

## 6 AGRICULTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

*This element seeks to support, sustain, reinvent, and diversify the agricultural economy. Agriculture is the primary business of Yolo County. The division of farmland for non-agricultural purposes is precluded. Mitigation for loss of farmland through agricultural conservation easements and/or land dedication is required. A new Agricultural District program to promote value-added agricultural endeavors in certain key emerging areas is identified. An innovative program to transfer farm dwelling rights to other farmers for agriculturally-related purposes is also included. Agricultural land also provides important biological habitat and defacto open space. The goals and policies of this element emphasize wildlife friendly farming, local food preference, community revitalization, creation of jobs and economic health, business outreach, expansion of tourism, and collaboration with the Rumsey Tribe and UC Davis.*

### **A. Introduction**

#### **1. Context**

The defining characteristic of Yolo County is its agriculture and open spaces. Ninety-two percent of the land surface of Yolo County is off-limits to residential, commercial and industrial development uses that are not consistent with the agricultural designation. Instead, these lands are currently set aside for farming, grazing and open space.<sup>1</sup> Sixty-seven percent of the unincorporated area of the county is protected under Williamson Act contracts to provide further long-term protection of these lands.<sup>2</sup>

Yolo County's historic commitment to honor its "roots" by preserving agriculture—dating back several decades and reaffirmed in the last comprehensive update of the General Plan in 1983—has produced an enviable quality of life, significant open space preservation and long-standing development agreements between Yolo County and its four incorporated cities that largely concentrate housing and commercial development within the Spheres of Influence (SOI) of existing urbanized areas.

This General Plan continues the County's commitment to agriculture, open space and "smart growth." However, it also recognizes the need to expand our horizons and broaden the local economy. Although there are many benefits of preserving farmland and habitat, they do not generate the dynamic economy required to meet the needs of a growing and diverse population. Due to the lack of alternative industries, more than one-third of all employment in Yolo County comes from the government sector, primarily

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<sup>1</sup> County of Yolo, 2005. *Background Report for the Yolo County General Plan Update*, Woodland, California, pages 1-5 and 1-6.

<sup>2</sup> County of Yolo, 2005. *Background Report for the Yolo County General Plan Update*, Woodland, California, page 1-10.

State agencies. As a result, the health and security of many household incomes are increasingly dependent upon decisions made in Sacramento. Similarly, without strong local businesses to provide a stable and reliable tax base, the ability of the County to direct and respond to local policy concerns is limited. The County's long-standing emphasis on farming and compact communities, as well as its abundant natural resources, have positioned it well to take advantage of the opportunities created by an era of rising food and energy costs. This General Plan looks to build upon the County's past successes by developing a "smart economy" that will afford both residents and the local government the ability to continue to chart the County's course into the future.

## **2. Contents**

This element addresses agricultural issues throughout Yolo County including:

1. Preservation of agriculture (Goal AG-1)
2. Natural resources for agriculture (Goal AG-2)
3. Healthy farm economy (Goal AG-3)
4. Education and awareness (Goal AG-4)
5. Local preference (Goal AG-5)
6. Delta agriculture (Goal AG-6)

This element addresses economic development issues throughout the County including:

1. Economic diversity (Goal ED-1)
2. Business climate and business assistance (Goal ED-2)
3. Community revitalization (Goal ED-3)
4. Expansion of tourism (Goal ED-4)
5. Economic sustainability (Goal ED-5)

The subsection for each of these topics is formatted as follows: Background Information, Policy Framework and Implementation Program. Within the Policy Framework and Implementation Program sections, policies and actions related to climate change are denoted with the symbol "🌍".

## **B. Agriculture**

### **1. Background Information**

Agriculture has been at the heart of Yolo County's identity, character, economy and way of life since the County's founding in 1850. Today, over 85 percent of county land is used for agriculture.<sup>3</sup> Traditional growers on large-scale commodity farms share the

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<sup>3</sup> County of Yolo, 2005. *Background Report for the Yolo County General Plan Update*, Woodland, California, page 1-7.

land with a growing number of diversified small farms (e.g. specialty crops and organic farms), as well as thriving livestock operations. Additionally, many farmers are implementing innovative new models for farm operation, crop choice and mix and marketing. Important contributors to the strength and success of agriculture in Yolo County include the County's longstanding commitment to agricultural preservation, its focus on directing growth into the existing cities and towns and the presence of UC Davis, which is an international leader in agricultural research and education.

Although past practices have served the county well, changing times have brought new challenges and require additional innovation. Urbanization pressures are likely to continue. Despite recent upturns, the agricultural economy has generally seen lower commodity prices, higher costs and a loss of markets and agricultural infrastructure for more traditional commodities in recent years. Production has remained level, despite technological advances. It is difficult for family farmers to respond to a growing body of regulatory requirements.

At the same time, the county continues to see growth in higher value crops, organic products, wine grapes and wineries and specialty products such as grass fed beef. Farmers are finding new ways, such as value-added products, direct marketing and agricultural tourism, to diversify and augment their incomes. If Yolo County is to maintain its agricultural land base and a thriving agricultural economy, it needs to continue to adopt new approaches for farmland protection as well as strategies for improving farming as a livelihood.

#### a. Soil Resources

The county's agricultural land, soil and water resources are the foundation of successful and continuing agriculture. There are many different ways of characterizing agricultural land and soil resources, beginning with the types of soils and their suitability for a range of agricultural uses and the availability of water and irrigation. Two of the most widely used systems, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Land Capability Classification system and the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, are used below to describe Yolo County farmland and soil resources.

The NRCS Land Capability Classification System is based on the limitations of soils for irrigated field crops, the risk of damage if soils are used for crops and the way soils respond to management. Land capability classes for irrigated land are designated by the numbers I through VII, indicating progressively greater limitations and narrower choices for agricultural use and are defined as follows.

- Class I soils have slight limitations that restrict their use.
- Class II soils have moderate limitations that restrict the crop selection or that require moderate conservation practices.
- Class III soils have severe limitations that restrict the choice of plants or that require special conservation practices, or both.

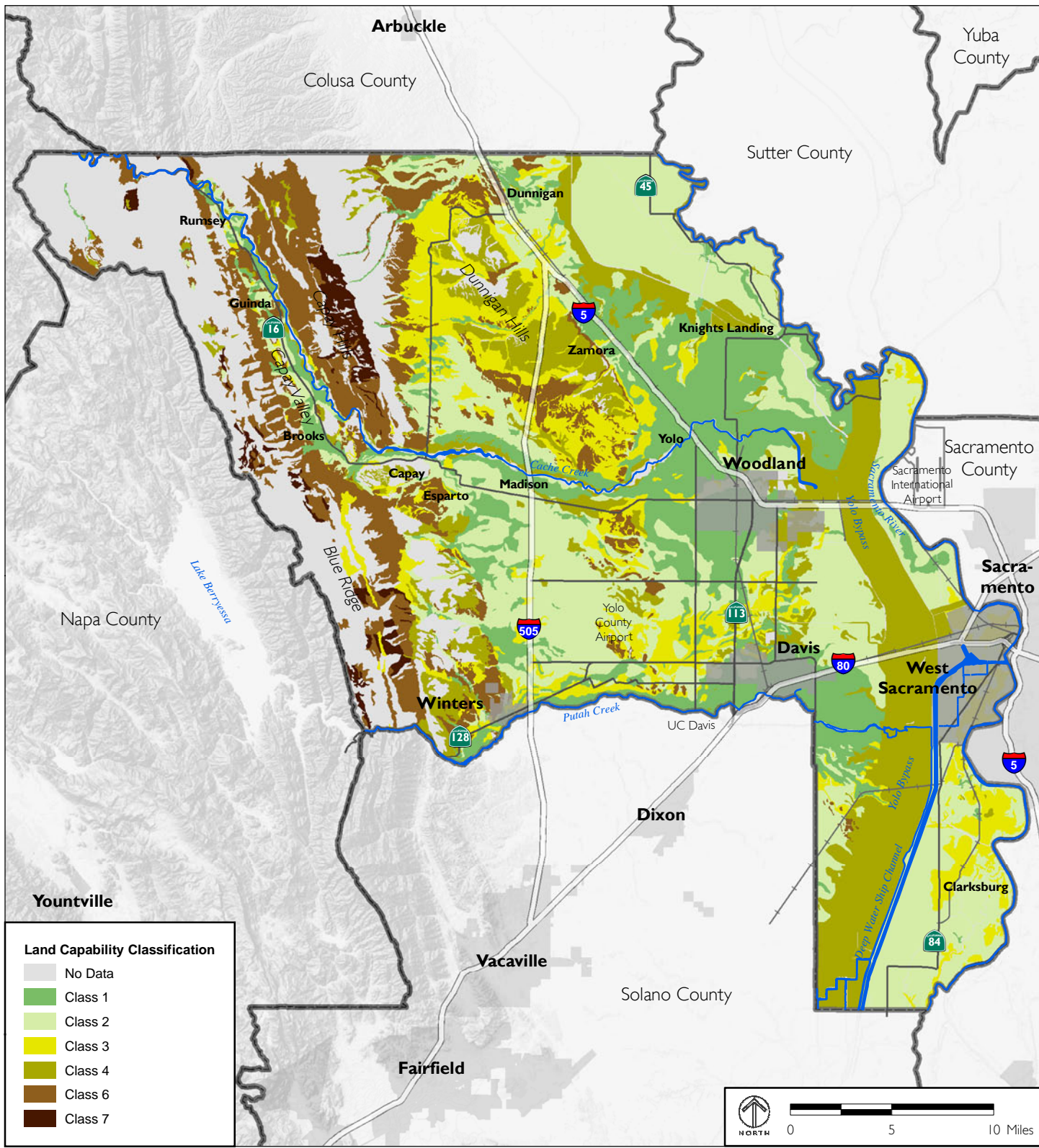
- Class IV soils have very severe limitations that restrict the choice of plants or that require very careful management, or both.
- Class V soils are subject to little or no erosion but have other limitations, impractical to remove, that restrict their use mainly to pasture, rangeland, forestland and/or wildlife habitat.
- Class VI soils have severe limitations that make them generally unsuitable for cultivation and that restrict their use mainly to pasture, rangeland, forestland, or wildlife habitat.
- Class VII soils have very severe limitations that make them unsuitable for cultivation and that restrict their use mainly to grazing, forestland and/or wildlife habitat.

The distribution of NRCS soils classifications in Yolo County is presented in Figure AG-1 and Table AG-1. Over 63 percent of total County farmland is on Class I, II and selected Class III soils; 11 percent is on other Class III and Class IV soils and 26 percent is on Class VI and VII soils. There are no Class V soils in Yolo County. Most of the unincorporated county consists of Class I and II soils, with areas of poorer quality soils in the Dunnigan Hills, along the Colusa Basin Drain and the Yolo Bypass and in the western foothills.

#### b. Important Farmlands

The NRCS classifies farmland according to soil type and the availability of irrigation. One of the most widely used descriptors of the suitability and value of land for agriculture, the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program uses this classification system to map the State's important farmlands.

- **Prime Farmland.** Land which has the best combination of physical and chemical soil characteristics, growing season and moisture supply needed to sustain long-term, high-yield agricultural production and has been used for the production of irrigated crops at some time during the four years before the mapping date.
- **Farmland of Statewide Importance.** Land similar to Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to store soil moisture and which has been used for the production of irrigated crops at some time during the four years before the mapping date.
- **Unique Farmland.** Land of lesser quality soils used for the production of the State's leading agricultural crops, usually irrigated but may include non-irrigated orchards or vineyards and has been cropped at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.



Source: USDA, NRCS  
 Land capability classification shows the suitability of soils for most kinds of field crops.  
 Class numbers indicate limitations on crop production, with greater class numbers indicating more limited soils.

