



## Part II-Chapter 1. Rural Valley Lands Plan

The Rural Valley Lands Plan is divided into the following sections:

- Rural Valley Lands Plan Policies (Section 1.1)
- Work Plan/Implementation Measure (Section 1.2)
- Rural Valley Lands Plan Criteria and Evaluation Matrix and Checklist (Section 1.3)

### **Rural Valley Lands Plan (RVLP)**

This chapter incorporates the RVLP adopted by the County in 1975. The RVLP applies to the Central Valley generally below the 600-foot elevation contour line along the foothills of the Sierra Nevada (including Valley Agricultural Extensions as described in Part II-Chapter 3) outside the County's Urban Development Boundaries (UDBs), Hamlet Development Boundaries (HDBs), Urban Area Boundaries (UABs) for cities, and other adopted land use plans which may include urban corridors, planned communities, and the Kings River Plan. Scenic and regional corridor plans may retain the RVLP subject to the policies developed in those plans (Part II-Figure 1-1: Rural Valley Lands Plan).

The RVLP was initiated in order to establish minimum parcel sizes for areas zoned for agriculture and to develop a policy that is fair, logical, legally supportable, and which consistently utilizes resource information to determine the suitability of rural lands for non-agricultural uses. The policies in this chapter will act as a guide to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors in determining appropriate minimum parcel sizes and areas where non-agricultural use exceptions in the rural areas of the County may be allowed.

### **Tulare County Annual Crop and Livestock Report**

Tulare County is the third largest producer of agricultural products in the nation. In the 2008 Tulare County Annual Crop and Livestock Report, the gross production value of all agricultural products was listed as \$5,018,022,800.00. Of a total of 120 commodities produced in the agricultural sector, the dairy industry is the leading commodity, with a total value of \$1,796,425,000.00, followed by fruit and nut commodities (\$1,835,198,000.00), field crops (\$630,631,000.00) and nursery products (\$85,413,000.00). In addition, agriculture produces income for other areas of the economy, including farm equipment assembly, maintenance and sales, as well as the banking and building industries.

It is important that land to be developed for non-agricultural uses be programmed in a gradual outward extension of present non-agricultural areas such that agricultural lands will not be unnecessarily fragmented and that service costs will be kept at an economic level. Where possible, non-agricultural uses should be directed to less desirable soils where conflicts with agriculture and impacts on the County's future agricultural productivity can be minimized. In addition, such uses should be directed to areas where groundwater level and soil suitability permit building without substantial public safety hazards or critical environmental disturbances.

## **Policy Analysis**

Policy RVLP-1.3: Tulare County Agriculture Zones, permits the County to establish minimum parcel sizes (for example, 20, 40, 80 acres) that are necessary to preserve agricultural lands in increments large enough to support commercial agriculture and discourage the generation of urban land uses in predominantly agricultural areas. This policy will have the effect of slowing the dilution of required public services and diminish land use incompatibilities associated with non-agricultural uses interspersed with agricultural operations.

Policy RVLP-1.4: Determination of Agriculture Land, permits the County to zone parcels of land in an agricultural zone (for example: A-1, AE, AE-20, AE-80) to non-agricultural zoning classifications (for example: R-A, R-O, R-1, R-2, R-3, O, P-O, R-1, C-1, C-2, M-1, M-2) if it is found that the parcel is better suited for a non-agricultural zone classification by means of the system of selection set forth in the policy.

Policy RVLP-1.6: Checklist, permits the County to apply the system of selection set forth in the policy to rezoning applications which change the zoning classification from one agricultural zone to another agricultural zone and which have the effect of reducing the minimum parcel size limitation below those set forth in the Williamson Act.

Such a policy does away with the need to amend the General Plan each time a proposed zone change comes before the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. This policy allows for a more orderly and efficient review of those parcels zoned for agriculture which are proposed for a zone other than agriculture, because it eliminates the need to prepare specific plans for many small geographic areas.

## **Policy Statement**

It is recognized that exceptions to the general policy described above are necessary and desirable. In order to determine in a consistent and logical fashion when such exceptions should apply, the following method shall be used to judge the relative agricultural or non-agricultural suitability of rural valley lands for zoning purposes.

Pursuant to this policy, all lands found to be more suitable for non-agricultural zoning by means of this system may be zoned for urban/suburban types of uses. The application of zoning to implement this policy, however, is discretionary and the County is not compelled to grant such zoning.

