



COUNTY OF SOLANO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

CAC WORKBOOK SUISUN VALLEY SPECIAL STUDY AREA

SEPTEMBER 10, 2007

This workbook is intended to educate CAC members about the process and outcome of the Suisun Valley Special Study Area meetings. The workbook aims to (a) provide CAC members insight into how the community recommendations for land use alternatives and policies were generated and (b) to facilitate the creation of the CAC recommendations that will be incorporated within the preliminary draft General Plan for Planning Commission review.

COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATION FOR CAC CONSIDERATION

A single recommendation emerged from the Suisun Valley Special Study Area community meetings. This recommendation consists of a land use map, goals and policies, and a description of allowable uses within the land use designations portrayed on the land use map.

The land use map merges the two existing agricultural designations (Intensive and Extensive) into one Agriculture-Suisun Valley designation, creates seven Neighborhood Agricultural Centers to accommodate agri-tourism related uses and activities, and folds an existing Rural Residential designated area into the new agricultural designation. Ten recommended policies and a proposed allowable use matrix support the land use map and address additional community concerns such as maintaining the agricultural landscape, improving the valley's agricultural economy, increasing agri-tourism, and improving infrastructure.

This recommendation represents the consensus achieved by the majority of the group by examining three alternatives for the valley. Other ideas and variations were presented. These are discussed in the Options discussion section starting on page 5. The recommended land use map, policies, and allowable use matrix are described in the following sections.

RECOMMENDED CAC ACTIONS

CAC members are encouraged to:

- A. Review and discuss the recommended land use map, goals and policies, and allowed uses matrix.**
- B. Accept, modify, or revise these materials**
- C. Recommend these materials or a modified option for inclusion in the preliminary draft General Plan.***

* **Note:** CAC members are encouraged to review the information in this workbook, make notes on options and policies found in the workbook, and come prepared to discuss these items at the September 10, 2007 CAC meeting.

The CAC will have another chance to review the initial Draft General Plan before making final recommendations to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors .

This workbook consists of six parts:

- ▶ **Workshop Summary** – a summary of workshops conducted in the Suisun Valley Special Study Area;
- ▶ **Issues** – a summary of the issues or concerns and opportunities identified by the community;
- ▶ **Land Use Alternatives Development/Discussion/Recommendation** – a synopsis of the land use alternatives presented to the community, the community’s input regarding the alternatives, and a description of the community’s recommendation to the CAC;
- ▶ **Goals and Policies Recommendation** – description of the General Plan goal and policies regarding Suisun Valley that the community is recommending to the CAC;
- ▶ **Allowable Use Recommendations** - description of land uses and activities that the community recognized are compatible with the proposed vision for the Suisun Valley;
- ▶ **Workshop Attachments** – attachments, including meeting agendas, maps and materials, and meeting summaries.

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Five community workshops were held in the Suisun Valley to shape the recommended land use plan and General Plan policies for the community. Workshops were held at Solano Community College from 7 to 9 pm on the following dates and focused on the tasks/steps summarized below:

- ▶ Workshop #1: May 29, 2007 – The aim of the first workshop was to identify community planning issues, opportunities, and concerns;
- ▶ Workshop #2: June 28, 2007 – The goal of the second workshop was to review conceptual land use alternatives and other concepts that would be part of those alternatives;
- ▶ Workshop #3: July 10, 2007 – The purpose of the third workshop was to review refined conceptual alternatives, select a preferred alternative, and discuss proposed allowable uses.
- ▶ Workshop #4: July 24, 2007 – At the fourth workshop, the community reviewed recommended alternatives, selected allowable uses, and discussed proposed policies for the General Plan.
- ▶ Workshop #5: August 7, 2007 – At the fifth workshop, the community reviewed the final recommended alternative, proposed policies, and recommended allowable uses.

ISSUES

This section of the workbook presents the planning issues identified by the community during the course of the five community workshops for the Suisun Valley. The issues summarized below were recurring themes that resonated throughout each of the workshops.

