

June 1, 2004

Alternative Futures Workshop

On June 1, 2004 over 20 people attended a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) workshop in Visalia to explore policy choices for the future of Tulare County. Participants reviewed planning issues and assets identified at previous workshops. Working as members of planning teams, participants developed concepts for Tulare County's future to the year 2025. Their charge was to use maps to capture their ideas about how the County can address the issues identified by the community at the previous workshops.



Each team used colored paper representing estimated urban land area required for accommodating the projected 2025 population. They had to find a balance between preservation of farmland, rural and natural landscapes, housing, and new employment opportunities.

Each team had four assignments that addressed leading issues identified by participants at earlier workshops:

Assignment 1: Preserving Natural and Working Landscapes

**Issue:** Population growth and urban encroachment is impacting agriculture and natural landscapes.

The teams mapped development patterns, suggested overall connections, and proposed a design framework for Tulare County in 2025.

Assignment 2: Economic Diversification

**Issue:** **Tulare County needs to create more higher paying year-around jobs.**

The teams identified important economic development concepts and indicated on their maps the location of employment centers on their maps.

Assignment 3: Inclusive Future

**Issue:** Poverty, poor quality housing, and lack of education for rural Tulare County residents can hold the County back.

The teams listed policies that would provide for a future to advance all people in the county.

Bonus Question:

How can your team's ideas improve air quality and protect the agricultural, habitat and biological resources that are vital to the County's health, beauty and economy?

**Workshop Highlights**

The teams presented their concepts. There was consensus on some issues and different approaches to others.

Consensus Concepts and Ideas:

- Rely on existing urban areas for growth and transit accessibility
- Distribute the growth in a balanced way (jobs and housing)
- Grow the county "proportionally"
- Provide additional jobs in the south county/99 corridor
- Provide vocational training

Variations:

- Population growth should happen in existing cities only
- Population growth should happen in both cities and in rural communities
- Carefully planned growth could be accommodated in the foothills
- Jobs/industrial uses should be located near housing
- Jobs could be created by pursuing renewable energy

**After the teams presented, the TAC discussed what the tough policy questions are for the County. These included:**

- Obtaining good data to understand our resource base (water and other resources)
- Water rights and acquisition
- Funding for roads and infrastructure, particularly for unincorporated areas
- Defining the "new economy" for Tulare County
- Consensus on the county's identity
- Maintaining agriculture as the economic focus
- Lack of legislative urgency in terms of budgets and environmental issues
- Will the real estate market accept higher densities?
- Trend of agricultural residential uses (splitting up large farms into ranchettes)
- What institutional structures can strengthen the relationships between the county and cities?

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The following pages include written summaries and maps from the planning teams.

## Team 1



### Where does urbanization happen?

Three features of development patterns:

- Preserve agricultural land
- Expand existing urban areas through balanced growth among commercial, industrial, and residential uses
- Maintain existing foothill policy except set aside a “reserve” for significant new development (e.g. Yokhol Valley)

### How and where do we diversify our economy?

Employment locations:

- Utilities/expand existing infrastructure by locating in urban areas
- Capture pass-through tourism to create new job opportunities in foothills
- Expand employment opportunities in southwest part of county, for instance add an agricultural support center in Alpaugh

