



County of Yolo

PLANNING, RESOURCES AND PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

John Bencomo
DIRECTOR

292 West Beamer Street
Woodland, CA 95695-2598
(530) 666-8775 FAX (530) 666-8728
www.yolocounty.org

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

May 14, 2009

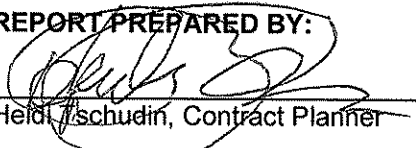
Hearing to receive Oral Comments on Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Draft 2030 Countywide General Plan – Receive public and agency comments on Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Draft 2030 Countywide General Plan.

APPLICANT: County of Yolo
Planning and Public Works Department
292 West Beamer Street
Woodland, CA. 95695

LOCATION: Countywide

GENERAL PLAN: Various
ZONING: Various
FLOODING: Various
SOILS: Various

REPORT PREPARED BY:


Heidi Tschudin, Contract Planner


David Morrison, Assistant Director

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission take the following actions:

1. Receive a staff report regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Draft 2030 Countywide General Plan; and
2. Provide an opportunity for the public to comment on the DEIR (distributed to the Commission and public on April 28, 2009 under separate cover).

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The purpose of the hearing is to receive testimony from any interested party regarding the adequacy of the subject DEIR as an informational tool for making decisions regarding the Draft 2030 Countywide General Plan. Although CEQA does not require a public hearing to receive

AGENDA ITEM: 6.9

oral comments on Draft EIRs, it is the County's practice to do so. The state guidelines for determining the adequacy of an EIR state as follows:

An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decisionmakers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in the light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure. (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15151)

The CEQA Guidelines require that formal written responses be prepared and made available for relevant comments received on the DEIR, including oral comments. These responses, plus the DEIR, will comprise the Final EIR for the County's Draft General Plan.

BACKGROUND

The first Public Review Draft of the 2030 Countywide General Plan was published for public review on September 10, 2008. The Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission held a joint public workshop to review the Draft General Plan on September 16, 2008. Subsequently, 29 additional community meetings and workshops were held.

On November 3, 4, and 6, 2008 the Planning Commission held workshops on the Draft General Plan polices and considered public comments on the polices. Based on these meetings and the comments received, the Planning Commission recommended modification of certain policies. The Revised Public Review Draft General Plan, published on January 20, 2009, contained nearly all of the changes recommended by the Planning Commission, as well as other changes recommended by staff. Additionally, the staff proposed revisions to the land use map in order to more accurately reflect existing land uses based on the new proposed land use designations.

On January 20 and 21, 2009, the Board of Supervisors held workshops on the Revised Draft General Plan and ultimately accepted that document, with specified changes, as the "preferred project" for purposes of environmental review. The DEIR analyzes the environmental impacts of the revised Draft General Plan including the changes directed by the Board of Supervisors on January 21, 2009.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is adoption of a new General Plan for the County of Yolo (2030 Countywide General Plan, Yolo County, Revised Public Review Draft, January 20, 2009, as modified by the Board of Supervisors January 21, 2009). The General Plan applies to the unincorporated areas of the County. It establishes County policy, and identifies planned land uses and infrastructure. California State law requires each jurisdiction to adopt a General Plan to guide physical growth within its jurisdictional boundaries.

The proposed General Plan has a planning horizon of 2030. It incorporates growth that would be allowed under build-out of the 1983 General Plan, plus a modest amount of additional "new" growth. In total, most of the urban growth allowed under the General Plan would occur in the communities of Dunnigan, Elkhorn, Esparto, Knights Landing, and Madison. Agricultural processing (Agricultural-Industrial land uses) and tourism-related activities (Agricultural-Commercial land uses) would be encouraged throughout much of the unincorporated area.

Assuming full build-out of the General Plan by the horizon year of 2030, the unincorporated population would increase from 23,265 currently to 64,700; the number of dwelling units would increase from 7,263 to 22,061; and the number of jobs would increase from 20,818 to 53,154.

