

Solano

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#### URBANIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS

The plan sets forth policies for encouraging urban development to proceed in an orderly manner so as to: First, reduce conflicts between urban and agricultural uses; Second, discourage the future expansion of urban uses into essential, agriculturally productive areas; and Third, reduce the speculative pressures brought on by uncertainty of the timing and direction of future urban growth.

The plan makes proposals for clearly defining the extent of urbanization through the establishment of urban growth lines which define areas where urbanization is to occur and where lands are to be retained in agricultural use. Cities are encouraged to direct their growth into non-essential areas when the need for additional urban lands becomes necessary. Urban uses located along the urban-rural fringe should be developed in a manner which minimizes conflicts with agricultural use. Lower residential densities in such areas are encouraged when possible.

To provide for orderly development and reduce speculative pressures on agricultural lands, the plan encourages the formation of realistic sphere of influence lines, which generally follow the urban growth line to clearly define those areas intended for urbanization.

Finally, the plan supports taxation measures which encourage the retention of lands in continued agricultural uses. The County shall continue to expand its agricultural preserve program and to consolidate the existing pattern of agricultural preserves.

#### CONFLICTING LAND USES

The plan also seeks to ensure that uses which occur in essential agricultural areas are compatible with the continued agricultural operation of the area. In

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intensive agricultural areas, uses which are agricultural or agriculturally related should be allowed. Agricultural service uses should be limited to those uses where a rural location to service agriculture is necessary. In extensive agricultural areas, only those uses compatible with continued agricultural operations should be allowed. Such uses include limited recreational opportunities in designated areas and limited industrial development in the central County area. Rural residential uses should be confined to areas designated for such uses to minimize potential conflicts.

#### Policies

1. Preserve and maintain essential agricultural lands including intensive agricultural areas comprised of high quality soils and irrigated lands and extensive agricultural areas with unique or significant dryland farming or grazing activities.
2. In essential agricultural areas, the County shall encourage the formation and retention of agricultural parcels of sufficient size to be maintained as a farmable unit. Farmable units are defined as the size of parcels a farmer would consider leasing or purchasing for different agricultural purposes as follows:
  - 160-acre minimum parcel size for non-irrigated lands.
  - 80-acre minimum parcel size for irrigated lands.
  - 40-acre minimum parcel size where "highly productive" irrigated parcels are demonstrated to exist.
3. Urban development shall be confined to patterns which do not conflict with essential agricultural lands.
4. Rural and suburban development shall be confined to non-essential marginal agricultural lands with a low capability of agricultural production and in a manner which minimizes conflicts with surrounding agricultural activities.

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5. Non-essential agricultural lands should be protected and retained in agricultural use until land conversion to non-agricultural uses becomes necessary.
6. Encourage consolidation of the fragmented pattern of agricultural preserves established under the Land Conservation Act and the retention of agricultural preserves in essential agricultural, watershed and marshland areas.
7. The County shall support changes in local, State and Federal taxing structures which promote the retention of agricultural parcels in agricultural use.
8. Agricultural practices shall be conducted in a manner which minimizes impacts to air and water quality and marsh and wildlife habitat.
9. Lands Designated Intensive Agriculture or Extensive Agriculture.
  - (a) Within the "Intensive Agriculture" land use designation, the maximum permitted residential density is one dwelling unit per eighty (80) acres, except that if a landowner demonstrates that a particular parcel is capable of highly productive agricultural use such as orchard and vineyard lands, then a maximum permitted residential density of one dwelling unit per forty (40) acres may be applied. Within the "Extensive Agriculture" designation, the maximum permitted residential density is one dwelling unit per one hundred and sixty (160) acres. However, in non-essential agricultural areas which have limited viability for agricultural uses, a maximum permitted residential density of one dwelling unit per twenty (20) acres may be applied.
  - (b) Notwithstanding the preceding paragraph, one residence may be built on a lot of record existing as of January 1, 1984, designated "Agriculture" provided however that (i) the owner demonstrates compliance with all other applicable

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County requirements, and (ii) before such exemption is granted, the lot has first been merged with contiguous parcels to the maximum extent possible consistent with State law.

10. Lands within the "Agriculture" designations as shown on the Land Use and Circulation Map adopted by the Board of Supervisors on December 19, 1980 as readopted and reaffirmed by the voters of Solano County in Proposition A in June, 1984, and as amended subsequently consistent with Proposition A, may be redesignated to a more intensive agricultural designation, or to a rural residential designation (with a maximum density of one unit per 2.5 to 10 acres) if and only if the Board of Supervisors makes each of the following findings:
  - (a) That the approval will not constitute part of, or encourage, a piece-meal conversion of a larger agricultural area to residential or other non-agricultural uses, and will not alter the stability of land use patterns in the area;
  - (b) That no land proposed for redesignation is prime agricultural land as defined pursuant to California Government Code Section 51202 (the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, also known as the Williamson Act);
  - (c) That the subject land is unsuitable for agriculture due to terrain, adverse soil conditions, drainage, flooding, parcel size or other physical factors, such that it has no substantial market or rental value under the "Agriculture" designation;
  - (d) That the use and density proposed are compatible with agricultural uses and will not interfere with accepted farming practices;
  - (e) That the land is immediately adjacent to existing comparably developed areas and the applicant for the redesignation has

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provided substantial evidence that the Fire District, School District, County Sheriff and County Transportation Department have adequate capacity to accommodate the development and provide it with adequate public services; and

- (f) That annexation to a city or incorporation is not appropriate or possible based on the following factors: nearby cities' designated sphere of influence boundaries, cities' general plan growth limits and projections, and comprehensive annexation plans.

All redesignations pursuant to this policy shall be limited to a maximum of 160 acres for any one landowner in any calendar year. Landowners with any unity of interest are considered one landowner for purposes of this limitation.

11. To comply with state law regarding the provision of low and very low income housing, as those terms are or may be defined by state law, lands within the "Agriculture" designations on the Land Use and Circulation Map may be changed to a residential designation. No more than 50 acres of land may be redesignated for this purpose in any calendar year. Such redesignation may be made only upon each of the following findings:

- (a) The findings stated in subparagraphs (e) and (f) in policy 10 above are met;
- (b) Use of the land redesignated under this policy will be limited to a low and very low income housing development, pursuant to a legally valid Housing Element of this General Plan;
- (c) There is no existing residentially designated land available for the low and very low income housing; and
- (d) The redesignation of lands, and construction of low and very low income housing on those lands, is required to comply with state law requirements for provision of such housing.

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12. Lands within the "Agriculture" designations may be redesignated to "Park & Recreation" only for public recreation and public open space uses and only if the uses permitted by the new designation will not interfere with or be in conflict with agricultural operations.
13. Lands within the "Agriculture" designations may be redesignated to "Watershed" or "Marsh".

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