B. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

This section assesses the effects of the Draft 2030 Countywide General Plan for Yolo County (Draft General Plan) on the agricultural resources of the County. The following sections describe the existing agricultural setting of the County, the regulatory framework applicable to agriculture in the County, criteria of significance used to determine potential environmental effects on agriculture that may result from build-out of the Draft General Plan, identified impacts, and mitigation measures to reduce those impacts to a less-than-significant level, if applicable.

The analysis included in this section is based on a series of agricultural reports and other planning documents, including: 1) Yolo County General Plan Agricultural Preservation Techniques Report;[1] 2) Background Report for the Yolo County General Plan Update;[2] 3) 2007 Yolo County Agricultural Crop Report;[3] 4) Integrated Regional Water Management Plan;[4] and 5) the State of California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP)[5] as well as data obtained from the County's geographic information system (GIS).

1. Setting

This section describes the agricultural resources within the County, including agricultural land uses, soil and farmland characterization, and historical farmland conversion to other uses in Yolo County.

a. Physical Environment. Agricultural resources, soil classification, and other information pertaining to agriculture in Yolo County is provided below.

(1) Agricultural Resources. Within Yolo County approximately 544,723 acres of land are designated for agricultural use.[6] This total includes a mix of large-scale and small-scale farms as well as livestock operations. The top ten commodities produced in the County in 2007 were tomatoes, hay (alfalfa), grapes (wine), rice, seed crops, almonds, organic production, walnuts, cattle and calves, and wheat, totaling $358,583,664.00 in gross valuation.[7] These ten commodities accounted for almost 80 percent of the total gross valuation of agricultural commodities in the County in 2007. In addition to these commodities, the County also produces prunes, corn (field), hay (grain), safflower, sunflower, melons, lambs, dairy products, poultry, and apiary products. The County includes 74 registered organic farms producing fruit, nut, field, vegetable, and nursery 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

[1] Design, Community & Environment, 2006. *Yolo County General Plan Agricultural Preservation Techniques Report*. December.

[2] County of Yolo, 2005. *Background Report for the Yolo County General Plan Update.* Woodland, CA.

[3] County of Yolo, 2008. *2007 Yolo County Agricultural Crop Report.* Woodland, CA.

[4] Water Resources Association of Yolo County, 2007. *Integrated Regional Water Management Plan.* April.

[5] Department of Conservation, 2006a. Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. Available online at http://redirect.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/fmmp/product_page.asp, (accessed 14 October, 2008).

[6] County of Yolo. 2009. op. cit.

[7] County of Yolo, 2008. *2007 Yolo County Agricultural Crop Report.* Woodland, CA.

County's agricultural economy, as demonstrated above, is dominated by fruit crops, particularly tomatoes and wine grapes, which are increasingly profitable and benefitted in 2007 from increases in acreage, yield, and price. The following discussion adapted from the 2030 Countywide General Plan details information regarding crops in Yolo County.

Vineyards. Vineyards (wine grapes) are the largest single agricultural use in the fruit and nut category, both in terms of harvested acreage (11,898 acres in 2007) and total commodity value ($46,513,316 in 2007). Several factors, including climate, lower land and production costs, and the proximity of the U.C. Davis' Department of Viticulture and Enology give Yolo County a competitive advantage in the wine industry. There are four federally-designated wine appellations in Yolo County; known as "American Viticultural Areas" or AVAs, these areas denote winegrowing regions with officially-recognized boundaries. The four AVAs in Yolo County are the Capay Valley, Clarksburg, Dunnigan Hills, and Merritt Island AVAs, although Merritt Island AVA is included as a subzone to the larger Clarksburg AVA.

- Capay Valley AVA is approximately 150 square miles yet only has one winery with 25 acres of land currently under vine. This relatively new AVA has a long history of growing grapes, with recorded viticulture occurring as early as 1861. The region has potential for expanded vineyard operations using sustainable practices, as its warm, dry climate allows for less pesticide spraying in vineyards to control pests.
- Clarksburg AVA is approximately 64,640 acres in size, bordered by the town of Freeport to the north, Interstate 5 to the east, Twin Cities Road to the south, and the Sacramento Deep Water Ship Channel to the west. This AVA extends into both Solano and Sacramento Counties and includes the Merritt Island AVA. The Clarksburg AVA currently contains ten wineries and approximately 11,000 acres of vineyards.
- Dunnigan Hills is an 89,000-acre AVA in northwest Yolo County, and became an approved appellation in 1993. It is generally bordered by Cache Creek to the south, County Road 99W to the east, Buckeye Creek to the north, and Hungry Hollow to the west. It currently contains two wineries with approximately 3,000 acres of vineyards.

Orchards. Yolo County's fruit and nut orchards covered approximately 20,960 acres in 2007, and grew a wide variety of crops including almonds, apples, apricots, blackberries, blueberries, cherries, chestnuts, citrus fruit, figs, kiwis, nectarines, olives, peaches, pears, pecans, persimmons, pistachios, pomegranates, prunes, strawberries, table grapes, and walnuts. Nuts are profitably grown in the County on smaller lots, typically require a large capital investment, and have been increasing in production value. Yolo County also benefits from California's strong market presence in almonds and walnuts, with more than $47 million in production value occurring from approximately 17,500 bearing acres in 2007.[8] Orchard crops (not including wine grapes) produced a total value of $58,710,414 in 2007.[9]

Field and Vegetable Crops. The acreage of field crops in Yolo County increased by 19,149 acres from 2006 to 2007; acres under vegetable crop production increased by 5,033 acres during the same time period. Dry pasture, hay (alfalfa), tomatoes, rice, and wheat occupy the largest amounts of

[8] Yolo County Department of Agriculture, 2008. *2007 Agriculture Crop Report.* Fruit and Nut Crops.

[9] Ibid.

harvested acreage in these categories. Tomatoes were the top agricultural commodity in the County in 2007, with a production value of more than $100 million (more than 22 percent of the County's total agricultural production value in 2007.) Hay (alfalfa), rice, and wheat were the top three most profitable field crops in the County during the same year; hay (alfalfa) likely increased due to increased per-unit prices, whereas rice and wheat benefited both from increased acreage as well as increased per-unit prices.

Seed Crops. Total seed crop acreage declined from 2006 to 2007, but these crops (which include both certified and non-certified seed) continue to be profitable to keep in rotation. Although total acreage declined from 2006 to 2007, production value of seed crops in Yolo County increased more than 11 percent over this time period. Seed crops include small grains, sunflower, asparagus, beans, rice (for seed only), safflower, sudangrass, vineseed, alfalfa (for seed only), carrot, onion, and pepper, as well as pasture and grass.

Rangeland, Livestock, and Poultry. A significant portion of the County is rangeland (predominantly lands in the western one-third of the County), providing grazing acreage for beef cattle, lambs, and dairy cattle. In 2007, approximately 17,200 head of cattle and calves generated a total production value of $15,870,404; 15,188 head of lambs generated an additional $1,947,410 during the same period. Miscellaneous apiary, livestock, and poultry products including hogs, slaughter sheep, honey, pollination, package bees, queens, colonies, wax, eggs, wool, and poultry produced an additional $14,961,554 of production value in 2007.

Organic Production. Yolo County is one of the top five organic producers in California. While total acres harvested for organic products decreased from 2006 to 2007, total valuation for these commodities increased almost $5 million during the same timeframe, with production increasing 34 percent to more than $19 million. The value of organic crops has tripled in Yolo County since 1998; there are currently 74 registered organic farms in the County.

Processing, Distribution, and Other Agricultural Industries. Agriculture in Yolo County depends on a network of adequate roads and irrigation, as well as the availability and proximity of field labor, processing services and equipment, transporting equipment, marketing, and other farm-related services for continued economic success. The Port of Sacramento, which is 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. Airports are also vital to agriculture as both a means to ship agricultural commodities as well as bases for crop-dusting equipment. Two of the County's airports, Yolo County Airport and Watts-Woodland Airport, as well as 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 primary crop duster and aerial seeding service based in Yolo County, with minor activity occurring at the Clarksburg-Borges Airport.

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 a tomato processor, two rice mills, nine wineries, eight nut and nut oil processors, three dairies, 16 seed labelers, and a prune processor. These facilities 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. Agricultural commercial and industrial facilities are encouraged within the Agricultural land use designation in order to provide locational advantages for their use. According to the Draft General Plan, agricultural commercial uses are encouraged to promote agri-tourism as an economic development strategy, and agricultural industrial uses are encouraged within the Agricultural land use designation to promote the location of agricultural processing uses within the County to create successful crop economies. Agricultural commercial and agricultural industrial uses work together as a critical part of the County's economic infrastructure and promote successful agriculture. By including these areas near lands where related crops are grown, the transportation requirements of processing and distribution for agricultural products are significantly reduced. When facilities are located further away from areas where crops are grown, transportation and processing costs increase, greater rates of spoilage and produce damage are likely to occur, and economic returns on farming activities are reduced.

Figure IV.B-1 identifies the general locations of various agricultural commodities produced in Yolo County.

(2) Soil Characteristics. Yolo County uses the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Land Capability Classification System to describe its soil resources. Land Capability Classification is a system of grouping soils primarily on the basis of their capability to produce common cultivated crops and pasture plants without deteriorating over a long period of time. Land capability classes are designated by the Roman numerals I through VIII, indicating progressively greater limitations and narrower choices for agricultural use and are defined as follows:

- Class I (1) soils have slight limitations that restrict their use.
- Class II (2) soils have moderate limitations that reduce the choice of plants or require moderate conservation practices.
- Class III (3) soils have severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants or require special conservation practices, or both.
- Class IV (4) soils have very severe limitations that restrict the choice of plants or require very careful management, or both.
- Class V (5) soils have little or no hazard of erosion but have other limitations, impractical to remove, that limit their use mainly to pasture, range, forestland, or wildlife food and cover.
- Class VI (6) soils have severe limitations that make them generally unsuited to cultivation and that limit their use mainly to pasture, range, forestland, or wildlife food and cover.
- Class VII (7) soils have very severe limitations that make them unsuited to cultivation and that restrict their use mainly to grazing, forestland, or wildlife.
- Class VIII (8) soils and miscellaneous areas have limitations that preclude their use for commercial plant production and limit their use to recreation, wildlife, or water supply or for esthetic purposes.