Currently, urban land uses exist on about 19,685 acres out of a total of about 621,224 acres that comprise the unincorporated County or about 3.2 percent). Build-out of the General Plan would result in conversion of about 5,592 additional acres to urban uses bringing the urbanized total to 25,277 acres or about 4.1 percent. This represents a net change of less than one percent.

A comparison of land uses allowed under the 1983 General Plan and those proposed under the new General Plan are provided below. It should be noted that (as described in the DEIR) many of these changes represent corrections to the 1983 land use data base to rather than actual changes in land use.

The Draft General Plan is organized into nine chapters as follows: Introduction and Administration, Vision and Principles, Land Use and Community Character Element, Circulation Element, Public Facilities and Services Element, Agriculture and Economic Development Element, Conservation and Open Space Element, Health and Safety Element, Housing Element. Within each chapter the following information is generally provided: introduction and background information, regulatory framework, policy framework (consisting of goals and policies), and an implementation program with specific actions, responsible parties, and timing.

General Plan Summary Comparison of Designated Land Use

Land Use Categories	1983 GP	2030 GP	Difference
Open Space	2,722	52,969	+50,247
Agriculture	603,544	544,723	-58,821
Recreation	1,121	866	-255
Residential	3,237	3,088	-149
Residential Rural (1du/5ac to <1du/ac)	1,668	1,602	-66
Residential Low (1du/ac to <10du/ac)	1,342	1,280	-62
Residential Med (10du/ac to <20du/ac)	196	179	-17
Residential High (>20 du/ac)	31	27	-4
Commercial	406	651	+245
Commercial General	263	532	+269
Commercial Local	143	119	-24
Industrial	1,195	1,049	-146
Public	694	7,001	+6,307
Specific Plan	145	3,285	+3,140
Other (roadways, railroads, highways)	8,160	8,592	+432
TOTAL (unincorporated county)	621,224	621,224	0

Note: In acres; December 23, 2008 (corrected Feb 16, 2009)

The Draft General Plan is available for review or purchase at the public counter of the Planning and Public Works Department at 292 West Beamer Street, Woodland, California 95696. The document is also available online at the County's General Plan website located at www.yolocountygeneralplan.org and at all of the public libraries within the County. Copies of the land use map are available online or can be purchased separately.

SUMMARY OF DEIR

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the County and its consultant, LSA Associates, have prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) which analyzes the potential adverse environmental impacts associated with implementation of the General Plan. A Final EIR (Response to Comments) will be prepared following public review and comment. The County will consider this information when deliberating the project. Following certification of the Final EIR, the County will take action to adopt the new General Plan.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures in the DEIR take the form of new or revised Draft General Plan policies and actions. Some of the notable mitigation measures identified for the County's consideration are summarized below:

- Mitigation Measure LU-1c amends Policy CC-3.13 of the Draft General Plan to retain the 79 acres southwest of town (south of SR16 and east of CR 86A) as Industrial rather than allowing for future mixed use residential development.
- Mitigation Measure LU-2a amends Policy CC-3.1 of the Draft General Plan to require preparation of a Specific Plan or Master Plan for the Covell/Pole Line Road Industrial property.
- Mitigation Measures LU-4a, b, and c amend the Policies CC-2.10, CC-2.11, and CC-3.3 relating to jobs/housing balance, match, and phasing respectively to be stronger by adding the words "to the greatest extent feasible".
- Mitigation Measure LU-4c also amends Policy CC-3.3 to require a program to monitor the jobs/housing relationship in each specific plan area including monitoring (and rebalancing land uses if necessary) every five years.
- Mitigation Measure LU-4d amends Policy CC-3.11 to require high density upper-story residential development to accommodate work force housing.
- Mitigation Measures CI-1a and b identify new policies that would establish a threshold of 44 vehicle miles of travel (VMT) generated per household per weekday as a maximum within the Dunnigan Specific Plan area (with performance monitoring required at each development phase) and as a target or goal within the other specific plan areas.
- Mitigation Measure CI-1e identifies a new policy that would require the establishment of mode split goals (including biennial household surveys to ensure performance) for walking, bicycling, and transit trips within Transit Plan required (per Action CI-A6) for each specific plan area.

