



# County of Yolo

## PLANNING AND PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

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**TO:** **THE HONORABLE HELEN THOMSON**, Chairwoman,  
and Members of the Board of Supervisors

**THE HONORABLE JEFF MERWIN**, Chair,  
and Members of the Planning Commission

**FROM:** **JOHN BENCOMO**, Director  
David Morrison, Assistant Director.  
Planning and Public Works Department

**DATE:** June 7, 2005

**SUBJECT:** Recommended Preferred Alternative for the Comprehensive Yolo County  
General Plan Update

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### **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the Board of Supervisors take the following actions:

- A. **RECEIVE** the staff presentation, hold a public hearing, and accept public testimony regarding the proposed General Plan alternatives; and
- B. **DIRECT** staff and Jones and Stokes Associates to begin preparing a Draft General Plan and Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (EIR), based on the Preferred Alternative as modified by the Board of Supervisors. Also direct staff to include Alternatives 1 (revised to be consistent with the Sacramento Area Council of Governments adopted Regional Blueprint Plan) and 3 in the Programmatic EIR, as part of the alternatives analysis.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The three alternatives previously reviewed in various workshops and the County Summit would reduce the structural deficit from \$7 million (Alternative 1) to \$4 million (Alternative 3). According to Applied Development Economics (ADE), the Preferred Alternative would reduce the County deficit from approximately \$15 million annually at its current level to approximately \$1.4 million over the 20-year planning period. As such, the recommended Preferred Alternative would not by itself correct the ongoing County structural budget deficit. Other fiscal measures would need to be implemented by the County in order to achieve fiscal balance.

In response to questions from the public, staff has worked with ADE to develop a hypothetical new scenario with a mixture of land uses that would completely eliminate the structural budget deficit. Based on preliminary analysis, such a scenario would significantly expand commercial and industrial zoning throughout the County, while holding residential development to a minimum, resulting in a ratio of nearly 2.5 jobs per household. This is twice the rate of anticipated job development in the SACOG region. This scenario could create a substantial jobs/housing imbalance within the County, with workers commuting in from surrounding counties to work in the new commercial/industrial areas. Transportation and air quality would both be adversely affected, while constraints on residential development may exacerbate the existing lack of affordable housing. Due to the substantial implications for social and environmental quality within Yolo County, this scenario was not selected.

While the Preferred Alternative doesn't by itself address the County's fiscal situation, its budgetary implications are balanced by other concerns of protecting agricultural land and open space, as well as improving the quality of life in the larger towns.

### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

The Preferred Alternative would strengthen local farming, open space, and towns, so that they can retain their character and thrive within the highly competitive environment of Yolo County's position between the Sacramento and Bay Area metropolitan regions. The primary objective of the Preferred Alternative is to maintain and enhance the agriculture, recreational areas, and communities that comprise the rural character of Yolo County, to create a distinctive destination for residents from nearby urban areas where they can relax and explore. A second objective is to direct rural conservation and development in such a manner that supports fiscal stability and allows for the provision of public services in a cost-efficient manner. The concepts outlined in this alternative will provide the policy framework that will allow the County to meet the challenges and to take advantages of the opportunities that the next twenty years has to offer.

### **BACKGROUND**

In May of 2004, the County began the process of updating the General Plan. The first workshop with the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission was held that month, where the schedule and process for the General Plan update were approved. In August, five workshops were held in Clarksburg, Dunnigan, Esparto, Knights Landing, and West Plainfield, to hear public comments on what the General Plan should contain. The next month, the second joint workshop of the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission was held. This workshop focused on issues, guiding principles, and vision statements. In October, four more workshops were held in Davis, West Sacramento, Winters, and Woodland, where the public was asked further about whether and how the County should develop over the next twenty years. Based on public comments and direction from the Board and Commission, staff and the County's consultants released a set of three alternatives for public review in January. The three alternatives are described in more detail below. A series of Technical Background Reports on the General Plan were released in February. In March, four more public workshops were held in Davis, Dunnigan, Esparto, and Woodland, to take public comment and reaction to the alternatives. A fifth workshop was held in April of 2005, between the Board of Supervisors and the four City Councils of Davis, West Sacramento, Winters, and Woodland, to hear the cities' perspective on the proposed alternatives.