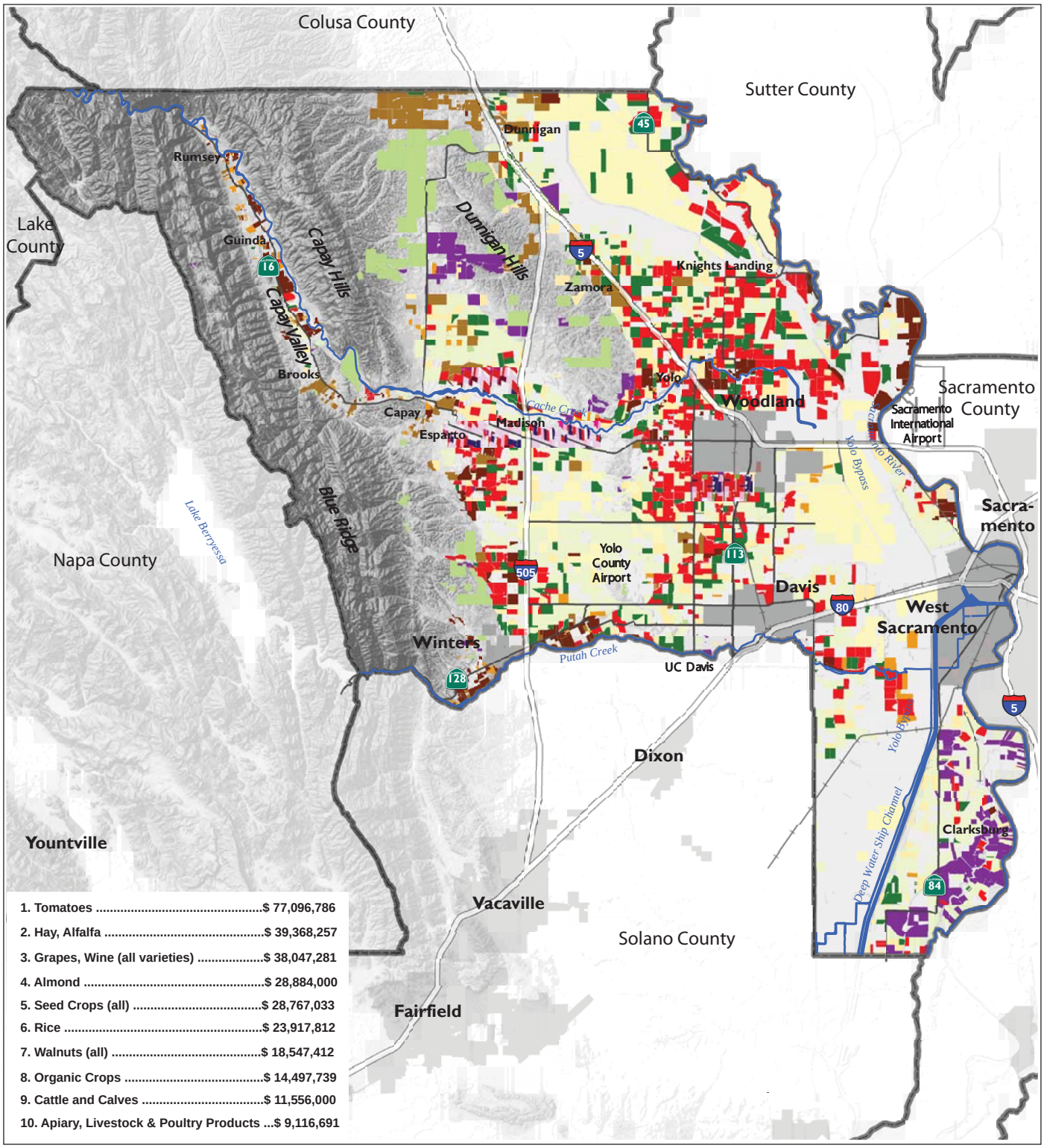

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FIGURE IV.B-1

Yolo County 2030 Countywide General Plan EIR

Top 10 Agricultural Commodities

SOURCE: YOLO COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEPT., 2006.

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The distribution of NRCS soil classifications in Yolo County is presented in Figure IV.B-2 and listed in Table IV.B-1; more than 63 percent of total County farmland is identified as Class I, II, and III soils.[10] The Class I, II and III soils in Yolo County have yield potentials which rank them with the best irrigated soils in California. Beyond the Class I, II, and III soils, there are many specific crops which can be produced on other soil classes. For example, rice and wine grapes can be produced on Class III and IV soils and are important crops to the County. The County contains no Class V soils. Most of the unincorporated County land consists of Class I and II soils, with areas of poorer quality soils in the Dunnigan Hills, along the Colusa Basin Drain and Yolo Bypass, and in the western foothills of the County.

Table IV.B-1: Yolo County Agricultural Soils

Soil Class	Acres
Water	8,496
Class I	107,835
Class II	182,994
Class III	67,316
Class IV	109,143
Class V	0
Class VI	73,197
Class VII	66,662
Class VIII	37,906
Total	653,549[a]

[a] Adjusted by +71 acres to match Yolo County GIS Data
Source: 2030 Countywide General Plan, County of Yolo, 2008.

(3) Storie Index. The Storie Index is based on soil characteristics that govern the land's potential utilization and productive capacity. It is independent of other physical or economic factors that might determine the desirability of growing certain plants in a given location. Characteristics included in determining a location's rating include slope, the soil profile, texture of surface soil, and conditions of the soil exclusive of profile, surface texture, and slope (such as drainage, alkali content, nutrient level, erosion, and micro-relief.) The most favorable or ideal conditions with respect to each factor are rated at 100 percent. Percentage values or ratings for each factor are then multiplied, which produces the land's Storie Index rating. In California, soils are divided into nine profile groups, but for simplification six soil grades were later created for the Index by combining soils having ranges in index rating as follows:

- **Grade 1 (excellent):** Soils that rate between 80 and 100 percent and which are suitable for a wide range of crops.
- **Grade 2 (good):** Soils that rate between 60 and 79 percent and which are suitable for most crops. Yields are generally good to excellent.
- **Grade 3 (fair):** Soils that rate between 40 and 59 percent and which are generally of fair quality, with less wide ranges of suitability than Grades 1 and 2. Soils in Grade 3 may give good results with certain specialized crops.
- **Grade 4 (poor):** Soils that rate between 20 and 39 percent and which have a narrow range in their agricultural possibilities.
- **Grade 5 (very poor):** Soils that rate between 10 and 19 percent and are of very limited use except for rangeland or pasture because of adverse conditions such as shallowness, roughness, and alkali content.
- **Grade 6 (nonagricultural):** Soils that rate less than 10 percent and are generally unusable as agricultural land such as tidelands, riverwash, soils of high alkali content, and steep, broken land.

[10] USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, 2006.

According to the Soil Survey of Yolo County, California, there are 12 soil associations and 35 soil series in Yolo County.[11] Seven of the associations are on alluvial fans or in basins, making up 63 percent of the County. The other five associations, making up about 37 percent of the County, are located on uplands and high terraces. The 35 soil series found in Yolo County are predominantly Grades 1 and 2 soils, although soils of the remaining 4 grades are also found within the County.[12]

(4) Farmland Classification. Important farmland in California is classified and mapped according to the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP).[13] This classification system was developed by the State Department of Conservation's Division of Land Resource Protection and was based on the system developed by the USDA Soil Conservation Service Land Inventory and Monitoring System. Classifications are based on a combination of physical and chemical characteristics of the soil and climate that determine the degree of suitability of the land for crop production. The FMMP-defined categories are as follows:

- **Prime Farmland:** Land with 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 prior to 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. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural within four years prior to the mapping date.
- **Unique Farmland:** Land of lesser quality soils used for production of the State's leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated, but may include non-irrigated orchards or vineyards as found in some climatic zones of California. Land must have been cropped at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.
- **Farmland of Local Importance:** Land of importance to the local agricultural economy as determined by each county's board of supervisors and local advisory committees. For Yolo County this land is defined as farmland, presently cultivated or not, having soils which meet the criteria for Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance 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. The minimum mapping unit for grazing land is 40 acres.
- **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.

[11] U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, 1972. *Soil Survey of Yolo County, CA.*

[12] Ibid.

[13] California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, 2007. Accessed online at http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/FMMP/Pages/Index.aspx (13 October 2008).

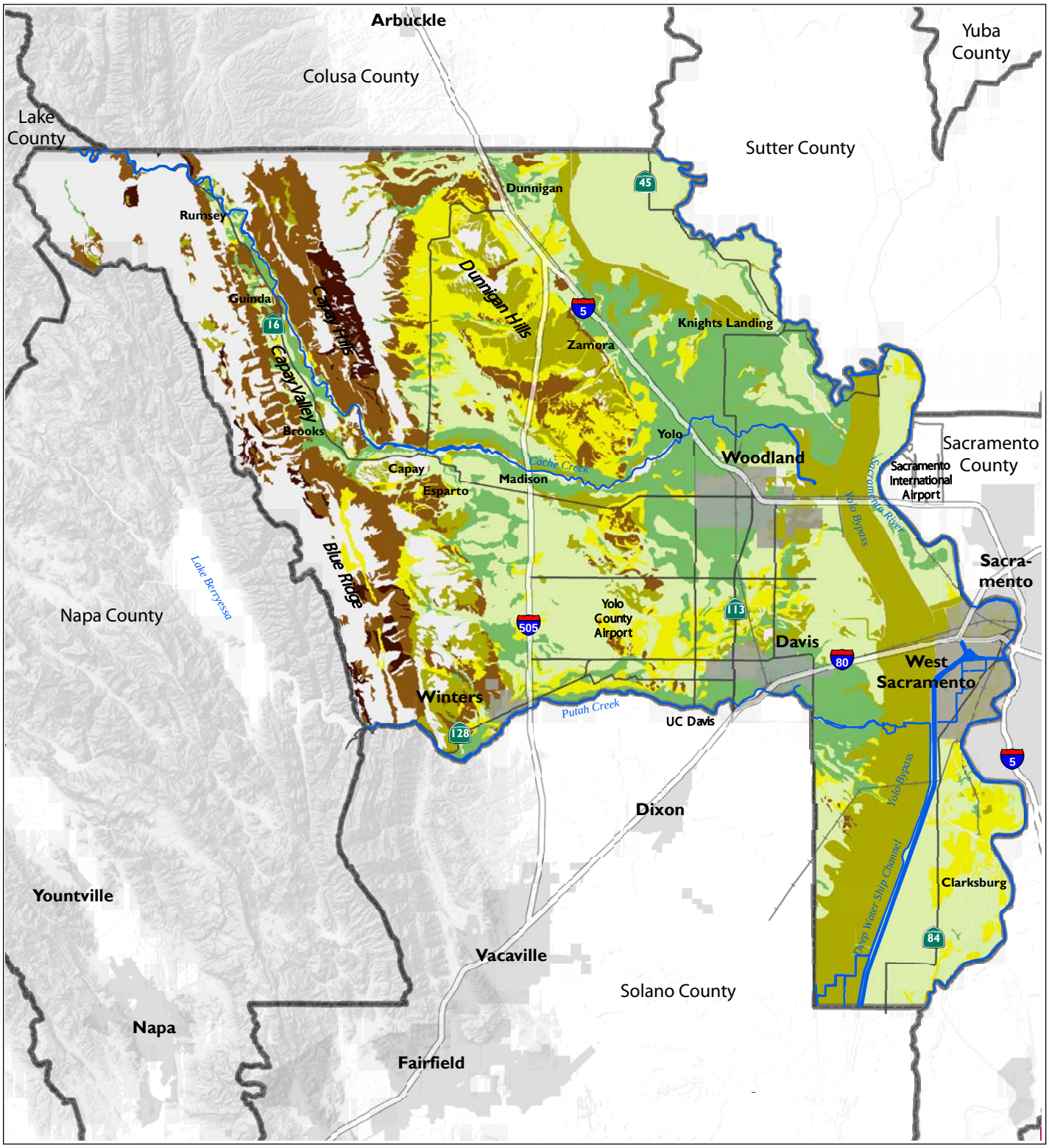

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FIGURE IV.B-2

Yolo County 2030 Countywide General Plan EIR

Irrigated Land Capability Classification

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.

SOURCE: USDA, NRCS, 2008.

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- **Other Land:** Land not included in any other mapping category. Other Land may include low-density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for 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.

Figure IV.B-3 and Table IV.B-2 show the distribution of important farmland in Yolo County.

(5) Water Resources. Since rainfall in Yolo County is generally inadequate to sustain most crops, agriculture depends on a reliable irrigation water supply from a combination of groundwater and surface water; in most years, surface water is the primary source of irrigation water in the County. According to the *Model Policies for Water Resources for the Yolo County General Plan*,[14] the main sources of surface water in Yolo County are Cache Creek, the Sacramento River, Putah Creek, the Yolo Bypass, Tule Canal, Willow Slough, the Tehama-Colusa Canal, and the Colusa Basin Drainage Canal. Clear Lake is the source of water for Cache Creek, which in turn supplies water to the Rumsey Water Users Association and the Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. Putah Creek flow is directly controlled by Lake Berryessa, a U.S. Bureau of Reclamation project. Shasta Lake provides water for the Tehama-Colusa Canal, while the source of the Coulsa Basin Drainage Canal is primarily agricultural tail water from farmland to the north. The Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (YCFCWCD) Water Management Plan indicates that a minor volume of distribution discharge may become surface flow through Cache Creek and the Willow Slough Bypass, and as subsurface flow under Putah Creek and into Solano County.[15]

Table IV.B-2: Yolo County Important Farmland

Land Category	Acres
Prime Farmland	257,893
Farmland of Statewide Importance	16,989
Unique Farmland	50,197
Farmland of Local Importance	65,173
Grazing Land	150,339
Urban and Built-Up Land	29,343
Other Land	75,800
Water	7,815
Total	653,549[a]

[a] Adjusted by +96 acres to match Yolo County GIS Data
Source: 2030 Countywide General Plan, County of Yolo, 2008.

