

AgVision,

Traditionally the updates of General Plans of Cities and Counties in California consume considerable dollars and effort with a major focus on urbanization. Communities that are rich in natural resources often ignore planning to nurture the very agricultural resources that gave them birth. Land-use Elements of any community's General Plan typically identify areas for urbanization with little regard for their negative impacts from the specific land removed or the aggregate impact of land conversion upon the local, regional or industry wide economies inter-dependent on those agricultural lands.

The long-term availability of quality farmlands is likely to be in the political hands of urbanites. Whether they choose leaders who move their communities to practicing smart growth principles or take over final approval of land-use expansion through the initiative process, more communities are recognizing the value of "ballot box planning." This often used negative phrase is morphing into a last resort option for citizens to reign-in elected representatives who don't demonstrate land-use restraint.

From a Central Valley wide perspective the aforementioned piece-meal planning to save the best farmlands may be a too-little, too-late process that won't counter the run-away urbanization that is likely to rekindle from the current housing bust.

Three processes need to occur to plan for agriculture land in the Central Valley of California.

First. Local control is important to retain our sense of community and our ability to respond to ever changing conditions as we attempt to manage the problem of farmland loss. I recommend that state legislation require that the land-use elements of county and city General Plans be submitted to the public for majority approval of total urban size and shape, within each jurisdiction.

Second. Incentives/disincentives are effective tools in the market place and can be made part of the on-going process of urbanization. I recommend that state legislation require a statewide minimum in-kind farmland mitigation for property conversion of farmland to any other use. The Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring distinctions can be used.

Third. Jobs/housing balance in local communities provide improved tax base for local governments, retain generated incomes for improved local economies through multiplier effects, and reduce transportation costs that can bankrupt families economically and communally. Community members who spend less time on the road have more time for family and community and reduce their negative environmental impact. Less road time means a reduced expansion of transportation systems that to-date have consumed massive amounts of land.

I recommend state legislation to require local city and county governments to generate a Jobs/housing Balance Element within their respective General Plans that are consistent with the aggregate GP's within each county. This action would

institutionalize more efficient cities within more efficient counties resulting in more efficient regions and reduce land requirements.

The Great Central Valley of California can remain an urban/ag community if we take actions to assure it.

Thank you.

Denny Jackman