The next step in the update process is to start drafting both the revised General Plan document and the Programmatic Environmental Impact Report. Both of these tasks will require significant investments of time and money for staff and Jones and Stokes. Before this work can begin, however, the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission need to select a Preferred Alternative. This will establish the initial direction for staff and the consultant to use in reviewing the existing General Plan document. They will determine what changes and/or additions are needed to revise the Plan to comply with the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative also provides Applied Development Economics with a scenario to perform more detailed economic analysis on, which will provide a more detailed evaluation of how this scenario would affect the County's fiscal health.

Once the draft General Plan and EIR are completed, they will be made available for public comment. Both the Board and the Commission will review the draft Plan and EIR in the fourth workshop, tentatively scheduled for October of 2005. Based on direction provided during the workshop, staff and the consultant will make any necessary changes to the draft Plan and EIR and release them for further public comment and review. The final versions of both documents are tentatively scheduled to be presented to the Planning Commission for recommendation in February of 2006, with action by the Board to occur in March.

The three alternatives reviewed in the public workshops and the recent County-City Summit are briefly summarized as follows:

**Alternative 1 – City Focused Growth:**

This alternative represents what would be reasonably expected to occur if no major changes are made to land use designations, densities, policies, or other aspects of the existing 1983 General Plan. It is also considered to be the "No Project" alternative, which is required for analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act. Nearly 86% of all new growth would be directed to the cities of Yolo County. Almost 90% of all new development would be located within the four cities over the next 20 years. In comparison, 2,700 homes would be built in the unincorporated area. Under this alternative, development in the unincorporated area would grow at a 1.5% annual rate, and would account for a total of 11.0% of the County's population. The majority of homes (about 60%) would be located in the rural agricultural areas, as currently occurs. Limited growth would be allowed in the existing unincorporated communities, at density rates similar to existing development. The housing projected under this alternative is expected to generate about 3,240 jobs, including 71 acres of commercial development and 139 acres of industrial uses.

**Alternative 2 – Town-Focused Growth:**

This alternative would shift some development away from the cities and would instead concentrate growth in the larger unincorporated communities. The intent of the additional growth would be to support small-town economic development and to promote new investment in the construction and maintenance of sewers, water systems, roads, and other infrastructure. About 83% of all new development would go into the cities under this alternative. Most of the 5,525 homes under this alternative would be located in the four largest communities: Esparto, Knights Landing, Dunnigan, and Madison. The density of development would be increased from roughly 5 units per acre to 8 units per acre. Additional restrictions would be placed on the location of homes in the rural agricultural areas, compared to Alternative 1, reducing the total

number allowed from 1,642 to 821. Rural residential development would, however, be allowed within the Monument Hills area by increasing density from 5-acre lots to 2.5-acre lots. Under this alternative, development in the unincorporated area would grow at a 2.5% annual rate, and would account for a total of 14% of the County's population. The housing projected under this alternative is expected to generate 6,630 jobs, including 191 acres of commercial development and 187 acres of industrial uses.

### **Alternative 3 – New City:**

This alternative would shift growth away from the existing cities, towns, and rural agricultural areas, and would instead concentrate development in the north by developing Dunnigan into a new city. The intent would be to protect larger and more fertile farmlands in the south and central areas of the County, improve the geographic distribution of population, and create additional opportunities within the regional economy. About 70% of all new development would go into the cities under this alternative. Growth in the unincorporated area would be strongly focused in Dunnigan, with all other characteristics remaining the same as Alternative 1. Nearly 75% of the 9,523 homes under this alternative would be located in Dunnigan. As with Alternative 2, the density of development would be increased from roughly 5 units per acre to 8 units per acre. Under this alternative, development in the unincorporated area would grow at a 3.75% annual rate, and would account for a total of 18% of the County's population. The housing projected under this alternative is expected to generate 11,428 jobs, including 191 acres of commercial development and 350 acres of industrial uses.