County Adopted City General Plans land use plans shall be adopted for incorporated cities within Urban Area Boundaries. The point exception system shall be used in an advisory capacity to evaluate the relative agricultural or non-agricultural suitability of lands located between the Urban Development Boundaries or Urban Area Boundaries for which a general plan amendment is proposed to expand or establish an Urban Development Boundary. The point total shall be considered along with other relevant information when approving or denying a proposed general plan amendment.

Fifteen (15) factors will be used to evaluate a parcel's suitability for non-agricultural zoning. (See Section 1.3: Rural Valley Lands Plan Criteria and Evaluation Matrix for factors, their value categories, definitions, justifications, and weighting criteria.)

In employing this method, a parcel of land is "surveyed". The two "Restricted to Agriculture" factors are applied initially. If a "Restricted to Agriculture" criteria is met for either of these factors, the parcel is to remain agriculturally zoned and no further point ratings need to be applied. If none of the "Restricted to Agriculture" criteria are met, the factors from the point value categories are applied. If a factor meets the "Highest Relative Suitability" criteria, it is assigned the number of points listed for that category. If a factor meets the "Lowest Relative Suitability" criteria, it receives no points.



*Valley Agriculture Extensions are subject to the RVLP. See (Part II) Chapter 3-FGMP, Page 3-1.*

## 1.1 Rural Valley Lands Plan Policies

### **RVLP-1**

To sustain the viability of Tulare County's agriculture by restraining division and use of land which is harmful to continued agricultural use of non-replaceable resources.

#### **RVLP-1.1 Development Intensity**

The County shall limit non-agricultural development in the unincorporated portions of the valley area designated for agriculture, outside of established UDBs, UABs, HDBs, and other adopted land use plans which may include urban corridors, planned communities, and the Kings River Plan. The County shall maintain a minimum parcel size large enough to sustain agricultural use.

The County's rules for parcel sizes shall be based on zoning, slope, local agricultural conditions, and the need to ensure the viability of agricultural operations. Residential uses in support of agricultural operations are allowed if appropriate buffers from agricultural uses are provided.

#### **RVLP-1.2 Existing Parcels and Approvals**

The County shall consider the re-zoning of existing parcels less than the minimum required by agricultural zoning, if found to not be viable for agricultural purposes as per the RVLP checklist and if such re-zoning would not impinge upon current or future agricultural uses in the area.

#### **RVLP-1.3 Tulare County Agriculture Zones**

In order to protect and maintain the agricultural viability of the valley area, the County shall maintain several exclusive agricultural zones, each containing a different minimum parcel size. The County shall apply such zones to lands located outside adopted UDBs and HDBs, where such boundaries have been adopted, generally below and west of the 600-foot elevation contour line as it occurs in Tulare County, except where otherwise designated by the Land Use Element of the Tulare County General Plan (Part II-Figure 1-1). The County recognizes that there may be unique circumstances under which parcels as small as ten (10) acres in size may be agricultural in nature. The County further recognizes that twenty (20) acre, forty (40) acre, and eighty (80) acre minimum parcel sizes are necessary to maintain and protect the agricultural viability of significant portions of the County. A determination as to the most appropriate minimum parcel size for a particular area shall be made on the basis of factors relevant to the protection and maintenance of existing and/or potential agricultural uses of land including, but not limited to, factors such as existing land use patterns, land capability ratings for agriculture, and the occurrence of agricultural preserves. Nothing herein is intended to prevent the application of exclusive agricultural zones developed pursuant to this policy to lands located outside the above described area.

#### **RVLP-1.4 Determination of Agriculture Land**

The County shall not allow re-zoning of parcels that accumulate 17 or more points according to the RVLP Development Criteria (contained in Section 1.3 of this chapter). If the number of points accumulated is 11 or less, the parcel may be considered for non-agricultural zoning. A parcel receiving 12 to 16 points shall be determined to have fallen within a "gray" area in which no clear cut decision is readily apparent. In such instances, the Planning Commission

and Board of Supervisors shall make a decision based on the unique circumstances pertaining to the particular parcel of land, including factors not covered by this system.

### **RVLP-1.5 Non Conforming Uses**

Irrespective of other policies or designations contained in the various elements of the Tulare County General Plan, zoning necessary to make a use conforming, which legally existed in the A-1 (Agricultural) Zone before January 11, 1973, is deemed to be consistent with the General Plan for purposes of Section 65860 of the Government Code. This opportunity will expire five years from the adoption date of this General Plan.

