



COUNTY OF SOLANO SUISUN VALLEY STRATEGIC PLAN STAKEHOLDERS WORKING SESSION

County Administrative Center
1st Floor Multi Purpose Room 1610/1620
675 Texas Street, Fairfield

March 30, 2009
6 – 8 pm

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome

Adam Cline and Jim Louie of Solano County welcomed attendees and reviewed the comments received at the last meeting.

2. Overview: Zoning Ordinance

Jeff Henderson of EDAW presented comments received from the Suisun Valley Fruit Growers Association and the Suisun Valley Wine Growers with regard to the zoning ordinance. Mr. Henderson also presented some ideas regarding winery zoning. After his presentation, the following comments and questions were received from the audience.

- ▶ Suggest three levels of permits for farmstands, similar to wineries, based on the origin of products.
- ▶ Will non-wineries (like produce stands) have the same allowances as wineries?
- ▶ Where do animals fall into this (i.e. horse shows, raising cows)?
 - Current zoning standards apply.
 - Why not allow more for animals, too?
- ▶ How much study has there been of how the origin of products should affect the permit process?

3. Overview: Design Guidelines

Mr. Henderson presented the purpose of design guidelines and showed images depicting design guidelines that would encourage rural character. He led a discussion on the design guidelines and received the following comments:

- ▶ Design guidelines could be great for the Suisun Valley, as long as they are not mandatory.
- ▶ How can you take care of issues with visual sign clutter? Is there something in the County sign ordinance that could help?
- ▶ Allow for open air farmstands as they are more attractive than closed stores. Satisfy health and safety standards while considering the importance of the rural context.

- ▶ Consider the character of each center or type of use (tasting, fruitstands, olives).
- ▶ What recourse is there for someone who sees a use or condition inconsistent with the guidelines?
 - Design guidelines apply to new projects, not existing uses.
- ▶ Consider night light pollution in the guidelines.
- ▶ Wineries don't always contribute to rural character because of their design and architecture.
- ▶ The visual character of Suisun Valley begins outside of the valley.
- ▶ Active farmland must be useable in a different way than tourist centers. Allow farmers to continue to use land, without deferring to design.
- ▶ Design carefully so that the design guidelines don't result in a "cookie cutter" look.
- ▶ Consider parking in the design for safety, space, and traffic flow.

4. Presentation: Infrastructure and Roadway Prototypes

Mr. Henderson led a discussion on infrastructure and roadway challenges. The following comments and questions were received from the stakeholder group and the community:

Infrastructure

- ▶ What is the age of the water lines? How long do they last?
- ▶ Can we plan for the next 50 years?
- ▶ Protect water quality from the contamination resulting from on-site septic tanks.
- ▶ Large wells and pumps may be one solution, although water quality could be a problem.
- ▶ A solution for water could include a treatment plant on the Putah Creek Canal.
- ▶ Consider how best to deal with unusable land resulting from on-site wastewater treatment. Land may have to remain in open space because of septic or leach field systems.
- ▶ Event centers result in a higher burden on infrastructure compared to agricultural uses. How would the extra cost be handled to support event centers?
- ▶ There is a possibility that the County could make an agreement with Fairfield for wastewater treatment, although it may require state legislation.
- ▶ The North Connector used to have a right to connect into Fairfield's systems although it may require annexation or special legislation now.
- ▶ Uses in Napa Valley are on septic.

- ▶ Does Napa County allow package treatment plants?
- ▶ Uses in Napa Valley are on engineered systems. Services do not extend outside cities.
- ▶ There is a study on water lines being done for the North Connector.
- ▶ Don't forget other infrastructure needs like fire service, flooding, and medical/emergency needs.
- ▶ Annexation should not be an option because it negatively impacts County funding for services.
- ▶ Suisun Valley has a different character than Fairfield. Residents travel into Fairfield to shop which results in tax revenue for the city. How does this tax benefit Suisun Valley?

Roadways

- ▶ Place a restriction on right turns from Rancho Solano during the day.
- ▶ The North Connector will bring additional traffic to Abernathy and Rockville Road will continue to be a thoroughfare.
- ▶ Don't improve every road. Keep the rural character.
- ▶ The North Connector will affect the valley.
- ▶ The biggest challenge to dealing with traffic is commute traffic, not visitors.
- ▶ Could there be a cost sharing program with the City of Fairfield?
- ▶ Include bike lanes throughout the valley.
- ▶ Consider the needs of farmers in bicycle planning. Bike lanes may not be appropriate because of how the farmers need to spray.
- ▶ Bicyclists use the roadways but don't stop to patronize the businesses.
- ▶ Educate bicyclists about farming and agricultural needs.
- ▶ Consider the water flow on roadways.
- ▶ Consider the impact on agricultural property owners of bike paths.
- ▶ The North Connector will have a bike lane, and will pull bikers deeper into the valley.
- ▶ There is a need to provide for bicyclists.
- ▶ Use signage to educate bikers regarding farming.

Closing Remarks and Next Steps

Mr. Henderson and Mr. Louie closed the meeting and reminded attendees of the next stakeholders meeting on April 20, 2009 at 6:30pm (new start time).