YCFCWCD is the primary provider of water for agricultural uses. YCFCWCD obtained rights to Clear Lake in 1967 when it purchased the Clear Lake Water Company and Cache Creek Dam. Clear Lake covers approximately 44,000 acres when full and has a storage capacity of 1,155,000 acre-feet. The District is allowed to release up to 150,000 acre-feet of water annually.[16] In the past, the amount of water released from Clear Lake during dry years was not enough to serve the agricultural needs of the County. In order to address this issue, the YCFCWCD constructed the Indian Valley Dam and Reservoir in 1975. The dam is 6 miles long and 1 mile wide, and includes a reservoir with a capacity of 300,600 acre-feet.[17] In total, the YCFCWCD owns, operates, and maintains three dams, two

[14] Water Resources Association of Yolo County, 2007. *Yolo County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, Model Policies for Water Resources for the Yolo County General Plan.*

[15] Yolo County Flood Control & Water Conservation District, 2000. *Water Management Plan.* October.

[16] Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, 2007. *District Infrastructure*. Website: www.ycfcwcd.org/infrastructure.html December 18.

[17] Ibid.

hydroelectric plants, two reservoirs, and 175 miles of irrigation and drainage facilities.[18] The YCFCWCD's water distribution and irrigation system is critical infrastructure to agricultural activities within the County; although a number of water districts provide agricultural water to various portions of the County, this system is the largest provider of agricultural water and supports agricultural operations throughout the County that would otherwise not be feasible.

Other agricultural water is supplied from wells; groundwater is relied upon for approximately 40 percent of irrigation supply in normal years and relied upon more heavily during drought years. Groundwater is recharged by Cache Creek in the south-central portion of the County, and by the watershed to the west in the north-central part of the County. The Sacramento River contributes to the groundwater supply in areas adjacent to the river. According to the Water Resources Association of Yolo County, 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.[19] Agricultural water users face problems with unreliable water supplies during drought conditions, from subsidence resulting from groundwater overdraft in the Upper Cache Creek region and the Dunnigan Hills region, competing demands from non-agricultural development, and increasingly stringent, complex, and costly water quality regulations.[20]

b. Regulatory Framework. Policies and regulations relevant to the agricultural resources of Yolo County are drawn from the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), the Yolo County Zoning Ordinance, the Yolo County Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, the Delta Protection Commission Land Use and Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta, the Yolo County Local Agency Formation Commission's Agricultural Conservation Policy, and the Sacramento Area Council of Governments Preferred Blueprint Scenario for 2050.

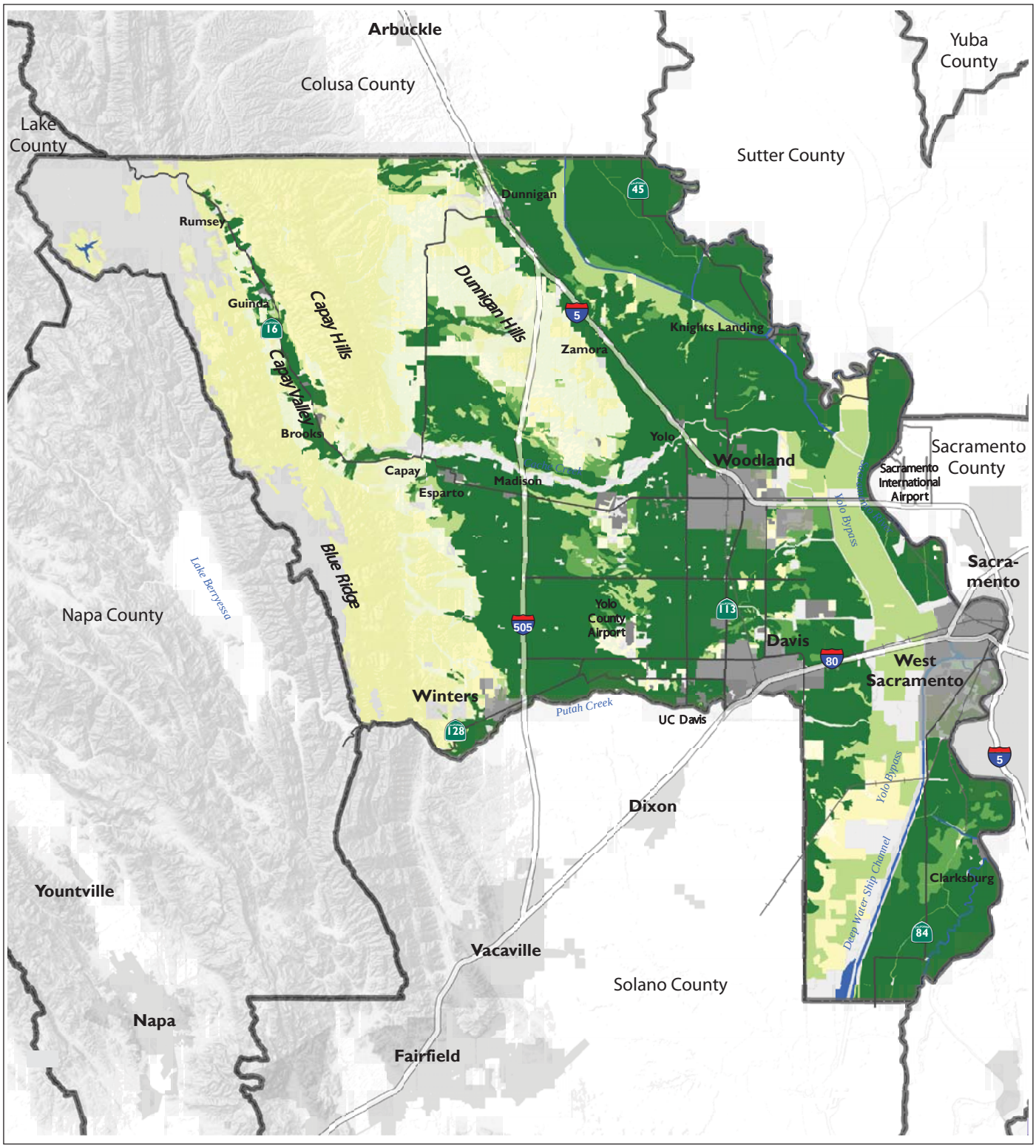
(1) California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. As noted above, important farmland in California is classified and mapped according to the California Department of Conservation FMMP.[21] Authority for the FMMP comes from Government Code Section 65570(b) and Public Resources Code Section 612. Government Code Section 65570(b) requires the Department of Conservation to collect or acquire information on the amount of land converted to or from agricultural use for every mapped county and to report this information to the Legislature. This chapter is due biennially (every two years) on or before June 30 of every even numbered year. Public Resources Code Section 612 requires the Department to prepare, update, and maintain Important Farmland Series Maps and other soils and land capability information. Other legislation related to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program is Government Code Section 51283(d), which provides for funding, and Public Resources Code Section 21060.1, which defines agricultural land for California Environmental Quality Act purposes.

[18] Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, 2000. *Water Management Plan, Chapter VI: District's Water Delivery System*. October.

[19] Water Resources Association of Yolo County, 2007. *Op. cit.*

[20] Ibid.

[21] California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, 2007. Accessed online at http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/FMMP/Pages/Index.aspx (13 October 2008).



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Prime Farmland
Farmland of Statewide Importance
Unique Farmland
Farmland of Local Importance
Grazing Land
Other Land
Urban and Built Up Land
Water

N

0 5 10
MILES

FIGURE IV.B-3

Yolo County 2030 Countywide General Plan EIR
Important Farmlands

SOURCE: CALIFORNIA DEPT. OF CONSERVATION, FARMLAND MAPPING & MONITORING PROGRAM, 2004.

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(2) Yolo County Zoning Ordinance. Title 8 (Land Development and Zoning) of the Yolo County Code contains the primary land development regulations of the County, including the Zoning Ordinance. These regulations implement the General Plan and must be consistent, however, any inconsistencies between the Zoning Ordinance and the General Plan must be resolved in favor of the General Plan. The Yolo County Zoning Ordinance includes the following zoning designations for agriculture:

- A-1: Agricultural General Zone This zone provides uses on lands best suited for agriculture. The minimum lot area is 20 acres. Principal permitted uses include agricultural uses (including agricultural buildings or structures),one single-family dwelling, public parks, rural recreation, and various accessory uses.
- A-P: Agricultural Preserve Zone This zone preserves land best suited for agricultural use from the encroachment of nonagricultural uses. The A-P Zone is intended to be used to establish agricultural preserves in accordance with the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, as amended. Uses approved on contracted land must be consistent and compatible with the provisions of the Act. Authorized uses do not include Agribusiness Development Park Areas. The minimum lot area is 80 gross acres where the soils are capable of cultivation and are irrigated, 160 gross acres where the soils are capable of cultivation but are not irrigated, and 320 gross acres where the soils are not capable of cultivation (including rangeland and lands which are not income producing). The minimum acreage requirement for establishment of an Agricultural Preserve is 100 acres total. Principal uses include agricultural uses (including agricultural buildings or structures), one single-family dwelling, public parks, rural recreation, and various accessory uses.
- A-E: Agricultural Exclusive Zone This zone provides uses for lands best suited for agriculture. The minimum lot area is 20 acres. This zone is very little used. Principal permitted uses are the same as those specified for the A-1 Zone. Conditional uses that are authorized by a Minor Use Permit upon review and approval by the Zoning Administrator, as well as conditional uses authorized by Major Use Permit upon review and approval by the Planning Commission, are the same as those listed under the A-1 Zone above.
- AGI: Agricultural Industry Zone This zone designates lands in rural areas for uses directly related to agricultural industry. There is no minimum acreage requirement, except where natural barriers, health or safety issues, environmental, or existing rail or highway facilities may constrain agricultural industry uses.

Three additional Zoning Ordinance designations, Watershed Combining (-W), Mobile Home Combining (-MHF), and Special Sand and Gravel Combining (-SG) correlate with the Agriculture (AG) General Plan Land Use Designation as defined in the Draft General Plan. The Zoning Ordinance, including the zone categories, will be updated following adoption of the Draft General Plan to ensure consistency and enable Draft General Plan build-out.

(3) Yolo County Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. Through its Agricultural Conservation Easement Program,[22] Yolo County provides an opportunity for landowners to conserve and protect lands in a natural, rural, or agricultural condition through the issuance of an agricultural conservation easement. An agricultural conservation easement is a voluntary, legally-recorded deed restriction that is placed on a specific property used for agricultural production which restricts future

[22] County of Yolo. *Yolo County Zoning Ordinance Section 8-2.2416.*

use of that property to agricultural uses. In selling or donating an easement on an agricultural parcel, landowners relinquish the rights to develop the property for future non-agricultural uses. In return, landowners receive cash or tax benefits, or both. Public agencies or conservation organizations such as a land trust acquire and hold the easements and manage them over time. California Farmland Conservancy Program (CFCP) grant funds may be used by a local government or a qualified nonprofit organization (e.g., park district, resource conservation district, or land trust) to purchase a landowner's conservation easement.

Under this ordinance, Yolo County also 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. Eligible lands for this mitigation must meet the following criteria:

- They must have comparable or better soil than the land being converted to non-agricultural use, based on Storie Index;[23]
- They shall have a comparable or better water supply and any associated water rights must remain within the mitigation land;
- They must be located in Yolo County within a two-mile radius of the land being converted to non-agricultural use, or if such is unavailable mitigation land outside the two mile radius must be of equal or better conservation easement market value to the lands inside the two mile radius area;
- Land previously encumbered by any other agricultural conservation easement shall not qualify, but overlapping habitat easements may qualify.