FIGURE AG-1

IRRIGATED LAND CAPABILITY CLASSIFICATION

TABLE AG-1 YOLO COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOILS (NRCS LAND CAPABILITY CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM)<sup>a</sup>

Soil Class	Area	Percent of Total County Lands
Water	8,496	1.3
Class I	107,835	16.5
Class II	182,994	28.0
Class III	67,316	10.3
Class IV	109,143	16.7
Class V	0	0
Class VI	73,197	11.2
Class VII	66,662	10.2
Class VIII	37,906	5.8
Total	653,549 <sup>b</sup>	100

<sup>a</sup> Assumes irrigation where irrigation data was not available, the non-irrigated classification was included.

<sup>b</sup> Adjusted by +71 acres to match County GIS totals.

Source: USDA, NRCS.

- **Farmland of Local Importance.** Defined for Yolo County as farmland, presently cultivated or not, having soils which meet the criteria for Prime or Statewide, except that the land is not presently irrigated, as well as other non-irrigated farmland.
- **Grazing Land.** Land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock.
- **Urban and Built-Up Land.** Land occupied by structures with a building density of at least one unit per 1.5 acres. This land is used for residential, industrial, commercial, construction, institutional, public administration, railroad and other transportation yards, cemeteries, airports, golf courses, sanitary landfills, sewage treatment, water control structures and other developed purposes.
- **Other Land.** Land not included in any other mapping category, for example, low density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities; strip mines and borrow pits; water bodies smaller than 40 acres; and vacant and non-agricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres in area.
- **Water.** Perennial water bodies with an area of at least 40 acres.

Important farmlands in Yolo County are presented in Figure AG-2 and Table AG-2. The majority of the County's farmland is Prime Farmland, particularly in flat areas. Most of the County's cities and unincorporated communities are surrounded by Prime Farmland. The western foothills are predominantly classified as Grazing Land.

c. Agricultural Water Supply

Since rainfall in Yolo County is inadequate to sustain most crops, agriculture depends on a reliable irrigation water supply from a combination of both groundwater and surface water. In most years, surface water is the primary source of irrigation water in Yolo County. The main sources of surface water supply in Yolo County are the Sacramento River, Colusa Basin Drain, Putah Creek, Cache Creek, Yolo Bypass, Tule Canal, Willow Slough and the Tehama-Colusa Canal. Farmers rely on groundwater for approximately 40 percent of their supply in a normal year and rely more heavily on groundwater during drought years.<sup>4</sup>

Agricultural water demand is expected to remain fairly stable or to decline slightly due to the increasing use of higher value, permanent crops and associated efficient irrigation systems. Agricultural water users face problems with unreliable water supplies during drought conditions, subsidence from groundwater overdraft in the Upper Cache Creek region and the Dunnigan Hills region, competing demands from non-agricultural development for and the environment for limited water supplies and increasingly stringent, complex and costly water quality regulations.<sup>5</sup>

Water resource issues are also addressed in other elements of the General Plan. The Conservation and Open Space Element addresses aquatic and riparian ecosystems and water conservation. The Public Facilities and Services Element addresses water supply and water quality. The Health and Safety Element addresses flooding.

d. Crops

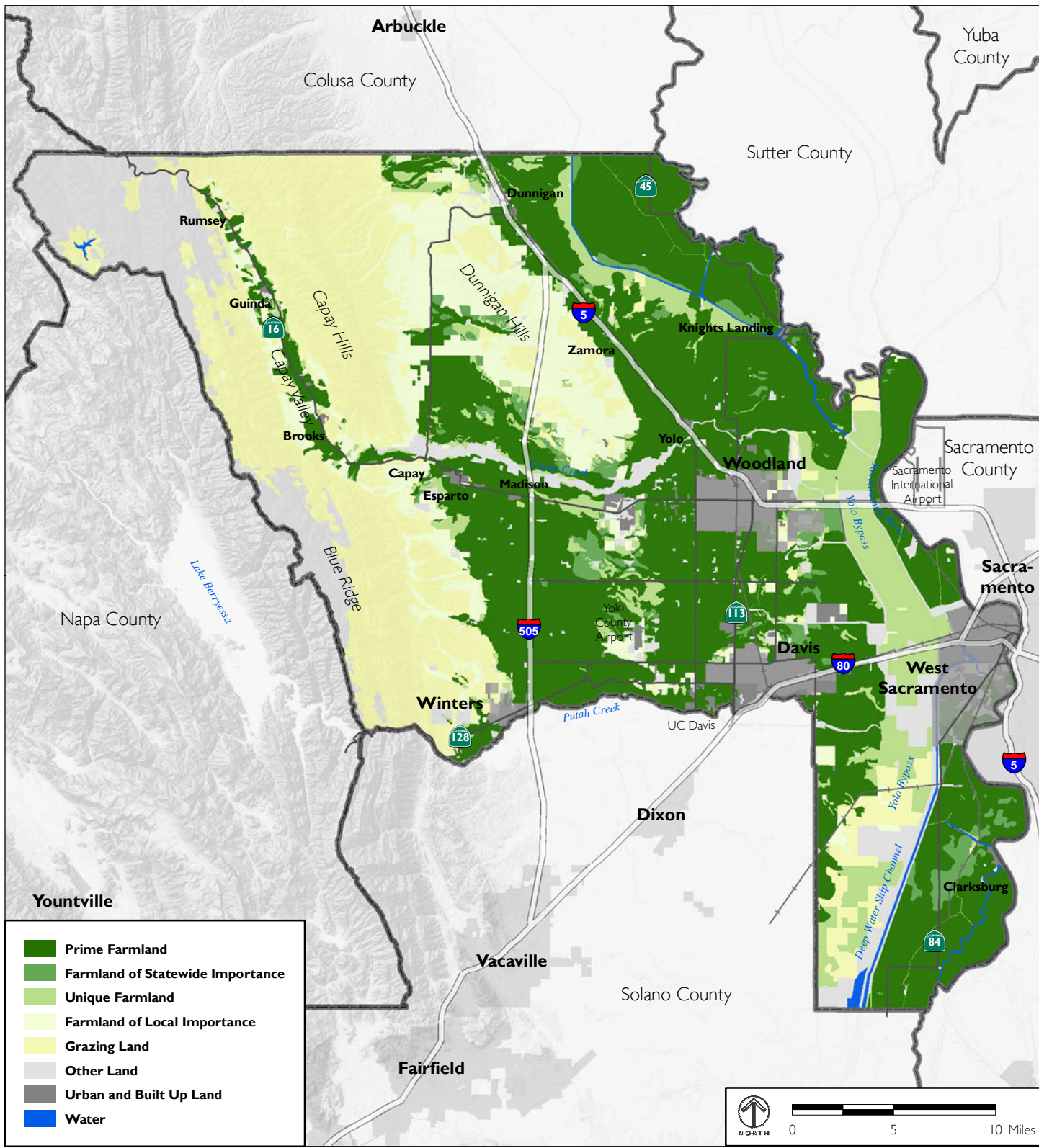
Crops grown in Yolo County can be characterized by acreage (the number of acres occupied by a particular crop) and by profitability (the amount of money generated by a particular crop). Yolo County's agricultural landscape is dominated by field crops, particularly alfalfa and rice crops. The County's agricultural economy is dominated by fruit crops, particularly tomatoes and wine grapes, which are the most profitable. As shown in Figure AG-3 and described below, the County's top ten most profitable agricultural commodities in 2007 were processing tomatoes, alfalfa, wine grapes, rice, seed crops, almonds, organic crops, walnuts, cows and wheat. Table AG-3 provides values for the leading commodities since 1998.

- **Processing Tomatoes.** Processing tomatoes have been the county's leading commodity in terms of income since 1960 and, despite a loss of canneries, lower prices and higher costs, are expected to remain an important economic crop.

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<sup>4</sup> IRWMP, 2007. *Model Policies for Water Resources for the Yolo County General Plan*, page 2.

<sup>5</sup> IRWMP, 2007. *Model Policies for Water Resources for the Yolo County General Plan*, page 3.



Source: California Dept. of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, 2004

FIGURE AG-2  
 IMPORTANT FARMLANDS



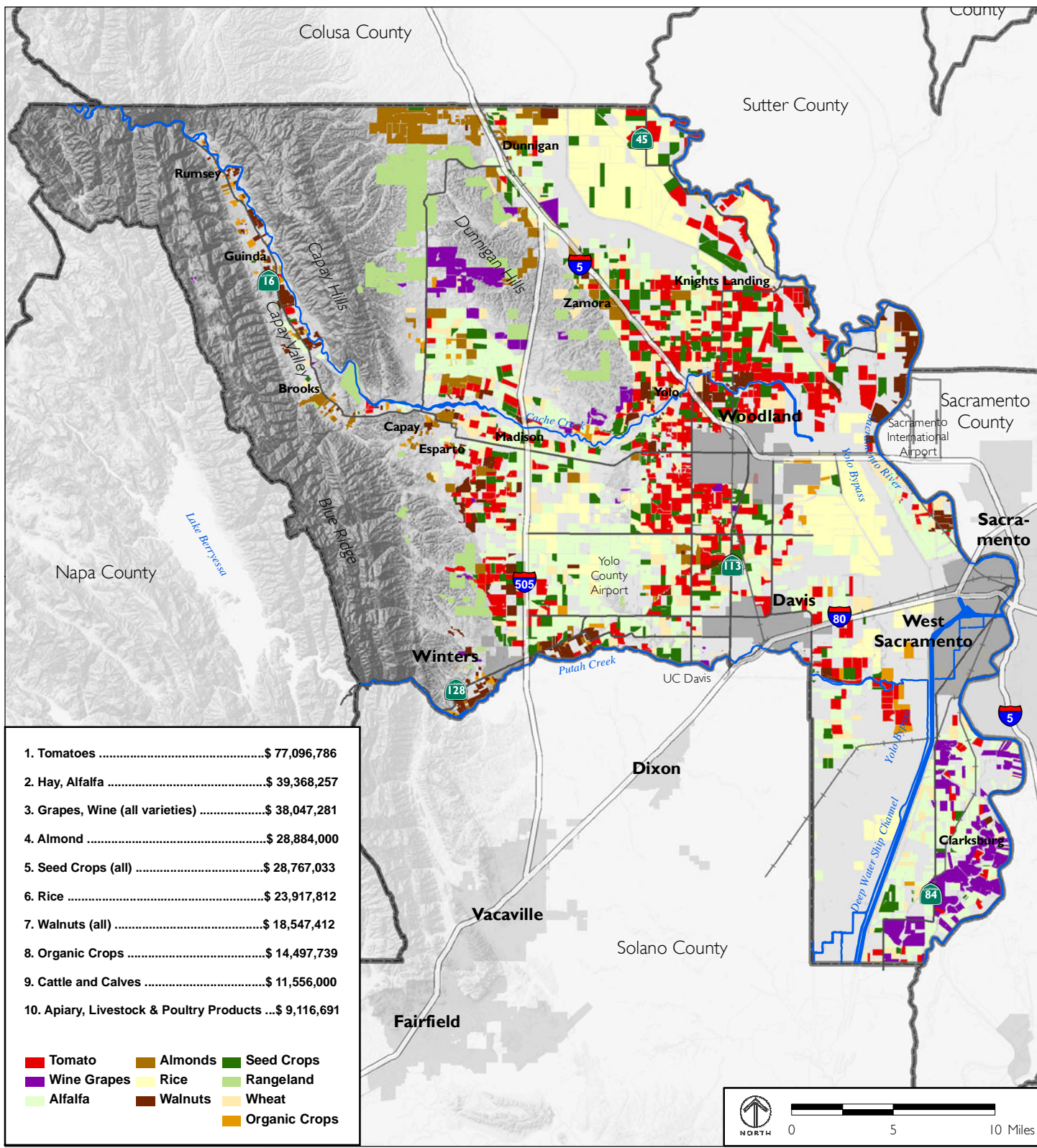
TABLE AG-2 YOLO COUNTY IMPORTANT FARMLANDS

Land Category	Area (Acres)	Percent of Total County Lands
Prime Farmland	257,893	40%
Farmland of Statewide Importance	16,989	3%
Unique Farmland	50,197	8%
Farmland of Local Importance	65,173	8%
Grazing Land	150,339	23%
Urban and Built-Up Land	29,343	4%
Other Land	75,800	12%
Water	7,815	1%
Total	653,549	100%

Adjusted by +96 acres to match County GIS totals.  
Source: Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, 2006.

