



COUNTY OF YOLO

Office of the County Administrator

Sharon Jensen
County Administrator

Beth Gabor
Public Information Officer

625 Court Street, Room 202 • Woodland, CA 95695
(530) 666-8150 • FAX (530) 668-4029
www.yolocounty.org

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Contact: Beth Gabor, Public Information Officer
(530) 666-8042 [w] • (530) 219-8464 [c]

Draft General Plan Document Released

(Woodland, CA) – Today, the Yolo County Draft General Plan was released to the public. On September 16, a joint meeting of the Yolo County Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission will be held to receive a presentation on the Draft General Plan. The General Plan is the basic document used by local government in land use planning. It provides the comprehensive long-term plan for the physical development of the county, and is often referred to as “the constitution” of the county. All cities and counties are required, under state law, to have one.

The last update was in 1983, based on the county’s original General Plan from 1958. In May 2003, the Board of Supervisors gave direction to begin the current General Plan update process. This is only the third time in the county’s history that the General Plan has been comprehensively updated. While the fundamental land use goals of promoting agriculture and directing urban growth to the cities have not changed, circumstances facing the county have changed. Agriculture requires flexibility to allow it to branch out into processing and tourism related businesses. Similarly, several of the county’s small towns require new infrastructure, investment, and services that can accompany well-designed growth. There is also a greater need for economic development to provide growth and stability to the county revenues that pay for local services. This General Plan update allows the county to examine these issues and chart a course for the future that meets these challenges.

Yolo County is 653,549 acres in size, of which 32,325 acres (just under 5%) lies within the four incorporated cities. Currently, approximately 23,265 residents live in 7,263 homes within the remaining 95% of the county, along side 430 acres of job-producing commercial and industrial land. Under the existing 1983 General Plan, another 11,240 residents, 4,014 homes, and 1,440 acres of commercial and industrial land could be added. The Preferred Land Use Alternative, adopted by the Board of Supervisors on September 18, 2007, is the basis for creating the General Plan update. In addition to the 1983 General Plan, it would allow for another 26,600 residents, 9,500 homes, and 901 acres of economic development through the year 2030.

The four primary proposed land use changes that account for these increases include:

- Dunnigan community expansion (21,000 residents, 7,500 units, and 430 job-producing acres)
- Madison community expansion (3,655 residents, 1,305 units, and 116 job-producing acres)
- New commercial and industrial development in Elkhorn (320 job-producing acres)
- Conversion to industrial at Spreckels site (69 job-producing acres)

The growth in Dunnigan and Madison is reflective of a desire by the Board of Supervisors to ensure the future sustainability of these communities, including a minimum population to support basic community services as well as carefully structured land uses to ensure that the number and price of homes roughly match the number and wages of local jobs. The growth in Elkhorn and Spreckels is supportive of the Board of Supervisors' economic development priorities and both highlight site-specific resource opportunities of the county. It should be noted that development in Knights Landing and Esparto is already planned under the 1983 General Plan.

New policy directions in the proposed Draft General Plan focus on the following primary themes:

- The continuing primacy of agriculture and related endeavors throughout the county, by allowing for more economic innovation and aggressively protecting the water and soil resources upon which farming depends.
- Modest managed growth within existing towns, accompanied by improvements to infrastructure and services to ensure community sustainability.
- Expanded protection of a network of connected open space and recreational areas, integrated with the Yolo Natural Heritage Program.
- Opportunities for revenue-producing and job-producing agricultural, industrial, and commercial growth in designated locations and along key transportation corridors.
- Manage the existing road network to make the most of existing capacity, while accommodating a diversity of users and alternative modes of transportation.
- Service levels that allow for the effective and efficient provision of services, consistent with rural values and expectations.
- A comprehensive approach to both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and plan for the potential impacts of global climate change.
- New emphasis on community and neighborhood requirements that reflect “smart growth” and “healthy design” principles, which complement the unique character of existing developed areas.

All Yolo County residents are urged to follow this important process which will shape the future of Yolo County. Comments on the document will be accepted by the Planning and Public Works Department through November 20, 2008. To view the Draft General Plan, the schedule of upcoming public meetings, or to find additional general information on the General Plan update, visit: www.yolocountygeneralplan.org.

Hard copies of the Draft General Plan are available for viewing and check-out at all Yolo County library branches (visit: www.yolocountylibrary.org for branch locations) and the Yolo County Planning & Public Works (PPW) Department (292 West Beamer Street in Woodland). Hard copies of the Draft General Plan are available for purchase at PPW for \$50.00 or on CD for \$4.50.

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