(4) Agricultural Setback Requirements of the Agricultural Commissioner. Pesticides and their application pose a potential hazard to humans, livestock and wildlife. In Yolo County, only registered pesticides that are least toxic to humans, fish and wildlife, effective for the control of a given pest, are allowed by the County Agricultural Commissioner for use in close proximity to environmentally sensitive areas.[24] Examples of environmentally sensitive areas are areas regularly used by humans such as residential areas, schools, playgrounds, parks, hospitals, and shopping centers, areas used by livestock, and areas that contain sensitive resources, such as estuaries, reservoirs, lakes and streams, wildlife management areas, and critical habitat for rare, endangered or threatened species. The County Agricultural Commissioner has established minimum distances that must be maintained between environmentally sensitive areas and areas where restricted pesticides are applied. The minimum distances are 500 feet for aerial applications, 300 feet for air blast orchard applications, and 100 feet for ground applications.

[23] Additional information can be found in R.E. Storie's *Storie Index Soil Rating*, revised 1978, available at http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu/Maps/3203.aspx

[24] County of Yolo Agricultural Commissioner, *Conditions Covering the Use of Restricted Materials*, available at http://www.yolocounty.org/index.aspx?page=469, January 1, 2009.

(5) The California Land Conservation Act of 1965. The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, or Williamson Act, preserves agricultural and open space lands through property tax incentives and voluntary restrictive use contracts. Private landowners voluntarily restrict their land to agricultural and compatible open-space uses under minimum 10-year rolling term contracts with counties and cities also acting voluntarily. In return, restricted parcels are assessed for property tax purposes at a rate consistent with their actual use, rather than potential market value.[25]

Only land located within a locally-designated "Agricultural Preserve" is eligible for a Williamson Act contract, although not all land within an Agricultural Preserve must be under contract. By State law, an Agricultural Preserve must be designated by the local government, must consist of no fewer than 100 acres, and may be made up of land in one or more townships. In Yolo County, Agricultural Preserves are designated using the Agricultural Preserve (A-P) zoning district.

Williamson Act contracts are popular throughout the State, since they are voluntary, impose no requirements on landowners other than prohibiting urban development during the duration of contracts, and tend to protect a large portion of the State's prime agricultural land from development and the resulting agricultural loss. The Williamson Act defines prime agricultural land as any of the following:

(1) All land that qualifies for rating as Class I or Class II in the Natural Resource Conservation Service land use capability classifications.

(2) Land which qualifies for rating 80 through 100 in the Storie Index Rating.

(3) Land which supports livestock used for the production of food and fiber and which has an annual carrying capacity equivalent to at least one animal unit per acre as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture.

(4) Land planted with fruit- or nut-bearing trees, vines, bushes or crops which have a nonbearing period of less than five years and which will normally return during the commercial bearing period on an annual basis from the production of unprocessed agricultural plant production not less than two hundred dollars ($200) per acre.

(5) Land which has returned from the production of unprocessed agricultural plant products an annual gross value of not less than two hundred dollars ($200) per acre for three of the previous five years.

Participation in the program has been steady, hovering at about 16 million acres enrolled under contract statewide since the early 1980s. This number represents about one third of all privately held land in California, and about one half of all the state's agricultural land.[26] Yolo County currently has approximately 410,659 acres of land under Williamson Act Contracts; this number has decreased steadily, however, over the last 15 years.[27] Approximately 58 percent of land under Williamson Act contracts in the County is prime farmland. Figure IV.B-4 shows parcels in Yolo County under Williamson Act contracts.

[25] California Department of Conservation, 2002. *California Land Conservation (Williamson) Act Status Report.* August.

[26] Design, Community, and Environment, 2006. *Yolo County Agricultural Preservation Techniques Report*. December.

[27] Ibid.

The State has repeatedly considered various changes to the program, including elimination of the program, elimination of the funding, and shifting the burden for funding to local governments.[28] The County has extensively relied on this program since its inception to bolster local interests and programs to preserve agricultural land. Yolo County has been recognized by the State for exemplary administration and management of the Williamson Act program.[29]

(6) Farmland Security Zones. In August 1998, the California State Legislature expanded the Williamson Act by amending it to provide for the establishment of "Farmland Security Zones." The Farmland Security Zone legislation authorizes landowners to petition the County board of supervisors (Board) to rescind their existing Williamson Act contract in favor of a new Farmland Security Zone Contract (FSZ Contract). The landowner must have an existing Williamson Act contract before the Board can approve a FSZ Contract. For land not currently in a Williamson Act contract, the Board may allow enrollment of the land into a Williamson Act contract, then authorize the immediate rescission of those contracts in favor of FSZ Contracts.

Land subject to an FSZ Contract is valued for assessment purposes at 65 percent of the value of its Williamson Act value, or its Proposition 13 value, whichever is lower. This tax incentive was intended to encourage owners of agricultural land to put their property into Farmland Security Zones. In addition to the 65 percent assessment value, the Farmland Security Zone legislation requires that new special taxes for urban-related services be levied at an unspecified reduced rate on land enrolled in a FSZ Contract, unless the tax directly benefits the land or the living improvements on the land. In addition to the 65 percent assessment value, the Farmland Security Zone legislation requires that new special taxes for urban-related services be levied at an unspecified reduced rate on land enrolled in a FSZ Contract, unless the tax directly benefits the land or the living improvements on the land.

The following requirements must be met to place land into FSZ Contracts:

- **Land must be Currently in a Williamson Act Contract.** As discussed above, before land may be placed into a FSZ Contract, it must first be subject to a Williamson Act contract.
- **Landowner Request.** No land may be placed into a FSZ Contract unless expressly requested by the landowner.
- **Grade of Land.** To qualify, land must be designated on the Important Farmland Series maps as predominately on or more of the following: (1) Prime Farmland; (2) Farmland of Statewide Importance; (3) Unique Farmland; or (4) Farmland of Local Importance.
- **Sphere of Influence.** Any land located within a city's sphere of influence may not be included in a Farmland Security Zone, unless expressly approved by resolution by the city with jurisdiction within the sphere.

[28] Morrison, David, 2009. Personal Communication with LSA Associates, Inc. February.

[29] Ibid.

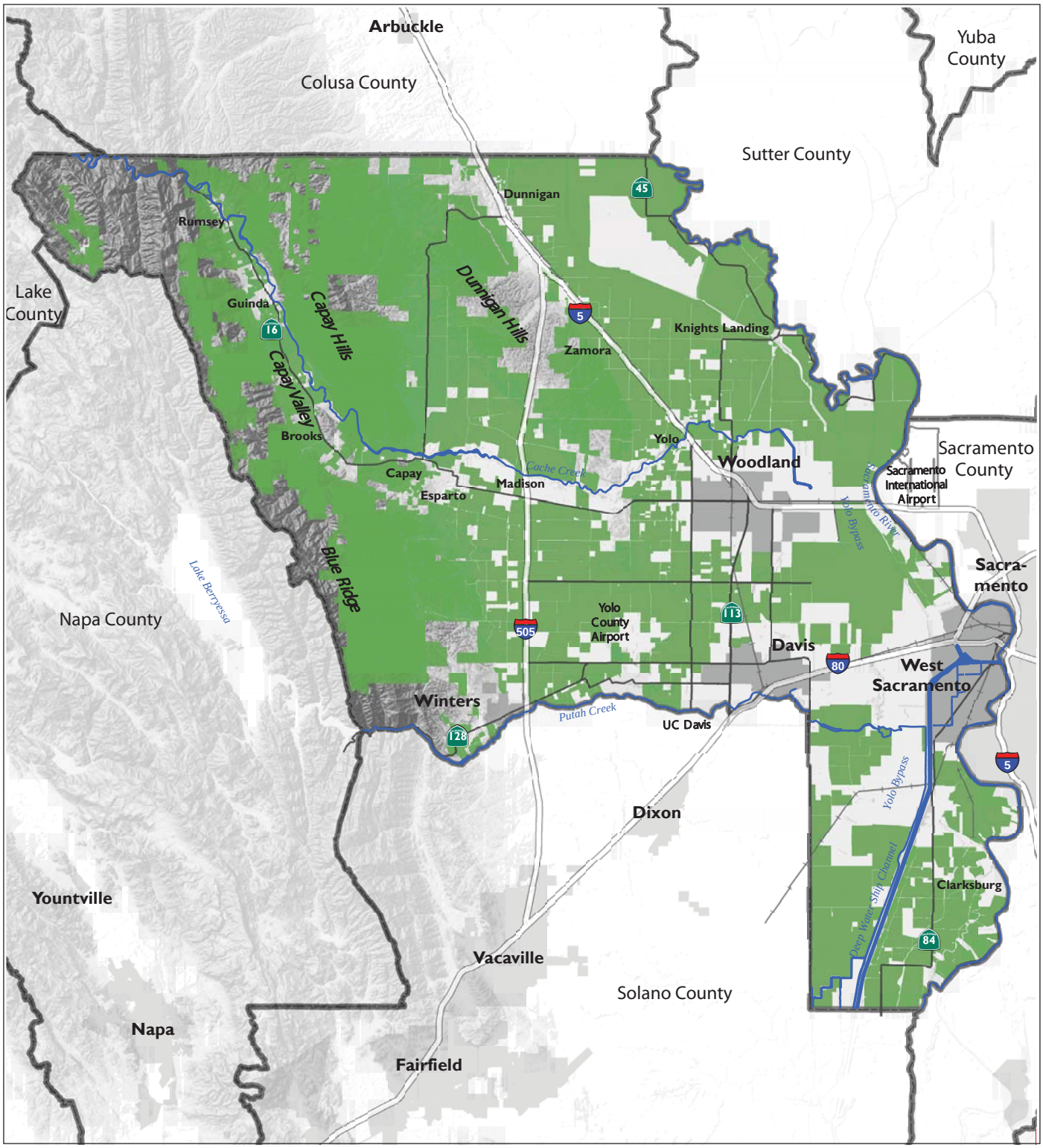

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FIGURE IV.B-4

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MILES

Parcels Under Williamson Act Contracts

Yolo County 2030 Countywide General Plan EIR

Williamson Act Contracts

SOURCE: COUNTY OF YOLO, GIS, 2009.

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Yolo County restricts the establishment of FSZ contracts to properties located within three miles of the existing incorporated boundaries of any of the four cities. The Williamson Act provides for a higher subvention rate within this area, which reimburses the County for the loss of property tax resulting from the FSZ subsidy. Outside the three-mile range, the subvention rate is lower and does not fully cover the cost of the County subsidy.

(7) Delta Protection Commission Land Use and Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta. Recognizing the threats to the Primary Zone of the Delta from potential urban and suburban encroachment and the need to protect the area for agriculture, wildlife habitat, and recreation uses, the California Legislature passed and the Governor signed into law on September 23, 1992, the Delta Protection Act of 1992 (SB 1866). The Act directs the Delta Protection Commission to prepare a comprehensive resource management plan for land uses within the Primary Zone of the Delta. The planning conducted by the Delta Protection Commission involved preparation and public review of nine background reports: Environment; Utilities and Infrastructure; Land Use and Development; Water; Levees; Agriculture; Recreation and Access; Marine Patrol, Boater Education, and Safety Programs; and Implementation. These reports provided the information base for the Land Use and Resource Management Plan (LURMP) findings and policies, as well as opportunities for public review and comment through circulation and public hearings before the Commission. The LURMP was adopted by the State in 1995 and adopted by Yolo County as a General Plan amendment on March 18, 1997 by Resolution No. 97-34.