### How can everyone have a stake in the future?

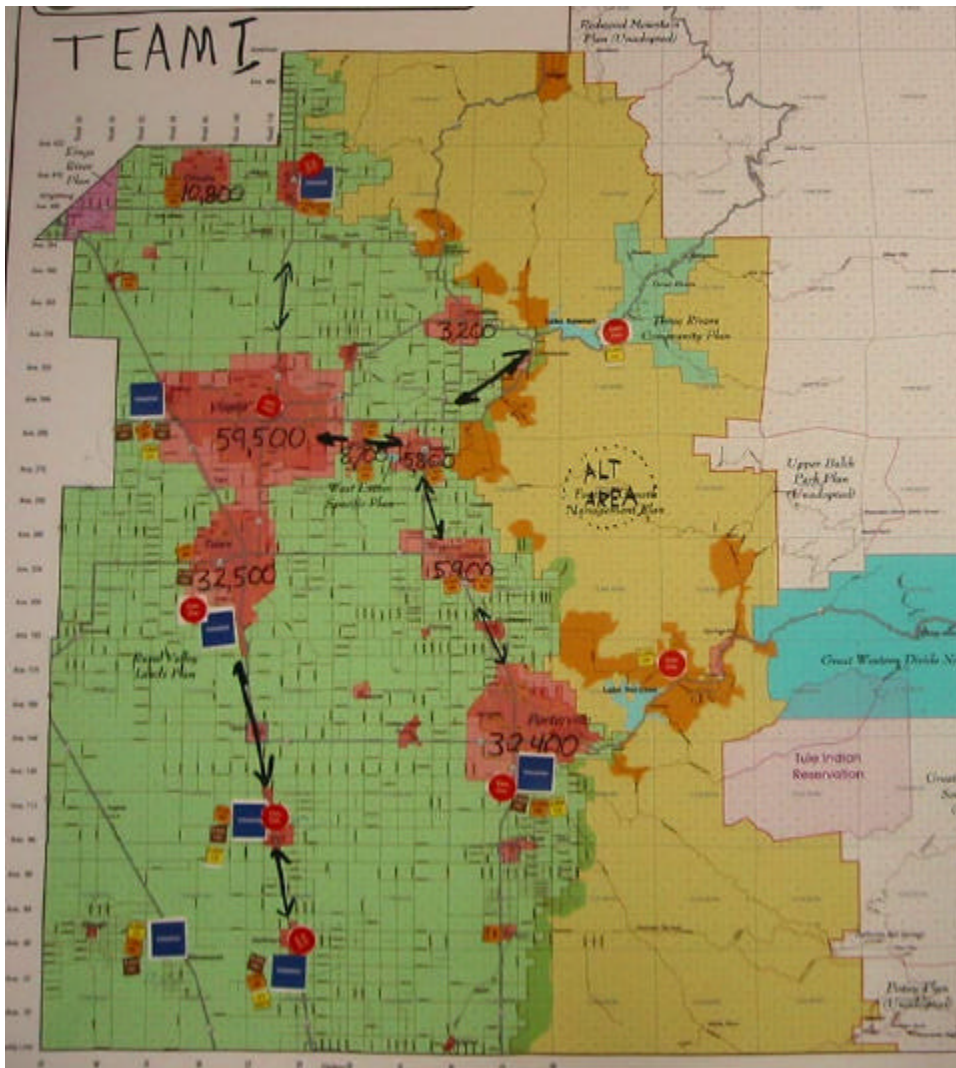
Social Policy

- Distribute affordable housing in existing urban areas, considering the jobs: housing balance

### Bonus question: Making the environment healthy

The Grand “3-fer”

- Preservation of agricultural land
- Preservation of habitat
- Improve air quality
- The resulting balanced growth in existing urban areas would minimize vehicle trips and development of “new” undeveloped areas



Team 1 Map

## Team 2



### Where does urbanization happen?

- South county/99 corridor population/commercial/industrial centers (Pixley)
- Growth in cities will likely be higher than they are planning
- Rural foothill corridors

### How and where do we diversify our economy?

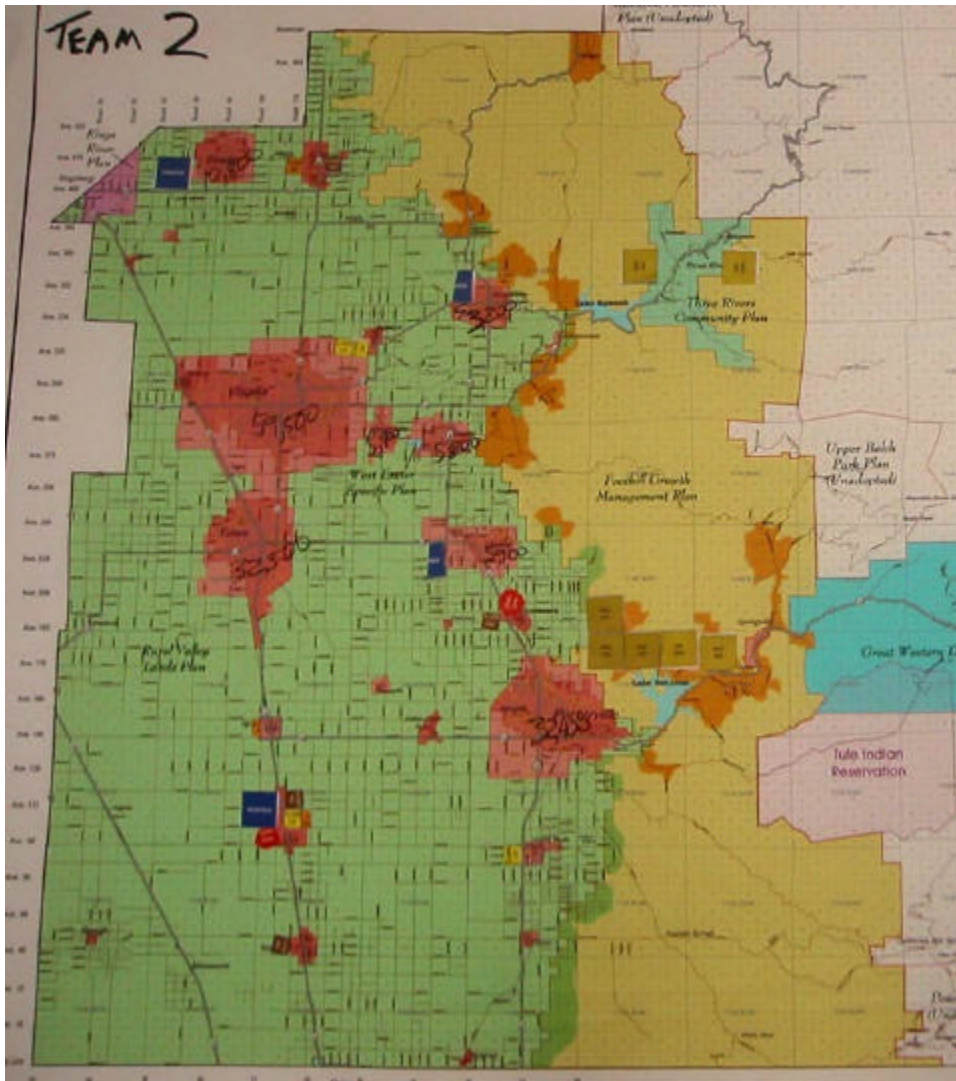
- Attract and retain professionals
- Provide vocational training
- Ensure a balanced jobs: housing ratio in unincorporated communities and smaller cities, including Pixley, Lindsay, Woodlake and Dinuba
- Renewable energy production, such as ethanol

