety is the foundation for a safe and healthy society, law enforcement, fire and life safety service agencies will provide Stanislaus County residents with the highest quality services possible in conjunction with local community involvement. To that end, all agencies will strive to collaborate and form partnerships to deliver optimum service in all aspects of public safety endeavors

Actions: *Law Enforcement:*

1. Law enforcement will establish minimum standards for entry, retention, development, advancement and education of law enforcement personnel.
2. Law enforcement will adopt a policing strategy focused on the individual needs of communities. There will be an emphasis on solving problems at their root, as opposed to reacting only to the symptoms. Prevention will be as important as reacting to problems and community involvement will be key to long-term change.
3. Interagency radio communications will be coordinated to allow direct contact between working level officers. Initially radio channels must be coordinated to allow patches via dispatch centers. An integrated radio system must be developed, in the long term, to allow unrestricted communication between all agencies.
4. Information sharing and data management must be in a format that allows full sharing and access by all Stanislaus County agencies.
5. Countywide crime analysis capability will be developed to gain a strategic crime fighting advantage and to improve resource utilization.
6. Agencies will develop formats what will allow for the implementation of task forces and working committees that will address common concerns and public safety issues. Examples are drugs, gangs, financial crimes and other problems that transcend jurisdictional lines.
7. Recruitment and personnel development will be a shared objective for Stanislaus County law enforcement. An emphasis will be placed on ensuring that the make-up of each agency adequately represents the communities served.
8. Stanislaus County law enforcement agencies will manage for the future, anticipating changes in law, technology, societal attitudes, demographic changes and changing service demands.

Fire and Life Safety:

- A. *Fire districts, cities, county, hospitals and emergency response organizations will adopt integrated, collaborative and multi-disciplinary planning to ensure that all citizens are served in an equitable, efficient, and effective manner.*
 1. Strive for a "seamless" emergency response system regardless of jurisdictional boundary that considers availability, and closest resource.
 2. Pursue those organizational and jurisdictional changes that make financial and operational sense.

3. Establish minimum standards that can be measured against the best practices in the industry.
 4. Establish a collaborative process for distributing the cost of providing service to the jurisdictions, organizations, and agencies that use the services.
- B. Fire districts, cities, and county will ensure the safety of its citizens through adoption of fair and reasonable fire and life safety codes and ordinances and by embracing the technological advances in fire detection and automatic suppression systems.*
1. Strive to achieve uniformity in the adoption and application of codes and regulations throughout the districts, cities, and county without regard to jurisdictional boundary lines.
 2. Continue to emphasize customer service, one-stop assistance, and a reasonable balance between public safety and economic development.
 3. Work in concert with other regulatory agencies (Building, Planning, Environmental Resources) to develop a broad-based approach to public safety planning and regulation.
 4. Embrace the long-term benefits that can be achieved by including automatic fire detection and automatic fire suppression systems in new buildings.
- C. Fire districts, cities and county are committed to enhancing their value by becoming "all-risk" emergency service providers.*
1. Continue to develop specialized capabilities within the public safety area including hazardous materials mitigation, technical rescue teams, domestic preparedness planning, incident command teams, basic and advanced medical first responder programs.
 2. Continue to develop and enhance relationships with public and private agencies and organizations involved in providing public safety services.