

**SUISUN VALLEY AGRICULTURE WORKSHOP  
SOLANO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN UPDATE  
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
AGRICULTURAL SUBCOMMITTEE  
AUGUST 29, 2007**

**PURPOSE:** Develop, ideas, concepts and issues that are important to the General Plan as it relates to agriculture, specifically for Suisun Valley.

**Possible Topics For Discussion**

Economics	Water Management
HCP	Regulations
Taxes	Buffer Zones
Transportation	Land Use
Urbanization	Permits/Fees

**Special Presentation:** A discussion was held by Bob Hanson outlining the findings of the Suisun Valley Grape Growers Association and the Suisun Valley Fruit Growers Association for their vision of the economic future of Suisun Valley.

**Introductory Questions:**

1. What one thing could the General Plan do to have a positive impact on agriculture?
2. What county policies/regulations impede/enhance agricultural productivity?

**Participant Responses**

**Question #1) What one thing could the General Plan do to have a positive impact on agriculture?**

1. There should be a statement in the General Plan that agriculture provides a very important economic value to the County.
2. There needs to be better control of flood water. We need storm drains, water lines and infrastructure.
3. Make the linkage between how agriculture enhances the cities. The cities should help support agriculture.
4. The County should be proactive to help agriculture.
5. Look at Napa, Sonoma and Healdsburg as examples of profitable agricultural policies on the part of government.

**Question #2) What county policies/regulations impede/enhance agricultural productivity**

1. The County needs to recognize that the world and agriculture is different than it was 50 years ago. There needs to be proactive County policies to help agriculture to adapt to the changes.
2. The biggest problem is inconsistency with decisions made in the Planning Department.
3. The county has become a profit making machine and we are paying for that. If you want anything you have to pay for it twice.
4. The County seems to create uncertainty and land speculation in zoning.

### **Economic development**

1. We need ag tourism in Suisun Valley.
2. How many of you would rather farm than be getting into ag tourism? My father-in-law doesn't want anyone on his property
3. Technology, fertilizers, irrigation, etc has changed overtime and we need to take advantage of the changes to increase productivity and marketing.
4. If tourists come in here and have a good experience that will draw in a high-end market and that involves marketing strategies.
5. Under economic development we need to determine the number of agricultural clusters and size we want in Suisun Valley.
6. We need help to even out the ups and downs of the market and how it affects the bottom line.
7. Cities will have to pay for some of the economic development for agriculture in the county, ie transportation, infrastructure, market support.
8. We need to work with the agricultural investment community to draw the small processing facilities in here.

### **Permits and fees**

1. Processing fees are excessive, confusing and not consistent.
2. What do we get from the permits and what does the government get from them?
3. You can't make the profit on poor land like you can on prime ag land, and it becomes unprofitable because of fees and regulations.

### **Land use**

1. One thing I see is people coming in and putting houses and horses on smaller parcels.
2. The breaking up of land should not be allowed or we should mitigate for it.
3. The Cities develop around farmers and force the farmers out.
4. In Napa Valley they have little zones for grapes and land capability but Solano doesn't have that. We have micro climates and incredible capabilities.
5. We need a map that shows soil types in detail.

### **Zoning**

1. If you change from A40 to A20 there are some parcels A20 already grandfathered. Should be case by case basis.
2. Landowners should have the option to cluster buildings.
3. There should be some kind of a formula for what is high density in an agricultural area.
4. The Department of Conservation interprets the Williamson Act (WA) and says those are not agricultural activities and counties have to become more proactive in interpretation of the WA.

### **Buffer zones**

1. People moving next to a farm should know that the farmer has a right to farm.

### **Transportation**

1. The County should maintain and widen roads to improve safety for truck traffic to move agriculture and to support tourism.
2. It is important that people have a good experience and go home and buy Suisun Valley products. We will have to put up with traffic, and people in order to have them buy agricultural products.
3. Ag tourism helps connect people who want to buy products with the agricultural producer.

### **Regulations**

1. Urban regulations should not be applied to a rural setting.
2. Urban people should put money into infrastructure and the under grounding overhead utility lines.

3. Sprinklers required in barns; it doesn't work to put out fires...the fires should be allowed to burn out.
4. The County Agriculture Department should be put under the State Department of Agriculture.
5. There should be regulations to protect agricultural areas from urban problems.
6. The County needs to be flexible in creating zone; things may change 10 years down the road.

The next Suisun Valley Workshop will be held on September 6<sup>th</sup> at the Clayton Road Firehouse.

Agriculture Subcommittee members present: Larry Clement, Patricia Gatz, Sandy Person and Nicole Byrd. Members absent: Ian Anderson