The goals of the Plan as set out in the Act are to "protect, maintain, and where possible, enhance and restore the overall quality of the Delta environment, including but not limited to agriculture, wildlife habitat, and recreational activities; assure orderly, balanced conservation and development of Delta land resources and improve flood protection by structural and nonstructural means to ensure an increased level of public health and safety." Also pursuant to the Act, to the extent that any of the requirements specified in the LURMP are in conflict, nothing in the LURMP shall deny the right of the landowner to continue the agricultural use of the land.

The LURMP contains the following goals and policies concerning agriculture in the Primary Zone of the Delta:

Goals: Preserve and protect the natural resources of the Delta, including soils. Promote protection of remnants of riparian habitat. Promote seasonal flooding and agriculture practices on agricultural lands to maximize wildlife use of the hundreds of thousands of acres of lands in the Delta. Promote levee maintenance and rehabilitation to preserve the land areas and channel configurations in the Delta.

Environment Policies

- Policy P-1: The priority land use of areas of prime soil shall be agriculture. If commercial agriculture is no longer feasible due to subsidence or lack of adequate water supply or water quality, land uses which protect other beneficial uses of Delta resources, and which would not adversely affect agriculture on surrounding lands, or viability or cost of levee maintenance, may be permitted. If temporarily taken out of agriculture production due to lack of adequate water supply or water quality, the land shall remain reinstateable to agricultural production for the future.
- Policy P-2: Agricultural and land management practices shall minimize subsidence of peat soils. Local governments shall support studies of agricultural methods that minimize subsidence and shall assist in educating landowners and managers as to the value of utilizing these methods.

- Goals: Protect the unique character and qualities of the Primary Zone by preserving the cultural heritage and strong agricultural base of the Primary Zone. Direct new residential, commercial, and industrial development within the existing communities as currently designated and where appropriate services are available.

Land Use Policies

- Policy P-1: The rich cultural heritage and strong agricultural base of the Delta shall be preserved and recognized in public/private facilities, such as museums within the existing communities.
- Policy P-2: Local government general plans, as defined in Government Code Section 65300 et seq., and zoning codes shall continue to strongly promote agriculture as the primary land use in the Primary Zone; recreation land uses shall be supported in appropriate locations and where the recreation uses do not conflict with agricultural land uses or other beneficial uses, such as waterside habitat. County plans and ordinances may support transfer of development rights, lot splits with no increase in density, and clustering to support long-term agricultural viability and open space values of the Primary Zone. Clustering is intended to support efficient use of agricultural lands, not to support new urban development in the Primary Zone. Local governments shall specifically indicate when, how, and why these options would be allowed in the Primary Zone.
- Policy P-3: New residential, recreational, commercial, or industrial development shall ensure that appropriate buffer areas are provided by those proposing new development to prevent conflicts between any proposed use and existing agricultural use. Buffers shall adequately protect integrity of land for existing and future agricultural uses. Buffers may include berms and vegetation, as well as setbacks of 500 to 1,000 feet.
- Policy P-4: New non-agricultural residential development, if needed, shall be located within the existing Primary Zone communities where support infrastructure and flood protection are already provided.
- Goal: To support long-term viability of commercial agriculture and to discourage inappropriate development of agricultural lands.

Agriculture Policies

- Policy P-1: Commercial agriculture in the Delta shall be supported and encouraged as a key element in the State's economy and in providing the food supply needed to sustain the increasing population of the State, the Nation, and the world.
- Policy P-2: Local governments, as defined in Public Resources Code Section 29725, shall identify the unique qualities of the Delta which make it well suited for agriculture. These qualities include: rich soil, ample supplies of water, long growing season, mild climate, and proximity to packaging and shipping infrastructure. The unique physical characteristics of the Delta also require that agricultural landowners maintain extensive levee systems, provide flood control, and have adequate drainage to allow the lands to be farmed.
- Policy P-3: Education of the local populations about the value and rich heritage of agriculture in the State and in the Delta shall be continued and expanded.
- Policy P-4: Local governments shall support long-term viability of commercial agriculture in the Delta because of its economic and environmental importance to the State and local communities.
- Policy P-5: Support shall be given to current and alternative programs that help to minimize the need for costly production inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides as long as crop production levels and agricultural income can be maintained. Improving crop production and agricultural income is vital to the success of Delta agriculture.
- Policy P-6: Each local government shall continue to implement the necessary plans and ordinances to: maximize agricultural parcel size; reduce subdivision of agricultural lands; protect ordinary agricultural activities; protect agricultural land from conversion to other uses; and clearly define areas in that

jurisdiction where urban land uses are appropriate and where agricultural land uses are appropriate. An optimum package of regulatory and incentive programs would include: (1) an urban limit line; (2) minimum parcel size consistent with local agricultural practices and needs; (3) strict subdivision regulations regarding subdivision of agricultural lands to ensure that subdivided lands will continue in agriculture; (4) delete from zoning ordinances "other" land uses which are not compatible the agriculture; (5) require adequate buffers between agricultural and non-agricultural land uses particularly residential development outside but adjacent to the Primary Zone; (6) an agriculture element of the general plan; (7) a right-to-farm ordinance; and (8) a conservation easement program.

- Policy P-7: Local governments shall encourage acquisition of agricultural conservation easements as mitigation for projects within each county, or through public or private funds obtained to protect agricultural and open space values, and habitat value that is associated with agricultural operations. Encourage transfer of development rights within land holdings, from parcel to parcel within the Delta, and where appropriate, to sites outside the Delta. Promote use of environmental mitigation in agricultural areas only when it is consistent and compatible with ongoing agricultural operations and when developed in appropriate locations designated on a countywide or Deltawide habitat management plan.
- Policy P-8: Local governments shall encourage management of agricultural lands which maximize wildlife habitat seasonally and year-round, through techniques such as sequential flooding in fall and winter, leaving crop residue, creation of mosaic of small grains and flooded areas, controlling predators, controlling poaching, controlling public access, and others.
- Policy P-9: Local governments may continue to retain agricultural zoning and minimum parcel sizes as described in zoning codes in place January 1, 1992. Where minimum parcel size is less than 40 acres, local governments shall describe how smaller parcel sizes will support long-term viability of commercial agriculture in the Primary Zone. This policy shall not be construed to require the re-zoning of subminimum parcels.
- Policy P-10:

  (i) Local governments may develop programs to cluster agriculture-dependent residential units or transfer development rights (TDRs) to off-site locations. Clustering on a single farm would be for family members or employees and would not exceed maximum number of units allowed under existing zoning as of January 1, 1992. Clustering would be accompanied by conditions to preserve agricultural use and open space values on the balance of the property. TDRs may involve transfers from farms to Primary Zone communities with adequate flood protection to protect residential use, or to sites out of the Primary Zone.
  (ii) Local governments that pursue clustering or transfer of development rights shall proceed with adoption procedures to implement such programs as part of the local government implementation of the resource management plan.
  (iii) Where portions of cities are located within the Primary Zone, cities shall indicate zoning which was in place on January 1, 1992. Future changes to city general plans or zoning ordinances shall conform to the resource management plan.

(8) Yolo County Local Agency Formation Commission's (LAFCO's) Agricultural Conservation Policy. The Yolo County LAFCO is an independent agency responsible for the implementation of the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (Government Code, Section 56000 et seq.) and is integral to the continued success of agriculture within the County. Yolo County LAFCO membership includes two County Supervisors appointed by the Board of Supervisors, two City Council members appointed by the City Selection Committee, and one public member appointed by LAFCO. Yolo County LAFCO is empowered to review, approve or deny boundary changes, city annexations, consolidations, special district formations, incorporations for cities and special districts, and to establish local "Spheres of Influence". Such decisions

significantly impact the availability of agricultural lands for productive agricultural use. The Sphere of Influence for each governmental agency is a plan for its future boundary and service area.

California Government Code Section 56377 mandates that LAFCOs consider the following factors in reviewing and approving or disapproving proposals which could reasonably be expected to induce, facilitate, or lead to the conversion of existing open-space lands to uses other than open-space uses:

- Development or use of land for other than open-space uses shall be guided away from existing prime agricultural lands in open-space use toward areas containing non-prime agricultural lands, unless that action would not promote the planned, orderly, efficient development of an area.
- Development of existing vacant or non-prime agricultural lands for urban uses within the existing jurisdiction of a local agency or within the sphere of influence of a local agency should be encouraged before any proposal is approved which would allow for or lead to the development of existing open-space lands for non-open-space uses which are outside of the existing jurisdiction of the local agency or outside of the existing sphere of influence of the local agency.

The Yolo County LAFCO Agricultural Conservation Policy includes six considerations against which all proposals are reviewed. It emphasizes that, where feasible, non-prime land should be annexed before prime land and requires that a land's current zoning, pre-zoning, or land use designations are considered in determining whether mitigation will be required for the loss of agricultural land. This policy is a major protection for the County's agricultural lands and enforces preservation of agricultural lands for productive agricultural uses to the greatest extent feasible. Further, annexation for land uses in conflict with an existing agricultural preserve contract are prohibited unless specific criteria outlined in the policy are met. Mitigation measures are explicitly detailed in the policy and as such are not repeated in this EIR.[30]

(9) Sacramento Area Council of Governments Preferred Blueprint Scenario for 2050.
The Sacramento Area Council of Governments' (SACOG's) Preferred Blueprint Alternative Scenario for 2050 is the culmination of a broad regional analysis that sought to create four distinct scenarios showing how the Sacramento region would look according to different growth patterns. The Preferred Blueprint Alternative Scenario, which was approved in December 2004, contains a number of smart growth principles regarding transportation choices, mixed-use development, compact development, housing choice and diversity, use of existing assets, quality design, and natural resources conservation intended to impact and improve future development in the region.[31]

The Preferred Blueprint Alternative Scenario for 2050 foresees slower growth for Yolo County due to its strong agricultural and natural resource values, with population increases and new development centering primarily around West Sacramento and the other cities and towns in the County.

(10) Sacramento Area Council of Governments Rural-Urban Connections Strategy.
SACOG's Rural-Urban Connections Strategy examines the region's growth and sustainability objectives from a rural perspective to create an economic and environmental sustainability strategy for rural areas. This strategy identifies rural challenges and opportunities in five broad topic areas:

[30] The full text of the Yolo County LAFCO Agricultural Conservation Policy can be found online at http://www.yolocounty.org/Index.aspx?page=195.

[31] Sacramento Area Council of Governments, 2004. *Preferred Blueprint Alternative Scenario for 2050.*

- Land use and conservation
- The infrastructure of agriculture
- Economic opportunities
- Forest management, and
- Regulations.

The challenges and opportunities were developed with input from local agriculture, planning, economic development, and environmental representatives to help the region better understand the unique issues in rural areas. SACOG is assembling working groups around these core topic areas to help further understand what is currently happening around the region, identify rural challenges, and expand on the region's unique opportunities. Through the working group process, SACOG will work directly with rural stakeholders, citizens, businesses, and public agencies to form strategies that enhance agriculture and rural economies, resource conservation, recreation, quality of life, and regional sustainability and broaden the region's understanding of how land use and transportation investments affect rural areas.

2. Draft 2030 Countywide General Plan for Yolo County

The Draft General Plan provides a guide for future development and land uses in Yolo County through 2030 and identifies community priorities and values to guide public decision-making for the County. As stated in the Draft General Plan, the vision of Yolo County is to remain an area of active and productive farmland and open space. Polices and actions of the Draft General Plan that are pertinent to agriculture and that mitigate the potential impacts of the Draft General Plan are listed below.

