



What is the General Plan?

The General Plan is the blueprint for what the County will look like in twenty years. It provides the foundation for all decisions within the unincorporated area regarding land use, including housing, economic development, public works, transportation, and resource conservation. The General Plan is also the basis for the County's Zoning Ordinance, which governs what can and cannot occur on individual parcels.

The State of California first authorized the use of Master Plans (General Plans) in 1927. By 1937, the State had required each city and county to adopt a General Plan. There are seven mandatory elements to the General Plan. The Land Use and Circulation Elements were the first ones to be required in 1955. The Housing Element was added in 1969, with the Conservation and Open Space Elements required in 1970. The Safety and Noise Elements were the last to be added in 1971. No new mandatory elements have been adopted in the past 33 years.

As described in the General Plan Guidelines, prepared by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), all General Plans must be: comprehensive; internally consistent; based on a long-term perspective; and composed of well-defined parts.

Yolo County's first General Plan was adopted in 1958. In addition to the seven mandatory elements, four optional elements have been adopted: Agriculture, Energy, Historic Preservation, and Scenic Highways. The General Plan also includes 16 community and area plans, providing specific policies for different towns and regions within the County. Cities, State, Tribal, and Federal properties have their own land use plans and are not included in the County General Plan.



What are the basic principles of the existing Yolo County General Plan?

The first Yolo County General Plan, prepared in 1958, included the following policies that are still valid today:

- The goal of the General Plan is the guidance of the development of the area toward the most desirable future possible.
- Outside of established communities, the best development is thought to be minimum urbanization.
- Preservation of rich Yolo farm resources and the amenities of open space is, in the long run, the highest and best use of this land.
- Uncontrolled spread of development can have disastrous effects. Community facilities and utilities will not efficiently serve scattered development and remaining land is chopped up so that it cannot be economically farmed and has no public value as open space.
- Yolo County can avoid these difficulties even as it absorbs its share of growth of the Sacramento Metropolitan Area.



Why do we need to update the General Plan?

The Yolo County General Plan was last updated in 1983. Although there are no regulations specifying the length of time between updates, typically General Plans are revised every 5 to 20 years. More importantly, growth pressures within the County are accelerating and our present policies may be insufficient to meet new challenges.

Yolo County is situated between rapidly growing metropolitan areas and faces increasing development pressure from both Sacramento and Bay Area, especially along the Interstate 80 corridor that links the two. Yolo County is experiencing growth pressure internally as well, as our two largest employers, the University of California and the Cache Creek Casino, are undergoing significant expansion. In addition, the quality of life that Yolo County has carefully cultivated is attractive to many homebuyers, both within and outside the County.

These effects have combined to create intense demands for residential development, which in turn has reduced the supply of available and affordable housing. As the population expands, and cities grow, we can also expect a corresponding increase in demand for new parks, schools, retail, employment, hospitals, government centers, and infrastructure. As cities and towns grow in response to these pressures, the uncontrolled spread of development can have disastrous effects on outlying areas. Community facilities and utilities cannot efficiently serve scattered development and remaining land becomes fragmented so that it cannot be economically farmed and has little public value as open space.



Past and future growth trends

Yolo County grew at an annual rate of about 1% until World War I, when its population stood at 17,105. After the Great War, growth increased to over 2.5% until the end of World War II and the population grew to 40,640. The “baby boom” saw a growth rate of about 3%, doubling the population to 79,900 by 1965. Over the past 40 years, the rate has dropped to slightly above 2 percent, and future projections show a slowing to about 1.75% annually. While this is less than growth rates for most of the past century, the rate applies to a much larger number of people. The population projected by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) for the planning period of 2005-2025 is as follows:

	<u>2004</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yolo County	184,475	100.0%	266,325	100.0%
Davis	64,500	35.0%	70,300	26.4%
West Sacramento	38,000	20.6%	77,100	28.9%
Winters	6,875	3.7%	12,520	4.7%
Woodland	52,500	28.5%	71,250	26.8%
Unincorporated	22,600	12.3%	35,155	13.2%

The increase in growth can be seen in the number of new homes constructed in the unincorporated area over the past five years. In 2000, the County approved 85 new residential building permits. In 2004, the number of new residential building permits had grown to 396, a 465% increase. The majority of recent growth has occurred in Esparto and Wild Wings, however, several new subdivisions have been approved or are being considered in Knights Landing. A conceptual residential and commercial development project is also being proposed for Madison.



What principles are being used to guide preparation of the General Plan?

The Board of Supervisors and County Planning Commission have held two joint meetings where the following standards were agreed upon to direct the General Plan Update

- Rely on public involvement, co-operative efforts, and openness in communications. All participants should be treated with respect, dignity, courtesy, and responsiveness.
- Protect agriculture and habitat as fundamental to the economy and quality of life. Green spaces should be used to keep cities and towns separated and unique. Encourage innovative agricultural practices. Environmental impacts should be reduced to the greatest extent feasible.
- Ensure that new development benefits the community in which it is located. Existing public services should be improved and new infrastructure constructed where populations are underserved. Public services should be provided in a cost-effective and efficient manner.
- Encourage economic development to provide local jobs and investment. Recreational and tourism opportunities should be enhanced, compatible with adjoining farms.
- Locate growth within or close to cities and towns to reduce sprawl. New growth should be complemented with in-fill and increased density housing in older developed areas. Create a variety of housing types to meet the needs of our diverse population.
- Include alternative transportation such as bicycles, buses, rail, and walking. Compact neighborhoods should be friendly to pedestrians and located within easy commute to stores and work. Communities should be connected with networks of trails, bike paths, and public transit.