### **RVLP-1.6 Checklist**

The RVLP checklist shall also be applicable to re-zoning applications which change the zoning classification from one agricultural zone to another agricultural zone and which have the effect of reducing the minimum parcel size in the following manner:

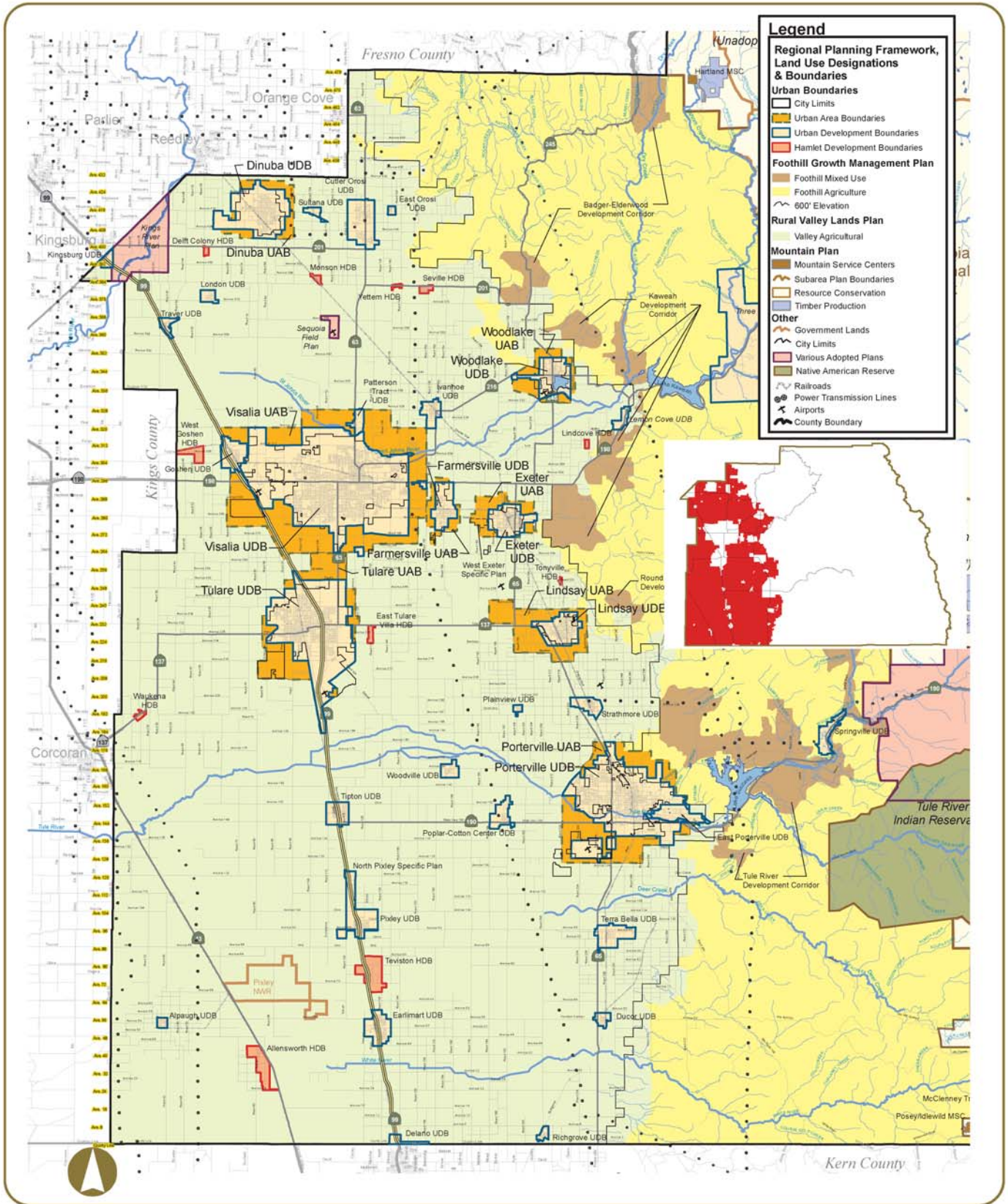
1. Less than ten (10) acres in the case of prime agricultural land, or
2. Less than forty (40) acres in the case of land which is not prime agricultural land.

The RVLP checklist is not required for existing parcels which do not meet the minimum parcel size as set forth in (1) and (2) above prior to the adoption of this policy.