- Mitigation Measure UTIL-1a identifies a new policy to establish maximum daily water use thresholds (e.g. on a per-"dwelling unit equivalent" (DUE) basis within the Dunnigan Specific Plan, and to use those thresholds for purposes of sizing infrastructure.

Significant Impacts

The DEIR identifies the potential for significant effects in the following impact areas: Land Use and Housing; Agricultural Resources; Transportation and Circulation; Air Quality; Noise; Global Climate Change; Public Services; Utilities and Energy; Cultural Resources; Biological Resources; Hydrology and Water Quality; Geology, Soils, Seismicity and Mineral Resources; Hazards and Hazardous Materials; and Visual and Scenic Resources. The EIR concludes that the many impacts may remain significant and unavoidable even after identified mitigation measures are implemented.

In fact, the DEIR concludes that there are "significant and unavoidable" (SU) impacts in almost every area of analysis. There are 41 countywide impacts and another 12 cumulative (regional) impacts identified as SU. Initially, this may appear to be an unusually high number of significant and unavoidable impacts. However, there are a number of reasons for taking this approach:

- 1) Even though already approved, this EIR was required to assess the environmental impacts associated not just with the new growth contemplated in the Draft General Plan, but also the remaining build-out of the 1983 General Plan. As such, this EIR had to look at the potential for impacts from 41,435 more people, 14,798 more homes, and 32,336 more jobs by 2030. This is approximately a doubling of the unincorporated area's existing development.
- 2) We don't know the precise impacts on individual pieces of land as the General Plan builds out. This is particularly true with the proposed policies to encourage more agricultural processing and agricultural or environmental tourism. The EIR describes how the policy framework is expected to provide full mitigation for much of the anticipated/allowed growth, but also discloses that there will still be significant and unavoidable environmental changes associated with this type of economic development.
- 3) The policy framework of the Draft General Plan strongly embraces a "smart growth" approach of more dense/intense development where development is allowed, so that land use opportunities are maximized and more agricultural land can be protected. This approach differs from more traditional rural models of less density and intensity within rural towns. However, it can also lead to more environmental impacts regarding noise, land use conflicts, and traffic.
- 4) The State CEQA Guidelines were developed with more traditional development patterns in mind and tend to have a bias against "smart growth" in terms of environmental conclusions. While the State is taking steps to change this, the CEQA Guidelines in place today do not yet reflect those changes. This EIR goes beyond the minimum CEQA Guideline requirement to more fully disclose and analyze that problem. Similarly, the CEQA Guidelines do not as yet provide any direction on the issue of climate change. As a result, we've taken a fairly careful approach by identifying this impact as SU.

- 5) Environmental impacts are often perceptual, depending on the circumstances. A five decibel increase of noise in the country can be highly annoying, while it may not even be noticed in an urban downtown. Due to the relatively small amount of growth that has historically been allowed within the unincorporated area, impacts are perceived to be more prominent, which can lead to more frequent findings of significance.

The following is a list of the impacts found to be significant and unavoidable in the DEIR.

Land Use and Housing

- LU-2: Build-out of the Draft General Plan could create substantial incompatibilities between land uses.
- LU-3: Build-out of the Draft General Plan would substantially alter the type and intensity of land uses within the community areas of the unincorporated County.
- LU-4: Land uses and development consistent with the Draft General Plan would fail to achieve a jobs/housing balance and match in some community areas and could potentially exacerbate an existing jobs/housing imbalance in some community areas.

