



## 2008 COUNTY GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

### *General Plan Agricultural Policy Background Summary*

May 6, 2009 General Plan Advisory Committee Meeting

#### **Exiting General Plan Policies:**

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The main focus of the Agricultural Policies in the County General Plan is to achieve the optimal balance between preservation of economically viable agricultural lands and potential developments. It is true that due to the recent growth of the County, many of the viable agricultural resources have been pressured to be converted into lands that are more conducive to developments. To manage these growth pressures, the County has implemented several policies within the General Plan to administer the growth patterns. In summary, the County has policies that are geared toward permitting agricultural uses that are economically productive while alleviating growth pressure points through land use management.

#### **Vision Statement:**

*“Agriculture remains a strong component of the County’s economy. Even though some agricultural land has been urbanized, there has also been expansion in other locations. The place of agriculture in the community remains strong and conflicts between agricultural operations and nearby development are rare. The Riverside County agricultural industry is a strong competitor in the global agricultural market.”*

As stated in the statement, Riverside County continues to promote preservation of economically viable and historically significant agricultural activities in midst of developments and growth pressures.

#### **Land Use Element:**

In this section land use policies of agricultural designations are outlined with provisions for some detailed appropriate use policies in the designation. Issues included in the element are: 1. residential and commercial uses in conjunction with agriculture, 2. participation in Williamson Act of 1965, 3. creation of new incentive programs and policies, 4. adhering to existing county ordinances and policies of agricultural preservation.

#### **Open Space Element:**

Further explanations and agricultural resources in the County are discussed in this section of the General Plan. Issues included in the element are: 1. extensive discussion on policies related to Williamson Act, 2. stakeholder and interest party recognition, 3. use of agricultural open space as a conservation measure, 4. reduce soil erosion and update agricultural resource inventory.

#### **Administration Element:**

“Agriculture Conversion” policies within Agriculture Foundation of the Land Use Plan are widely discussed in this section of the General Plan. Issues included in the element are: 1. 7% conversion per 2½ year cycle, 2. 2½ year cycles are to be reviewed and studied after each cycle, 3. three divisions of the county in implementing conversion rules, 4. establishment of Agricultural Task Force for management of conversion policies.