Land Use and Community Character Element

- Policy LU-2.1: The intent of this policy is to protect existing farm operations from impacts related to the encroachment of urban uses. The expertise of the County Agricultural Commissioner shall by used in applying this policy. Urban development shall bear the primary burden of this policy. 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 of within the growth boundary of an unincorporated community. New urban (non-agricultural) development should be setback a minimum of 300 feet from adjoining agricultural land where possible, but special circumstances can be considered by the decision-making body. The buffer area shall generally be designated Open Space (OS), but may also be designated Public and Quasi-Public (PQ) or Parks and Recreation (PR) based on applicable circumstances. Agricultural buffers are not required for planned urban growth elsewhere within a growth boundary because the agricultural-urban interface will be temporary until full build-out occurs.
- Policy LU-2.2: Allow additional agricultural commercial and agricultural industrial land uses in any designated agricultural area, where appropriate, depending on site characteristics and project specifics. Agricultural commercial and/or agricultural industrial development is anticipated as shown in Table LU-7 (Anticipated Agricultural Commercial and/or Agricultural Industrial Growth) and Figure LU-X (New Targeted Future Agricultural Commercial and Agricultural Industrial Sites).
- Policy LU-2.3: Manage agricultural parcels of less than 20 acres, including antiquated subdivisions where appropriate, to create compatibility with surrounding agricultural uses to the greatest extent possible, including: 1) discourage residential development; 2) encourage lot mergers to achieve larger parcel sizes; 3) encourage clustering of units either within parcels or near existing homes on adjoining parcels to preserve farmland and natural resources; 4) encourage transfers of development rights to areas where

additional farm dwellings are desired (e.g. organic farms that are labor intensive); 5) encourage deed restrictions, site design and development themes that support the agricultural use of the land; and 6) aggressively limit the impact of residential development where it does occur.

- Policy LU-2.4: Prohibit the division of land in an agricultural area if the division is for non- agricultural purposes and/or if the result of the division will be parcels that are infeasible for farming.
- Policy LU-2.5: Vigorously conserve, preserve, and enhance the productivity of the agricultural lands in areas outside of adopted community growth boundaries and outside of city SOIs.

Agricultural and Economic Development Element

- Policy AG-1.1: Protect and enhance the County's four key agricultural sectors. This includes: (1) retaining existing growers and processors of 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.
- Policy AG-1.5: Strongly discourage the conversion of agricultural land for other uses. No lands shall be considered for redesignation from Agricultural or Open Space to another land use 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 offsite agricultural practices. All dwellings in agriculturally zoned areas shall be encouraged to be located on portions of the parcel less suitable 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 of an unincorporated community. New urban (non-agricultural) development shall be set back a minimum of 300 feet from adjoining agricultural 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 (implemented through the Williamson Act), 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 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, from willing sellers or donors.
- Policy AG-1.18: The intent of this policy is to protect existing farm operations from impacts related to the encroachment of urban uses. The expertise of the County Agricultural Commissioner shall be used in applying this policy. Urban development shall bear the primary burden of this policy. 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 of within the growth boundary of an unincorporated community. New urban (non-agricultural) development should be setback a minimum of 300 feet from adjoining agricultural land where possible, but special circumstances can be considered by the decision-making body. The buffer area shall generally be designated Open Space (OS), but may also be designated Public and Quasi-Public (PQ) or Parks and Recreation (PR) based on applicable circumstances. Agricultural buffers are not required for planned urban growth elsewhere within a growth boundary because the agricultural-urban interface will be temporary until full build-out occurs.
- 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: Within conservation easements, preclude the practice of fallowing fields for the purpose of water export. Fallowing as a part of normal crop rotation is not subject to this policy.
- Policy AG-1.23: Protect the integrity of irrigation conveyance systems and related infrastructure from the impacts of adjoining non-agricultural development.
- Policy AG-1.24: Oppose the creation of any conservation easements within growth boundaries. Conservation easements within growth boundaries shall not be accepted for mitigation purposes.
- 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, mitigation banks 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 climate change.
- Policy AG-2.8: Facilitate partnerships between agricultural operations and habitat conservation efforts to create mutually beneficial outcomes.
- Policy AG-2.9: 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.
- Policy AG-2.10: Encourage habitat protection and management that does not preclude or unreasonably restrict on-site agricultural production.
- Policy AG-2.11: Encourage farmers to use agricultural methods that reduce or minimize use of pesticides, herbicides and manufactured fertilizers.
- Policy AG-2.12: Encourage farmers to employ agricultural practices that supplement rather than deplete topsoil and conserve or minimize water use.
- Policy AG-2.13: Promote wildlife-friendly farm practices, such as tailwater ponds, native species/grasslands restoration in field margins, hedgerows, ditch management for riparian habitat, restoration or riparian areas in a manner consistent with ongoing water delivery systems, reduction of pesticides, incorporating winter stubble and summer fallow, etc.
- Policy AG-2.14: 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 farming methods that reduce the use of fossil fuels and pesticides.
- Policy AG-2.15: Encourage the establishment of agricultural mitigation banks in appropriate locations that provide strategic protection of high value farmland.
- Policy AG-2.16: Pursue legislation to allow growers to use non-food agricultural by-products, including wood waste products, for renewable energy.
- 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, specialized marketing efforts, and other programs as may be determined to be appropriate. Three initial districts shall be considered as follows:

District	Unique Aspects	Suggested Policies and Actions
Capay Valley	Organic farming with many different specialty crops Agricultural and eco-tourism Cache Creek Casino Resort destination Historic downtowns Cache Creek recreation One wine appellation (Capay Valley)	Promote organic and small-scale farming Enhance cooperative small-scale processing, warehousing, marketing capacity Improve the visitor experience Advance the Capay Valley Grown brand Review land use policies for visitor-serving facilities
Clarksburg	Existing wine industry and wine grape growing potential Agricultural and eco-tourism (River and Delta related tourism) Historic mill site with boutique wineries Existing wine appellation (Clarksburg) and numerous wineries	Promote wine grape growing Establish local crushing, fermentation, bottling, storage capacity Promote tourism Establish a Clarksburg brand Review land use policies for visitor-serving facilities Establish and promote Enterprise Zone benefits
Dunnigan Hills	Existing wine appellation (Dunnigan Hills) and wineries Existing almond, wine grape and orchard region Emerging olive region and olive oil growth potential Agricultural and eco-tourism potential	Promote wineries and olive presses Establish a Dunnigan Hills brand Encourage use of appellation

- 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. truck farms, organic farms 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 nontraditional 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.
- Policy AG-3.20: Work with the Sacramento Regional Sanitation District to accept agricultural production wastewater, dry-weather discharge, winery discharge and/or septic system sludge.
- 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 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.

Conservation and Open Space Element

- Policy CO-1.10: The target threshold for resource parks (regional and open space parks) shall be 20 acres per 1,000 total County population (both unincorporated and incorporated). Larger ratios may be appropriate in Specific Plan areas to accommodate important natural features and/or safety areas.

Yolo County's commitment to agriculture is carried forward from the 1983 General Plan through the expansion of policies intended to promote all types of agriculture, mitigate for losses of agricultural land, and promote agricultural innovation. Additionally, Yolo County's agricultural goals from the 1983 General Plan were updated in the Draft General Plan to include two new emphases: promoting the use of foods and products from Yolo County to strengthen the local economy, improve health, and connect residents with the agricultural community (Goal AG-5) and to enhance the agricultural

heritage of the Clarksburg area to complement the broader values of the Delta region (Goal AG-6). These two goals include eight and four additional policies, respectively, intended to assist the County in achieving these goals. The County's focus continues to emphasize wildlife-friendly farming, community revitalization, and the creation of jobs and economic health. The Draft General Plan contains one policy, however, that will likely result in the conversion of agricultural lands to open space uses (Policy CO-1.10).[32]

3. Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This section discusses potential impacts to agricultural resources that could result from build-out of the Draft General Plan and identifies mitigation measures, if appropriate.

Several components to the growth allowed under the Draft General Plan may have impacts on agricultural resources within the County. Specifically, the Draft General Plan provides for 4,738 acres of urban growth (i.e., those acres included within designated growth boundaries as defined in the Draft General Plan); future open space acquisitions of 4,103 acres (see footnote 31), which is presumed for the purposes of this analysis to remove agricultural land out of production; approximately 69 acres of land taken out of agricultural production to accommodate roadway improvements; and 162 acres to be used for future trails between towns and other places within the County.[33, 34, 35]

Approximately 4,718 acres of new farm dwellings, agricultural industrial, and agricultural commercial growth were not included in this calculation. The 4,718 acres includes 1,610 new farm dwellings assumed under build-out of the 1983 General Plan plus an additional 322 dwellings added under the Draft General Plan; the County assumes two-acre homesites for every farm dwelling or farm dwelling complex, which would result in 3,864 acres used for farm dwellings. An additional 854 acres is assumed to be used for siting new agricultural commercial and agricultural industrial uses.

These uses are not considered to convert agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses because they support and enhance the agricultural nature of the County; as such, they are not required to mitigate for the loss of lands where these uses are implemented. While these uses are legitimate agricultural support uses and allowed by right under the Agriculture land use designation, they may be considered adverse to habitat; therefore, agricultural commercial and agricultural industrial uses would be

[32] Policy CO-1.10 requires 20 acres of open spaces per 1,000 total County population. Assuming a total County population at build-out of the Draft General Plan of 322,586 (determined as 64,700 unincorporated population plus a four-city build-out population projection for 2025 by SACOG factored up by 9.6 percent [average of the last four five-year increments] for 2030 of 257,886) the County would require 6,452 acres of open space. Approximately 1,973 acres of open space currently exist within the County and 376 acres of open space are assumed within the four Specific Plan areas for either agricultural buffers, habitat buffers, and/or buffers from known waterways. The County would be required to include an additional 4,103 acres of open space to fulfill this requirement.

[33] Tschudin, Heidi. 2009. Personal communication with LSA Associates, Inc. January.

[34] Calculations for the total amount of "urban growth" within the defined growth boundaries is provided in Section IV.A, Land Use, of this EIR. 69 acres of roadway improvements assumes an additional 25 feet of right-of-way along County Roads 6, 21A, and 85B; 20 feet of additional right-of-way along County Road 99W, State Road 16 (from County Road 21A to I-505); and 10 feet of additional right-of-way along County Roads 89, 102, and State Road 16 (from County Road 75 to County Road 85B and I-505 to County Road 98). 162 acres of trails uses assumes a 25-foot wide trail from Rumsey to Woodland, from Woodland to Davis, from the end of the Class I bicycle trail along County Road 31 to Winters, and from Clarksburg to West Sacramento.

required to mitigate for loss of habitat, as appropriate. This mitigation is discussed in greater detail in Section IV.J, Biological Resources, of this EIR.

a. Significance Criteria. Build-out of the Draft General Plan would have a significant impact to agricultural resources if it would:

- Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) of the California Resources Agency, to a non-agricultural use;
- Conflict with or result in the cancellation of a Williamson Act contract;
- Result in permanent conversion of agricultural soils to non-agricultural use;
- Cause the loss of agricultural productivity or crop values that represent a major proportion of the County's production or value of crops;
- Substantially conflict with applicable plans, policies and regulations of other agencies where such conflict would result in an adverse physical change in the environment;
- Result in new policies that would result in significant adverse physical impacts as compared to the 1983 General Plan policies.

b. Impacts Analysis. This following discussion provides an evaluation and analysis of potential impacts of the Draft General Plan for each of the criteria of significance listed above.

(1) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. This section discusses potential impacts resulting in conversion of farmlands classified under the FMMP to non-agricultural use.

<u>Impact AG-1</u>: Build-out of the Draft General Plan and the associated development would convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural uses. (S)

As discussed above, Yolo County contains approximately 325,079 acres of farmland categorized by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. This total represents 51 percent of all land in Yolo County; the majority of these lands are located in the Capay Valley and on the Sacramento Valley floor.

The Draft General Plan anticipates total build-out in 2030 of 22,061 dwelling units – an increase of 10,784 units over what was anticipated under the 1983 General Plan and 14,798 units over existing conditions. For commercial and industrial uses, the Draft General Plan would result in build-out of 2,881 acres, an increase of 919 acres over what was anticipated in the 1983 General Plan and 2,451 acres over existing conditions.[36] This growth is confined within designated areas established in the Draft General Plan to limit the developed footprint within the County, protect agricultural uses and resource areas, and support sustainable growth. The Draft General Plan designates these limits as

[36] Commercial and industrial acreage does not include agricultural industrial development, which is allowed for and included in Agricultural land use designations. These facilities are included and encouraged in agricultural areas to promote locational efficiencies of processing near harvesting areas and reduce transportation time and costs that can negatively impact agricultural commerce.