ISSUE 1: MAINTAIN AGRICULTURAL CHARACTER

From the first workshop forward, residents expressed a strong desire to maintain the agricultural character of the valley. Participants thought that appropriate zoning and prevention of incompatible uses were important in

achieving this goal. Many residents wanted a vision for the character of the area to be created. Farmers in the valley stated that a viable agricultural economy was critical to the success of this goal. Comments regarding agricultural character included:

- Uses need to respect the scale and character of the valley. Fitting in too much may ruin the rural feel of the valley.
- Keep Rural Residential out of the valley.
- General agreement among the group that inappropriate uses for Suisun Valley included airports, confined animal facilities, service stations, truck operations, and public stables.
- Allow 20-acre parcels, but no smaller.
- Others stated that 20-acre minimum was too small for viable agriculture on non-prime farmland and rangeland. The 20-acre parcel size may lead to ranchette development.

ISSUE 2: IMPROVE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION/INCOME

A variety of comments addressed the need to help agriculture and agriculture-related businesses become more profitable. Emphasis was placed on the County's role in reducing barriers that currently prevent farms from being more profitable. Primary among these comments was a desire to process crops grown off-site into finished products. Participants felt that agricultural processing should be allowed whether the ingredients were grown on the property or grown elsewhere. Participants also expressed an opinion that processing should be allowed without a conditional use permit. Some participants wanted the County to initiate economic programs for farming such as low-interest financing. Comments regarding agricultural production/income included:

- Off-farm product processing and product sales should be allowed in the Agriculture designation.
- Sale and processing of off-site products are okay as long as the farm grows some product.
- Make permitting for agricultural uses easier.
- Add a policy to support establishing a County agricultural economic ombudsman

ISSUE 3: NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS - AGRICULTURAL TOURISM

There was significant agreement among the group that agricultural tourism would be critical to the future viability of agriculture in the valley. Participants requested that additional uses be allowed on lands designated for agriculture. Participants also agreed that the creation of small tourist-oriented centers within the valley would help attract tourists and provide additional opportunities to market local products. Comments regarding Neighborhood Centers - Agricultural Tourism included:

- Why not create more Neighborhood Centers?
- How big are the Neighborhood Agricultural Centers going to be? This needs to be defined.
- The proposed centers should be larger than 2.5 acres.
- The total number of acres desired for Neighborhood Agricultural Center use in the valley should be established as a policy, rather than setting a uniform maximum size for all centers.

LAND USE ALTERNATIVES

This section describes the process used to develop the recommended land use map. Several alternatives were presented during the various meetings. The following paragraphs summarize and describe the alternatives maps presented to the community, the dates they were presented, and the comments that accompanied them. Please refer to the appendix to this workbook for larger scale diagrams of the alternatives and detailed meeting summaries.

Three land use alternatives were presented at the second meeting. The community narrowed this to two alternatives at the third meeting, and then to one alternative in the fourth meeting. This alternative was refined and finalized into a preferred alternative at the fifth and final meeting. The recommended land use map is a hybrid of Alternatives 2 and 3, as presented at the second and third meetings, and is the result of valuable citizen input and multiple revisions.

ORIGINAL ALTERNATIVES

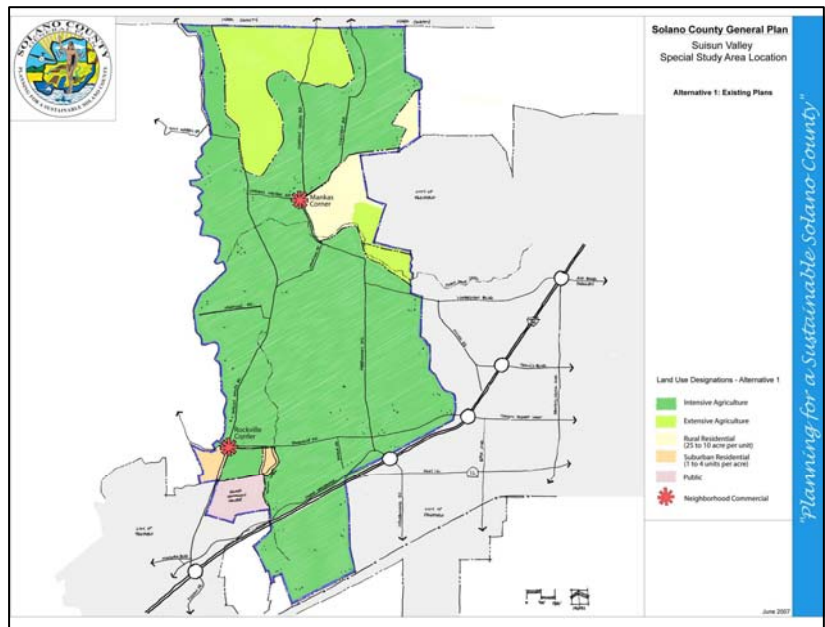
At the second workshop, held on June 28, 2007, three alternatives were presented to the public, based on consideration of comments received at the first workshop. The alternatives included keeping the existing General Plan (Alternative 1) and considered two different ways of re-arranging agricultural, agri-tourism, and residential uses in the valley (Alternatives 2 and 3).