■ **Wine Grapes.** Wine grapes are the largest single crop in the fruit and nut category. Several factors, including climate, lower land and production costs and the UC Davis Department of Viticulture and Enology, give Yolo County a competitive advantage in the wine industry when compared to better known areas like Napa and Sonoma Counties. As a result, Yolo County is among the top dozen wine producers in the State. There are four federally designated wine appellations in Yolo County. Known as “American Viticulture Areas,” or AVAs, these areas denote a winegrowing region with officially recognized boundaries. They are shown in Figure AG-4 and described below:

- Clarksburg: The 64,640-acre Clarksburg AVA is approximately 16 miles long and 8 miles wide, bordered by the town of Freeport on the north, Interstate 5 on the east, Twin Cities Road to the south and the Sacramento Deep Water Ship Channel on the west. It currently contains ten wineries and around 11,000 acres of vineyards. The Clarksburg AVA includes Merritt Island, which was previously a separate viticulture area.
- Dunnigan Hills: Dunnigan Hills is an 89,000-acre AVA in northwest Yolo County, established in 1993. It is generally bordered by Cache Creek on the south, County Road 99W on the east, Buckeye Creek on the north and Hungry Hollow to the west. It currently contains two wineries with about 3,000 acres of vineyards planted.



Source: Yolo County Agriculture Dept., 2006.

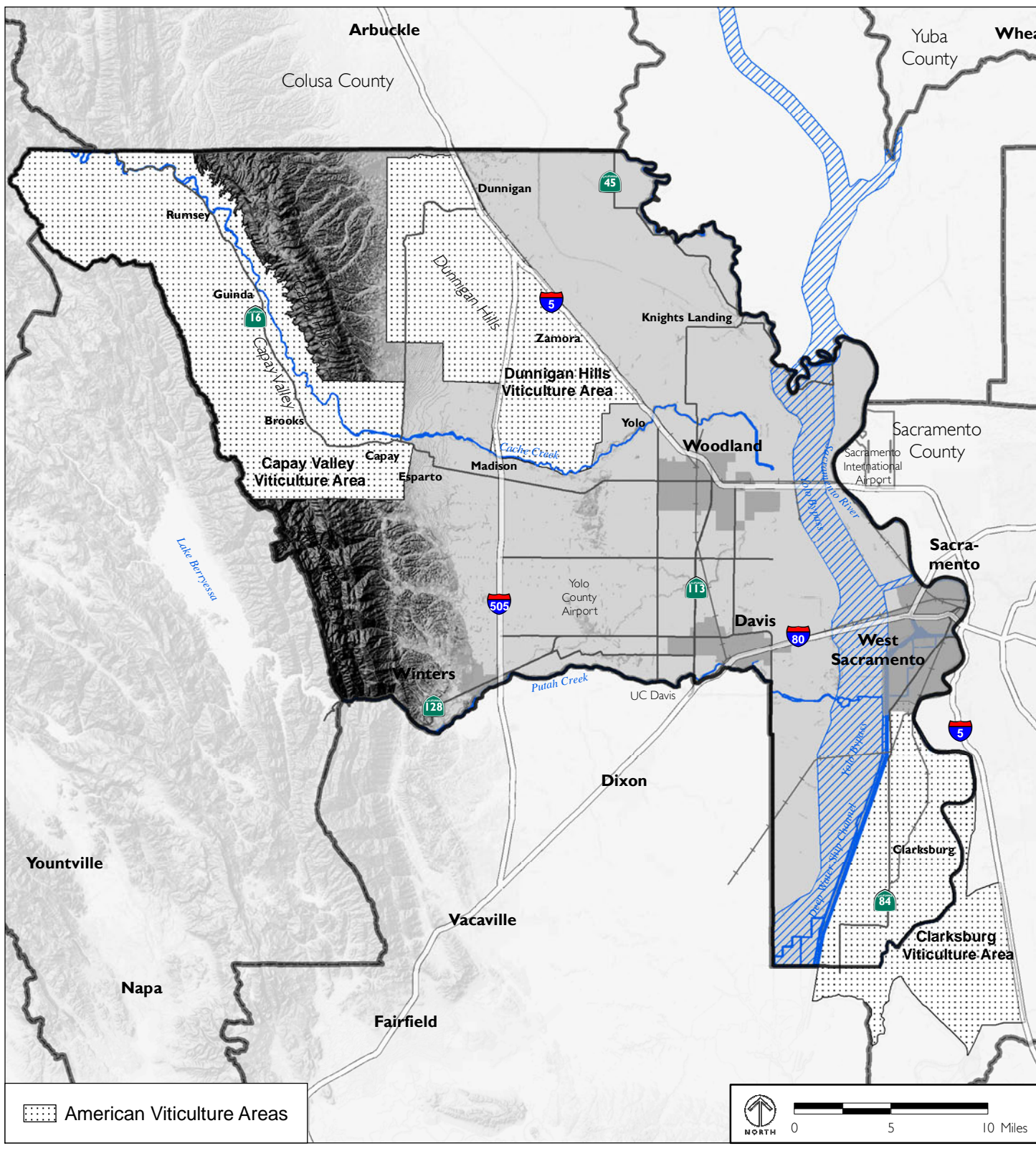
FIGURE AG-3

COUNTY OF YOLO  
 2030 COUNTYWIDE GENERAL PLAN  
 AGRICULTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

TABLE AG-3 VALUE OF LEADING COMMODITIES SINCE 1998

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
	(\$/Acres)	(\$/Acres)	(\$/Acres)	(\$/Acres)	(\$/Acres)	(\$/Acres)	(\$/Acres)	(\$/Acres)	(\$/Acres)	(\$/Acres)
Tomato	\$87,936,000	\$87,936,000	\$76,496,000	\$68,752,000	\$74,135,000	\$61,189,000	\$86,111,000	\$68,260,000	\$77,096,786	\$100,012,325
	56,600	67,114	48,575	40,374	42,812	38,274	45,129	42,232	37,026	42,149
Hay, Alfalfa	24,393,000	24,393,000	21,420,000	31,839,000	32,804,000	31,089,000	36,753,000	36,242,000	\$39,368,257	\$51,957,572
	42,430	43,024	38,720	45,885	53,231	55,914	52,904	45,776	59,269	53,959
Wine Grapes (All)	46,837,000	46,837,000	40,873,000	33,241,000	44,675,000	37,366,000	33,341,000	41,967,000	\$38,047,281	\$46,513,316
	8,410	8,704	9,496	10,242	9,699	10,334	9,909	8,464	10,156	11,898
Rice	11,714,000	11,714,000	34,597,000	28,316,000	27,687,000	39,899,000	40,768,000	28,248,000	\$23,917,812	\$32,836,105
	17,816	24,483	36,229	28,717	32,446	37,303	45,655	34,670	29,997	32,660
Seed Crops	20,649,000	20,649,000	19,975,000	17,079,000	14,999,000	17,943,000	21,278,000	21,413,000	\$28,767,033	\$31,952,413
	22,599	25,163	18,708	16,754	16,619	20,708	26,556	26,806	29,104	23,337
Almond	7,434,000	7,434,000	4,427,000	4,814,000		12,220,000	19,309,000	30,976,000	\$28,884,000	\$28,914,985
	5,879	5,612	5,552	6,437	5,854	6,038	6,818	9,149	9,378	9,698
Organic Production	6,392,000	6,392,000	6,674,000	8,288,000	9,078,000	10,637,000	13,693,000	13,914,000	\$14,497,739	\$19,475,512
	2,425	2,830	3,335	6,253	5,405	4,692	4,998	4,515	6,003	5,932
Walnuts	7,599,000	7,599,000	9,885,000	12,601,000	11,464,000	12,274,000	11,437,000	21,748,000	\$18,547,412	\$18,872,190
	8,003	7,299	8,497	7,962	9,080	9,785	9,447	9,605	9,845	7,851
Cattle & Calves	7,430,000	7,430,000	10,034,000	9,485,000	7,695,000	10,185,000	10,601,000	12,412,000	\$11,556,000	\$15,870,404
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Wheat	7,135,000	7,135,000	8,382,000	9,629,000	8,537,000	16,350,000	12,948,000	7,738,000	4,558,000	\$12,178,840
	39,014	33,832	43,144	43,774	33,076	56,227	44,098	34,647	20,976	35,613

Source: Yolo County, Agricultural Reports 1998-2007.



Source: County of Yolo GIS, 2006.

FIGURE AG-4  
**AMERICAN VITICULTURE AREAS**

- **Capay Valley:** This large valley (150 square miles) only has one winery with 25 acres of land currently under vine. This relatively new AVA, has a long history of growing grapes – in fact as early as 1861, a winery in the region was voted to have the best vineyard in the Golden State. While it is just northeast of Napa and a mere two-hour drive from San Francisco, the region has not had much recognition compared its neighboring Napa County. A potential for the region to explore is sustainable practices, as its warm dry climate—particularly relative to fog prone Napa Valley—allows for less spraying in the vineyard. In an era when consumers are more aware of environmentally sensitive practices in the field, this could be an avenue to explore further.
- **Nuts.** Nuts are profitably grown on smaller lot sizes, require a large initial capital investment and have been increasing in production value. Yolo also benefits from California’s strong global market presence in almonds and walnuts.
- **Field Crops.** The acreage of field crops in Yolo County has increased, replacing acreage that once grew processing tomatoes. Alfalfa, wheat and rice crops occupy the largest agricultural land use in Yolo County and are the third, ninth and fifth most profitable crops, respectively.
- **Seed Crops.** Due to consistently being a profitable crop to keep in rotation, the acreage of seed crops in Yolo County has been stable or slightly increasing in recent years.
- **Rangeland.** A significant portion of the county is rangeland. Beef cattle and lamb, grass-fed beef and milk have been increasing in production and value.
- **Organic Production.** Yolo County is one of the top five organic producers in the State. Organic production increased by 34 percent in 2007 to over \$19 million, as Yolo County farmers kept pace with expanding demand for organic produce. The value of organic crops has tripled in Yolo County since 1998.

As shown in Figure AG-3, these leading commodities are grown throughout the county, in some cases on non-prime farmland. Many of these crops, such as organic crops, seed crops and wine grapes, are important to the County’s economy as a foundation for related value-added processing and support businesses, as well as agricultural tourism.

e. **Agricultural Infrastructure**

Yolo agriculture depends on a network of adequate roads and irrigation, as well as the availability and proximity of field labor, processing, transporting, marketing and other farm-related services.

i. *Transportation*

Yolo County’s nearly 900 miles of roads provide a reliable network by which local farmers can move equipment, labor and supplies from field to field and transport their goods to processing plants and markets. However, many of the county’s roads are in poor condition and increased traffic (due primarily to regional growth and the Cache

Creek Casino Resort) impedes the movement of slower farm equipment thus affecting productivity.

The Port of Sacramento, located in Yolo County, offers containerized and bulk shipment of products and agricultural raw materials. The two major commodities exported from the Port are rice and wood chips. However, its capacity remains limited by the shallow depth of the Deep Ship Channel that provides access to cargo ships.

Airports are important to agriculture for two reasons: as a way to ship agricultural commodities and for use by crop-dusters. Two of the County's airports (Yolo County Airport and Watts-Woodland Airport) and the nearby Sacramento International Airport allow for shipment of higher value agricultural products. Growers Air Service, based at the privately-operated Medlock Field north of Davis, is the only remaining crop duster service based in Yolo County. All other crop duster services come from outside the County.

#### *ii. Residential Uses*

The County allows, either by right or as a conditional use, one single-family dwelling and one ancillary dwelling per legal parcel in agricultural areas. This policy allows truck farmers, organic farmers or start-up farmers (who generally have smaller scale operations) to live on their land. The location and placement of homes in the rural area can have an impact on tenant farmers and neighboring farm operations.