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# 1. Rural Valley Lands Plan



0 5 10 15 20 25 Miles

Rural Valley Lands Plan

Part II  
Figure 1-1

**1.2 Work Plan/Implementation Measures**

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The following table documents the Implementation Measures included with the General Plan to implement the goals and policies included in this Chapter.

| Implementation   | Implements what Policy | Who is Responsible                   | 2012-2015 | 2015-2020 | 2020-2030 | On-Going |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| 1. The County shall continue to work with the Agricultural Advisory Committee or successor to ensure maintenance of the RVLP Criteria and Evaluation Procedures to identify parcels appropriate for non-agricultural zoning or development in areas designated as “agricultural” (see Land Use Diagram). The County shall periodically review the criteria and evaluation procedures and revise them as necessary. | RVLP-1.4               | RMA; Agricultural Advisory Committee |           |           |           | ■        |
| 2. The County shall maintain zoning to conform with the RVLP and shall consider initiating re-zoning actions where necessary to correct inadvertent application of exclusive agricultural zoning to areas that qualify for non-agricultural zoning under the exception procedure (16 points or less).  | RVLP-1.5               | RMA                                  |           |           |           | ■        |

*Please see next page.*

### 1.3 Rural Valley Lands Plan Criteria and Evaluation Matrix

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#### Definitions, Justifications, and Weighting of Factors

##### A. RESTRICTED TO AGRICULTURE VALUES

###### 1. Agricultural Preserve Status

###### a. Definition

Determine if the site is within an agricultural preserve.

###### b. Justification

To prevent conflict between agricultural preserve rules and regulations and use of the land.

###### c. Weighting Criteria

1) Restricted to Agriculture - site is within an agricultural preserve.

a) Importance - the Board of Supervisors has determined that these lands should be maintained in commercial agricultural production.

2) Not Restricted to Agriculture - site is not within an agricultural preserve.

a) Importance - these lands have other land use alternatives available to them.

###### 2. Limitations for Individual Waste Disposal Facilities

###### a. Definition

Determine by conferring with the Tulare County Health Department if individual waste disposal facilities can be permitted on the parcel under review.

###### b. Justification

The Tulare County Health Department may determine that employing an individual waste disposal facility for the disposal of liquid waste will be in violation of County ordinances and/or State and federal laws or regulations.

###### c. Weighting Criteria

1) Restricted to Agriculture - employing an individual waste disposal facility is prohibited by law or regulation.

a) Importance - prevent the contamination of the groundwater table.

2) Not Restricted to Agriculture - employing an individual waste disposal facility is not prohibited by law.

a) Importance - to direct non-agricultural development into areas where employing an individual waste disposal system will not result in the contamination of the groundwater table.

##### B. VARIABLE POINT VALUE

###### 1. Land Capability

###### a. Definition

Determine the predominant land capability of the site for agricultural purposes.

###### b. Justification

To preserve prime agricultural lands for agricultural production.

c. Weighting Criteria

- 1) Highest Relative Suitability - lands which are of a Class I, II, III, or IV land capability. Their point values are as follows:

Class I, II, or III – 4 point value

Class IV – 2 point value

- a) Importance - to preserve lands with agricultural capability by discouraging non-agricultural development.
- 2) Lowest Relative Suitability - lands which are not of Class I, II, III, or IV capability.
- a) Importance - direct non-agricultural development into areas that are not suited for agricultural purposes.

## C. FOUR POINT VALUES

1. Existing Parcel Size

a. Definition

Determine the parcel size of the applicant's entire contiguous ownership.

b. Justification

To provide for development of non-agricultural uses on those parcels which are less than five acres (gross) in size. This will prevent the division of lands into smaller parcels.

c. Weighting Criteria

- 1) Highest Relative Suitability - the site is five acres (gross) or larger in size.

a) Importance - to prevent further division of large agricultural parcels into smaller parcels, thus limiting their value for agricultural purposes.

- 2) Lowest Relative Suitability - the site is less than five acres (gross) in size.

a) Importance - to allow development of non-agricultural uses to occur on those parcels where most agricultural uses would be economically infeasible.

2. Existing Land Use/Suitability for Cultivation

a. Definition

Determine present use of the site and its suitability for the commercial cultivation, growing and harvesting of field crops, fruit and nut trees, vines, vegetables, and horticultural specialties.

b. Justification

To identify and protect existing and potential agricultural lands, while also allowing non-agricultural uses to locate on those lands not suitable for agriculture.

c. Weighting Criteria

- 1) Highest Relative Suitability - the land is in agricultural use or has the potential for cultivation. Things to be considered are as follows: Is the site presently being used for commercial agriculture? What is the land's cropping history? Is the site suitable for cultivation? Have adjacent properties been successfully farmed? (For factors to consider in judging suitability see lowest relative suitability.)

a) Importance - to preserve land in agricultural use and to discourage non-agricultural use of land with the potential for cultivation.