Agricultural Resources

- AG-1: 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Transportation and Circulation

- CI-1: Build-out of the Draft General Plan could result in increased vehicle miles of travel.
- CI-2: Build-out of the Draft General Plan would add vehicle trips to roadways that would operate below the 1983 Yolo County General Plan level of service (LOS) under cumulative conditions.
- CI-3: Build-out of the Draft General Plan would rely upon future roadway capacity expansion projects for which full funding is not ensured.
- CI-4: Build-out of the Draft General Plan would contribute vehicle trips to roadways projected to operate worse than the LOS thresholds identified in the Congestion Management Program (CMP) under cumulative conditions.
- CI-5: Build-out of the Draft General Plan would contribute vehicle trips to roadways projected to operate worse than the LOS thresholds of the incorporated Cities of Davis, West Sacramento, Winters, and Woodland under cumulative conditions.
- CI-6: Build-out of the Draft General Plan would contribute vehicle trips on state highways that would operate worse than the Caltrans LOS threshold under cumulative conditions.
- CI-7: Build-out of the Draft General Plan could result in increased travel on roadways that do not meet current design standards.
- CI-8: Build-out of the Draft General Plan could result in increased travel on state facilities that do not meet current design standards.

- CI-9: Build-out of the Draft General Plan would result in an adverse physical environmental impact associated with an increase in traffic on roadways in comparison to the policies of the 1983 General Plan.

Air Quality

- AIR-1: Build-out of the Draft General Plan could result in construction-related emissions that exceed the YSAQMD thresholds of significance for criteria pollutants.
- AIR-2: Build-out of the Draft General Plan could result in long-term operational emissions that would exceed YSAQMD thresholds of significance and substantially contribute to air quality violations.
- AIR-4: Build-out of the Draft General Plan could result in a cumulatively considerable impact on criteria air pollutants.
- AIR-5: Build-out of the Draft General Plan could result in conflicts with air quality planning efforts by other agencies.

Noise

- NOI-1: Increased traffic from build-out of the proposed Draft General Plan would result in a significant increase in traffic noise levels on roadway segments throughout the County.
- NOI-3: Build-out of the proposed Draft General Plan would result in a substantial or periodic increase in ambient noise levels.

Global Climate Change

- GCC-1: Build-out of the Draft General Plan would result in greenhouse gas emissions that would have a significant physical adverse impact and cumulatively contribute to global climate change.
- GCC-2: While uncertainty exists in the degree to which the effects of climate change will occur, it is likely that significant adverse physical impacts from the effects of global climate change will occur on existing and future planned land uses in the County by 2030.

Utilities and Energy

- UTIL-1: Build-out of the Draft General Plan may result in a demand for water in excess of available groundwater supply.
- UTIL-2: Build-out of the Draft General Plan could result in increased overdraft of County aquifers and a net increase in ground surface subsidence.

Cultural Resources

- CULT-1: Build-out of the Draft General Plan would result in the potential for impacts to architectural resources and archaeological deposits that qualify as historical resources under CEQA.
- CULT-2: Build-out of the Draft General Plan would result in the potential for impacts to archaeological deposits that qualify as unique archaeological resources under CEQA.

Biological Resources

- BIO-1: Build-out of the Draft General Plan may result in loss or destruction of riparian habitats and the wildlife and plants that depend on those habitats.
- BIO-2: Build-out of the Draft General Plan may result in loss or destruction of wetlands and vernal pools and the wildlife and plants that depend on those habitats.
- BIO-3: Build-out of the Draft General Plan may result in loss or destruction of oak woodlands and the wildlife and plants that depend on those habitats.
- BIO-4: Build-out of the Draft General Plan may result in the disruption of movement corridors and nursery sites on which local wildlife depend.
- BIO-5: Build-out of the Draft General Plan may result in the loss or destruction of special status plants and their habitats, and/or to special-status fish and wildlife and their habitats.
- BIO-6: Build-out of the Draft General Plan would result in a general loss of habitat in natural and agricultural areas.