Decent farm worker housing is needed in locations throughout the county so farmers have a ready and nearby supply of reliable labor at key times in the crop cycle. Liability and landlord regulations have discouraged many landowners from providing farm worker housing. In addition, farm workers and their families need an array of social support services, including government assistance, schools, medical services, shopping, etc. that are largely located in the urban areas. Farm workers tend to have the lowest incomes among all workers, so housing needs to be affordable to households earning 50 percent or less of the median income. Farm worker housing, as well as housing for other low-income residents, is covered comprehensively in the Housing Element of the General Plan.

#### *iii. Industrial Uses*

Despite the closure of sugar beet mills and tomato canneries in recent years, Yolo County remains home to a large share of the region's top food processing companies. Current processing facilities include one tomato processor, two rice mills, nine wineries, eight nut and nut oil processors, three dairies, 16 seed labelers and a prune processor. These are distributed throughout the County, with most rice processing facilities, seed labelers and dairies located in the Woodland area and most walnut hullers located in Winters or Guinda. Wineries are located in Clarksburg, Brooks and the Hungry Hollow area north of Esparto.

f. **Agricultural Economy and Employment**

In 2007, the total gross valuation of all agricultural commodities produced was nearly \$454 million, up 22.5 percent from \$370 million in 2006. Recent trends and future outlook continue upward, although the gross production value of the County's leading commodities fluctuates with annual changes in acreage and price. Seed crops and organic production continue their upward trend. Field labor, processing, transporting, marketing and other farm-related services boost the annual contribution of agriculture to the overall Yolo County economy to over \$1 billion.<sup>6</sup>

Approximately 4,200 people were employed on Yolo County farms in 2006, about 4.2 percent of the 100,500 civilian jobs in the County, which is double the State average.<sup>7</sup> This reflects a decrease of 200 jobs or 4 percent since 1995.<sup>8</sup> To the extent that farm inputs are provided locally and outputs are processed locally, they generate additional income and employment for the County. Related uses such as agricultural support businesses, agricultural industrial uses, farm worker camps, stores selling items grown and manufactured in Yolo County, bed and breakfasts, lodges and wineries are also important contributors to the local economy. The income multiplier effect for agricultural uses is roughly 2.0.<sup>9</sup>

Agricultural property and business activity provide a significant portion of the tax base in Yolo County. The tax revenues generated by the agricultural industry are generally lower than would be created by other uses on the same land, however, the cost to provide government services to farms is also lower. Regardless, additional diversification in its economic base would benefit local employment, businesses and the County budget.<sup>10</sup>

**2. Regulatory Framework**

a. **State Requirements**

The Agricultural and Economic Development Element is not one of the seven mandatory elements of a General Plan. The County has adopted this element because agriculture has been the economic and social engine for the County. It has defined the County's cultural values and continues to be the number one industry of the County. Although it is an optional element, under State law it carries the same weight as any of the mandatory elements and bears the same requirements for both horizontal and vertical consistency.<sup>11</sup> This element addresses the requirements of Government Code Section 65560.b.2 related to agriculture and rangeland.

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<sup>6</sup> County of Yolo, 2007. *2006 Agricultural Crop Report*, Woodland, California.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/cosnaps/yolosnap.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> County of Yolo, 1996. *Agricultural and Tourism Targeted Industry Analyses, Final Report*, Woodland, CA, page VI-2.

<sup>9</sup> County of Yolo, 2005. *Background Report for the Yolo County General Plan Update*, Woodland, California, pages 2-78 and 2-79.

<sup>10</sup> County of Yolo, 2002. *General Plan Agricultural Element*, Woodland, California, page 2-12.

<sup>11</sup> California Government Code Sections 56300.5, 65301a and 65303.

b. Growth Boundaries

The County has long maintained a growth strategy that focuses urban development within the four cities and the unincorporated communities. This General Plan establishes growth boundaries for each unincorporated community in Yolo County and relies upon the City SOI as the growth boundaries for the cities, clearly defining the agricultural-community interface. In addition, the County has agreed with Davis and Woodland to maintain a permanent agricultural and open space buffer between the two cities. This Agricultural and Economic Development element contains a policy to maintain this 11,000-acre buffer and an action to work with the cities to make it more specific and binding.

c. Yolo County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)

LAFCO has been a close partner in the County's agricultural preservation efforts. LAFCO's strong preservation posture, its Agricultural Conservation Policy and mitigation requirements are intended to preserve agricultural lands. These policies and requirements also serve to discourage the premature conversion of prime agricultural lands to urban uses and have become critical elements of farmland protection in Yolo County. The LAFCO Agricultural Conservation Policy includes policy guidelines, implementation strategies and standards which are applied to proposed boundary changes for cities and special districts.

d. Williamson Act

The California Land Conservation Act, better known as the Williamson Act, has been a cornerstone of the County's agricultural preservation program. As shown in Figure AG-5, 410,659 acres or 67 percent of Yolo County's total land area is in Williamson Act contracts. In 2005, the State honored Yolo County with an agricultural stewardship award in recognition of the County's work to preserve agricultural land through the Williamson Act. Subventions (reimbursements for lost property tax revenue resulting from Williamson Act contracts) have repeatedly been proposed for reduction or elimination by the State in recent years in order to balance the State budget. This would have a significant and adverse effect on both farmers and the County.

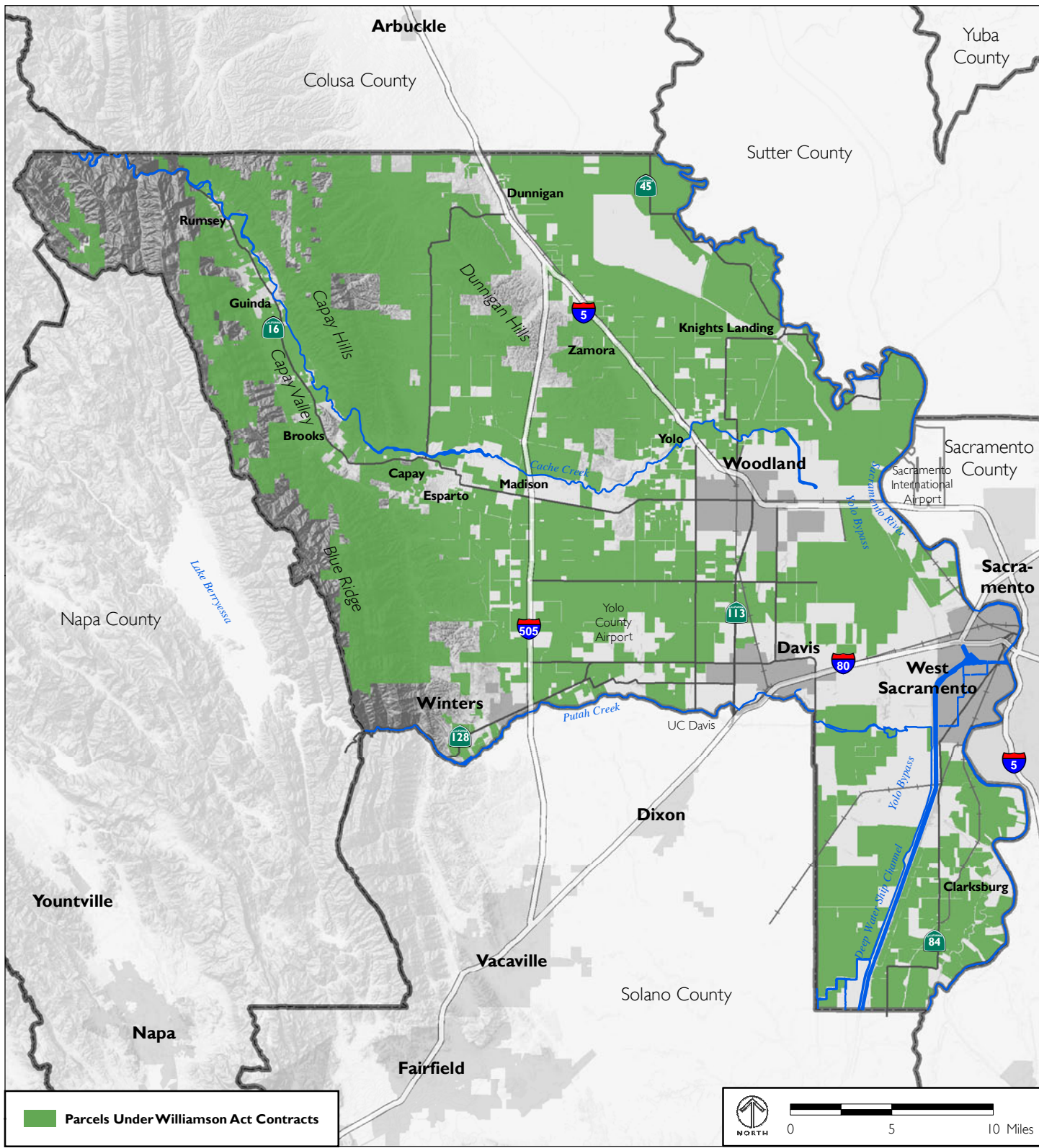
e. Yolo County Farmland Conversion Mitigation Program

Through its Agricultural Land Conversion Ordinance<sup>12</sup>, Yolo County requires mitigation when farmland is converted to non-agricultural uses for development purposes. The ordinance requires dedication of 1 acre of proximate and equivalent agricultural land for each acre of agricultural land converted. The ordinance outlines the soil, irrigation and other requirements of land that can qualify as agricultural mitigation. Yolo County does not allow for payment of a fee in-lieu of land and/or easement acquisition except for conversions totaling 5 acres or less. The ordinance also prohibits "stacked mitigation," which would allow credit for agricultural mitigation and habitat or other mitigation on the same property.

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<sup>12</sup> Zoning Ordinance Section 8-2.2416.





Source: County of Yolo GIS, 2006.

FIGURE AG-5  
 WILLIAMSON ACT CONTRACTS

f. Agricultural Districts

In January of 2008, the County established the Clarksburg Agricultural District in order to explore ways to encourage agricultural business development and expansion. The district is shown in Figure AG-6. The Clarksburg Agricultural District encompasses both the federally-recognized Clarksburg wine appellation and the West Sacramento Enterprise Zone. While the land within this District makes up only 9 percent of the County’s active farmland, it produces almost 22 percent of the total value of the County’s top five crops. The County is considering an array of possible tools that could be applied within the District, such as relaxing regulatory standards and level of service standards; subsidizing marketing efforts; lowering building permit fees; allowing additional on-site housing and designating specific economic focus points where shipping, processing, trade and other services would be centrally located. This element contains policies and actions encouraging the similar use of agricultural districts in other areas of the County, where appropriate. Other Districts are being evaluated for future consideration in the Capay Valley and Dunnigan Hills areas.

g. Revenue Agreements

Redevelopment pass-through agreements and annexation revenue-sharing agreements are key components of the County’s farmland preservation framework, providing revenues to the County that allow it to forego revenue-generating urban development on unincorporated agricultural land. The County will continue to collaborate with the cities to strengthen such agreements, ensure sufficient revenues, cover County revenue losses and service costs and enable the continued preservation of agricultural land that would otherwise be subject to intense development pressure.