### **Preferred Alternative 2.A – Rural Sustainability:**

One of the more frequent comments heard during the various workshops was an interest in a fourth alternative that would spread growth out to several communities, increase the level of economic development, and further restrict housing in the agricultural areas. In addition, staff was not satisfied with the economic performance of the three earlier alternatives, none of which did better than reducing the County's structural deficit to \$4 million annually. As a result, staff and the consultant team developed a fourth alternative. This alternative is very similar to Alternative 2, in that some development would be shifted away from the cities and would instead be concentrated in the larger unincorporated communities. The primary differences are as follows:

- Housing in Dunnigan would be increased from 1,200 residences to between 2,500 and 3,000 homes;
- Housing would not be expanded in the town of Madison, although highway service commercial development would be significantly increased;
- Highway service commercial development would be added to the town of Yolo;
- Industrial business parks would be included at the former Spreckels site and near Winters;
- A commercial and industrial business park would be located at Elkhorn; and
- Monument Hills would be increased in density from one home per 5 acres to one home per 1.5 acres.

Under this alternative, about 78% of all new development would go into the cities under this alternative. Most of the 6,978 homes under this alternative would be located in the three largest communities: Esparto, Knights Landing, and Dunnigan. The density of development would be increased from roughly 5 units per acre to 8 units per acre. Homes in the rural agricultural

areas would be limited to one primary residence per 80 acres, reducing the total number allowed from 1,642 to between 750 and 900. Under his alternative, development in the unincorporated area would grow at a 3.0% annual rate, and would account for a total of 15% of the County's population. The housing projected under this alternative is expected to generate 8,374 jobs, including 200 acres of commercial development and 460 acres of industrial uses.

Staff has organized the Preferred Alternative into five broad areas of sustainability: Agriculture; Communities; Economy, Natural Resources, Services, and Transportation. Based on comments and suggestions gathered through the public outreach process, preliminary goals and objectives have been included within each theme area (see Attachment A).

A comparison of each of the alternatives is summarized in the table below. It should be noted that the projected density of 8 units per gross acre is a goal. Recent subdivision project densities have generally ranged between 4 and 6 per gross acre. Actual housing numbers may be less than shown here.

Town	2004 Pop.	Alternative 1: City Focused Growth		Alternative 2: Town Focused Growth		Alternative 2.A: Rural Sustainability		Alternative 3: New Dunnigan City	
		2025 Pop.	New Homes	2025 Pop.	New Homes	2025 Pop.	New Homes	2025 Pop.	New Homes
Capay	148	217	27	217	27	217	27	217	27
Clarksburg *	486	542	22	542	22	542	22	542	22
Dunnigan	898	1,341	173	4,157	1,273	8,578	3,000	18,818	7,000
Esparto	2,389	3,567	460	5,615	1,260	5,333	1,150	3,567	460
Guinda	133	200	26	200	26	200	26	200	26
Knights	1,002	1,496	193	3,544	993	4,202	1,250	1,496	193
Madison	563	785	83	2,929	883	785	83	785	83
Monument	1,633	1,697	25	2,017	150	2,785	450	1,697	25
Yolo	625	767	56	767	56	767	56	767	56
Zamora	61	97	14	97	14	97	14	97	14
Total Towns	6,305	10,709	1,054	20,085	4,704	23,506	6,078	30,650	7,881
Total Farm	9,054	13,258	1,642	11,156	821	11,358	900	13,258	1,642
TOTAL *	15,359	23,967	2,696	31,241	5,525	34,864	6,978	43,908	9,523

\*1 Excludes the pending Sugar Mill Specific Plan application.

\*2 Excludes the population of the unincorporated communities adjoining Davis (e.g., North Davis Meadows, Binning Farms, El Macero, Willowbank, Royal Oaks, and Patwin Road), estimated at a total population of 2,413 in 2004. No further significant growth is anticipated in these areas. Also excludes the population of UC-Davis, estimated at 4,098 in 2005. The University anticipates increasing its on-campus population to 8,438.

Over the past two years, the Board of Supervisors has participated extensively in the Regional Blueprint program, sponsored by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG). This project was an effort to coordinate the land use and transportation needs of the six counties and 22 cities within its jurisdiction. A general comparison of the adopted Blueprint Plan and the draft Preferred Alternative is provided in the Table below.

