

YOLO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN UPDATE OVERVIEW OF AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

On March 27, 2007 as a part of the General Plan Update, the Yolo County Board of Supervisors approved the concept of establishing agricultural districts in Clarksburg and the Capay Valley. The preliminary boundaries were chosen to be coincident with the community boundaries for the two areas (see map attachments).

On September 18, 2007, the Board of Supervisors approved preliminary boundaries for a third district in the Dunnigan Hills (see map attachments). The Board also approved an initial working definition of Agricultural Districts which is provided below. The concept is to encourage voluntary participation in various programs that encourage agricultural business development and expansion. The Board directed the staff to work with interested parties in each of the three districts to further tailor the initial working definition to the individual district. The language to be used as a starting point for discussions is as follows:

Agricultural Districts are areas within Yolo County where agricultural business development and expansion (including industrial processing, commercial sales, and agricultural tourism) would be encouraged through the use of targeted regulatory streamlining, financial incentives, and specialized marketing efforts. Agricultural Districts are specially designated areas within which recognition of high value crops and area “branding” is already taking hold, and where additional efforts by the County would be valuable to the agricultural success of the area and where focused efforts within the districts to promote agricultural processing and tourism would yield additional benefits to farming throughout the unincorporated area. As the initial districts mature and the County is able to document successes and failures, programs within the agricultural districts would be modified in response to changing market conditions, and may encompass new areas or evolve into countywide programs. Concepts to explore within Agricultural Districts could include the following:

- *Lower building permit fees to promote improvements and structures related to agricultural processing, rural tourism, and other value-added activities.*
- *Relaxed standards for parking (e.g. allowed use of gravel surfaces rather than paved), occupancy (e.g. allowed use of barn structures for events), lighting (e.g. lower minimum standards), pedestrian circulation (e.g. allowed use of surfaces other than paved sidewalk), and sanitation (e.g. allowed use of portable toilets and related facilities rather than permanent systems) to encourage agricultural tourism opportunities.*
- *Free or subsidized participation in specialized marketing efforts to continue targeted “branding” and name recognition within the districts.*
- *Free or subsidized use of County sponsored CEQA clearance documents (e.g. master EIRs) to allow for more intense agricultural “tourism” use of properties (e.g. dude ranch, winery, restaurant, bakery, itinerant vending, cheese production, oil press, wine crush, outdoor entertainment/music, culinary classes, tourist cabins, etc.).*
- *Differentiated impact thresholds for rural roadways that allow higher traffic levels for agriculturally related events while maintaining the rural setting and design of the existing roadways.*

- *County “permit coordinator” services to educate and assist land owners in securing various permits for agricultural-related endeavors and infrastructure within the districts.*
- *Improved opportunities for development of on-site housing for agricultural families and farm-workers (e.g. mobile home parks; recreational vehicles; worker “camps”, etc.).*

The Board’s action was for the purpose of moving forward with and preparing the Draft General Plan and did not constitute a final approval. Final consideration of the Agricultural District concept and boundaries will occur later in the process after the Draft General Plan is distributed for public review and has undergone environmental impact analysis.

Attachments (maps of agricultural district boundaries)