- 2) Lowest Relative Suitability - the land is not in agricultural use and is not suitable for cultivation as determined by a professional agronomist. Examples of conditions to take into consideration in determining that the site is not suitable for cultivation are as follows: cold spots in thermal areas, sand streaks covering a majority of the site, high concentration of salts or alkali, and areas of extremely rocky soil. The opinion of the appropriate professional, such as testing by a soil scientist, may be required as proof of the existence of any impeding condition.
  - a) Importance - to encourage non-agricultural development to occur on lands which are not in agricultural use or are less suitable for cultivation.

## D. THREE POINT VALUE CATEGORY

1. Surrounding Parcel Size (Do not evaluate if the site received "0" points for "Existing Land Use/Suitability for Cultivation". Enter a "0" for this factor in such cases.)
  - a. Definition

Determine the percentage of final subdivision lots in the area devoted to parcels less than five acres (gross) in size within one-quarter mile (1,320 feet) of the perimeter of the subject site.
  - b. Justification

To provide for development of non-agricultural uses in areas where there is already a high percentage of parcels that are less than five acres (gross) and to protect large-parcel areas from further breakdown.
  - c. Weighting Criteria
    - 1) Highest Relative Suitability - within one-quarter mile (1,320 feet) of the perimeter of the site, 35 percent or less of the area is devoted to parcels smaller than five acres (gross) in size.
      - a) Importance - to discourage non-agricultural land uses in areas where land is essentially in agriculture.
    - 2) Lowest Relative Suitability - within one-quarter mile (1,320 feet) of the perimeter of the site, more than 35 percent of the area is devoted to parcels smaller than five acres (gross) in size.
      - a) Importance - allow non-agricultural development on the site, if within the surrounding area a high percentage of the area is devoted to parcels of less than five acres.
2. Surrounding Land Use
  - a. Definition

Determine the various land uses that are abutting and within one-quarter mile (1,320 feet) of the site. In determining land use, non-agricultural uses shall include schools and farm labor camps. Right-of-ways, including irrigation canals, rivers, roads and transmission lines, should not be included in the calculations described below. Agricultural uses include land that is fallow and has been under cultivation and shall also include uses that are compatible in agricultural areas, such vacant lands (improved or unimproved) and open space lands (including parks and golf courses). Tentative subdivision or parcel map approval shall not be considered a non-agricultural use until the final map has been recorded.
  - b. Justification

To prevent the close association of agricultural uses and non-agricultural uses, which may have the potential to adversely affect one another and to not encourage the establishment of non-agricultural uses in agricultural areas.

c. Weighting Criteria

- 1) Highest Relative Suitability - none of the standards that have been set for non-agricultural value have been met. However, for proposed heavy industrial zone changes, the lowest relative suitability criterion set forth below shall not consider residential uses to be non-agricultural uses.
  - a) Importance - to eliminate conflicts with adjacent land uses and protects agricultural land uses (and residential land uses, in the case of proposed heavy industrial zone changes) from intrusion of inharmonious uses.
- 2) Lowest Relative Suitability
  - 2.1) The site is not abutted by non-agricultural uses, but within one-quarter mile (1,320 feet) of the perimeter of the site, at least 35 percent of the area is devoted to non-agricultural uses.
  - 2.2) The site is abutted on one side with non-agricultural uses and within one-quarter mile (1,320 feet) of the perimeter of the site; at least 25 percent of the area is devoted to non-agricultural uses.
  - 2.3) The site is abutted on two sides with non-agricultural uses and within one-quarter mile (1,320 feet) of the perimeter of the site; at least 20 percent of the area is devoted to non-agricultural uses.
  - 2.4) The site is abutted on three sides with non-agricultural uses and within one-quarter mile (1,320 feet) of the perimeter of the site; at least 15 percent of the area is devoted to non-agricultural uses.
  - 2.5) The site is abutted on four sides with non-agricultural uses.
  - 2.6) Importance - to allow non-agricultural development in those areas where such development has already occurred.

3. Proximity to Inharmonious Uses

a. Definition

Determine if any dairies, feed lots, concentrated animal raising operations, sand and gravel operations, waste disposal sites, airports and/or agricultural chemical research stations are located within one-half mile (2,640 feet) of the site.

b. Justification

To prevent the establishment of inharmonious uses that may jeopardize the continued operation or future expansion of these activities, and to discourage non-agricultural uses in areas where dust, flies, odors, noise, and hazardous chemicals may be a problem.

c. Weighting Criteria

- 1) Highest Relative Suitability - the site is within one-half mile (2,640 feet) of any of the above types of uses.
  - a) Importance - to prevent uses which may be inharmonious with the above-mentioned activities.
- 2) Lowest Relative Suitability - the site is more than one-half mile (2,640 feet) from any of the uses mentioned above.
- 3) Flexible Point Value - for proposed commercial or industrial zone changes, the following formula may be used in place of the criteria contained in (1) and (2) above:
  - 3 points - If any of the above types of operations are located adjacent to the site.