**3. Policy Framework**

**GOAL AG-1      Preservation of Agriculture.    Preserve and defend agriculture as fundamental to the identity of Yolo County.**

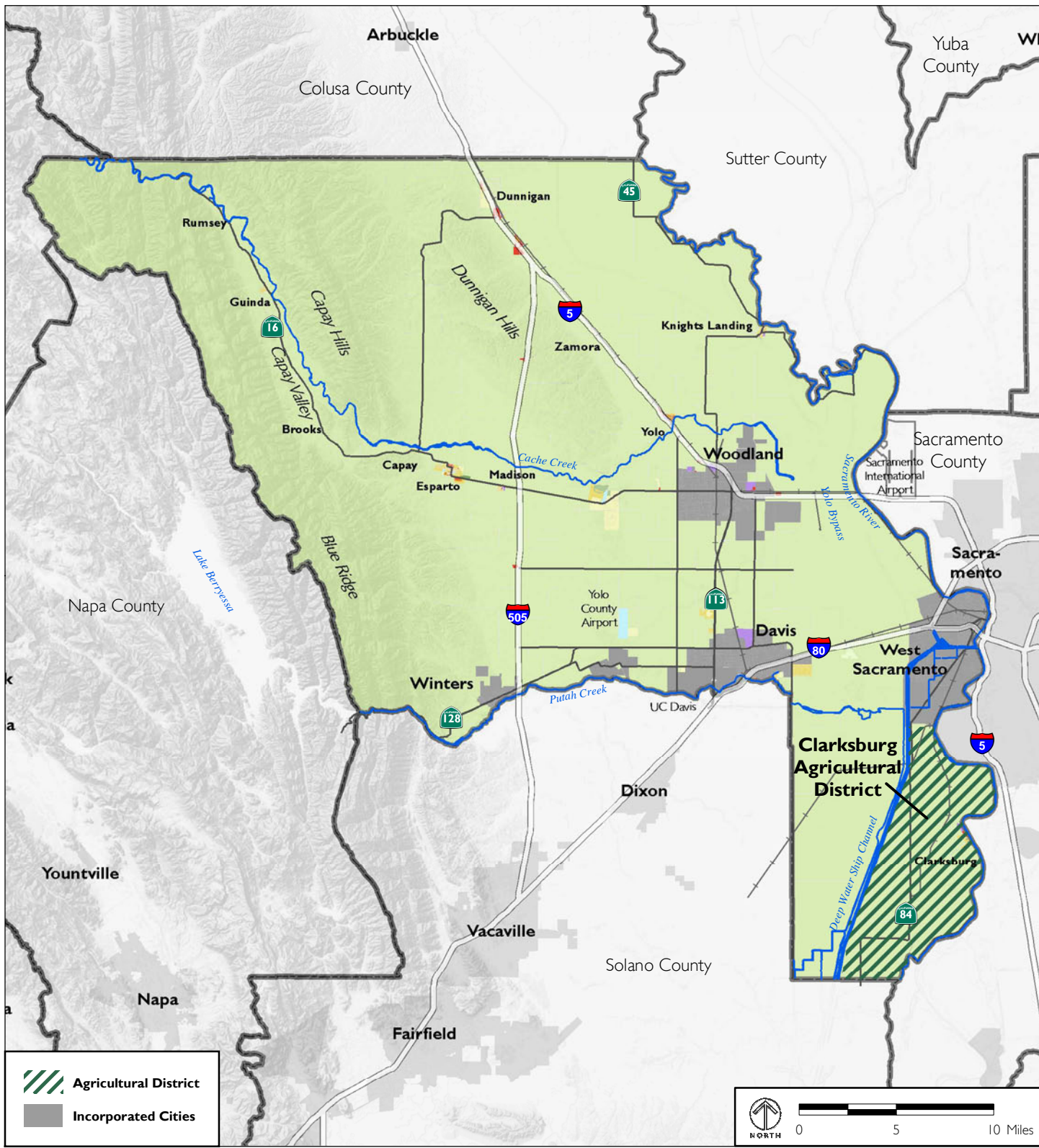
Policy AG-1.1    Protect and enhance the County’s four key agricultural sectors. This includes: (1) retaining existing growers and processors of large-scale commodity crops; (2) encouraging the growth of emerging crops and value-added processing; (3) supporting small and organic producers and their ability to serve visitors; and (4) enhancing the transfer of new technologies into practical applications for seeds, crops, fuels, alternative energy, food processing, etc.

Policy AG-1.2    Maintain parcel sizes outside of the community growth boundaries large enough to sustain viable agriculture and discourage conversion to non-agricultural home sites. 🌍

Policy AG-1.3    Prohibit the division of agricultural land for non-agricultural uses. 🌍

Policy AG-1.4    Prohibit land use activities that are not compatible within agriculturally designated areas.

COUNTY OF YOLO  
 2030 COUNTYWIDE GENERAL PLAN  
 AGRICULTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT



Source: Yolo County GIS, 2007.

FIGURE AG-6  
**AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT**

- Policy AG-1.5 Strongly discourage the conversion of agricultural land for other uses. No lands shall be considered for redesignation from Agricultural to another designation unless all of the following findings can be made: 🌍
- A. There is a public need or net community benefit derived from the conversion of the land that outweighs the need to protect the land for long-term agricultural use.
  - B. There are no feasible alternative locations for the proposed project that are either designated for non-agricultural land uses or are less productive agricultural lands.
  - C. The use would not have a significant adverse effect on existing or potential agricultural production on surrounding lands designated Agriculture.
- Policy AG-1.6 Continue to mitigate at a ratio of no less than 1:1 the conversion of farm land and/or the conversion of land designated or zoned for agriculture, to urban uses. 🌍
- Policy AG-1.7 Locate farm dwellings in a manner that protects both on-site and off-site agricultural practices. All dwellings in agriculturally zoned areas shall be encouraged to be located on portions of the parcel unsuitable for agricultural use and in “clustered” configurations.
- Policy AG-1.8 Ensure that development will not have a significant adverse effect on the economic viability or constrain the lawful practices of adjoining or nearby agricultural operations, except for land within the Sphere of Influence (SOI) around a city or within the growth boundary around an unincorporated community. New urban (non-agricultural) development shall be set back a minimum of 300 feet from adjoining agricultural land. A minimum 300-foot setback shall also be required for sensitive areas that are used as public gathering places (e.g. schools, churches, parks and detention basins) that adjoin agriculturally zoned land.
- Policy AG-1.9 Regulate and encourage removal of incompatible land uses and facilities from agriculturally designated lands.
- Policy AG-1.10 Work with the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) on issues of mutual concern including agricultural preservation policies and the establishment and maintenance of logical boundaries for service districts that support existing and planned community growth. 🌍
- Policy AG-1.11 Protect agricultural lands from urban encroachment by limiting the extension of urban service facilities and infrastructure, particularly sewers. 🌍

- Policy AG-1.12 Maintain growth boundaries around existing communities and neighborhoods to encourage urban infill development and protect adjoining agricultural lands. 🌍
- Policy AG-1.13 Prohibit new residential or suburban subdivisions in areas designated for agricultural use. 🌍
- Policy AG-1.14 Discourage the use of “antiquated subdivisions” for non-agricultural use. The County shall review areas previously subdivided (antiquated subdivisions) for consideration as specialty farming areas. Areas identified for this purpose shall have water and soil characteristics capable of sustaining specialty-farming operations.
- Policy AG-1.15 Preserve agricultural lands using a variety of programs, including the Williamson Act, Farmland Preservation Zones, conservation easements, an Agricultural Lands Conversion Ordinance and the Right-to-Farm Ordinance.
- Policy AG-1.16 Advocate for maintenance and improvement of the Williamson Act Land Conservation (Agricultural Preserve) Program.
- Policy AG-1.17 Encourage through voluntary means the coordinated acquisition of agricultural conservation easements by local, State and federal agencies and private conservation organizations with established records of responsible stewardship to protect agriculture.
- Policy AG-1.18 Encourage the coordinated placement of agricultural conservation easements on land most threatened by development, particularly those lands located close to cities and unincorporated communities. 🌍
- Policy AG-1.19 When undertaking improvement of public roadways and drainage facilities, consult with adjoining farmland owners and incorporate designs that minimize impacts on agriculture.
- Policy AG-1.20 Encourage the retention of existing and development of new airport facilities for agricultural aerial applications.
- Policy AG-1.21 Consider “affordable farming” programs where development impact fees or other funding sources and/or mechanisms are used to create incubator farms and other opportunities for entry-level farming.
- Policy AG-1.22 Discourage export of County water. Within conservation easements, preclude the practice of fallowing fields for that purpose. Fallowing as a part of normal crop rotation is not subject to this policy.

**GOAL AG-2**     **Natural Resources for Agriculture. Protect the natural resources needed to ensure that agriculture remains an essential part of Yolo County’s future.**

- Policy AG-2.1     Protect areas identified as significantly contributing to groundwater recharge from uses that would reduce their ability to recharge or would threaten the quality of the underlying aquifers. 🌍
- Policy AG-2.2     Preserve water resources for agriculture, both in quantity and quality, from competition with development and/or interests from outside of the County. 🌍
- Policy AG-2.3     Work proactively with regional and watershed based groups to protect and preserve Yolo County’s agricultural water supply.
- Policy AG-2.4     Encourage the agricultural community to utilize Best Management Practices in the application and use of water resources. 🌍
- Policy AG-2.5     Support high value and intensive farming practices on appropriate agricultural soils. Prime soils and other productive agricultural land outside of growth boundaries shall be preserved wherever feasible.
- Policy AG-2.6     Work with appropriate local, State and federal agencies to conserve, study and improve soils. Promote participation in programs that reduce soil erosion and increase soil productivity. 🌍
- Policy AG-2.7     Encourage farmers and agricultural businesses to prepare for opportunities and adversities that may result from global climate change. 🌍
- Policy AG-2.8     Facilitate partnerships between agricultural operations and habitat conservation efforts to create mutually beneficial outcomes.
- Policy AG-2.9     Promote wildlife-friendly agricultural practices.
- Policy AG-2.10     Support the use of effective mechanisms to protect farmers potentially impacted by adjoining habitat enhancement programs, such as “safe harbor” programs and providing buffers within the habitat area to allow for the on-going application of agricultural pesticides and herbicides on neighboring land.
- Policy AG-2.11     Encourage habitat protection and management that does not preclude or unreasonably restrict on-site agricultural production.
- Policy AG-2.12     Balance the needs for agriculture with recreation, flooding and habitat within the Yolo Bypass.

- Policy AG-2.13 Encourage growers to use agricultural methods that reduce or minimize use of pesticides, herbicides and manufactured fertilizers.
- Policy AG-2.14 Employ agricultural practices that supplement rather than deplete topsoil and conserve or minimize water use. 🌍
- Policy AG-2.15 Promote environmentally friendly farm practices, such as tailwater ponds, native species/grasslands restoration in field margins, hedgerows, ditch management for riparian habitat, reduction of pesticides, incorporating winter stubble and summer fallow, etc. 🌍
- Policy AG-2.16 Recognize the valuable role that agriculture plays in mitigating the effects of climate change, including permanent crops that sequester carbon for long periods of time and the use of organic farming methods that reduce the use of fossil fuels and pesticides. 🌍
- Policy AG-2.17 Encourage the establishment of agricultural mitigation banks in appropriate locations that provide strategic protection of high value farmland.

**GOAL AG-3 Healthy Farm Economy. Promote a healthy and competitive farm economy to expand the County’s agricultural base.**

- Policy AG-3.1 Establish an Agricultural District overlay designation to enhance and aggressively promote the distinctive agricultural and recreational character of unique regions within the County. Agricultural Districts shall be established in areas where agricultural business development and expansion (including industrial processing, commercial sales and agricultural tourism) will be encouraged through the use of targeted regulatory streamlining, financial incentives and specialized marketing efforts. Three initial districts shall be considered as follows:

District	Unique Aspects	Suggested Policies and Actions
Capay Valley	Organic farming with many different specialty crops	Promote organic and small-scale farming
	Agricultural tourism	Enhance cooperative small-scale processing, warehousing, marketing capacity
	Cache Creek Casino Resort destination	Improve the visitor experience
	Quaint downtowns	Advance the Capay Valley Grown brand
	Cache Creek recreation	
	One wine appellation (Capay Valley)	Review land use policies for visitor-serving facilities

District	Unique Aspects	Suggested Policies and Actions
Clarksburg		Promote wine grape growing
	Wine grape growing potential	Establish local crushing, fermentation, bottling, storage capacity
	Agricultural tourism (River and Delta related tourism)	Promote tourism
	Historic mill site with boutique wineries	Establish a Clarksburg brand
Dunnigan Hills	One wine appellation (Clarksburg)	Review land use policies for visitor-serving facilities
		Establish and promote Enterprise Zone benefits
	One wine appellation (Dunnigan Hills)	Promote wineries and olive presses
	Established almond, wine grape and orchard region	Establish a Dunnigan Hills brand
	Olive oil growth potential	Encourage use of appellation
	Eco-tourism potential	

Policy AG-3.2 Allow uses that support agriculture, such as agricultural commercial uses, agricultural industrial uses, direct product sales, processing, farm-based tourism, agricultural research and farm worker housing, on agricultural land subject to appropriate design review and development standards.

