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LAND USE ELEMENT

NOTES FOR ALL ELEMENTS

The General Plan will call out policies and actions that address specific topics of concern raised by the community. For the reader's ease, policies and actions related to these topics of concern are identified throughout the General Plan using the following icons. The policies and actions related to each topic will be compiled in an appendix to the General Plan.



Community Health



Environmental Justice



Economic Development



Sustainability

In addition, the draft policy guidance uses the term “Impacted Community” to identify what are called “disadvantaged communities” under Senate Bill (SB) 1000. SB 1000 defines these communities as low-income areas that are disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation.

Goals, Policies, and Actions

A. ORDERLY, WELL-PLANNED GROWTH

A1. Long-Range Planning

Goal LU-1

Coordinated and effective planning over the life of this General Plan.

Policies

LU-P1.1

The General Plan Update Environmental Impact Report (EIR) assumes the following maximum development projections for the year 2040:

- (a) ##,### new dwelling units.
- (b) #.# million square feet of new commercial and office space.
- (c) #.# million square feet of new industrial space.



When approved development within the unincorporated county reaches the maximum number of residential units and commercial/office and industrial square feet projected in the General Plan EIR, require that environmental review conducted for any subsequent development project address growth impacts that would occur from development exceeding the General Plan EIR's projections.

Actions

LU-A1.1

Track growth to ensure it does not exceed the development projections analyzed in the General Plan EIR and described in Policy LU-P1.1 without subsequent environmental review.

LU-A1.2

Periodically revise the County Zoning Ordinance and other ordinances to reflect newly adopted plans, address emerging issues and State laws, respond to economic, technological, and social trends, and ensure consistency with County policies. (3-a, 3-ak)

A2. Balanced Development and Conservation

Goal LU-2

Growth and conservation that are balanced to preserve and enhance the quality of life, protect the environment and public safety, and benefit all those who live or work in Contra Costa County. (3-A, 3-C)

Policies

LU-P2.1



Continue implementing the 65/35 Land Preservation Plan, using the County Urban Limit Line (ULL) to focus future development in the county's established urban and suburban communities while preserving agricultural land, rangeland, natural habitats, watersheds, and open space. (3-G, 3-69, 3-180, 8-5, 8-30, 8-31, 8-32, 9-3, 9-9)

LU-P2.2



Limit development outside the ULL to non-urban uses, such as agriculture, mineral extraction, wind and solar energy production, carbon sequestration, other resource-based uses, and essential infrastructure. (3-G, 3-69, 8-5, 8-30, 9-9)



LU-P2.3



Prohibit major subdivisions outside the ULL as well as successive minor subdivisions of previously subdivided lots. (3-G, 10-25)

LU-P2.4



Encourage infill of already developed areas and properties that have been skipped over. (3-8, 8-113)

LU-P2.5



Encourage clustering of allowable densities through use of Planned Unit District zoning to reduce development footprints and protect scenic resources, natural features, floodplains, and open spaces. (3-18, 9-14, 10-31)

LU-P2.6



On lands designated for residential or other urban uses, relate allowable parcel size to the availability of utility services, as follows:

- (a) Require a 5-acre minimum lot size where no public water or sewer service is available.
- (b) Require a 1-acre minimum lot size where either public water or sewer service is available.

Where public water and sewer services are available, allowable density will be based on the General Plan Land Use Map designation, as well as drainage, health, and other applicable standards. (3-49)

LU-P2.7



Prohibit extension of water and sewer lines into areas outside the ULL, except to serve public and semi-public uses that will not induce growth, or when such extension is necessary to address a declared public health emergency. Lines extending outside the ULL should be sized to serve only the use requiring service. (3-10, 8-ad, 8-af)

LU-P2.8



Consistently advise the Contra Costa County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) to support the 65/35 Land Preservation Plan and County ULL when considering requests for annexation to water and sewer districts and extension of services. (3-v)

Actions

LU-A2.1



Amend the County Ordinance Code to require the following prior to approval of a tentative map for subdivision in areas designated Agricultural Lands or Agricultural Core:

- (a) Evidence of adequate groundwater supply to support intended uses, considering the cumulative, long-term demand.
- (b) Demonstration that each parcel is suitable for a septic system.
- (c) Satisfactory road and street access, particularly for emergency vehicles.