- 2 points - If any of the above types of operations are located within one-eighth mile (660 feet) of the site.
- 1 point - If any of the above types of operations are located within one-quarter mile (1,320 feet) of the site.
- 0 points - If none of the above types of operations is located within one-quarter mile (1,320 feet) of the site.

a) Importance - to recognize that, while residential uses may be inharmonious with the activities mentioned above, commercial and industrial uses might not be inharmonious.

#### 4. Proximity to Lands within Agricultural Preserves

##### a. Definition

Determine the amount of area within one-quarter mile (1,320 feet) of the perimeter of the site that is in agricultural preserves.

##### b. Justification

To protect those areas which have been set aside by official action of the County for commercial agricultural use from adjacent conflicting land uses.

##### c. Weighting Criteria

(If the site meets any of the criteria listed under the highest relative suitability, award this factor 3 points. If the site does not meet any of the highest relative suitability criteria, award the factor "0" points.)

##### 1) Highest Relative Suitability

- 1.1) The site is not abutting an agricultural preserve, but within one-quarter mile (1,320 feet) of the perimeter of the site at least 64 percent of the area is land that is in agricultural preserves.
- 1.2) The site is abutted on one side with an agricultural preserve, and within one-quarter mile (1,320 feet) of the perimeter of the subject site at least 50 percent of the area is land that is in agricultural preserves.
- 1.3) The site is abutted on two sides with agricultural preserves, and within one-quarter mile (1,320 feet) of the perimeter of the site at least 35 percent of the area is land that is in agricultural preserves.
- 1.4) The site is abutted on three sides with agricultural preserves, and within one-quarter mile (1,320 feet) of the perimeter of the site at least 20 percent of the area is land that is in agricultural preserves.
- 1.5) The site is abutted on four sides with agricultural preserves.

a) Importance - to eliminate conflicts with adjacent land uses and to protect agricultural land uses from intrusion of inharmonious uses.

##### 2) Lowest Relative Suitability - none of the above criteria have been met.

a) Importance - to encourage non-agricultural uses to develop in those areas where such uses will not conflict with lands committed to long-term agricultural uses.

## E. TWO POINT VALUE CATEGORY

### 1. Level of Groundwater and Soil Permeability

#### a. Definition

Determine the groundwater level and the soil permeability rating for the site. Highly permeable is defined as a percolation rate greater than five inches per hour. Groundwater shall be the highest recorded groundwater level in unrestricted aquifers as shown on the U.S.D.I. Bureau of Reclamation "Lines of Equal Depth to Ground Water" map or the California Department of Water Resources "Lines of Equal Depth to Water in Wells" or "Lines of Equal Elevation of Water in Wells" maps, provided that the groundwater maps to be used are based on data that is not more than 25 years old.

#### b. Justification

To preserve in agriculture or open space those areas characterized by a high groundwater table and highly permeable soil.

#### c. Weighting Criteria

1) Highest Relative Suitability - site has highly permeable soil and a groundwater table within twenty (20) feet of the ground surface.

a) Importance - those lands that have highly permeable soil and a water table higher than twenty feet should be maintained in agriculture or open space because such lands are not suitable for the installation of domestic, commercial, and industrial waste disposal systems.

2) Lowest Relative Suitability - site has a water table lower than twenty (20) feet from the ground surface and does not have highly permeable soil.

a) Importance - such lands are more suitable for installation of domestic, commercial, and industrial waste disposal systems.

## F. ONE POINT VALUE CATEGORY

### 1. Proximity to Fire Protection Facilities

#### a. Definition

Determine the distance to the nearest fire protection facilities from the site.

#### b. Justification

To enable fire protection facilities to provide adequate services for all non-agricultural land uses in the County within the requirements of established Fire Code Standards and to protect the County's Insurance Services Office (I.S.O.) ratings.

#### c. Weighting Criteria

1) Highest Relative Suitability - site is not within a five-mile response distance from fire protection facilities. For proposed industrial or commercial zone changes, three (3) points shall be awarded for highest relative suitability.

a) Importance - this land should be maintained in agriculture in order to conform to fire safety standards.

2) Lowest Relative Suitability - site is within a five-mile response distance from fire protection facilities.

a) Importance - land which has accessibility to fire protection facilities is more suitable for non-agricultural uses.