ALTERNATIVE 1: EXISTING GENERAL PLAN LAND USES

Alternative 1 presented the land uses that are currently designated for Suisun Valley in the General Plan.

Characteristics of Alternative 1:

- ▶ Mostly Intensive Agriculture (light green) with 1 dwelling unit per 40 or 80 acres. Areas with steeper slopes and less fertile soils are Extensive Agriculture (darker green) with 1 dwelling unit per 160 acres (20 acre lots allowed in areas with limited agricultural viability).
- ▶ Residential designations were limited to three areas. One area has rural densities (light yellow) at 2.5 to 10 acres per unit and two areas of suburban densities (orange) of 1-4 dwelling units per acre (du/ac).
- ▶ Two existing neighborhood commercial areas were located at Mankas Corner and at the intersection of Rockville and Suisun Valley Roads (Rockville Corner).
- ▶ Solano Community College was designated for Public use.

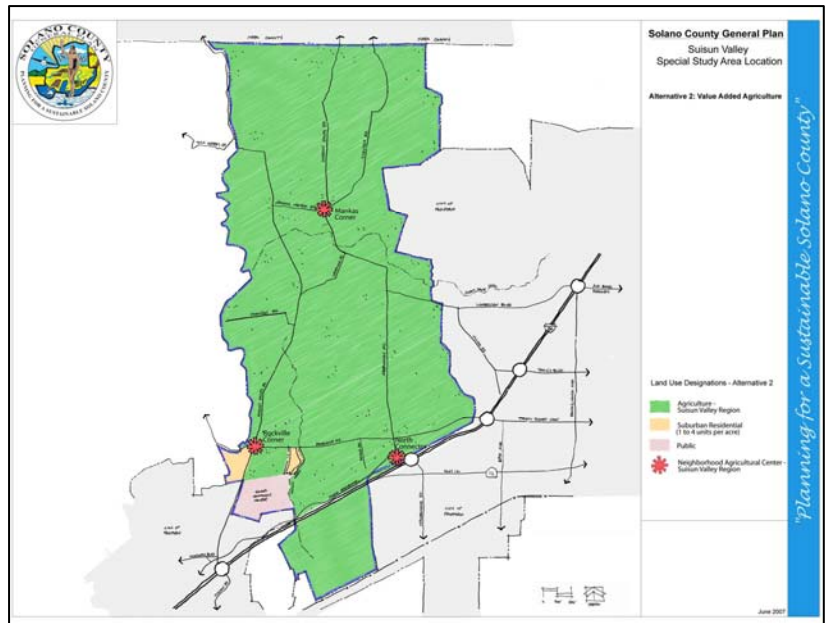


ALTERNATIVE 2: VALUE ADDED AGRICULTURE

Alternative 2 introduced the concept of redefining the two existing agricultural designations into one designation unique to Suisun Valley. This alternative also removed rural residential designations from the valley and added three Neighborhood Agricultural Centers, which would function as rural commercial districts emphasizing tourist and agricultural services.

Characteristics of Plan Alternative 2:

- ▶ Proposed one new Agriculture – Suisun Valley designation which would apply to most of the valley.
- ▶ Introduced a new Neighborhood Agricultural Center land use designation (red asterisks) in three locations (Mankas Corner, Rockville Corner, and the proposed North Connector/Abernathy Road) to allow for agri-tourism uses and commercial services.
- ▶ Maintained the existing Residential Suburban and Public designated areas.