Hydrology and Water Quality

- HYD-2: Build-out of the Draft General Plan would expose more people and structures flood hazards and may impede or redirect flood flows, resulting in increased flood hazards.
- HYD-3: Build-out of the Draft General Plan would expose more people and structures flood hazards as a result of climate-induced sea level rise.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

- HAZ-2: New development under the Draft General Plan may impair emergency response during peak traffic periods.

Visual and Scenic Resources

- VIS-1: Build-out of the Draft General Plan would result in new growth that degrades the existing visual character and quality of the County.
- VIS-2: Implementation of the Draft General Plan could result in additional uses that would create new sources of substantial light or glare, which could adversely affect nighttime views outside of identified growth areas.

Cumulative Impacts

- GROWTH-INDUCING-1: Build-out of the Draft General Plan would result in growth inducing impacts.
- IRREVERSIBLE CHANGES-1: Build-out of the Draft General Plan would result in significant irreversible changes.
- CUMULATIVE LU-1: Build-out of the Draft General Plan in conjunction with other planned development in the region would contribute cumulatively to land use and housing impacts in the region.
- CUMULATIVE AG-1: Build-out of the Draft General Plan in conjunction with other planned development in the region would contribute cumulatively to loss of agricultural land.
- CUMULATIVE CI-1: Build-out of the Draft General Plan in conjunction with other planned development in the region would contribute cumulatively to transportation and circulation impacts in the region.

- CUMULATIVE AIR-1: Build-out of the Draft General Plan, in conjunction with other planned development in the region would contribute cumulatively to air quality impacts in the region.
- CUMULATIVE NOISE-1: Build-out of the Draft General Plan in conjunction with other planned development in the region would contribute cumulatively to noise impacts in the region.
- CUMULATIVE GCC-1: Build-out of the Draft General Plan, in conjunction with other planned development in the region would contribute cumulatively to global climate change.
- CUMULATIVE UTIL-1: Build-out of the Draft General Plan in conjunction with other planned development in the region would contribute cumulatively to water supply and infrastructure impacts.
- CUMULATIVE UTIL-2: Build-out of the Draft General Plan in conjunction with other planned development in the region would contribute cumulatively to energy impacts.
- CUMULATIVE BIO-1: Build-out of the Draft General Plan in conjunction with other planned development in the region would contribute cumulatively to biological resources.
- CUMULATIVE HYDRO-1: Build-out of the Draft General Plan, in conjunction with other planned development in the region would contribute cumulatively to hydrology and water quality impacts.

Alternatives

The DEIR contains a full description and analysis of the three alternatives to the proposed project that are analyzed in this Draft EIR. The three alternatives are:

- The CEQA-required **No Project alternative** assumes that the proposed project would not be adopted or implemented and that development would continue in accordance with the 1983 General Plan. This alternative assumes the full build-out of the development envisioned under the 1983 General Plan and would result in a total of approximately 34,505 persons, 11,277 dwelling units, 33,945 jobs, and 1,962 acres of commercial/industrial development within the unincorporated County by 2030. This alternative would result in approximately 47 percent fewer residents, 48 percent of the residential units, and 37 percent of the commercial/industrial acres of development allowed under the Draft General Plan. In addition, under this alternative the 1983 General Plan policy framework would continue to be in effect, which would not provide the streamlining and incentives provided for agricultural and tourism that is contained in the Draft General Plan.
- The **Rural Sustainability alternative** assumes that a moderate amount of growth would occur in several unincorporated communities, increasing the level of economic development and restricting housing in the rural agricultural areas. In particular, additional density would be allowed in Monument Hills. By 2030, this alternative would result in a total of approximately 44,926 persons, 14,241 dwelling units, 42,372 commercial/industrial jobs, and 2,345 acres of commercial/industrial development within the unincorporated County. This alternative could result in approximately 30 percent fewer persons, 65 percent of the residential units, and 14 percent of the commercial/industrial acres of development than allowed under the Draft General Plan. In addition, under this alternative the smart growth framework proposed by the Draft General Plan would be in effect, but there would not be enough development to achieve sustainability within the communities in terms of issues such as achieving a jobs/housing balance within the community areas, lowering the vehicle miles traveled (and thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions), and

providing basic levels of community-serving water, wastewater, and storm drainage, and public services.