2. Access to a Paved County and/or State Maintained Road
  - a. Definition

Determine if the site has access to a paved County and/or State maintained road.
  - b. Justification

Protect agriculture from problems of dust and pollution created by increased vehicular traffic on unpaved minor roads, and to discourage the creation of new roads that may have to be maintained by the County or State.
  - c. Weighting Criteria
    - 1) Highest Relative Suitability - the site does not have direct access to a paved road.
      - a) Importance - those areas that do not have accessibility to paved roads may be better suited for agricultural uses.
    - 2) Lowest Relative Suitability - the site has access to a paved road.
      - a) Importance - those areas that have accessibility to a paved road may be better suited for non-agricultural uses than areas that do not have such access.
3. Historical, Archaeological, Wildlife Habitat, and Unique Natural Features
  - a. Definition

Determine if within the boundaries of the subject site there are any historical, archaeological, wildlife habitat, and/or unique natural features (as defined in ERME) which should be preserved.
  - b. Justification

To preserve and protect historical and archaeological sites, wildlife habitats, and unique natural features.
  - c. Weighting Criteria
    - 1) Highest Relative Suitability - located on the site is a historical or archaeological site, wildlife habitat, and/or unique natural feature.
      - a) Importance - to discourage encroachment of non-agricultural development, which could seriously damage or alter historical or archaeological sites, wildlife habitats, and/or unique natural features.
    - 2) Lowest Relative Suitability - no historical or archaeological site, wildlife habitat, and/or unique natural features exist on the site.
      - a) Importance - to direct non-agricultural uses into those areas in which there exists no historical or archaeological sites, wildlife habitats, and/or unique natural features, which may be destroyed by such activity.
4. Flood Prone Areas
  - a. Definition

Determine if the site is subject to 100-year frequency floods.
  - b. Justification

To preserve in open space or agricultural use those areas subject to flooding.
  - c. Weighting Criteria
    - 1) Highest Relative Suitability - site is subject to 100-year frequency floods.
      - a) Importance - to prevent non-agricultural uses from establishing in areas where severe flooding presents a hazard to public health, safety, or welfare.

- 2) Lowest Relative Suitability - site is not subject to 100-year frequency floods.
  - a) Importance - to direct non-agricultural uses into areas where flooding is not a problem.
5. Availability of Community Domestic Water
  - a. Definition

For residential zone changes, determine if community domestic water can be obtained. In the case of proposed industrial or commercial zone changes, determine instead if the requirements of the Tulare County Fire Flow Ordinance can be met.
  - b. Justification

To consolidate non-agricultural development where water services are already available in order to maximize use of existing systems and prevent proliferation of new systems in rural areas.
  - c. Weighting Criteria
    - 1) Highest Relative Suitability - for residential zone changes, site does not have accessibility to community domestic water. In the case of proposed industrial or commercial zone changes, the requirements of the Tulare County Fire Flow Ordinance cannot be met.
      - a) Importance - to discourage the creation of additional community domestic water systems in agricultural areas and assure that the requirements of the Tulare County Fire Flow Ordinance are met.
    - 2) Lowest Relative Suitability - for residential zone changes, site has access to community domestic water. In the case of proposed industrial or commercial zone changes, the requirements of the Tulare County Fire Flow Ordinance can be met.
      - a) Importance - to encourage non-agricultural uses to locate in areas where community domestic water systems have already been established and assure that the requirements of the Tulare County Fire Flow Ordinance are met.
6. Surface Water Irrigated Lands
  - a. Definition

Determine if the site has rights to surface irrigation water.
  - b. Justification

To preserve in agriculture those lands irrigated by surface water sources.
  - c. Weighting Criteria
    - 1) Highest Relative Suitability - site has rights to surface irrigation water.
      - a) Importance - to maintain in-agriculture those lands that can be irrigated by surface water sources and are not totally dependent on groundwater for irrigation.
    - 2) Lowest Relative Suitability - site does not have rights to surface irrigation water.
      - a) Importance - such lands are less suitable for agricultural use since their only source of irrigation water would be groundwater.
7. Groundwater Recharge Potential (Do not evaluate if the site received "0" points for "Surface Water Irrigated Lands". Enter a "0" for this factor in such cases.)
  - a. Definition