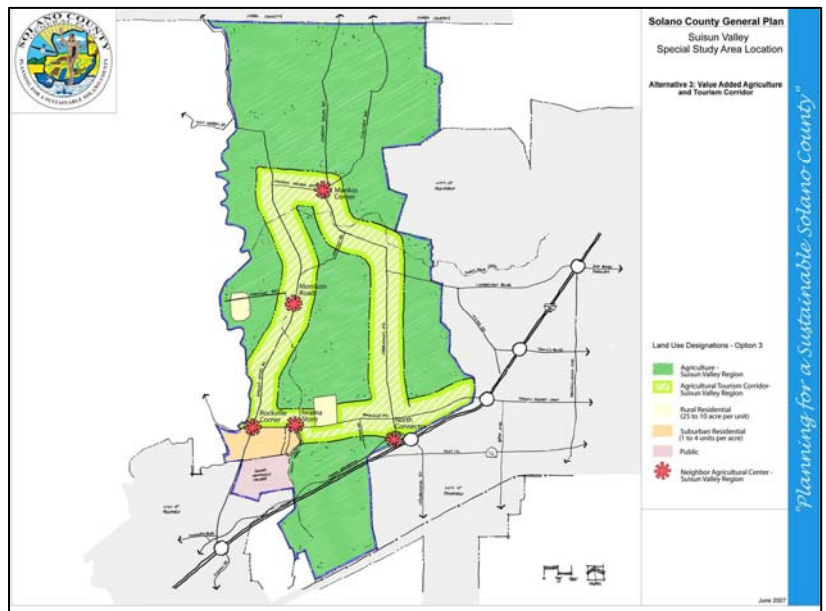


ALTERNATIVE 3: VALUE ADDED AGRICULTURE AND TOURISM CORRIDOR

Alternative 3 incorporated all of the changes made within Alternative 2, adding an agri-tourism corridor along a loop following Suisun Valley, Abernathy, Mankas Corner and Rockville Roads. Alternative 3 also proposed an additional residential suburban area adjacent to Solano Community College and two new rural residential areas. Alternative 3 also expanded the number of Neighborhood Agricultural Centers from three to five, adding centers at Iwama Market on Rockville Road, and at the intersection of Morrison Road and Suisun Valley Road.

Characteristics of Revised Alternative 3:

- ▶ Created a new Tourism Corridor land use category to enable additional tourism related uses on agricultural designated lands near primary roads.
- ▶ Established five Neighborhood Agricultural Centers to cater to higher-intensity tourism uses.
- ▶ Added new Rural Residential designated areas and expanded the Residential Suburban area.



REVISED ALTERNATIVES

Based on comments received at the second workshop on the three proposed alternatives, the consultant presented two revised alternatives at the third workshop, held on July 10, 2007. Having achieved a consensus that the community wanted to move beyond the current General Plan, Alternative 1 was removed from further discussions. The consultant presented revised versions of Alternatives 2 and 3.

REVISED ALTERNATIVE 2: VALUE ADDED AGRICULTURE

The revised version of Alternative 2 continued to promote the concept of combining the two existing agricultural designations into one designation and removing the existing rural residential designation from the valley. The revised alternative also included the two additional Neighborhood Centers (Iwama Store and Morrison Corner) that were presented as part of Alternative 3 at the previous workshop.

Characteristics of Revised Alternative 2:

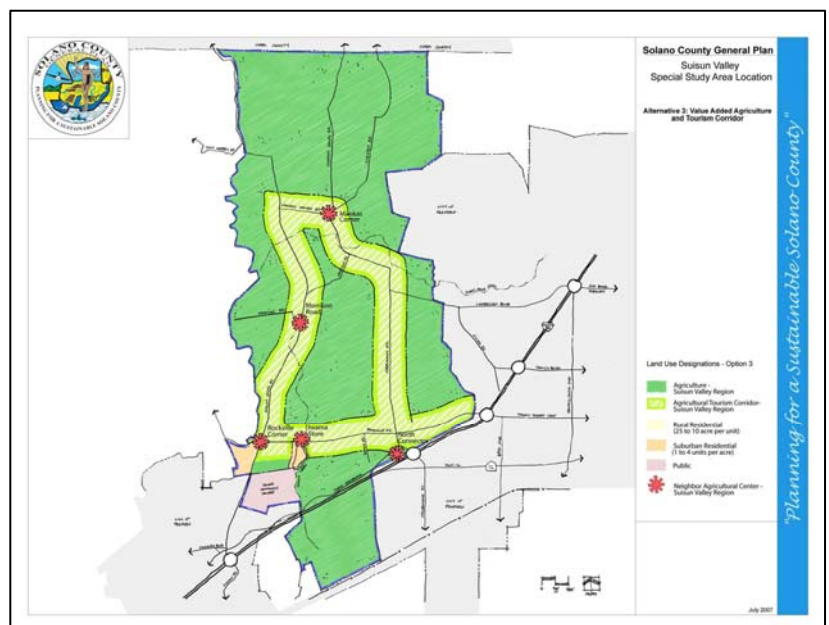
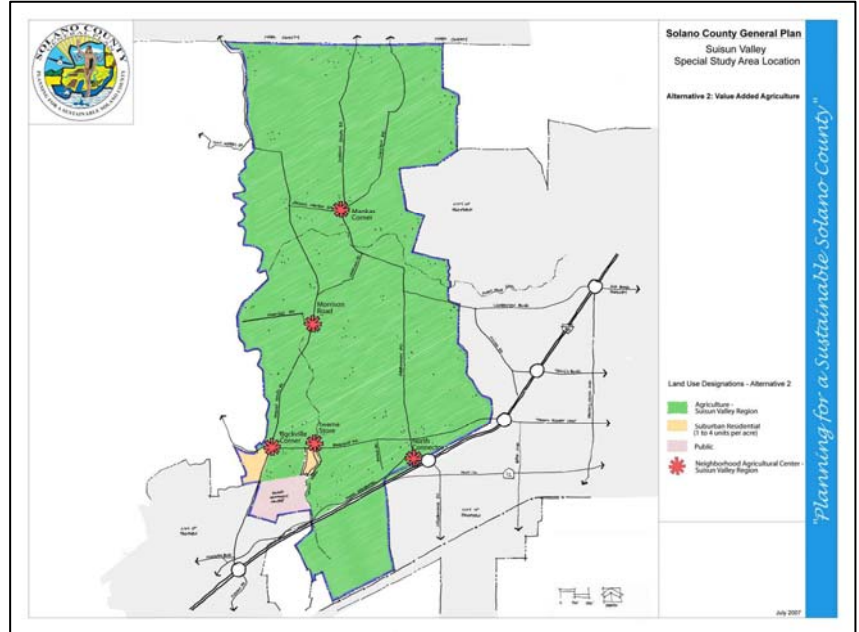
- ▶ Proposed one new Agriculture –Suisun Valley designation which would apply to the vast majority of the valley.
- ▶ Introduced a new “Neighborhood Agricultural Center” land use designation (red asterisks) in five locations to provide for agri-tourism appropriate uses mixed with limited residential units.
- ▶ Maintained the existing Residential Suburban and Public designated areas.
- ▶ Removed Rural Residential designations from the valley.

REVISED ALTERNATIVE 3: VALUE ADDED AGRICULTURE AND TOURISM CORRIDOR

The revised version of Alternative 3 retained the agri-tourism corridor loop and five Neighborhood Agricultural Centers as proposed at the June 28th meeting. The revised alternative, however, did not include proposed rural residential and suburban residential areas that were part of the previous version.

Characteristics of Revised Alternative 3:

- ▶ Created a new Tourism Corridor to enable additional agri-tourism related uses on agricultural lands near primary roads.



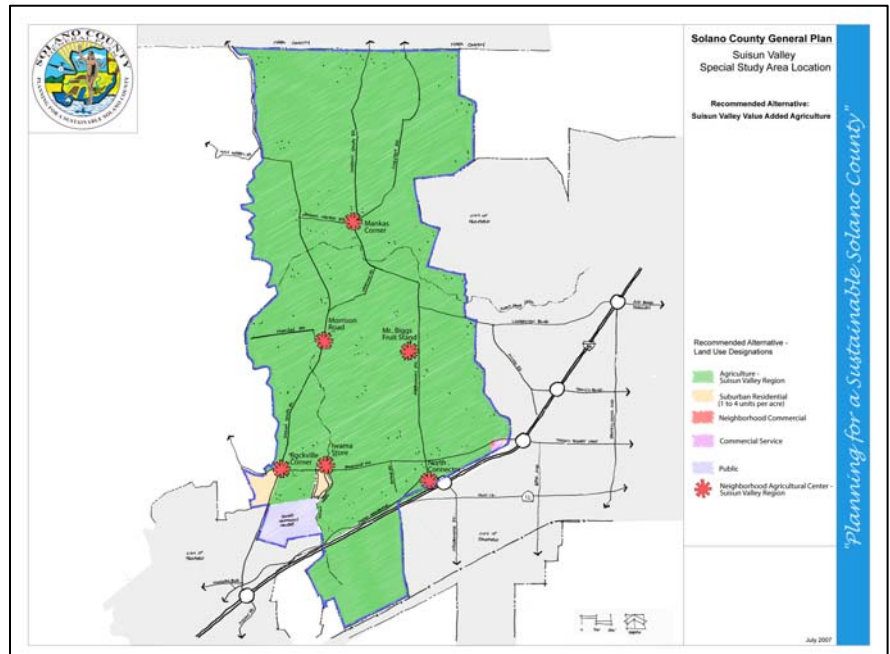
- ▶ Established five Neighborhood Agricultural Centers.