	SACOG	Preferred Alternative
New Homes	2,400	5,645 – 6,920
Total New People	6,576	14,4551 – 17,715
New Residential Zoning (acres)		460 – 575
New Commercial Zoning (acres)		200
New Industrial Zoning (acres)		461
New Public Zoning (acres)		282
Total New Jobs	2,900	6,774 – 8,304
Jobs/Housing Balance	1.2	1.2

The low end of the range in the Preferred Alternative is generally consistent with the projected growth of Yolo County over the entire 50-year planning period of the Regional Blueprint. The General Plan time horizon is only 20 years. The only scenario that has approximately the same level of growth as the Blueprint is Alternative 1. However, preliminary economic analysis by Applied Development Economics indicates that Alternative 1 would produce the highest budget deficits of the three. In addition, Alternative 1 would not provide any opportunities for growth and improvement within the underserved unincorporated towns. Staff believes that the Preferred Alternative is the scenario that comes closest to meeting the general parameters of the Regional Blueprint, while also providing needed community and economic benefits.

A more detailed discussion of how the Preferred Alternative would be implemented in specific communities is provided below.

Dunnigan (see Attachment B):

New growth would be primarily focused in two areas: (1) the corridor between County Road 99W and Interstate 5, between County Roads 6 and 8; and either (2.a) the area between Interstate 5 and County Road 88, from Hardwood Subdivision to south of County Road 6; or (2.b) the area south of County Road 6, immediately east and west of County Road 89B. A total of 2,500 to 3,000 new homes would be added, with 7 percent provided through existing in-fill and 93 percent through new development. This would increase the population from 898 in 2004 to between 7,300 and 8,600 in 2025. Due to the increase in population, a school site of 75 acres is included, as well as nine acres of public parks. Approximately 100 acres would be required for municipal sewer and water systems. The target density of 8 units per acre would require 280 to 340 acres of new residential development. This would be complemented by 25 acres of commercial development (15 retail and 10 lodging), and 25 acres of industrial development. A total of 515 to 575 acres of farmland would be converted. The existing 50 acres of regional retail development would be considered for a retail/housing mixed use development. Dunnigan would be considered as a potential redevelopment zone.

Esparto (see Attachment C):

New growth would be primarily focused in two areas: (1) the property between State Route 16 and Grafton Street, immediately west of the Parker Place Subdivision and north of Esperanza Estates; and either (2.a) the area between the Winters Canal and the Junior High School, between Lamb Valley Slough and Road 21A; or (2.b) the area south of Road 21A/State Route

16, between Roads 86 and 86A. A total of 850 to 1,150 homes would be added, with 45 percent provided through existing in-fill and 55 percent through new development. This would increase the population from 2,389 in 2004 to between 4,500 and 5,400 in 2025. The target density of 8 units per acre would require 60 to 80 acres of new residential development. This would be complemented by 40 acres of commercial development (20 retail, 10 lodging, and 10 office), as well as three acres of new parkland. Approximately 10 acres of additional land may be required to expand the sewage treatment plant. A total of 225 to 260 acres of farmland would be converted. Downtown Esparto would be considered as a potential redevelopment zone.

Knights Landing (see Attachment D):

New growth would occur in existing in-fill within the community and in the area east of town, between Road 116 and the Sacramento River, as currently allowed in the approved Knights Landing General Plan. Between 1,000 and 1,250 homes would be added, with 15 percent provided through existing in-fill and 85 percent through new development. This would increase the population from 1,002 in 2004 to between 3,500 and 4,200 in 2025. The target density of 8 units per acre would require 120-155 acres of new residential development. This would be complemented by 20 acres of commercial retail development. A second school site of 40 acres would be set aside, along with five acres of public parks. Approximately 40 acres of additional land may be required to expand the sewage treatment plant. A total of 225 to 260 acres of farmland would be converted. The waterfront and downtown area would be considered as a potential redevelopment zone.