### How can everyone have a stake in the future?

- Provide job opportunities in south Tulare County
- Provide rural health care opportunities
- Provide vocational and technical education

### Bonus question: Making the environment healthy

- Clustering housing and jobs results in trip reduction and creates transit opportunities
- Focus on existing growth and transportation areas
- Promote renewable energy and technologies industrial centers



Team 2 Map

### Team 3



#### **Where does urbanization happen?**

- Direct urban growth primarily to established communities
- Assign growth proportionally to existing communities
- Achieve increased overall densities with mixed uses throughout

#### **How and where do we diversify our economy?**

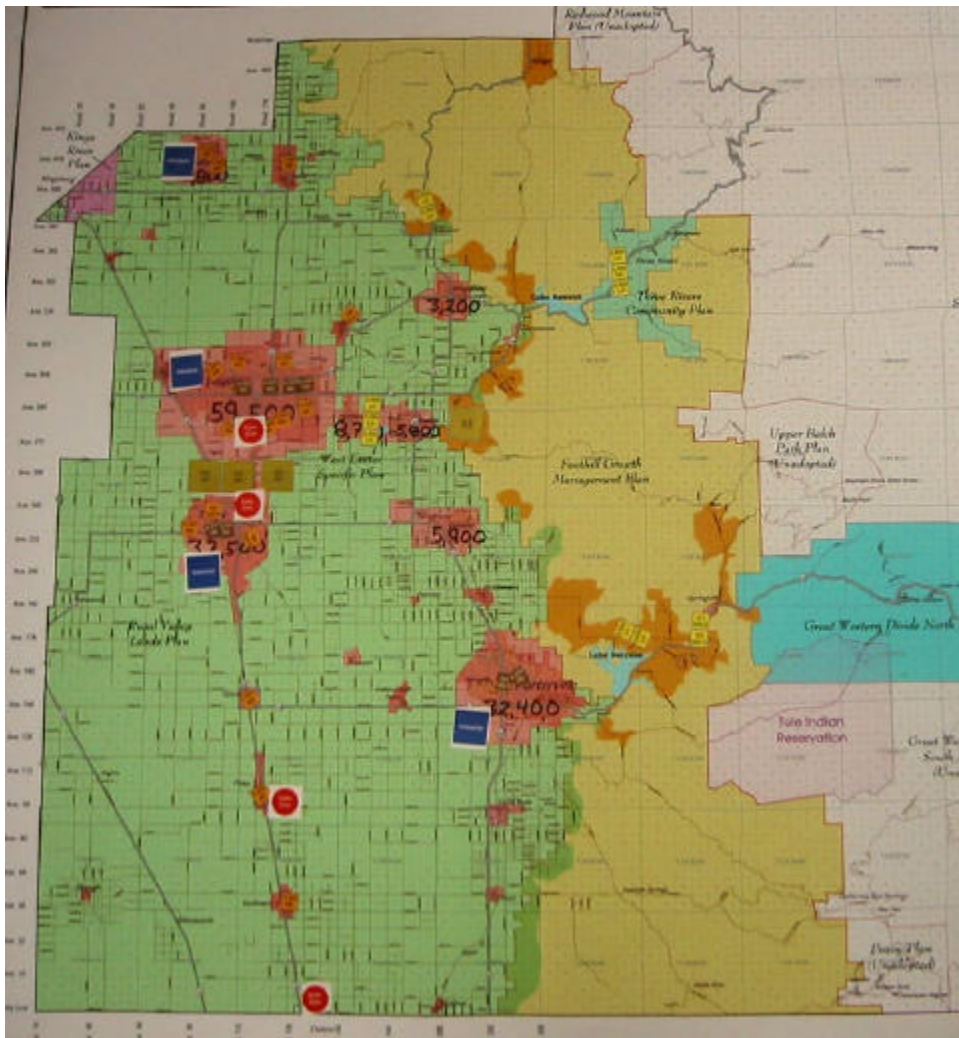
- Maintain agriculture as the core of the economy
- While seeking diversification, increase job training and higher education opportunities
- More prisons and casinos (Ha Ha)

#### **How can everyone have a stake in the future?**

- Vocational training
- Convenient access to job training

#### **Bonus question: Making the environment healthy**

- Direct growth to existing communities
- Increase densities
- Diversify economy
- The result is trip reduction, reduced emissions, farmland preservation, and improved transit opportunities



Team 3 Map