DRAFT RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE

Based on comments received at the third workshop, the consultant presented a draft recommended alternative at the fourth workshop, held on July 24, 2007. The draft recommended alternative strongly resembled the original Alternative 2 though it incorporated the Neighborhood Centers first presented in Alternative 3.

DRAFT RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE: VALUED ADDED AGRICULTURE

Based on community input from the previous meetings, a draft recommended alternative was presented at the fourth meeting. The draft recommended alternative was identical to the previous Alternative 2, except that an additional Neighborhood Center was located in the vicinity of Biggs Fruit Stand, to create a total of six centers in the valley. The draft recommended alternative continued to promote the concept of combining the two existing agricultural designations into one designation and removing existing rural residential designations from the valley. No new residential designation was proposed and most non-agricultural commercial uses would be limited to the Neighborhood Agricultural Centers.



Characteristics of Draft Recommended Alternative:

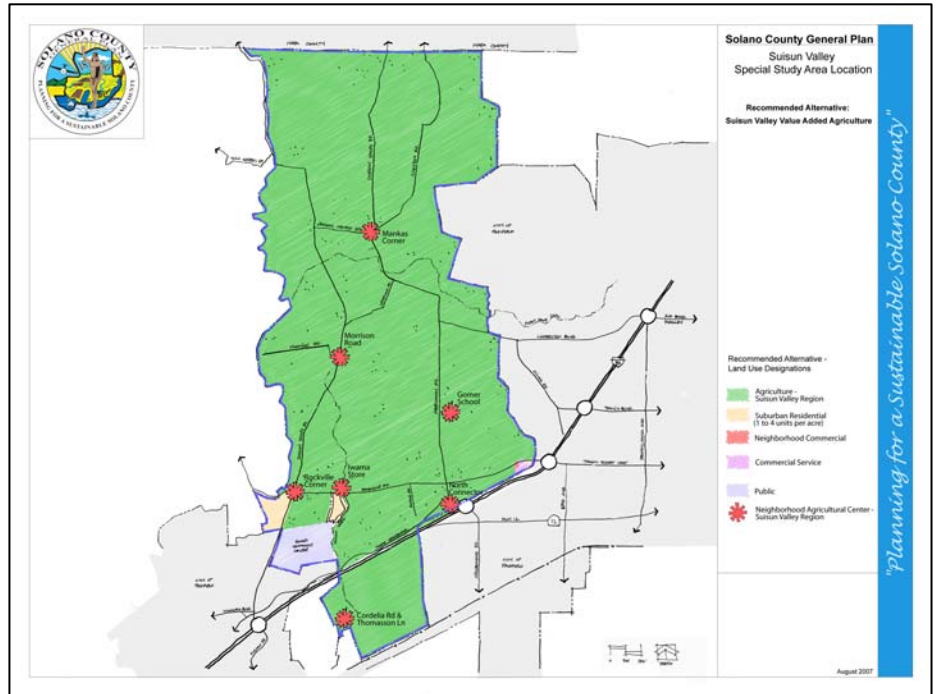
- ▶ Proposed one Agriculture –Suisun Valley designation which would apply to the majority of the valley.
- ▶ Proposed a new Neighborhood Agricultural Center land use designation (red asterisks) in six locations to provide for agri-tourism related uses.
- ▶ Maintained the existing Residential Suburban and Public designated areas.
- ▶ Removed Rural Residential designations from the valley.

RECOMMENDED LAND USE MAP

At the fifth and final workshop, on August 7, 2007, the consultant presented the recommended land use map to the community.

RECOMMENDED LAND USE MAP: VALUED ADDED AGRICULTURE

Based on community input from previous meetings a recommended land use map was prepared and presented at the fifth meeting. The map was identical to the previous version except that the Neighborhood Agricultural Center located in the vicinity of Biggs Fruit Stand was moved to the Gomer School site and a new Neighborhood Commercial center was added at the intersection of Cordelia Road and Thomasson Lane south of I-80. This created a total of seven centers in the valley. The recommended land use map continued to promote the concept of combining the two existing agricultural designations into one designation and removed existing Rural Residential designation from the valley. No new residential designation was proposed and most non-agricultural commercial uses would be limited to the Neighborhood Agricultural Centers.