Policy AG-3.3 Support the ability to continue to move agricultural equipment along and across roads and highways.

Policy AG-3.4 Recognize and protect agricultural infrastructure, such as farm-to-market routes, water diversion and conveyance structures, fertilizer and chemical sales, airfields, processing facilities, research and development and farm worker housing.

Policy AG-3.5 Encourage the provision of farm worker housing by streamlining permit requirements, reducing fees and requiring inclusionary housing within established communities.

Policy AG-3.6 Strongly encourage cities to share in the responsibility for providing adequate sites to accommodate farm labor housing. 🌍



- Policy AG-3.7 Support the development of local suppliers for agricultural goods and services, including small-scale and/or mobile processing facilities and distribution centers for locally produced foods. 🌍
- Policy AG-3.8 Encourage re-use, for agricultural purposes, of agricultural industrial facilities that are no longer needed due to changing economic conditions.
- Policy AG-3.9 Support the development of an agricultural marketing and tourism program to coordinate private and public initiatives and to integrate them with County efforts to attract business.
- Policy AG-3.10 Encourage the establishment of small-scale agriculture uses (e.g. specialty crops, organic farming, specialized animal facilities and agricultural research operations) where small parcels of land presently exist in agricultural areas with suitable soils.
- Policy AG-3.11 Adopt land use regulations for small farms that recognize the potential role such farms play in education and agricultural tourism and provide for the inclusion of such activities, while discouraging the use of small farms as non-agricultural home sites.
- Policy AG-3.12 Promote marketplace-initiated conversion from lower to higher value added crops and agricultural commodities.
- Policy AG-3.13 Support farmers in diversifying their products to produce and market healthful foods, specialty ethnic foods and foods needed and desired by local consumers. 🌍
- Policy AG-3.14 Work with local agricultural groups to establish a unique identity for Yolo County agricultural products.
- Policy AG-3.15 Provide technical and educational support for farmers in Yolo County through the services of the Agricultural Commissioner's Office, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Resource Conservation District and University of California Cooperative Extension.
- Policy AG-3.16 Promote agricultural innovation, including research and development, biotechnology, sustainable farm practices, agri-tourism and non-traditional agricultural operations in order to expand and improve business and marketing opportunities for those engaged in agriculture.
- Policy AG-3.17 Collaborate with other agencies and organizations to provide training, technical assistance and capital for emerging agricultural businesses.

Policy AG-3.18 Allow the location of agricultural commercial, industrial and tourism activities on land designated as Agricultural, consistent with the Land Use and Community Character Element.

Policy AG-3.19 Identify areas suitable for future biotechnology development to support and expand the growing local biotechnology industry.

<b>GOAL AG-4</b>	<b><u>Education and Awareness.</u> Support education to ensure continued public recognition of the important role that agriculture plays in Yolo County.</b>
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Policy AG-4.1 Promote educational programs aimed at informing the general public about agriculture.

Policy AG-4.2 Work with Natural Resources Conservation Service, UC Cooperative Extension, Farm Bureau and similar organizations to increase awareness of actions that may affect farming, including the involvement of an agricultural issues curriculum in the public schools.

Policy AG-4.3 Encourage ongoing public education programs by such organizations as UC Cooperative Extension, Farm Bureau, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Yolo County Resource Conservation District, 4-H Club, Future Farmers of America, Ag Futures Alliance and other related organizations.

Policy AG-4.4 Coordinate with the 40th District Agricultural Association and the City of Woodland regarding the possible relocation of the Yolo County Fairgrounds and the appropriate reuse of the existing facility.

<b>GOAL AG-5</b>	<b><u>Local Preference.</u> Promote the use of foods and products from Yolo County to strengthen the local economy, improve health and connect residents with the agricultural community.</b>
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Policy AG-5.1 Promote markets for locally and regionally grown and/or prepared food and other products and services. 🌍

Policy AG-5.2 Support the development of community kitchens and related infrastructure, food business incubator facilities and other related entrepreneurial projects.

Policy AG-5.3 Support programs and facilities that help reduce hunger and provide food-related business opportunities.

- Policy AG-5.4 Encourage neighborhood grocery stores, farmers markets, community gardens and food assistance programs to increase their use of locally grown/prepared goods. 🌍
- Policy AG-5.5 Encourage increased access to affordable and culturally relevant healthful foods, especially for low-income households.
- Policy AG-5.6 Encourage institutions, such as schools, hospitals, colleges, government agencies, businesses and private food outlets such as grocery stores and restaurants, to provide foods produced locally and in the region. 🌍
- Policy AG-5.7 Provide opportunities within each unincorporated town for community gardens and farmers markets. 🌍
- Policy AG-5.8 Promote an ecologically sustainable food system. 🌍

**GOAL AG-6 Delta Agriculture. Enhance the agricultural heritage of the Clarksburg area to complement the broader values of the Delta region.**

- Policy AG-6.1 Continue to promote agriculture as the primary land use in the portion of Yolo County that lies within the Primary Zone of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.
- Policy AG-6.2 Advance the economic and cultural vitality of heritage or legacy communities in the Delta, such as Clarksburg.
- Policy AG-6.3 Within the Delta Primary Zone, ensure compatibility of permitted land use activities with applicable properly adopted agricultural policies of the Land Use and Resource Management Plan of the Delta Protection Commission.
- Policy AG-6.4 Work with the Delta Protection Commission and other parties to develop and implement the Land Use and Resource Management Plan update in a manner that supports and enhances the existing rural economy.

**4. Implementation Program**

- Action AG-A1 Amend the Agricultural Mitigation Ordinance to direct agricultural mitigation to areas adjoining growth boundaries for the communities and cities within the County. (Policy AG-1.12, Policy AG-1.8, Policy AG-1.18, Policy CC-1.7) 🌍

Responsibility: Planning and Public Works Department  
Timeframe: Ongoing

Action AG-A2 Negotiate cooperative agreements with neighboring jurisdictions to allow their agricultural mitigation requirements to be satisfied in appropriate locations within Yolo County. Agreements shall consider compensation to Yolo County for lost tax revenues and economic opportunity costs. (Policy AG-1.18)

Responsibility: County Administrator's Office, County Counsel  
Timeframe: 2012/2013

Action AG-A3 Verify that easements used for mitigation require the landowner to maintain adequate water rights in perpetuity to support sustainable farm productivity. (Policy AG-1.18, Policy AG-2.2)

Responsibility: Planning and Public Works Department  
Timeframe: Ongoing

Action AG-A4 Consider development, if feasible, of a local and/or regional conservation bank to provide carbon sequestration credits associated with orchards, vineyards and oak woodlands. (Policy AG-1.18, Policy AG-2.7, Policy AG-2.16) 🌍

Responsibility: Planning and Public Works Department  
Timeframe: Ongoing

Action AG-A5 Amend the agricultural mitigation ordinance to specify that ancillary uses must be clearly subordinate to the primary agricultural use, particularly with regards to home sites. (Policy AG-1.9)

Responsibility: Planning and Public Works Department  
Timeframe: 2011/2012

Action AG-A6 Develop specific criteria regarding the location and/or placement of home sites on agriculturally designated land, to ensure compatibility with both on-site and surrounding agricultural uses. Proposed homes that comply with the criteria would be issued building permits, while those that are not consistent with the criteria would require prior approval of a use permit. Criteria would apply to both the primary and the ancillary home and may include the following:

- Size and mass of the home(s).
- Location of the home(s) within the property to avoid restricting the extent of pesticide/herbicide spray on adjoining farms and avoid productive agricultural soils and/or operations.
- Approval of a stewardship plan demonstrating how the property would be farmed.

- Placement of the remainder of the property, outside of any home site(s), in a permanent agricultural conservation easement, deed restriction or similar instrument.
- Requirement of a Use Permit for home sites on less than 20 acres.
- Recordation of a deed notice acknowledging the potential for nuisances to occur, such as dust, agricultural chemical applications, etc.
- Recordation of a deed notice acknowledging the County's right-to-farm ordinance. (Policy AG-1.7) 🌐

Responsibility: Planning and Public Works Department

Timeframe: 2009/2010

Action AG-A7 Amend the Right-to-Farm Ordinance to require the disclosure of related deed restriction and notices as a condition of sale for any transfer of property to increase the general awareness of such provisions. (Policy AG-1.8)

Responsibility: Agriculture Department

Timeframe: 2009/2010

Action AG-A8 Prepare and promote a voluntary commitment (or "rural oath") that new residents on agriculturally designated land can sign to acknowledge that they understand the consequences of living in a rural area and accept both the potential nuisances of nearby farming and the lower levels of service available. (Policy AG-1.8)

Responsibility: Agriculture Department

Timeframe: 2009/2010

Action AG-A9 Create opportunities for incubator farms, consisting of small leased parcels on land protected under conservation easement. Provide opportunities for joint access to shared equipment and irrigation. Ensure that leases mandate active agricultural production. (Policy AG-1.14, Policy AG-1.21) 🌐

Responsibility: Agriculture Department, Planning and Public Works Department

Timeframe: 2010/2011

Action AG-A10 Develop technical assistance programs that may include: monitoring of changes in natural cycles; encouraging methane recovery; and promoting farming practices that capture and store more carbon in the soil. (Policy AG-2.7, Policy AG-2.16) 🌐

Responsibility: Agriculture Department

Timeframe: Ongoing

- Action AG-A11 Develop a special area plan to govern land use management within the bypass. (Policy AG-3.10)  
Responsibility: Planning and Public Works Department, Parks and Resources Department  
Timeframe: 2013/2014
- Action AG-A12 Work to site a refrigeration and consolidation unit in a location central to the County, if feasible. This would allow farmers to bring their produce to one location where trucks could pick up a full load and deliver to their destination, reducing the need for trucks to go to individual farms to pick up small loads. (Policy AG-3.7, Policy AG-3.10, Policy AG-3.11, Policy AG-4.18) 🌐  
Responsibility: County Administrator's Office, Agriculture Department  
Timeframe: 2011/2012
- Action AG-A13 Develop and implement an Economic Development Strategy that encourages agricultural/ecological tourism, viticulture operations, agricultural-industrial opportunities and farm marketing efforts. (Policy AG-3.18, Policy AG-4.2)  
Responsibility: County Administrator's Office  
Timeframe: 2010/2011
- Action AG-A14 Reduce development restrictions for new and/or expanded agricultural processing, on-site agricultural sales, and biodiesel and ethanol production. (Policy AG-3.2, Policy AG-3.16, Policy AG-3.19) 🌐  
Responsibility: Planning and Public Works Department, County Administrator's Office, Health Department  
Timeframe: 2010/2011
- Action AG-A15 Revise countywide standards to create incentives for agricultural economic development and value-added enterprises. These may include the following: parking (e.g. use of permeable surfaces), occupancy (e.g. use of barn structures for limited events), roads (e.g. reduced rural road widths and/or improvements) and sanitation for special events (e.g. use of portable toilets instead of permanent systems). (Policy AG 3.2, Policy AG-3.9, Policy AG-3.16)  
Responsibility: County Administrator's Office, Planning and Public Works Department, Health Department  
Timeframe: 2010/2011
- Action AG-A16 Work with farm interests and housing organizations to develop specific recommendations for expanding farm worker housing opportunities. Such recommendations may include providing pre-approved building plans, exempting Use Permit requirements for homes where there is an agreement to limit occupation to farm workers, reducing require-

ments for mobile homes and limiting property tax reassessment. (Policy AG-3.5)

Responsibility: Assessor, Agriculture Department, Planning and Public Works Department, Health Department, County Administrator's Office  
Timeframe: 2010/2011