- The **Market Demand alternative** assumes that the County's historic constraints on growth would be removed. By 2030, this alternative would result in 71,165 persons, 24,200 dwelling units, 61,945 commercial/industrial jobs, and 3,246 acres of commercial/industrial development within the unincorporated County. This alternative examines the effects of meeting residential market demand within the County and could result in an approximately 11 percent increase in population and 10 percent more dwelling units, and a 31 percent more commercial/industrial acres of development than the growth allowed under the Draft General Plan. In addition, under this alternative the 1983 General Plan policy framework would continue to be in effect, which would not provide the streamlining and incentives provided for agricultural and tourism that is contained in the Draft General Plan.

Based on the evaluation described in this section, the Rural Sustainability alternative would be the environmentally superior alternative because it would reduce impacts in the greatest number of topic areas compared to the Draft General Plan. However, the overall level of remaining significant and unavoidable impacts is similar between the Rural Sustainability alternative and the Draft General Plan, and the analysis contained in the DEIR demonstrates that adoption of the Draft General Plan would be the superior choice when comparing and balancing land use, policy, economic viability, environmental impact, and community values.

Comments

The DEIR is now available for public review or purchase at the public counter of the Planning and Public Works Department at 292 West Beamer Street, Woodland, California 95696. Interested parties may purchase hard copies of the document or electronic versions on CD. The document is also available online at the County's General Plan website located at www.yolocountygeneralplan.org and at all of the public libraries within the County.

Written comments on the DEIR will be accepted throughout the 45-day public review period which began Tuesday April 28, 2009 and will end Friday June 12, 2009 at 4:00pm. All comments must be received by 4:00pm Friday June 12, 2009 and should be directed to:

David Morrison, Assistant Director
Yolo County Planning and Public Works Department
292 West Beamer Street
Woodland, CA 95696
david.morrison@yolocounty.org

NEXT STEPS

After six years of meetings, hearings, workshops, analysis, and deliberation, the process to adopt a new General Plan for the County is nearing its end. There are three sets of hearings left prior to final adoption:

- **Planning Commission Recommendation**

Dates: Wednesday June 10, 2009 at 8:30 a.m.
Thursday June 11, 2009 at 1:00 p.m.
Friday June 12, 2009 at 8:30 a.m. (if needed)

Location: Board of Supervisors Chambers (Room 206)
625 Court Street, Woodland, CA

Purpose: Final recommendation to Board of Supervisors regarding certification of the DEIR and adoption of the new General Plan

- **Board of Supervisors Deliberation and Intent Motion**

Dates: Monday July 20, 2009 at 9:00 a.m.
Tuesday July 21, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. (if needed)
Thursday July 23, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. (if needed)

Location: Board of Supervisors Chambers (Room 206)
625 Court Street, Woodland, CA

Purpose: Final direction and motion of intent to certify the DEIR and adopt the new General Plan

Following the hearings before the Board of Supervisors in July, staff will prepare an approval package of appropriate resolutions and findings of fact to support the final direction given by the Board. On September 15, 2009 the Board of Supervisors will hold a final hearing to take final action to approve the General Plan.

- **Board of Supervisors Final Action**

Dates: Tuesday September 15, 2009 at 1:00 p.m.

Location: Board of Supervisors Chambers (Room 206)
625 Court Street, Woodland, CA

Purpose: Final action to certify the DEIR and adopt the new General Plan

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Draft Environmental Impact Report on the 2030 Countywide General Plan (Revised Public Review Draft, January 20, 2009, as modified by the Board of Supervisors January 21, 2009). This document was previously distributed. It can be reviewed or purchased at the County or accessed online.