"growth boundaries" for each town and other community areas of the unincorporated County to delineate the furthest extent of growth that will occur within these areas. Lands outside the growth boundaries are designated for agricultural and open space uses.

The actual total amount of land converted to urban uses in the Draft General Plan is 4,807 acres (urban and roadway uses), which represents 1.5 percent of lands categorized by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Conservatively including projects for future open space and trails use would add an additional 4,265 acres to the amount of acres converted, resulting in a total of 9,072 acres, or 2.8 percent of lands categorized as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance.

Potential impacts to Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance would occur as a result of growth allowed under the Draft General Plan. The County's land uses, regulatory, and policy framework do minimize the potential for impact to Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance by directing most growth to the cities and existing rural towns, and by ensuring that the growth that is allowed follows "smart growth" principles.

Yolo County Zoning Ordinance Section 8.2-2416 requires that one acre of existing farmland of equal or higher quality for each acre of farmland that is converted to non-agricultural uses is preserved elsewhere within the County through the establishment of farmland easements or other similar mechanisms. Implementation and enforcement of Draft General Plan policies will avoid further conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural uses outside those acres identified in the Draft General Plan to be converted for non-agricultural uses. Specifically, policies AG-1.3, AG-1.6, 1.8, AG-1.11, AG-1.12, AG-1.13, and AG-1.15 prohibit the division of agricultural lands for non-agricultural uses, mitigate the conversion of farmland, require development setbacks from agricultural lands, limit the extension of urban service facilities and infrastructure, maintain growth boundaries around existing communities, prohibit new residential subdivisions in agricultural areas, and use programs such as Williamson Act and FPZ contracts to preserve agricultural lands. Policies LU-2.1, LU-2.5, LU-3.1, LU-3.2, and LU-3.5 seek to preserve and enhance the productivity of agricultural lands, set development buffers, direct new development to areas within growth boundaries, locate infrastructure to serve only existing and planned uses, and prohibit the creation of a ring of rural residential development outside the designated growth boundaries. The smart growth principles upon which the Draft General Plan is based and the policies and actions listed above would limit the amount of farmland converted to non-agricultural uses to the minimum amount necessary to achieve the Draft General Plan's objectives, but would still result in a significant impact.

The majority of undeveloped acres in Yolo County are currently designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. This includes the land designated for growth under the Draft General Plan, although the land within the Dunnigan growth boundary (which is the County's largest growth area) is of a lesser quality than most of the County soils. It is conservatively assumed for the purposes of this EIR that all converted agricultural lands fall within one of these categories, and therefore up to 9,072 acres of farmlands mapped by the State would be unavoidably converted as a result of Draft General Plan build-out. Once agricultural lands have been converted to non-agricultural use, they are generally regarded as permanently converted and not considered for future reclassification as farmland, effectively removing these lands from future agricultural

productivity. However, it is important to note that the County considers this loss of farmland "preemptive" for several reasons: it relieves pressure for growth elsewhere where there are greater constraints and less net community value; it keeps the small towns healthy and helps them thrive; it encourages commercial investment; it reinforces the County's policy of maintaining a hard urban edge; and it allows for important agricultural economic investment. In other words, were it not for this modest amount of controlled growth, increasing regional pressures and local fiscal economic realities would likely result in greater future conversion of farmland.

Yolo County is a statewide leader in farmland preservation. Numerous regulatory and policy methods for agricultural preservation are already in use in the County and supported by County goals and policies. As noted above, the County already requires compensatory mitigation in the form of 1:1 mitigation through conservation easements. Although the County's regulations will require permanent protection of agricultural acreage at a minimum equivalent to that lost, there remains a permanent net loss of farmland. The County could increase the level of mitigation through an increased mitigation ratio, e.g., 2:1 or greater. This has recently been considered and rejected by the Board as infeasible due to lack of nexus and a failure to meet conditions of rough proportionality to the impact. As such, no additional feasible mitigation measures have been identified.

> Mitigation Measure AG-1: None available.
>
> Permanent conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses will occur with build-out of the Draft General Plan, and while implementation of the policies and actions included in the Draft General Plan would reduce the severity of this impact, no additional feasible mitigation measures are available, and this impact would remain significant and unavoidable. (SU)

(2) Conflicts with Williamson Act contracts. This section discusses potential impacts that may result in conflict with or cancellation of Williamson Act contracts in the County.

Impact AG-2: Build-out of the Draft General Plan and the associated development would conflict with or result in the cancellation of a Williamson Act contract. (S)

As noted above, Yolo County has 410,659 acres under Williamson Act contracts – 67 percent of the County's total land area. These lands are located throughout the County, including lands located adjacent to developed areas. As noted above, lands under Williamson Act contract must be within an Agricultural Preserve and designated in Yolo County through the zoning designation A-P. As part of the Draft General Plan, the County anticipates total build-out of 22,061 dwelling units – an increase of 14,798 over existing conditions. For commercial and industrial uses the Draft General Plan would result in 2,881 additional acres at build-out, which is 2,451 acres over existing conditions. This development is confined to areas within the established growth boundaries shown in the Land Use and Community Character Element of the Draft General Plan. The County has included the identified growth within the Draft General Plan in order to, among other things, sustain improved economic and quality-of-life conditions in the rural community areas and satisfy the State's regional housing needs allocation. The smart growth principles upon which the Draft General Plan is based promote development within and adjacent to existing developed areas as a viable and sustainable alternative to new development in previously undeveloped areas, such as apart from existing communities. Because the land surrounding these community areas is predominantly agricultural land, any development that

occurs will include the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses, creating an unavoidable impact to this resource.

Approximately 1,704 acres of land currently under Williamson Act contracts fall within the growth boundaries established for these communities in the Draft General Plan; approximately 348 of these acres are under active contracts, while the remaining 1,357 acres are considered to be in the non-renewal process.[37] In order for development to occur within these areas, the lands must cancel or elect not to renew their Williamson Act contracts and the zoning designation for the land must be changed from A-P to the appropriate future use designation. Yolo County Zoning Ordinance Section 8.2-2416 (reinforced by Draft General Plan Policy AG-1.6) requires that one acre of existing farmland of equal or higher quality for each acre of farmland that is converted to non-agricultural uses is preserved elsewhere within the County through the establishment of farmland easements or other similar mechanisms, and would partially mitigate the loss the of Williamson Act-contracted lands to non-agricultural uses. Draft General Plan Policies AG-1.5, AG-1.6, AG-1.11 and AG-1.12 discourage the conversion of agricultural lands to other uses, require mitigation at a ratio of no less than 1:1 for agricultural lands converted to non-agricultural uses, protect agricultural lands from urban encroachment by limiting the extension of urban service facilities and infrastructure, and maintain growth boundaries around existing communities. Policies AG-1.13, AG-1.15, AG-1.16, AG-1.17, and AG-1.18 prohibit new residential development in agricultural areas, promote the use of Williamson Act and FSZ contracts to preserve agricultural lands, advocate for the maintenance and improvement of the Williamson Act Land Conservation Program, and encourage other voluntary conservation easements on agricultural lands. Policies LU-2.1, LU-2.4, LU-3.1, LU-3.6, LU-3.8, LU-3.10, and LU-6.5 further restrict new development on agricultural lands by focusing all new development to those areas confined within the designated growth boundaries. While implementation of these policies and actions will limit the amount of agricultural lands under Williamson Act contracts converted to other uses, these policies will not mitigate the loss of Williamson Act-contracted lands on lands proposed for growth. The resulting loss is approximately 1,704 acres of prime and non-prime agricultural lands currently within Williamson Act contract that will be permanently converted to other uses. In addition the potential exists for "induced" non-renewal of Williamson Act contracts adjacent to new growth areas, despite policies and land use designations that preclude growth outside of growth boundaries. The following mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level:

> Mitigation Measure AG-2: The Draft General Plan shall be amended to include the following new policy in the Agricultural and Economic Development Element:
>
> Policy AG-#: Where planned growth would occur on lands under Williamson Act contract, ensure that development is phased to avoid the need for contract cancellation, where feasible.
>
> Because some Williamson Act contracts may still be cancelled with build-out of the Draft General Plan, for example those in the Madison Specific Plan area, and while implementation of the policies and actions included in the Draft General Plan would reduce the severity of this impact, no additional feasible mitigation measures are available, and this impact would remain significant and unavoidable. (SU)

[37] County of Yolo. County GIS data provided by Marcus Neuvert as Ag_Impact.xls on March 24, 2009.

(3) Permanent Conversion of Agricultural Soils. This section describes the potential for build-out of the Draft General Plan to result in permanent conversion of agricultural soils.

Impact AG-3: Build-out of the Draft General Plan and the associated development would result in permanent conversion of agricultural soils to non-agricultural use. (S)

More than 63 percent of Yolo County's farmland soils are Class I, II, or III soils; 11 percent of farmland is on other Class III and 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 of the County. Along with the County's water resources, these soils serve as the foundation of agriculture in the County and promote crop diversity.

The Draft General Plan anticipates that approximately 6,242 acres of farmland with Class I-IV and VI soils will be converted to other uses, including 1,063 acres of Class I soils, 3,138 acres of Class II soils, 1,200 acres of Class III soils, 769 acres of Class IV soils, and 73 acres of Class VI soils.[38] As noted above, once acres are converted to non-agricultural use, they are considered permanently converted. Draft General Plan policies AG-1.3, AG-1.6, 1.8, AG-1.11, AG-1.12, AG-1.13, and AG-1.15 prohibit the division of agricultural lands for non-agricultural uses, mitigate the conversion of farmland, require development setbacks from agricultural lands, limit the extension of urban service facilities and infrastructure, maintain growth boundaries around existing communities, prohibit new residential subdivisions in agricultural areas, and use programs such as Williamson Act and FPZ contracts to preserve agricultural lands. Policies LU-2.1, LU-2.5, LU-3.1, LU-3.2, and LU-3.5 seek to preserve and enhance the productivity of agricultural lands, set development buffers, direct new development to areas within growth boundaries, locate infrastructure to serve only existing and planned uses, and prohibit the creation of a ring of rural residential development outside the designated growth boundaries. Implementation and enforcement of these policies will restrict further impacts to agricultural lands by focusing all new development to those areas confined within the General Plan-designated growth boundaries, but these policies and actions will not mitigate the loss of those agricultural soils located on the lands planned for future growth. Anticipated development included in the Draft General Plan is considered necessary growth to sustain improved economic and quality-of-life conditions in the County, and the smart growth principles upon which the Draft General Plan is based promote development within and adjacent to existing developed areas as a viable and sustainable alternative to new development in previously undeveloped areas, such as apart from existing communities. Because the land surrounding these community areas is predominantly agricultural land, any development that occurs will include the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses, creating an unavoidable impact to this resource. As a result, loss of the approximately 6,242 acres of farmland with soils in Classes I-IV and VI is considered significant and unavoidable.

As stated previously, it is important to note that the County considers this loss of farmland to be "preemptive" for several reasons: it relieves pressure for growth elsewhere where there are greater constraints and less net community value; it keeps the small towns healthy and helps them thrive; it encourages commercial investment; it reinforces the County's policy of maintaining a hard urban edge; and it allows for important agricultural economic investment. In other words, were it not for

[38] County of Yolo. County GIS data provided by Marcus Neuvert as Ag_Impact.xls on March 24, 2009.

this modest amount of controlled growth, increasing regional pressures and local fiscal economic realities would likely result in greater future conversion of farmland.