What comment were received in the earlier public workshops?

About 125 people attended the first five public workshops held in Knights Landing, West Plainfield, Esparto, Clarksburg, and Dunnigan in August of 2004. About 75 people attended the second round of four public workshops held in Winters, West Sacramento, Davis, and Woodland in October and November of 2004. All together, more than 650 comments were received and can be generally grouped together into the following issues:

- Agriculture land should be protected and farming kept economically viable.
- More affordable and diverse housing should be built, creating neighborhoods with increased density within existing towns, located close to jobs, shopping, and transit.
- Infrastructure and services should be improved, with developers paying for the full impact of growth on existing roads, sewer, water and drainage.
- Economic development should be encouraged, particularly tourism and recreation.
- Public transit should be expanded and County roads improved.
- More recreational opportunities should be created, especially a regional trail system.
- Limited development should be allowed on poor quality farmland.
- Regional efforts should be increased to provide flood control.



Alternative 1 - City-Focused Growth

This alternative represents what is 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. This is similar to the Regional Blueprint model adopted by SACOG. It is also considered to be the “No Project” alternative, analysis of which is required under the California Environmental Quality Act.

This alternative would continue to direct nearly 86% of all new growth to the cities of Yolo County. Almost 26,000 housing units (approximately 70,000 people) 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 2.0% annual rate, and would account for a total of 12.5% 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 3,505 jobs, including 71 acres of commercial development and 139 acres of industrial uses.

Alternative 1 assumes that there would be no additional growth in the unincorporated neighborhoods adjoining the City of Davis or the Monument Hills area. It should be noted that the County has no jurisdiction over land use within the cities, state lands (such as the Vic Fazio Yolo Wildlife Area or UC-Davis), or federal lands (including BLM lands and the Cache Creek Casino). Each of these entities is responsible for its own planning. However, the County will continue to work with each of its partners on mutually beneficial efforts to coordinate land use planning.



Alternative 2 - Town-Focused Growth

This alternative would slightly 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. The total population under Alternative 2 represents a 20% increase over the Regional Blueprint model and a 41% increase over Alternative 1.

About 75% of all new development would go into the cities under this alternative. Growth in the unincorporated area would be focused in existing towns. Most of the 5,525 homes under this alternative would be located in the four largest communities: Esparto, Knights Landing, Dunnigan, and Madison. (The town of Yolo was not included as it does not have an existing common sewage treatment system.) 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. Instead, rural residential development would 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 3.75% annual rate, and would account for a total of 16% of the County's population. Alternative 2 also assumes that there would be no additional growth in the unincorporated neighborhoods adjoining the City of Davis. The housing projected under this alternative is expected to generate 7,183 jobs, including 191 acres of commercial development and 187 acres of industrial uses.



Alternative 3 - New City in Dunnigan

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. The total population under Alternative 3 represents a 52% increase over the Regional Blueprint model, but a new city near Dunnigan was included as a possible alternative in the adopted Blueprint plan. Total projected growth is 37% higher than in Alternative 2 and 88% higher than in Alternative 1.

About 62% of all new development would go into the cities under this alternative. Growth in the unincorporated area would be strongly focused in Dunnigan. All other characteristics would be 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 5.25% annual rate, and would account for a total of 20% of the County's population. The housing projected under this alternative is expected to generate 12,380 jobs, including 191 acres of commercial development and 350 acres of industrial uses.



Alternative Comparisons

Town	2004 Population (Estimated)	Alternative 1 City Focused Growth		Alternative 2 Town Focused Growth		Alternative 3 New Dunnigan City	
		2025 Population	No. of New Homes	2025 Population	No. of New Homes	2025 Population	No. of New Homes
Capay	148	220	27	220	27	220	27
Clarksburg	486	545	22	545	22	545	22
Dunnigan	898	1,362	173	4,310	1,273	19,658	7,000
Esparto	2,389	3,621	460	5,765	1,260	3,621	460
Guinda	133	202	26	202	26	202	26
Knights Landing	1,002	1,519	193	3,663	993	1,519	193
Madison	563	785	83	2,929	883	785	83
Monument Hills	1,633	1,633	0	2,035	150	1,633	0
Yolo	625	775	56	775	56	775	56
Zamora	61	99	14	99	14	99	14
Total Town Growth	6,305	9,128	1,054	20,543	4,704	29,057	7,881
Rural Agricultural	9,054	13,454	1,642	11,254	821	13,454	1,642
TOTAL	15,359	22,582	2,696	31,797	5,525	42,511	9,523

- Excludes population of Davis unincorporated areas, estimated at 2,413 in 2004. No further significant growth is anticipated in these neighborhoods. Also excludes the population of UC-Davis, estimated at 4,098 in 2005. The University expects to increase its on-campus population to 8,438.