Determine the soil permeability rating for the site. For highest groundwater recharge potential, the site should be irrigated by surface water sources and onsite soils should be in

a permeability class that is rated at least moderately slow (have a projected vertical conductivity/percolation rate of at least 0.20 inch of water per hour) and must lack a restrictive layer (a soil or rock layer that inhibits the movement of water and/or roots through the soil) so as to provide continuity to groundwater. Groundwater shall be the highest recorded groundwater level in unrestricted aquifers as shown on the U.S.D.I. Bureau of Reclamation "Lines of Equal Depth to Ground Water" map, or the California Department of Water Resources "Lines of Equal Depth to Water in Wells", or "Lines of Equal Elevation of Water in Wells" maps, provided that the groundwater maps to be used are based on data that is not more than 25 years old.

b. Justification

To preserve in agriculture (or open space) those lands with the highest potential for groundwater recharge.

c. Weighting Criteria

- 1) Highest Relative Suitability - site has soils that are of at least moderately slow permeability (percolation rate of at least 0.20 inch per hour) and lack a restrictive layer (a soil or rock layer that inhibits the movement of water and/or roots through the soil).
  - a) Importance - to maintain in agriculture those lands irrigated by surface water sources and containing permeable soils, as they account for significant amounts of groundwater recharge from irrigation water that percolates below the crop root zone and into the unconfined aquifer.
- 2) Lowest Relative Suitability - site does not contain permeable soils or contains an impediment to recharge, such as a restrictive layer that would inhibit the movement of water and/or roots through the soil (the latter factor to be determined by the opinion of the appropriate professional, such as a soil scientist, engineer, or geologist).
  - a) Importance - such lands are less suitable for groundwater recharge.

**Rural Valley Lands Plan – Parcel Evaluation Checklist**

Applicant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**A. RESTRICTED TO AGRICULTURE VALUES**

If a following factor meets the “restricted to Agriculture” criteria, place an “R” in the value column and stop the evaluation. If the factor meets the “non-agricultural” criteria, place a “0” in the value column and continue the evaluation.

- |   |   |                  |
|---|---|------------------|
| 1. Agricultural Preserve Status _____                         | [ | Value<br>_____ ] |
| 2. Limitations for Individual Waste Disposal Facilities _____ | [ | _____ ]          |

**B. VARIABLE POINT VALUE**

Each of the following land capability ratings (as per U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service data) have been awarded a number value as follows:

| <u>Land Capability</u> | <u>Point Value</u> |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Class I, II, or III    | 4 Points           |
| Class IV               | 2 Points           |
| Class V, VI, or VII    | 0 Points           |

For the following factor, determine the land capability rating(s) of the parcel under review and award its corresponding point value.

- |                     |            |       |   |         |
|---------------------|------------|-------|---|---------|
| Class I, II, or III | (4 points) | _____ | [ | _____ ] |
| Class IV            | (2 points) | _____ | [ | _____ ] |
| Class V, VI, or VII | (0 points) | _____ | [ | _____ ] |

**C. POINT VALUES**

If the following factor meets the highest relative suitability criteria, award the factor the number of points listed for the category. If the factor meets the lowest relative suitability criteria, award it a “0”.

**FOUR POINT VALUE CATEGORY**

1. Existing Parcel Size (use gross acreage figure) \_\_\_\_\_ [ ]
2. Existing Land Use/Suitability for Cultivation \_\_\_\_\_ [ ]

**THREE POINT VALUE CATEGORY**

1. Surrounding Parcel Size \_\_\_\_\_ [ ]  
Note: Do not evaluate this factor if the site received “0” points for “Existing Land Use/ Suitability for Cultivation”. Enter a “0” in such case.
2. Surrounding Land Use \_\_\_\_\_ [ ]
3. Proximity to Inharmonious Uses \_\_\_\_\_ [ ]  
Note: Flexible Point Value applicable in some cases.
4. Proximity to lands in Agricultural Preserves \_\_\_\_\_ [ ]



TWO POINT VALUE CATEGORY

1. Level of Ground Water and Soil Permeability \_\_\_\_\_ [ ]

ONE POINT VALUE CATEGORY

1. Proximity to Fire Protection Facilities \_\_\_\_\_ [ ]

Note: Three Point Value applicable in some case.

2. Access to Paved Roads \_\_\_\_\_ [ ]

3. Historical Sites, Archaeological Sites, Wildlife Habitats, and/or Unique Natural Features \_\_\_\_\_ [ ]

4. Flood Prone Areas \_\_\_\_\_ [ ]

5. Availability of Community Domestic Water/ Fire Flow Requirements \_\_\_\_\_ [ ]

6. Surface Irrigation Water \_\_\_\_\_ [ ]

7. Groundwater Recharge Potential \_\_\_\_\_ [ ]

Note: Do not evaluate this factor if the site received "0" points for "Surface Irrigation Water". Enter a "0" in such cases.

**TOTAL POINTS [ ]**

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