Madison (see Attachment E):

A total of 75 to 90 homes would be added, through existing in-fill. This would increase the population from 563 in 2004 to between 755 and 793 in 2025. Although no new residential development is proposed, 58 acres of commercial development (retail) would be added. The primary focus of the new growth would be highway service commercial, which would not compete against Esparto's downtown. The jobs/housing balance would be provided by workers both in Madison, as well as Esparto. Business could provide a new source of private investment to help improve Madison's storm water, sewer, and water infrastructure. Commercial development would be located south of the existing community, west of Road 89. A total of 58 acres of farmland would be converted.

Monument Hills (see Attachment F):

The existing Rural Residential designation (5-acre minimum lot size) would be increased in density to a minimum lot size of 1.5 acres, resulting in the addition of 400 to 450 homes, following completion of a Specific Plan. Further development of the area would be subject to the provision of improved infrastructure (water, storm drainage, and roads).

Yolo (see Attachment G):

New growth would primarily be focused on existing in-fill development, with the addition of a small area between Road 99W and Interstate 5, north of Road 17. A total of 50 to 75 homes would be added, all through existing in-fill. This would increase the population from 625 in 2004 to between 750 and 850 in 2025. Although no new residential development is proposed, 15

acres of commercial development (retail) would be added. The primary focus of the new growth would be highway service commercial. Business would provide new private investment which could assist with improving the Cacheville Community Services District existing water system. A total of 15 acres of farmland would be rezoned for new commercial development, located north of County Road 17, between Road 99W and Interstate 5. In addition, an existing 20-acre industrial site would be considered for additional highway service commercial development.

#### Other Communities:

In-fill would be allowed to occur under present zoning, as follows: Capay (30 new homes); Clarksburg (20 new homes – excluding consideration of the pending Sugar Mill project); Guinda (30 new homes); and Zamora (15 new homes). These numbers were included in the analysis supporting the County's certified Housing Element.

#### Industrial/Retail Parks (see Attachments H, I, J, and K):

Airport: The AV (Airport) zone would be revised to streamline permit processing for industrial, manufacturing, and processing uses within the approximately 488 acres surrounding the Yolo County Airport. This would encourage the development of aviation businesses by including specific development standards and by expediting permit review.

Elkhorn: Approximately 280 acres of agricultural land located south of County Road 22 and west of Road 117 (Old River Road) would be designated as commercial (retail/lodging) and industrial (business park). The project would create a hotel/conference center, along with restaurants and retail, and would take advantage of access to Interstate 5, scenic view of the Sacramento River, nearby marina, proximity to Sacramento International Airport, and the current deficiency of conference facilities in Yolo County. It would also allow for the development of distribution and office/research facilities as a later phase of the project.

Spreckels: Approximately 160 acres of the former Spreckels sugar plant existing industrial site would be changed from its existing A-1 (Agricultural General) zoning to allow for industrial development. The project would create a new business park, taking advantage of the site's rail access, natural gas line, location outside of the 100-year floodplain, proximity to Woodland sewer and water services, direct access to State Route 113, and proximity (within two miles) of Interstate 5.

Winters: Approximately 96 acres of land located south of Russell Boulevard, between Interstate 505 and the Yolo County Housing Authority project, would be changed from its existing A-1 (Agricultural General) to AGI (Agricultural Industrial) zoning. The project would take advantage of the site's direct access to I-505 and Highway 128, proximity to municipal sewer and water services, and nearby work force.

#### Agriculture:

The remaining 92 percent of the County is zoned Agriculture, either A-1 (20-acre minimum) or A-P (80-acre minimum). Currently, County requirements allow a primary and ancillary house to be constructed on any legally created parcel, regardless of existing size. This alternative would establish in both zones a minimum requirement of 80 acres before any new home (and ancillary residence) could be constructed. For parcels less than 80 acres, transfers of development

rights would be made available so that existing parcels would be merged, with density credits that could be redeemed within appropriate zoning in established communities. It is difficult to predict how many homes would be constructed under this provision. As an estimate, there would be a total of 750 to 900 new homes in the agricultural area (38 to 50 homes per year), which represents a 50% reduction in the rate of recent agricultural residential construction.