- (d) Adequate regional drainage capacity, including natural watercourses located downstream.
- (e) Detailed site plans for each lot indicating building locations, driveways, well and leach field locations, energy-conserving features, location of hazards, necessary flood and stormwater management improvements, and fencing.
- (f) Other information that may be required to confirm the safe use of each lot for its intended purpose. (8-v)

LU-A2.2



In 2024 or 2026, introduce a voter initiative that includes adjustment of the ULL to include approximately 500 acres between Byron Airport and Byron Highway in support of an aviation-based job center at that location, which, together with the planned Vasco Road-Byron Highway Connector Road and State Route 239 projects, would enhance the economic viability of the airport.

LU-A2.3

In 2024 or 2026, introduce a voter initiative that includes adjustment of the ULL to include the existing concentration of residential properties in Canyon in order to allow proper correction of General Plan and zoning inconsistencies in that community.

See also Section A.4, Land Use, Infrastructure, and Transportation Coordination, and the Public Facilities and Services Element for additional policies and actions on urban services and infrastructure. See the Open Space, Conservation, and Working Lands Element for additional policies and

actions on agricultural areas, resource-based uses, and open space management.

A3. Sustainable Growth and Quality Design

Goal LU-3

A range and distribution of compatible and sustainable land uses that meet the county's social and economic needs and allow for balanced housing and job growth. (3-D, 3-E)

Policies

LU-P3.1




Support construction of housing in or near existing employment centers and development of additional job-generating uses near areas that are primarily residential. Where large-scale residential or commercial development is planned, encourage a mix of housing and employment opportunities unless doing so would exacerbate a severe jobs-housing imbalance in the area. (3-1, 3-2, 3-3)

LU-P3.2



Encourage development that combines employment, housing, and services in close proximity to transit facilities, such as BART stations and major bus lines. Such development should be planned and designed to encourage walking,



bicycling, and transit use, shorter commutes, and reduced dependency on single-occupant vehicles, while at the same time mitigates, to the extent possible, the impacts of placing residents in proximity to mobile sources of air pollution, noise, and traffic hazards.

LU-P3.3



Achieve a jobs-housing balance by designating adequate acreage of developable land for employment and housing, encouraging housing that meets the needs of the local workforce and jobs that are suitable for local residents, and implementing programs that improve opportunities to live and work in the same community. (3-K)

LU-P3.4



For any General Plan amendment that converts a commercial, industrial, or office land use to a residential or non-urban land use, evaluate the project's effect on the local and countywide jobs-housing balance. (3-h, 3-i)

LU-P3.5



Sustain the County's economic vitality by supporting and attracting businesses in a wide variety of economic sectors, prioritizing clean energy, sustainable and green businesses, and emerging businesses and industries that are consistent with the County's environmental and economic goals and values.

LU-P3.6



Encourage incorporation of childcare, adult daycare, and similar beneficial uses into new development. To maximize

accessibility, encourage childcare facilities in residential neighborhoods, employment centers, schools, public libraries, hospitals, religious facilities, and parks, as well as near transit stops. (3-84, 7-147, 7-149, 7-151)

LU-P3.7



Welcome development that supports the countywide goal of reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT), thus reducing greenhouse gas emissions, to meet climate change targets. Require projects that do not support the County's VMT-reduction goals to incorporate necessary changes (e.g., design, land use mix) to ensure they support those goals.

LU-P3.8



Incorporate principles of a circular economy and ecologically sustainable practices and materials into new development and retrofit projects.