Action AG-A17 Prepare and implement a farm marketing ordinance to streamline permitting requirements for agricultural retail operations to the extent possible at the local level's areas of focus including special events, handicrafts and prepared foods, agricultural product and byproduct processing, alcoholic beverage sales, education, overnight accommodations, signage, parking, recreation, sanitation, dining, camping and RVs, access and other standards to the extent possible at the local level. (Policy AG-3.2, Policy AG-3.9, Policy AG-3.16)

Responsibility: Development Services Division, Economic Development Division, Environmental Health Division, Agricultural Commissioner, Sheriff-Coroner  
Timeframe: 2010/2011

Action AG-A18 Expand the role of the Agricultural Commissioner's office, to include staffed programs to promote agricultural tourism and direct marketing for the County and establish an Agricultural Advisory Board. (Policy AG-4.1)

Responsibility: County Administrator's Office, Human Resources Department, Agriculture Department  
Timeframe: 2010/2011

Action AG-A19 Create a Food Policy Council to create and implement agricultural marketing programs. (Policy AG-5.1, Policy AG-5.4, Policy AG-5.7)

Responsibility: Agriculture Department, County Administrator's Office  
Timeframe: 2014/2015

Action AG-A20 Create an Agricultural Permit Coordinator position ("farmbudsman") to assist farmers and ranchers with the permitting process. The Coordinator would work closely with representatives from the Planning and Public Works Department, Agricultural Commissioner's office, Health Department, Economic Development office and other agencies, to facilitate and expedite promising value-added agricultural projects. (Policy AG-3.2, Policy AG-3.16, Policy AG-3.19, Policy AG-7.1)

Responsibility: County Administrator's Office, Agriculture Department, Human Resources Department  
Timeframe: 2010/2011

Action AG-A21 Develop a grading ordinance to maintain natural terrain, drainage and vegetation to the extent possible, to minimize the disruption of natural

systems. (Policy AG-2.9, Policy AG-2.11, Policy AG-2.12, Policy AG-2.14, Policy AG-2.15, Policy AG-3.16)

Responsibility: Planning and Public Works Department

Timeframe: 2009/2010

Action AG-A22 Collaborate with farming interests to develop and implement a program for each Agricultural District to include tailored zoning requirements, financial incentives, marketing requirements and/or other benefits as they are determined. Specific tools for use within each district may include the following:

- Reduce building permit fees to promote improvements and structures related to agricultural processing, rural tourism and other value-added activities.
- Revise standards for parking (e.g. use of permeable surfaces), occupancy (e.g. use of barn structures for limited events), roads (e.g. reduced rural road widths and/or improvements) and sanitation for special events (e.g. use of portable toilets instead of permanent systems).
- Subsidize participation in specialized marketing efforts to target “branding” and name recognition of products grown or processed within each district.
- Prepare County-sponsored CEQA documents (e.g. Master EIRs) that broadly analyze agricultural tourism uses (e.g. dude ranch, winery, restaurant, bakery, cheese production, oil press, wine crush, outdoor entertainment/music, culinary classes, tourist cabins, etc.).
- Establish 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.
- Streamline permit processing for the development of on-site housing for agricultural families and farm-workers (e.g. mobile home parks, labor camps, etc.).

As the districts mature and the County is able to document successes and failures, programs within the agricultural districts may be modified in response to changing market direction and may encompass new areas or evolve into countywide programs. (Policy AG-3.1)

Responsibility: Planning and Public Works Department, Health Department, Agriculture Department, County Administrator’s Office

Timeframe: FY 2009/2010

Action AG-A23 Examine the possibility of creating agricultural districts (similar to business improvement districts) with the ability to generate tax revenue, to



fund agricultural business development and expansion. Also consider the use of special service districts (such as used for fire protection) for the same purpose. (Policy AG-3.1)

Responsibility: County Administrator's Office, Planning and Public Works Department, Agriculture Department

Timeframe: 2012/2013

Action AG-A24 Create a Farm-to-School program to bring fresh locally grown/produced food to school meals. (Policy AG-5.16)

Responsibility: Agriculture Department

Timeframe: 2010/2011

Action AG-A25 Amend the Zoning Code to require a Use Permit for any new home to be constructed on a parcel smaller than 20 acres within an antiquated subdivision. Include criteria that would have to be met to approve the Use Permit, such as a showing of agricultural feasibility, to ensure that the primary use of the parcel is not a homesite. (Policy AG-1.14)

Responsibility: Planning and Public Works Department

Timeframe: 2010/2011

Action AG-A26 Work with the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the City of Woodland to relocate the County Fairgrounds to a more suitable location. (Policy AG-4.4)

Responsibility: County Administrator's Office, Agriculture Department

Timeframe: Ongoing

Action AG-A27 Implement a voluntary Agricultural Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program to facilitate the creation of affordable farm worker housing. Such a program would allow for the transfer of existing rights to build farm dwellings from areas characterized by large-acreage farm operations to areas characterized by small farms and/or where labor needs are greater. Develop criteria for appropriate transfer and receiver locations that take into account factors such as labor needs, crop types and/or other relevant factors and that preclude non-agricultural related transfers. (Policy AG-3.6)

Responsibility: Planning and Public Works Department, Agriculture Department

Timeframe: 2009/2010

## **C. Economic Development**

### **1. Background Information**

#### **a. Setting**

Economic development is the enhancement of a community's productive capabilities, largely through the creation and retention of jobs and revenue. Yolo County makes a healthy local economy a high priority and recognizes the need to create high quality jobs for the future well being of its residents. The Yolo County economic development program is geared to help the private sector provide more job opportunities for Yolo County residents, which in turn generates more revenue for the County to provide a better array and quality of service. In addition to the agricultural policies and actions described in Section B of this element, Yolo County promotes economic development in general as a way to improve the County's regional desirability, revitalize existing commercial areas, create new jobs and improve quality of life for all County residents.

Yolo County has many existing characteristics that make it a competitive business environment within the Sacramento region. The County's several significant assets include the following.

- Access to regional job centers.
- Visibility and easy access to Interstates 80, 5 and 505.
- Airport and transit connections.
- Affordable housing.
- Affordable land.
- Food and fiber business synergy.

Tourism is an increasing component of the Yolo County economy and promoting its continued growth is a high priority. Further, since many of the County's best rural tourism opportunities are in the unincorporated area and many are in public ownership (e.g. Bureau of Land Management, County Parks), the County should work closely with both public and private landowners and operators to ensure expanded tourism opportunities.

Visitor spending (i.e. dollars brought into the County from outside and spent here) boosts local business income, personal income and tax revenues. Tourists patronize hotels and other lodging, restaurants, department stores, grocery stores, cinemas, casinos, local parks, bike and equestrian trails, passive recreation areas, museums, golf courses and gasoline and other automotive service businesses. Clearly delineated, appealing, historic downtowns enhance the visitor experience. Creating additional attractions also increases sales and property tax revenues to the County. The natural beauty and cultural heritage of the area is of interest to the film industry, which has the potential to generate short-term yet substantial local income during location filming activities.

Local residents appreciate many of the same services that tourists do, including a variety of shopping and dining choices; good highways, bus and air transportation; and a selection of local entertainment and recreational opportunities. A survey of Esparto

residents in 2001 indicated that residents made 70 percent of their general merchandise and food purchases in cities such as Woodland and Vacaville. Gearing County economic development policies towards expanding the tourism industry will also help recapture some of that lost spending and will at the same time improve the quality of life in the unincorporated communities. As a result, opportunities would become available for local residents to supplement their incomes through home-based businesses. Access to travel services and the Internet are important infrastructure concerns for this business group.

b. Background

In 2006, the Board of Supervisors convened the “Blue Ribbon Panel on Economic Development.” This panel of experts and stakeholders from different backgrounds met several times to discuss Yolo County’s economic strengths and weaknesses and to recommend a set of policies to help guide economic development. The Board of Supervisors subsequently adopted the panel’s recommendations, which are reflected throughout the General Plan and in this element in particular.

**2. Policy Framework**

**GOAL ED-1      Economic Diversity. Diversify the local economy to provide substantial and sustainable long-term growth that will benefit businesses, residents and local government.**

- Policy ED-1.1      Ensure that an adequate supply of industrial and commercial land is designated for future development, to allow the market to continue to expand.
  
- Policy ED-1.2      Support the continued operation of existing mining activities within the county as well as new mining in appropriate areas, to meet the long-range construction needs of the region.
  
- Policy ED-1.3      Encourage businesses that provide services and support to farming, with an emphasis on value-added agriculture, food processing and agricultural suppliers.
  
- Policy ED-1.4      Encourage the telecommunications industry to install and maintain high-speed high-capacity telephone and Internet service throughout the county so that businesses can effectively compete. 🌐
  
- Policy ED-1.5      Work with State and federal representatives and the City of West Sacramento, to support and expand the economic potential of the Port.
  
- Policy ED-1.6      Ensure that all new commercial and/or industrial development show a net fiscal benefit to the County.

- Policy ED-1.7 Attract and retain a balance of businesses to provide a full range of career choices that allow individuals and families to prosper.
- Policy ED-1.8 Retain and encourage growth in important economic export sectors, including mining, natural gas, tourism and manufacturing.
- Policy ED-1.9 Target biotechnology development, including the development of high-tech research and development campuses, regional offices and business parks and light manufacturing nodes.
- Policy ED-1.10 Target life science, biotechnology and related research uses along the Interstate 80 corridor in proximity to UC Davis or elsewhere as appropriate along the highway system in the County.
- Policy ED-1.11 Support local efforts to create new products, services and businesses that will expand the wealth and job opportunities for all social and economic levels.
- Policy ED-1.12 Seek productive expansion and re-use of existing County assets, including the Yolo County Airport, old military facilities and the County landfill.
- Policy ED-1.13 Develop and expand agricultural businesses within the Clarksburg Agricultural District, including industrial processing facilities, commercial sales and agricultural tourism, through the use of targeted regulatory streamlining, financial incentives and specialized marketing efforts.
- Policy ED-1.14 Support the development of specialty food stores and restaurants to meet the needs of the County’s diverse population, as well as the needs of the growing number of visitors to the area.

<b>GOAL ED-2</b>	<b><u>Business Climate and Business Assistance.</u> Work aggressively to create a welcoming environment for both existing companies and new business to advance local economic growth.</b>
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- Policy ED-2.1 Provide a consistent and efficient development review process.
- Policy ED-2.2 Bring together community and outside resources to attract new businesses and assist with expanding existing businesses.
- Policy ED-2.3 Support non-profit business and merchant associations to promote a strong business base, encourage joint marketing and improve the County’s business climate. These business and merchant associations may include, but are not be limited to, the Sacramento Area Commerce and Trade Organization (SACTO), Sacramento Area Regional Technology Alliance (SARTA), Sacramento Area Council of Govern-

ments (SACOG), the Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, the Yolo County Visitors Bureau (YCVB), Capay Valley Vision, Capay Valley Grown and various Chambers of Commerce.

- Policy ED-2.4 Support the development of adequate infrastructure for economic development, including communications technology, water supply, wastewater treatment, roadways and trails.
- Policy ED-2.5 Create local incentives to support business development without compromising the County's financial capacity.
- Policy ED-2.6 Work closely with the Yolo County Workforce Investment Board, local community colleges, UC Davis and others to ensure and adequate supply of trained workers.
- Policy ED-2.7 Encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses.
- Policy ED-2.8 Coordinate with other agencies and organizations to offer technical assistance to business, including targeted funding such as economic development grants, loans and other federal, State and private sources.

