



## COUNTY OF SOLANO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

### SUISUN VALLEY COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #4

Solano Community College  
Room 1646  
4000 Suisun Valley Road, Fairfield

**July 24, 2007**  
7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

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### **MEETING SUMMARY**

Approximately 20 people attended the fourth Suisun Valley Special Study Area community workshop held at Solano Community College on July 24, 2007. The purpose of this workshop was to receive comments from attendees on the recommended conceptual land use alternative, allowable uses matrix and General Plan goal and policies for the Suisun Valley area.

To start the meeting Jeff Henderson from EDAW gave a short presentation on the Suisun Valley Special Study Area planning process and a recap of issues and questions addressed in the third workshop.

#### **Public Presentations**

Each person who signed up at the previous meeting was then invited to present to the group for up to three minutes. No presentations were made.

#### **Revised Draft Conceptual Land Use Alternatives**

Mr. Henderson summarized the draft conceptual land use alternatives presented at the July 10 meeting, then presented the revised land use alternative: Value Added Agricultural. Next, the recommended General Plan goal and policies and the recommended allowable use matrix were presented. (Original and revised drafts of the conceptual land use maps and allowable use matrix are available at <http://www.solanocountygeneralplan.net/SPA-SuisunValley.htm> )

Mr. Henderson then facilitated a large group discussion and comment period about the recommended land use alternative, allowable use matrix and General Plan goal and policies. The following comments were offered in the group discussion and presented back to the group as a whole at the end of the meeting.

## **Comments and Questions from Large Discussion Group**

### ***Recommended Policies***

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

- Do we need to add tourism?
  - No, tourism is just one part of the puzzle.
  - Why 'rural' agricultural community?
1. *Preserve agricultural production as the principal use of the Valley's farmlands by limiting future residential uses to those which support agriculture.*
    - Delete all parts of Policy #1 following 'farmlands'.
    - Develop another policy that addresses residential uses.
  2. *Establish neighborhood agricultural centers that expand agri-tourism in the Valley.*
    - Not in favor of Neighborhood Centers because they allow commercial uses where others are not allowed to have them.
  3. *Minimize conflicts between commercial and residential uses and agriculture. Ensure that non-agricultural uses support the rural agricultural economy.*
    - Not in favor of the use of "residential" in this policy.
    - Get rid of policy #3.
    - Remove 'minimize conflicts between commercial and residential uses and agriculture.'
    - Combine last sentence with Policy #1.
  4. *Locate non-agricultural uses within neighborhood agricultural/tourist centers.*
    - Strike #4
  5. *Ensure that any future development is appropriately designed and scaled to fit in with the community's rural and agricultural context.*
    - Future Development - Don't limit residential, prohibit it.
    - Add Commercial/Industrial uses
  6. *Allow farms and vineyards to process, store, bottle, can, and package products produced both on-site and off-site.*
    - Add "sell".
  7. *Limit minimum parcel sizes in agriculture designations to the acreage that a farmer would be willing to lease or buy for agricultural use. New parcels shall not be created which are smaller than 20 acres in size.*
    - Why is first sentence included? Get rid of it.
    - It is necessary because on rangeland (extensive agriculture), 20 acres is not large enough.
    - 20-acre minimum is "good enough"

8. *Support agricultural production and related processing, support services, and/or visitor facilities serving uses as the primary use of properties in areas designated for agriculture.*
  - Protect processing
  - Maybe get rid of this policy.
  - Sections of 1, 6, and 8 all could be combined?
9. *Streamline permit processing for agricultural uses.*
  - Supported
10. *Support programs that promote the branding and identity of Suisun Valley products.*
  - Supported
11. *Develop design guidelines to promote community character and facilitate tourism within neighborhood agricultural/tourist centers.*
  - Supported
  - What is the difference between policy 11 and policy 5?
12. *Explore infrastructure alternatives for individual neighborhood centers to accommodate new commercial and tourist uses.*
  - “Add ‘agricultural’ to Neighborhood Centers.
13. *Work with local residents to find a suitable location for a community gathering place.*
  - Add ‘Seasonal Festivals’
  - Add ‘Farmers Markets’

*Other:*

- Add a policy for a county agricultural economic ombudsman

**Centers**

- How big are the Neighborhood Centers?
- Designated centers not needed. Auto mall was supposed to be in Cordellia.
- Area south of I-80 needs to be included.
  - Possible center south of I-80 near Erickson Ranch
- Incorporate farm worker housing needs.
- Gomer school site as additional center
  - Gomer School in flood area? Biggs Fruit Stand out of the flood area?
  - Add one or two more centers on Abernathy Road.

### **Allowable Uses**

- Minimum Parcel size for Agriculture
  - “I want to see 20 acre minimums”. 3 people concur with this statement.
  - Was A-10 in the 1960’s and then county changed it to a higher minimum when ranchette development started to occur.
  
- Include horse stables?
  - Comment, “Horses are as ag as you get”, referring to Valley character
  - Comment, “Horses are not agriculture”;
  - Horse trails are positive for tourism
  - Existing stables
    - Currently public horse stables @ Erickson Ranch
  - Private stables are appropriate
  - How do we differ between public and private livestock operations?
    - Public→ board other’s horses
  - Allow small scale animal operations, but no large commercial operations
  - Allow horse stables that are defined as an agriculture-tourism operation
  
- Incorporate a farmer’s market location
  
- What is a “resort” in the Ag area?
  - Should be ancillary to agricultural uses
  - Resorts need to be allowed -- they will not come to Suisun Valley if we’re too strict.
  - Need to define what a ‘resort’ is.
  - Define desired setback from roads.
  - Keep small. Define small scale.
  - Make sure if resort/hotel is allowed it’s of appropriate scale & character
  - Maybe a farm stay would work.
  
- Hotels
  - Limit by number of rooms.
  - Design guidelines are important.
  - Yountville Inn is a good example of large, but appropriate hotel.
  
- Farm stay should be allowed in Agricultural area.
  - ‘Farm Stay’ should be a permitted use in Ag area.

- Definition?
- Would the housing include live-work units?
- Ancillary uses  
Off-site products ok as long as farm grows some product.
- Commercial Confined Animal Operations
  - Small operations are ok (i.e. small free range poultry operation)
- Nurseries
  - % local content
  - On & off-site product
- Add Farm Equipment Sales to a category.
- Senior Housing
  - Remove from list.
- Limited Public Events
  - Modify “public” in order to include weddings etc.

### ***Other Comments and Questions***

- How do we protect existing property owner’s rights?
- Existing uses will be vested.
- Take advantage of photography and event opportunities in Suisun Valley
- Rockville Center – incorporate gray water/black water system
- Economic Development Policy Needed
  - Enterprise zone
  - Suisun Valley is model for other agricultural areas in Country!!
- “Add a Post Office and you have a new town!”
- Need sign ordinance for area.
- Gathering place for seasonal fairs, farmer’s market, and weddings

Mr. Henderson closed the meeting at 9:10pm and thanked everyone for attending. It was announced that the final workshop would be held in the same room or changes would be posted on the General Plan website:

<http://www.solanocountygeneralplan.net/SPA-SuisunValley.htm>

**Next Steps**

Final Workshop – August 7, 2007