LU-P3.9

Require that exterior remodels and the siting and design of new development are compatible with surrounding and adjacent buildings, public spaces, and cultural resources and follow principles of high-quality design.

LU-P3.10

Minimize conflicts between incompatible uses through use of setbacks, landscaping, screening, and other appropriate mechanisms. (3-19)

LU-P3.11

Require shadow and solar access studies for new multifamily, commercial, and industrial projects greater than three stories



in height or with obvious potential to significantly shade parks, commercial nurseries, residential yards, solar arrays, and other uses that are sensitive to loss of sunlight. (3-214)

Actions

LU-A3.1



Evaluate financial strategies and tools to attract housing to employment areas and to create new employment centers near residential areas. (3-4)

LU-A3.2

Develop and maintain an inventory of County-owned surplus lands with residential development potential and post the inventory on the County's website. (AB 1255)

LU-A3.3



Amend the County Ordinance Code to include requirements for low-impact development, the use of low carbon concrete, water and energy conservation, reclaimed water, renewable energy use, green and LEED-certified building, and other measures that reduce the environmental impacts of development, based on the best available science.

See also the Stronger Communities Element for additional policies and actions about economic development; the Conservation, Open Space, and Working Lands Element for additional policies and actions about sustainable design; and the Transportation Element for additional policies and actions about VMT.

A4. Land Use, Infrastructure, and Transportation Coordination

Goal LU-4

Coordinated land use, transportation, and infrastructure decisions so that growth occurs in locations where capacity and services are available or committed. (3-A, 3-F, 3-H)

Policies

LU-P4.1

Encourage development only in areas where requisite community services, facilities, and infrastructure can be provided. (3-8, 3-9, 7-19, 7-31)

LU-P4.2

Consider the potential alignments of planned regional infrastructure projects (e.g., major roadways, rail lines, pipelines, drainage improvements) when making land use decisions. (3-77)

Actions

LU-A4.1



Periodically re-evaluate parking standards, such as to

increase or eliminate parking minimums, or to consider strategies that reduce parking demand, to ensure their applicability to changing conditions, trends, and technology. (3-84, 5-20)

LU-A4.2

Work with the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) and utility service providers to:

- (a) Establish service spheres of influence that support the development planned in this General Plan.
- (b) Annex lands planned for urban development by this General Plan into their service areas.
- (c) Detach private lands from service boundaries that are not planned for urban development and that are not currently served. (7-m, 7-n, 7-y, 7-z)

LU-A4.3

Periodically perform an analysis of infrastructure needs and deficiencies in Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities and consider funding mechanisms that could make extension of needed services and facilities feasible. (SB 244)

See also the Stronger Communities Element for additional policies and actions about environmental justice in Impacted Communities. See the Public Facilities and Services Element for additional policies and actions about infrastructure and services, and the Transportation Element for additional policies and actions about transportation infrastructure.

A5. Intergovernmental Coordination

Goal LU-5

Effective coordination with cities and special districts to ensure consistent planning, service delivery, and community development. (3-1)

Policies

LU-P5.1



Ensure that County projects and decisions on private development and land use activities in the Primary Zone of the Delta are consistent with the Land Use and Resource Management Plan adopted by the Delta Protection Commission. Coordinate with the Delta Stewardship Council on actions impacting the Delta area. (3-54)

LU-P5.2

Work collaboratively with cities and special districts (e.g., East Bay Regional Park District and utility districts) to address regional issues of mutual concern and coordinate on decisions and actions that affect residents of nearby unincorporated areas.

LU-P5.3

When a project is within a city's sphere of influence or



adjacent to a city that is not within Contra Costa County, refer the project to the city for review and comment. (7-12)

LU-P5.4

Coordinate with LAFCO to ensure that city annexations and related land use decisions do not:

- (a) Interfere with attainment of the County's land use goals;
- (b) Include Housing Element inventory sites unless provisions have been made to transfer the site's assigned units to the receiving city's RHNA; or
- (c) Create new unincorporated islands (i.e., isolated areas substantially surrounded by incorporated land). (3-N, 3-v)

LU-P5.5

Encourage cities to annex unincorporated islands such as the Ayers Ranch and San Miguel neighborhoods.