Numerous regulatory and policy methods for agricultural preservation are already in use in the County and supported by County goals and policies. As noted above, the County already requires compensatory mitigation in the form of 1:1 mitigation through conservation easements. Although the County's regulations will require permanent protection of agricultural acreage at a minimum equivalent to that lost, there remains a permanent net loss of farmland. The County could increase the level of mitigation through an increased mitigation ratio, e.g., 2:1 or greater. This has recently been considered and rejected by the Board as infeasible due to lack of nexus and a failure to meet conditions of rough proportionality to the impact. As such, no additional feasible mitigation measures have been identified.

> Mitigation Measure AG-3: None available.
>
> Permanent conversion of agricultural soils to non-agricultural uses will occur with build-out of the Draft General Plan, and while implementation of the policies and actions included in the Draft General Plan would reduce the severity of this impact, no additional feasible mitigation measures are available, and this impact would remain significant and unavoidable. (SU)

(4) Loss of Agricultural Productivity or Crop Values. This section describes potential losses in production or crop value that may result from build-out of the Draft General Plan.

The Draft General Plan and the anticipated development it designates would occur adjacent to existing developed areas and would result in the conversion of approximately 3,963 acres of farmland currently in production to non-agricultural use. Current crop production data for these acres are incomplete, although the County has identified the following current crop production for 3,419 of the 3,963 acres (86 percent):[39]

- Vineyards: 132 acres
- Orchards: 401 acres
- Field Crops: 2,708 acres
- Other production (pasture, rangeland): 178 acres

In order to determine the maximum potential loss in production value for those acres identified for conversion to non-agricultural uses within the designated growth boundaries, this analysis assumes the crop production on the remaining 544 acres to be of the highest value crop in the County, tomatoes for processing, as identified in the 2007 Yolo County Agricultural Crop Report.[40] Although the loss of 3,963 acres of crop production would be unavoidable, this total represents only 0.9 percent of crop-producing acreage accounted for in the 2007 report.[41] Based on the production value per acre for those crops currently in production on lands proposed for future non-agricultural use, as calculated

[39] County of Yolo. County GIS data provided by Marcus Neuvert on April 24, 2009.

[40] County of Yolo, 2008. *2007 Yolo County Agricultural Crop Report.* Woodland, CA

[41] This calculation does not include acreage used for livestock, poultry, or aviary products.

from the Yolo County 2007 Agricultural Crop Report, and the default value for the remaining acreage using the 2007 value for processing tomatoes, the total potential loss of agricultural production value for these lands is approximately $5.05 million as shown in Table IV.B-3. By comparison, Yolo County's total gross valuation for all agricultural commodities in 2007 was approximately $454 million. The potential value lost as a result of implementing the Draft General Plan represents only 1.1 percent of total gross valuation for all agricultural commodities in the County, which would not be considered a significant loss in terms of gross valuation even though this loss is considered unavoidable as a result of implementing the Draft General Plan.

Table IV.B-3: Potential Production Value Losses

Crop	Harvested Acreage	Production Per Acre	Unit	Value Per Unit ($)	Total Value ($)[a]
Vineyard					
Grapes, wine (black)	132	6.34	Ton	620.33	518,000
Orchard					
Almond[b]	325	0.89	Ton	3,359.84	971,000
Walnut	76	1.33	Ton	1,802.70	183,000
Field Crops					
Alfalfa	434	6.82	Ton	141.14	419,000
Cantaloupe	<1	8.85	Ton	295.09	514
Corn	280	5.76	Ton	138.22	223,000
Oats, Ryegrass, Sorghum	529	2.40	Ton	113.56	144,000
Safflower	160	1.03	Ton	345.72	57,000
Sunflower	172	0.77	Ton	1,063.19	141,000
Tomatoes, Processing	888	38.59	Ton	61.56	2,110,000
Wheat	788	2.33	Ton	147.07	270,000
Other					
Pasture	139	--	Acre	92.22	12,800
Rangeland	39	--	Acre	12.89	508
Turf	<1	--	Acre	11,638.00[c]	1,990
Total	**3,963**	--	--	--	**5,050,000**

[a] Values are rounded to three significant digits.

[b] Includes less than 6 acres of pecans, for which crop-specific data were not available.

[c] Based on 2007 per acre value of turf and nursery crops in Yolo County.

Note: Table IV.B-3 includes known crop production data for 3,419 of the 3,963 acres estimated to be converted to non-agricultural uses. Acres for which cropping was not known are included in Tomatoes, Processing, which was used to assume the highest potential value for the remaining 544 acres of unknown crop types.

Source: County of Yolo GIS, 2009 and LSA Associates, Inc. 2009.

Section 15382 of the CEQA Guidelines states that a "significant effect on the environment" means a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change; an economic change by itself is not considered a significant effect on the environment, although these changes may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant. Further, Draft General Plan Policies LU-2.2, AG-3.2, and AG-3.8 encourage the location and use of agricultural industrial facilities in locally-appropriate agricultural areas, which would partially offset the potential negative fiscal impacts to agricultural processing that would result if these facilities were located away from crop production areas and required additional transportation for processing. Implementation of these policies would prevent the conflict or disruption of agricultural industrial processes within the County and would further aid farm production, processing, and distribution. The physical changes proposed by the Draft General

Plan to agricultural lands, as noted above, would not create the loss of a major portion of the County's production or value of crops; based on this analysis, there is no indication that the minor amount of land converted to non-agricultural uses associated with the Draft General Plan would have any significant impact on the continued viability of the local agricultural industry, and any impacts would be considered less-than-significant.

(5) Conflict with Plans and Policies of Other Agencies. This section describes potential conflicts with other adopted plans and policies applicable to agricultural resources that could result from build-out of the Draft General Plan.

The Draft General Plan includes a number of goals, objectives, and policies designed to mitigate or eliminate potential impacts to agricultural land that may result from new development. The goals, objectives, and policies of the Draft General Plan pertaining to agricultural resources listed in subsection 2 above seek to promote conservation of agricultural resources within the County to the greatest extent possible while still allowing for growth necessary to meet the County's needs. As demonstrated in the earlier impact analyses, even with these policies in place, build-out of the Draft General Plan will result in impacts to agricultural resources which could be considered in conflict with the applicable plans and policies of other agencies.

While growth in the Primary Zone of the Delta could result in impacts to agricultural resources and potential conflict with the LURMP, such growth is prohibited unless it is consistent with both the Draft General Plan and the LURMP. As such, this outcome will not occur. The LURMP is a part of the Draft General Plan, and the County must ensure consistency with it as with any other element or policy. Goal LU-4 addresses this directly. Additionally, through an appeals process the Delta Protection Commission has separate and distinct review and decision-making authority should the Commission disagree with a local determination of consistency.

In actuality, the only growth anticipated in the Draft General Plan within the Primary Zone of the Delta is either a carry-over from land use designations in place in 1992 or is agriculturally-related (such as the targeted 103-acres winery facility for which three alternative sites have been identified) and therefore consistent with the Delta Protection Commission and the LURMP.

(6) Result in Adverse Impacts from Draft General Plan Policies Compared to 1983 General Plan Policies. This section describes potential adverse physical impacts that may result from implementation of the Draft General Plan policies as compared to the 1983 General Plan policies, including the 2002 Agricultural Element Update.

The goals and objectives of the Draft General Plan build on and enhance those contained in the 2002 Agricultural Element, updating those goals and objectives to include advances in various agricultural sectors, such as organic farming (Policies AG-2.11 and AG-3.10), as well as to promote local agricultural products within the County's economy (Policies AG-3.7 and AG-3.13). The goals and objectives of the 2002 Agricultural Element and 1983 General Plan were supported by policies that have for the greater part only been reinforced in the Draft General Plan. These policies include promoting the use of agricultural conservation easements (Policies AG-1.15, AG-1.17, and AG-1.18), promoting the Williamson Act Land Conservation and Farmland Security Zone programs (Policies AG-1.15 and AG-1.16), limiting the extension of urban service facilities and infrastructure to protect agricultural lands from urban encroachment (Policy) AG-1.11, and promoting all types of agriculture

and agriculture-related innovation in the County (Policies AG-2.5, AG-2.7, AG-2.11, AG-3.10, AG-3.13, and AG-3.16). In general the emphasis on agricultural economic development and the explicit emphasis on agricultural industrial uses and agricultural commercial uses have beneficial effects on the industry and will result in more support facilities and infrastructure. Agricultural industrial uses will allow more opportunities for agricultural processing to locate in the County in order to create successful crop economies. Agricultural commercial opportunities encourage agri-tourism as an economic development strategy, and the two work together to ensure the success of agriculture beyond just preservation of land. The Draft General Plan's policies reinforce these concepts; in addition, the proposed development areas included in the Draft General Plan are adjacent to currently-developed areas and seek to support necessary development while minimizing potential impacts to agricultural lands and resources in the County.

There are two key areas of policy difference that merit more detailed discussion. Policy CO-1.10 establishes a countywide threshold of 20 acres of open space per one thousand population in both unincorporated and incorporated areas of the County. Upon full implementation this could eventually result in up to 4,103 acres of agricultural land being converted to open space. The potential physical impacts of this are analyzed in Chapter IVA, Land Use and Housing. This conversion is not necessarily adverse to agriculture, for example if the traditional agricultural use of the land continues, however if the land were to be converted to native habitat this would not be the case.

The other area of policy difference involves Policy AG-1.8 which is discussed further below.

Impact AG-4: Implementation of Draft General Plan policies could result in less effective buffers to protect agricultural operations. (S)

Policy AG-1.8 of the Draft General Plan generally requires a minimum setback of 300 feet between urban and agricultural land uses. Policy AP-22 of the existing General Plan (2002 Agricultural Element) establishes an absolute minimum buffer of 100 feet. The intent of the Draft general Plan policy was to increase the required amount of agricultural buffer between urban and agricultural uses from 100 feet to 300 feet by shifting the burden for more of the agricultural buffer toward new urban uses. Doing so would likely encourage denser development, which is in keeping with the County's emphasis on smart growth principles and is considered an additional beneficial impact of increased agricultural buffer size. However, the proposed new policy wording would inadvertently be less protective of agriculture than the existing wording:

> AP-22 (Existing 2002 Agricultural Element): With the exception of individual residences appurtenant to active farming operations where new urban (non-agricultural) development is approved adjacent to agricultural lands, it shall be set back a minimum of 150 feet. A setback of 300 feet shall be required for urban uses that adjoin agricultural preserves or active orchards, except where the adjacent property owner agrees in writing that the 300-foot buffer is not needed. In no case shall the buffer be reduced to less than 100 feet.
>
> Policy AG-1.8 (Proposed Draft General Plan): The intent of this policy is to protect existing farm operations from impacts related to the encroachment of urban uses. The expertise of the County Agricultural Commissioner shall be used in applying this policy. Urban development shall bear the primary burden of this policy. 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 of an unincorporated community. New urban (non-agricultural) development should be setback a minimum

of 300 feet from adjoining agricultural land where possible, but special circumstances can be considered by the decision-making body. The buffer area shall generally be designated Open Space (OS), but may also be designated Public and Quasi-Public (PQ) or Parks and Recreation (PR) based on applicable circumstances. Agricultural buffers are not required for planned urban growth elsewhere within a growth boundary because the agricultural-urban interface will be temporary until full build-out occurs.

The following mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level. With this change, the new policy would be equivalent to and generally more protective of agricultural operations, and therefore beneficial overall.

Mitigation Measure AG-4: Amend Policy AG-1.8 of the Draft General Plan as follows:

Policy AG-1.8: The intent of this policy is to protect existing farm operations from impacts related to the encroachment of urban uses…special circumstances can be can be considered by the decision-making body. Except as noted below where no buffer is required, in no case shall the buffer be reduced to less than 100 feet. The buffer area shall generally be designated Open Space (OS), but may also be designated Public and Quasi-Public (PQ) or Parks and Recreation (PR) based on applicable circumstances. Agricultural buffers are not required for planned urban growth elsewhere within a growth boundary because the agricultural-urban interface will be temporary until full build-out occurs. (LTS)