
ATTACHMENT - RURAL VALLEY LANDS PLAN

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 ground water table.
 - 2) Not Restricted to Agriculture - employing an individual waste disposal facility is not prohibited by law.
 - a) Importance - to direct nonagricultural 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 (SCS ratings). 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 nonagricultural development.
 - 2) Lowest Relative Suitability - lands which are not of Class I, II, III, or IV capability.
 - a) Importance - direct nonagricultural 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 nonagricultural 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 nonagricultural 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 nonagricultural 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 nonagricultural 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 nonagricultural 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 nonagricultural 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 nonagricultural 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 nonagricultural 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, nonagricultural uses shall include schools and farm labor camps. Rights of way, 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 nonagricultural use until the final map has been recorded.
- b. *Justification:* To prevent the close association of agricultural uses and nonagricultural uses, which may have the potential to adversely affect one another and to not encourage the establishment of nonagricultural uses in agricultural areas.
- c. *Weighting Criteria:*
 - 1) Highest Relative Suitability - none of the standards that have been set for nonagricultural 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 nonagricultural 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
 - a) The site is not abutted by nonagricultural 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 nonagricultural uses.
 - b) The site is abutted on one side with nonagricultural uses and within one-quarter mile (1,320 feet) of the perimeter of the

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- site; at least 25 percent of the area is devoted to nonagricultural uses.
 - c) The site is abutted on two sides with nonagricultural 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 nonagricultural uses.
 - d) The site is abutted on three sides with nonagricultural 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 nonagricultural uses.
 - e) The site is abutted on four sides with nonagricultural uses.
 - f) Importance - to allow nonagricultural 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 nonagricultural 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.
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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
 - a) 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.
 - b) 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.
 - c) 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.
 - d) 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.
 - e) The site is abutted on four sides with agricultural preserves.
 - f) 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 nonagricultural 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 groundwa-

ter 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 nonagricultural 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 nonagricultural 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 nonagricultural 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 nonagricultural 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 nonagricultural 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.

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- a) Importance - to prevent nonagricultural 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 nonagricultural 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 nonagricultural 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 nonagricultural 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 (enter a “1” for this factor)
 - 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.
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- 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.
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APPLICATION NO. _____

APPLICANT'S NAME _____

Rural Valley Lands Plan - Parcel Evaluation Checklist**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 “Nonagricultural” criteria, place a “0” in the value column and continue the evaluation.

VALUE

1. Agricultural Preserve Status----- ()
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:

| LAND CAPABILITY | POINT VALUE |
|---------------------|-------------|
| 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 ratings) of the parcel under review and award its corresponding point value.

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

C. POINT VALUES

If a 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 (do not evaluate this factor if the site received “0” points for ‘Existing Land Use/ Suitability for Cultivation’; enter a “0” in such cases) ()
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 cases)----- ()
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 (do not evaluate this factor if the site received “0” points for ‘Surface Irrigation Water’; enter a “0” in such cases) ()

TOTAL POINTS ----- ()