LU-P5.6

Coordinate with military personnel to ensure new buildings and structures are sited in a manner that does not significantly impact military readiness, considering light and glare, heat generation, smoke, dust, equipment testing and operation, personnel training, and flight operations.

Actions

LU-A5.1

Review and comment on major projects (e.g., General Plan amendments, rezonings, and large subdivisions) proposed

within cities to avoid conflicts with County land use designations, goals, and policies.

See also the Conservation, Open Space, and Working Lands Element for additional policies and actions about the Delta.

B. POLICIES FOR SPECIFIC USES

B1. Residential Uses

Goal LU-6

A variety of residential neighborhood types that provide housing opportunities and desirable living environments for all residents.

Policies

LU-P6.1

Plan for a variety of housing types in the county, ranging from high-density transit-oriented housing to low-density, single-family neighborhoods. Encourage innovative, nontraditional designs and layouts in response to evolving housing needs. Provide housing opportunities for all economic segments of the community while ensuring compatibility with surrounding uses. (3-22, 3-23)

LU-P6.2



Distribute affordable housing opportunities in communities throughout the county. Do not concentrate affordable housing in traditionally lower-income areas. Locate affordable housing near public transit and essential services whenever possible. (3-21)

LU-P6.3



Protect residential neighborhoods from incompatible uses and activities with the potential to adversely affect public health and safety. (3-27)

LU-P6.4



Ensure that new residential development is planned, designed, and constructed in a way that promotes health, minimizes known hazard exposure for future residents, and mitigates potential adverse effects on natural resources and the environment. (3-28)

LU-P6.5



Require new residential projects to provide convenient access/connections to public transit, local destinations, and multi-use trails whenever possible. (5-22, 5-at)

Actions

LU-A6.1

Maintain objective design standards for residential and mixed-use development to provide a streamlined approval

process and ensure architectural compatibility for future infill development. (SB 35)

See the Health and Safety Element for additional policies and actions related to residential development in areas vulnerable to hazards (wildfire, flooding, etc.), see the Stronger Communities Element for additional policies and actions related to safe housing, and see the Housing Element for additional policy guidance related to housing in general.

B2. Commercial and Mixed Uses

Goal LU-7

A variety of well-located commercial and mixed-use areas that provide jobs and services, create civic gathering places and community focal points, accommodate higher-density housing, and contribute to the tax base of the County. (3-30)

Policies

LU-P7.1



Plan for a sufficient quantity and distribution of commercial areas to meet the basic daily needs of residents in each part of the county. (3-32)



LU-P7.2



Support neighborhood-serving commercial services in and adjacent to residential areas so that they can be easily accessed using multiple modes of transportation. (3-34)

LU-P7.3



Encourage improvements to existing commercial centers, especially those that enhance pedestrian and bicycle access. (3-39)

LU-P7.4

Emphasize the function of commercial centers as civic gathering places. Where feasible, require plans for these areas to include community services, public space, and amenities that create a strong sense of place. (3-33)

LU-P7.5

Allow new strip commercial development only when no feasible alternative exists. (3-36, 3-173)

LU-P7.6



Encourage adaptive reuse of older commercial buildings, including conversion to new uses such as housing. (3-40)

LU-P7.7



Encourage growth of the county's hospitality sector, including heritage tourism, waterfront amenities, farm-to-table restaurants, other dining and entertainment establishments, commercial recreation, various types of

accommodations, and visitor services.