**GOAL ED-3     Community Revitalization. Revitalize communities, especially downtown areas, to serve the economic and social needs of residents, as well as to support regional visitor needs.**

- Policy ED-3.1 Create a vibrant mix of residential development, retail and other commercial services, employment opportunities, governmental services, restaurants, entertainment and cultural/recreational opportunities in downtowns.
- Policy ED-3.2 Provide support to make infill development attractive for private developers. 🌐
- Policy ED-3.3 Create jobs in tandem with housing. Strive for a minimum ratio of 1.2 jobs per home and seek to match local wages with community housing prices. 🌐
- Policy ED-3.4 Create economic opportunities that allow for individual and family self-sufficiency, with decreased dependence on County programs and services.
- Policy ED-3.5 Improve downtown street corridors to stimulate economic activity.
- Policy ED-3.6 Encourage the development of retail establishments that will reduce resident spending outside the County for retail purchases, services and entertainment. 🌐

Policy ED-3.7 Work with local agencies to promote the value of education, especially among youth with limited family history of higher education.

Policy ED-3.8 Promote and expand business activities that support schools, such as school partnerships, student internships, faculty internships and job shadowing.

<b>GOAL ED-4</b>	<b><u>Expansion of Tourism.</u> Provide a variety of tourism and recreational opportunities to expand the local economy in a manner consistent with Yolo County’s agricultural and open space emphasis.</b>
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Policy ED-4.1 Provide for the development of a visitor network, conveniently located, that includes a mix of lodging, attractions, transportation, restaurants, retail, gas stations and other services.

Policy ED-4.2 Bring more destination spending into Yolo County through collaborative and individual marketing and promotion.

Policy ED-4.3 Seek opportunities to expand tourism around local attractions and amenities.

Policy ED-4.4 Encourage ecotourism including boating, kayaking, canoeing, fishing, hunting, hiking and bird watching.

Policy ED-4.5 Provide locations for alternative recreation activities including off-road vehicle use.

Policy ED-4.6 Work with Chambers of Commerce, community and regional organizations and local businesses to promote downtowns as a destination to work, live, shop and dine.

Policy ED-4.7 Support the development of visitor-serving private businesses that retain and complement the County’s rural character, such as bed and breakfast facilities, wineries and cafes, particularly within established Agricultural Districts and downtown areas.

Policy ED-4.8 Encourage the development of private recreational facilities that preserve scenic and environmentally sensitive resources and that do not result in the creation of land use conflicts.

Policy ED-4.9 Support the development of critical facilities for travelers in areas that lack services, such as public restrooms, lodging, food and retail services.

- Policy ED-4.10 Support the development of tourist services (consistent with this General Plan) along Interstate 5 (Yolo, Zamora, Dunnigan), State Route 16 (Madison, Esparto) and State Route 113 (Knights Landing).
- Policy ED-4.11 Focus commercial aviation uses at the Yolo County Airport, including airport maintenance and facilities to serve visitors and support such activities.
- Policy ED-4.12 Encourage public agencies to increase the capacities of parks, recreational areas, attractions, rest areas and other facilities that serve visitors.
- Policy ED-4.13 Support collaborative efforts to market Yolo County as a tourist destination, through coordinated intra-County and regional promotion.
- Policy ED-4.14 Market Yolo County locations to the film and advertising industry.
- Policy ED-4.15 Encourage the marketing of the agricultural districts as destinations for agricultural tourism and other types of outdoor recreation.
- Policy ED-4.16 Promote Yolo County as a destination for vacations and day trips.
- Policy ED-4.17 Support and facilitate local events that showcase Yolo County products such as wine, produce and arts and crafts.
- Policy ED-4.18 Collaborate with local non-profit, business and merchant associations to promote and advertise local programs and events.
- Policy ED-4.19 Work with the Yolo County Visitors Bureau to identify potential tourism-oriented market opportunities and to develop stronger links to regional and national tourist markets.

**GOAL ED-5     Economic Sustainability. Support sustainable economic development. Encourage local industry to adapt to the expected effects of climate change and minimize greenhouse gases and other emissions.**

- Policy ED-5.1 Assist businesses in reducing their dependence upon non-renewable resources, such as fossil fuels. 🌍
- Policy ED-5.2 Work with businesses to reduce the quantity and improve the quality of their waste stream. 🌍
- Policy ED-5.3 Encourage businesses and research that support sustainability and contribute to the emerging “green” economy. 🌍

- Policy ED-5.4 Encourage businesses to exceed clean air standards, whenever possible. 🌍
- Policy ED-5.5 Promote Yolo County businesses by encouraging residents and government agencies to obtain their goods and services locally. 🌍
- Policy ED-5.6 Encourage employers to hire locally and to help employees find homes in the community where they work. Ensure that new jobs are created in proportion to new housing. Seek to maintain a minimum ratio of 1.2 jobs for each household within a community.
- Policy ED-5.7 Encourage appropriate home-based occupations and other “cottage” industries and telecommuting, to reduce fuel consumption and traffic and improve air quality. 🌍
- Policy ED-5.8 Promote the use of recycled materials and/or by-products of other businesses, to reduce the consumption of virgin raw materials. 🌍
- Policy ED-5.9 Support reductions in the use of hazardous materials and require businesses to employ proper disposal and recycling mechanisms. 🌍
- Policy ED-5.10 Require the re-use of processed water for landscaping and other appropriate activities, where feasible. 🌍

### 3. Implementation Program

- Action ED-A1 Create and maintain a website with useful economic and demographic information, as well as profiles of key development sites and vacant buildings available for new businesses. (Policy ED-2.2)  
Responsibility: County Administrator’s Office  
Timeframe: 2009/2010
- Action ED-A2 Amend the Zoning Code to include incentives for targeted businesses and infill development, including flexible development standards; fast-track processing; and fee exemptions, reductions, or deferrals. (Policy ED-2.1)  
Responsibility: Planning and Public Works Department  
Timeframe: 2010/2011
- Action ED-A3 Seek ongoing feedback regarding the County’s regulations and development review process from chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, the agricultural community and other clients. (Policy ED-2.1, Policy ED-2.3)  
Responsibility: Planning and Public Works Department  
Timeframe: 2010/2011



- Action ED-A4 Continue the Development Review Committee process to expedite the review of development applications for targeted development projects and to negotiate agreements to create opportunities for significant new jobs and tax benefits. (Policy ED-2.1)  
Responsibility: Planning and Public Works Department  
Timeframe: Ongoing
- Action ED-A5 Monitor development strategies to determine their effectiveness in achieving economic diversity and targeted businesses and adjust policies and incentives accordingly. (Policy ED-2.1)  
Responsibility: County Administrator's Office  
Timeframe: Ongoing
- Action ED-A6 Respond quickly and effectively to concerns raised by businesses regarding new or existing operations and/or planned expansions. (Policy ED-2.1)  
Responsibility: County Administrator's Office, Planning and Public Works Department  
Timeframe: Ongoing
- Action ED-A7 Seek feedback on quality-of-life needs from both individual businesses and economic development organizations and work with schools, health care providers, Community Service Districts, local service providers and others to provide these needs as a means of attracting economic development. (Policy ED-2.2)  
Responsibility: Planning and Public Works Department, County Administrator's Office  
Timeframe: Ongoing
- Action ED-A8 Provide incentives to revitalize established but aging buildings and/or facilities. (Policy ED-3.1, Policy ED-3.2)  
Responsibility: County Administrator's Office, Planning and Public Works Department  
Timeframe: 2011/2012
- Action ED-A9 Implement zoning and design guidelines to facilitate the location of appropriately scaled retail and service businesses, offices, public services and public gathering places in downtowns that include both daytime and nighttime activities. (Policy ED-3.1) 🌐  
Responsibility: Planning and Public Works Department  
Timeframe: Ongoing
- Action ED-A10 Implement the DMX Zone to require mixed-use development where appropriate, including both multi-family residential and commercial uses, in downtowns to provide both space for small businesses and alternative housing opportunities. (Policy ED-3.1)

Responsibility: Planning and Public Works Department  
Timeframe: Ongoing

Action ED-A11 Assist local businesses and community groups in forming business investment districts, Main Street programs and local development corporations. (Policy ED-3.1, Policy ED-3.6) 🌐  
Responsibility: County Administrator's Office  
Timeframe: Ongoing

Action ED-A12 Maintain, as appropriate, an inventory of vacant and underutilized land designated for commercial and industrial uses so that they may be targeted for expedited development and for redevelopment. (Policy ED-3.1)  
Responsibility: County Administrator's Office  
Timeframe: 2009/2010

Action ED-A13 Develop guidelines for the adaptive reuse of commercial, industrial and office buildings on infill sites, including the use of multi-story buildings as "live/work" spaces. (Policy ED-3.2) 🌐  
Responsibility: Planning and Public Works Department  
Timeframe: 2011/2012

Action ED-A14 Use Community Development Block Grants and other outside funding sources to supplement private and public funds for economic development. (Policy ED-3.2)  
Responsibility: County Administrator's Office  
Timeframe: Ongoing

Action ED-A15 Establish redevelopment areas, where appropriate, so that the resulting tax increment can be effectively used for downtown improvements and development projects. (Policy ED-3.2) 🌐  
Responsibility: County Administrator's Office  
Timeframe: 2011/2012

Action ED-A16 Offer incentives to business and property owners to improve the appearance of aging retail space. (Policy ED-3.2)  
Responsibility: County Administrator's Office, Planning and Public Works Department  
Timeframe: Ongoing


Action ED-A17 Establish focused public investment areas where the County will work with local service providers to improve basic infrastructure. (Policy ED-3.2)  
Responsibility: County Administrator's Office  
Timeframe: 2011/2012

- Action ED-A18 Streamline the development review process and reduce fees in downtown areas to provide incentives for targeted properties. (Policy ED-3.2)  
Responsibility: Planning and Public Works Department  
Timeframe: 2010/2011
- Action ED-A19 Provide flexibility for development in downtown areas through mixed use and planned development zoning standards. (Policy ED-3.1, Policy ED-3.2) 🌐  
Responsibility: Planning and Public Works Department  
Timeframe: 2009/2010
- Action ED-A20 Amend the zoning code to allow off-site signage in rural areas to assist businesses in attracting and directing visitors to their location. (Policy ED-4.1)  
Responsibility: Development Services Division  
Timeframe: 2009/2010
- Action ED-A21 Create a Yolo County identity to promote local tourism and recreational opportunities and assist in attracting visitors. (Policy ED-4.2, Policy ED-4.6)  
Responsibility: County Administrator's Office  
Timeframe: 2012/2013
- Action ED-A22 Prepare a cost-benefit analysis to ensure that public funding for infrastructure required by economic development projects is feasible. (Policy ED-1.6, Policy ED-2.3)  
Responsibility: County Administrator's Office  
Timeframe: Ongoing
- Action ED-A23 Provide labor market information to local educational institutions and youth and adult training agencies for planning and curricula purposes. (Policy ED-2.6)  
Responsibility: Yolo County Office of Education  
Timeframe: Ongoing
- Action ED-A24 Promote workforce investment efforts that match training programs to existing and planned job requirements, ensuring that a skilled workforce is available to business. Identify relevant skill sets and coordinate with education and training providers accordingly. (Policy ED-2.6)  
Responsibility: County Administrator's Office  
Timeframe: Ongoing
- Action ED-A25 Work with educational and vocational training facilities (including school programs and adult education) to ensure that the existing and future needs of both employers and employees are met. Coordinate

with businesses to pursue on-the-job training options where possible.  
(Policy ED-2.6)

Responsibility: Department of Employment and Social Services, Yolo  
County Office of Education, Rio Vista and Yuba Community Colleges

Timeframe: Ongoing

Action ED-A26 Provide incentives (e.g. live-work spaces, reduced parking requirements, etc.) to reduce employee and product transport vehicle trips.  
(Policy ED-5.1) 

Responsibility: Planning and Public Works Department

Timeframe: Ongoing

Action ED-A27 Create a new “agricultural commercial” zoning designation that will allow direct marketing opportunities with limited discretionary review.  
(Policy ED-1.13)

Responsibility: Planning and Public Works Department

Timeframe: 2009/2010

Action ED-A28 Conduct a collaborative effort with agricultural interests to receive input regarding ideas for improvements to the agricultural economy, agricultural regulations and other related matters. (Policy ED-1.13)

Responsibility: Planning and Public Works Department, County  
Administrator’s Office, Agriculture Department

Timeframe: 2009/2010