### **OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT**

Numerous comments have been received throughout this process. Staff has held thirteen public workshops, additional community meetings, two workshops with the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission, a summit with the Board and four City Councils, made presentations to several private organizations, maintained a mailing list of more than 500 names, and another e-mail list of nearly 100 names. Documents, schedules and reports have been continually provided on the General Plan website, which also includes a direct e-mail contact for both staff and Jones and Stokes Associates. Through it all, staff has heard from 300 to 400 individuals, totaling almost 1,300 comments.

### **ATTACHMENTS** (on file with the Clerk of the Board)

- Attachment A – Preliminary Goals and Objectives for Sustainability
- Attachment B – Dunnigan Preferred Alternative
- Attachment C – Esparto Preferred Alternative
- Attachment D – Knights Landing Preferred Alternative
- Attachment E – Madison Preferred Alternative
- Attachment F – Monument Hills Preferred Alternative
- Attachment G – Yolo Preferred Alternative
- Attachment H – Airport Preferred Alternative
- Attachment I – Elkhorn Preferred Alternative
- Attachment J – Spreckels Preferred Alternative
- Attachment K – Winters Preferred Alternative

# ATTACHMENT “A”

## PRELIMINARY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF RURAL SUSTAINABILITY

1. Sustainable Agriculture
  - a. Provide farmworker housing
  - b. Attract agricultural industry through incentives
  - c. Promote innovative practices, such as specialty and organic farms
  - d. Reduce regulation for farming, (e.g., streamlining, prioritization, etc.)
  - e. Increase agricultural mitigation requirements
  - f. Restrict antiquated subdivisions, ranchettes, and non-farming residences
  
2. Sustainable Communities
  - a. Grow within and immediately adjoining existing towns
  - b. Establish green buffers and urban limit lines for towns and cities
  - c. Ensure that development benefits the community (net gain criteria)
  - d. Value imagination in project design
  - e. Provide diversity of design
  - f. Include the needs of seniors and the disabled
  - g. Require affordable housing
  - h. Incorporate natural features into development
  - i. Design for public health and safety
  - j. Provide livable densities
  - k. Plan for park and recreation needs
  - l. Require solar power and energy efficiency
  - m. Accommodate small builders by setting aside lots for custom homes
  - n. Require annexation of projects next to cities
  - o. Intensify underutilized parcels
  - p. Encourage mixed-use development
  
3. Sustainable Economy
  - a. Expand commercial and industrial business activity
  - b. Balance housing with jobs
  - c. Promote tourism and visitor services
  - d. Revitalize existing downtown areas
  - e. Pursue redevelopment programs
  - f. Actively seek compatible economic opportunities
  - g. Intensify uses at the County Airport
  
4. Sustainable Natural Resources
  - a. Protect prime agricultural soils
  - b. Preserve habitat and open space
  - c. Improve water quality
  - d. Increase water supply
  - e. Minimize environmental impacts
  - f. Support regional flood control solutions
  - g. Protect heritage trees

- h. Develop broad-based funding mechanisms to protect ag and open space
  - i. Establish protected corridors along major waterways
  - j. Identify specific areas for permanent habitat and agricultural easements
  - k. Create a review process for reviewing proposed easements
  - l. Discourage development within the floodplains
5. Sustainable Services
- a. Repair and improve existing infrastructure
  - b. Prioritize needs
  - c. Design services to be provided efficiently
  - d. Ensure that development benefits meet or exceed costs
  - e. Protect existing public facilities
  - f. Encourage joint use of public facilities
  - g. Partner where beneficial with local, state, and federal agencies
  - h. Develop social support services in the communities
  - i. Specify implementation, financing, and accountability
  - j. Ensure that tax-sharing agreements pay for County services
  - k. Limit development in wild land fire areas
6. Sustainable Transportation
- a. Connect communities and natural areas with regional bicycle and hiking trails
  - b. Expand public transit
  - c. Locate higher density development around transit locations
  - d. Designate roads to accommodate farm equipment
  - e. Include narrower streets and traffic calming designs into neighborhoods
  - f. Encourage non-vehicular transportation (e.g., bicycle, walking, carpool)