LU-P7.8



Support development of co-working facilities and office support services that facilitate remote work. (3-200)

LU-P7.9



Accommodate a variety of land uses around Buchanan Field and Byron airports, consistent with master plans for each facility. Uses should support a range of commercial aviation functions, including fixed-base operators, aviation businesses, and passenger facilities and services, as well as uses that support the economic viability of each airport. (3-93, 3-94, 3-97, 3-98)

LU-P7.10



Plan land uses and activities in the vicinity of harbors to optimize their use for commerce and recreation without posing a threat to Bay or Delta resources, including water quality and shoreline and marshland habitats. (8-102, 8-103)

Actions

LU-A7.1



Monitor changes in the office and retail markets resulting from changes in workplace design, online work, and online retailing. As appropriate, consider General Plan, zoning, and other regulatory changes that facilitate conversion of vacant and/or obsolete space to new uses.



See also the Stronger Communities Element for additional policies and actions related to economic development.

B3. Industrial Uses

Goal LU-8

Industrial areas that support production, advanced manufacturing, distribution and repair, and other businesses and services that provide jobs and are critical to the county's economy. (3-41)

Policies

LU-P8.1



Welcome industries that create living-wage jobs and career advancement opportunities for county residents without causing severe environmental degradation. (3-44)

LU-P8.2



Welcome new businesses that improve supply chains for core local industries, including agriculture. (3-45)

LU-P8.3

Locate major industrial land uses adjacent to freeways, rail lines, and ports, and in other locations where impacts of industrial traffic on neighborhoods and commercial areas can be minimized. (3-42, 3-134, 3-146)

LU-P8.4



Reserve industrial land along the shoreline for uses requiring deep water access or large quantities of raw water for their processes (e.g., cooling), and discourage siting of other industrial uses that could be accommodated elsewhere. (5-80, 5-bu)

LU-P8.5



Plan industrial uses and districts to be harmonious with nearby areas, reduce the potential for off-site impacts, and limit potential exposure to environmental health hazards and pollutants. (3-43, 3-188)

See also the Conservation, Open Space, and Working Lands Element for additional policies and actions that support the agriculture industry.

Actions

LU-A8.1



Maintain formal designation of key industrial districts as "Priority Production Areas" by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)/Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), confirming their long-term importance to the region and facilitating future investment.



LU-A8.2



Evaluate the County's industrial land supply for opportunity zones or innovation districts that can accommodate emerging industries, including regenerative industries that support an economic transition, such as autonomous vehicle manufacturing, prefabricated housing production, logistics and mobility hubs, and maker spaces.

See also the Stronger Communities Element for additional policies and actions related to a potential transition from fossil fuel industries to renewable and sustainable industries that offer living-wage jobs, and for additional policies and actions about economic development. See the Health and Safety Element for additional policies and actions related to hazardous materials.

B4. Rural, Agricultural, and Open Space Uses

Goal LU-9

Rural, agricultural, and open space areas that provide scenic value, support Delta ecosystem health, and meet the needs of the agricultural industry.

Policies

LU-P9.1

Preserve the rural appearance and character of the following areas:

- (a) Franklin Canyon/Highway 4 corridor between Hercules and Martinez;
- (b) Tassajara Valley;
- (c) Alhambra Valley/Briones;
- (d) Morgan Territory Road;
- (e) Marsh Creek Road corridor between Clayton and Vasco Road; and
- (f) Deer Valley Road corridor between Antioch and Marsh Creek Road.

In these areas, pay special attention to potential aesthetic impacts and ensure such impacts are adequately mitigated. (3-158, 3-160, 3-163)

Actions

LU-A9.1



Maintain agricultural preserves in the Briones Hills and Tassajara Valley areas through agreements with adjacent cities to retain these areas for agricultural, open space, and other non-urban uses. (3-132)

LU-A9.2



Amend zoning regulations for development of homes and



associated buildings and structures on agricultural properties to require clustering to protect agricultural vitality and sustainability.

LU-A9.3

Continue working with agricultural stakeholders to evaluate and minimize the complexity, time, and expense of County permitting requirements for agricultural properties and maximize focus on meeting the objectives of the regulations.

See also the Conservation, Open Space, and Working Lands Element for additional policies and actions related to open space management and the agricultural industry.