Additional Concepts

1. Provide for agricultural industrial uses north of Woodland and near Interstate 5 in Dunnigan that support the farm economy and create new economic opportunities.
2. Identify a small commercial center to serve the Monument Hills/Wild Wings area. Local retail uses would be limited so as not to attract additional commercial development.
3. Define permanent urban limit lines and green buffers between both cities and towns.
4. Support agricultural and environmental based tourism, through cooperative marketing, permit streamlining, and by protecting farmland and natural resources.
5. Establish redevelopment project areas to invest in infrastructure, develop affordable housing, and create incentives for new businesses to locate in existing downtown areas.
6. Create an overlay zone for the Yolo County landfill. Prospective buyers of properties within the overlay zone would receive notice that they may be subject to potential impacts.
7. Clarify the existing commercial area near Chiles Road and Interstate 80, to indicate whether retail uses will be allowed and if so, to what extent.
8. Define the extent of industrial and other land uses north of Road 5. Create a structured transition of industrial, commercial, and residential uses near the existing Dunnigan Rest Area.
9. Create an Area Plan for the Yolo Bypass, to ensure that agriculture, habitat restoration, and recreation uses remain compatible with each other and with the need to maintain flood control.
10. Incorporate regional efforts, such as the Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum, Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, and Natural Communities Conservation Plan.



Additional Concepts (continued)

11. Develop policies to support increasing the water supply for agriculture, urban, and environmental uses, including conjunctive use, conservation, and export restrictions.
12. Coordinate with responsible agencies to develop and implement comprehensive solutions to regional flood control challenges
13. Establish a tiered roadway classification system of arterials, collectors, and local streets to prioritize maintenance and improvements.
14. Identify preferred agricultural lands for conservation easements, including prime farmland and appellation areas.
15. Amend the County Code to include rural residential clustering standards, locational criteria, and transfer of development rights procedures.
16. Designate a portion of the Elkhorn area as commercial, near the intersection of County Road 22 and Interstate 5, to create a hotel/conference center with potential housing and retail uses.
17. Identify potential highway commercial service centers near Interstates 5 and 505. Limited commercial development would be allowed at selected interchanges to serve the traveling public.
18. Develop a grading ordinance to manage storm water runoff. Provide minimum standards for land alteration to ensure that adjoining properties are not adversely affected by flooding.
19. Identify railroad and road rights-of-way to be retained for future public hiking trails, bicycle paths, and equestrian access.



C O U N T Y O F Y O L O G E N E R A L P L A N U P D A T E

Where do we go from here?

<u>Task</u>	<u>Time Frame</u>
1. Initiate Project-Joint PC/BOS Meeting	June 2004
2. Gather Background Information	Summer 2004
3. First Round Public Workshops	July/August 2004
4. Second Round Public Workshops	October 2004
5. Summary Input-Second Joint PC/BOS Meeting	October 2004
6. Technical Studies	October 2004
7. Preliminary Goals, Policies, Alternatives	December 2004
8. Third Round Public Workshops	February/March 2005
9. Review Draft Goals-Third Joint PC/BOS Meeting	April 2005
10. Preliminary Draft General Plan	July 2005
11. EIR Notice of Preparation	July 2005
12. Fiscal Impact Analysis	July 2005
13. Public Facilities and Services Analysis	July 2005
14. Review Draft Plan-Fourth Joint PC/BOS Meeting	August 2005
15. Public Comments-Draft General Plan	August/September 2005
16. Public Comments-Draft EIR	September/November 2005
17. Review Plan and EIR - Fifth Joint PC/BOS Meeting	November 2005
18. Final EIR-Response to Comments	January 2006
19. PC Public Hearing on Plan and EIR	February 2006
20. BOS Public Hearing on Plan and EIR	February 2006



Public Workshop Schedule and Locations

Monday, February 28, 2005
Esparto Community Center
17120 Yolo Avenue
Esparto, CA.
6:30 – 8:45

Tuesday, March 8, 2005
Country Fair Estates Mobile Home Park
5130 County Road 99W
Dunnigan, CA.
6:30 – 8:45

Wednesday, March 2, 2005
Woodland DESS Community Room
25 North Cottonwood Street
Woodland, CA.
6:30 – 8:45

Thursday, March 10, 2005
Yolo County Library – Davis Branch
315 East 14th Street
Davis, CA.
6:30 – 8:45

A fifth workshop for local city and county elected officials is tentatively being scheduled for mid-April. The meeting will be open to the public.

Meeting facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities. For more information about assistance with special needs, please call David Morrison at (530) 666-8041.



C O U N T Y O F Y O L O G E N E R A L P L A N U P D A T E

Contact Us

Yolo County welcomes and appreciates your comments on the general plan update. You can provide input by attending public workshops and hearings, writing the County, or visiting our website.

www.yolocountygeneralplan.org

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