Characteristics of the Recommended Land Use Map:

- ▶ Proposed one Agriculture –Suisun Valley designation which would apply to the majority of the valley.
- ▶ Proposed a new Neighborhood Agricultural Center land use designation (red asterisks) in seven locations to provide for agri-tourism related uses.
- ▶ Maintained the existing Residential Suburban and Public designated areas.
- ▶ Removed Rural Residential designations from the valley.

CAC COMMENTS

POLICIES

Concurrent with the development of the land use alternatives described above, the consultant presented a goal and policies to the public for consideration. The goal and policies are proposed for incorporation into the preliminary draft General Plan and will provide guidance for development and other activities within the valley. The preliminary policies were presented to the community at the fourth workshop. The community's input, suggestions, and revisions were recorded during the meeting. Revised policies were presented at the fifth workshop. At the workshop, revisions suggested by the community were incorporated and resulted in the recommended General Plan goal and policies. The following policies are presented for CAC consideration. (Draft versions and individual comments and changes can be found in the meeting summaries located in the appendices.)

RECOMMENDED POLICIES

Goal: *Preserve and enhance the landscape and economy of the Suisun Valley as a rural agricultural community.*

Policies:

1. Preserve agricultural production as the principal use of the Valley's farmlands.
2. Establish neighborhood agricultural centers that expand agri-tourism in the Valley.
3. Ensure that future development fits the scale of the Valley's rural and agricultural context.
4. Limit minimum agricultural parcel sizes in the Suisun Valley to encourage viable agricultural and ranching use. New parcels shall not be created which are smaller than 20 acres in size.
5. Allow farms and vineyards to process, store, bottle, can, package, and sell products produced both on-site and off-site.
6. Support programs that promote the branding and identity of Suisun Valley products.
7. Streamline permit processing for agricultural uses.
8. Develop design guidelines to promote community character and facilitate tourism within neighborhood agricultural/tourist centers.
9. Explore infrastructure alternatives for individual agricultural neighborhood centers in order to accommodate new commercial and tourist uses.
10. Work with local residents to find a suitable location for a public gathering place for community activities, including farmer's markets and seasonal festivals.

CAC COMMENTS

RECOMMENDED ALLOWABLE USES

The following recommended allowable uses within Suisun Valley land use designations are presented for CAC consideration. The summary is intended to provide an understanding of the range and type of uses that are provided for within each land use designation. It is not meant to identify all permitted uses, conditionally permitted uses or prohibited uses within each proposed designation. Those items will be determined as the County updates its Zoning Ordinance to implement the General Plan.

This summary incorporates revisions and comments suggested by the community at the meetings held on July 24 and August 7, 2007. (Comments and changes from each workshop can be found in the workshop summaries located in the appendices.)

Allowed Uses	Agriculture - Suisun Valley Region	Neighborhood Agricultural/Tourism Center
<i>▲ indicates use is allowed within land use designation</i>		
Agricultural Land Uses		
Crop production, including orchards and vineyards	▲	▲
Agricultural accessory structures	▲	▲
Agricultural processing facilities	▲	▲
Animal facilities and operations		
Grazing	▲	▲
Stable, private	▲	▲
Wind turbine generators, non-commercial (over 100ft)	▲	
Storage/maintenance of agricultural equipment/supplies	▲	▲
Tourism Uses		
Roadside Stands	▲	▲
Restaurant/café	#	▲
Bakery	#	▲
Winery and tasting facilities	#	▲
Local products store*		▲
Bed & Breakfast (≤10 rooms)	#	▲
Hotel (≤ 30 rooms)		▲
Resort	●	
Gallery	#	▲
Commercial and Service Uses		
Agricultural trucking services and facilities		**
Service station		**
Nursery	▲	
Farm/ranch supply store		▲
Storage/sale of agricultural service products (fertilizer, fuel)	▲	▲
Custom farm services (e.g. hay baling)	▲	
Farm equipment fabrication and repair	▲	**

VI. WORKSHOP ATTACHMENTS

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- B. Workshop #1- May 29, 2007
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- F2. Recommended Land Use Alternative**
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