

# San Joaquin County

## General Plan Update



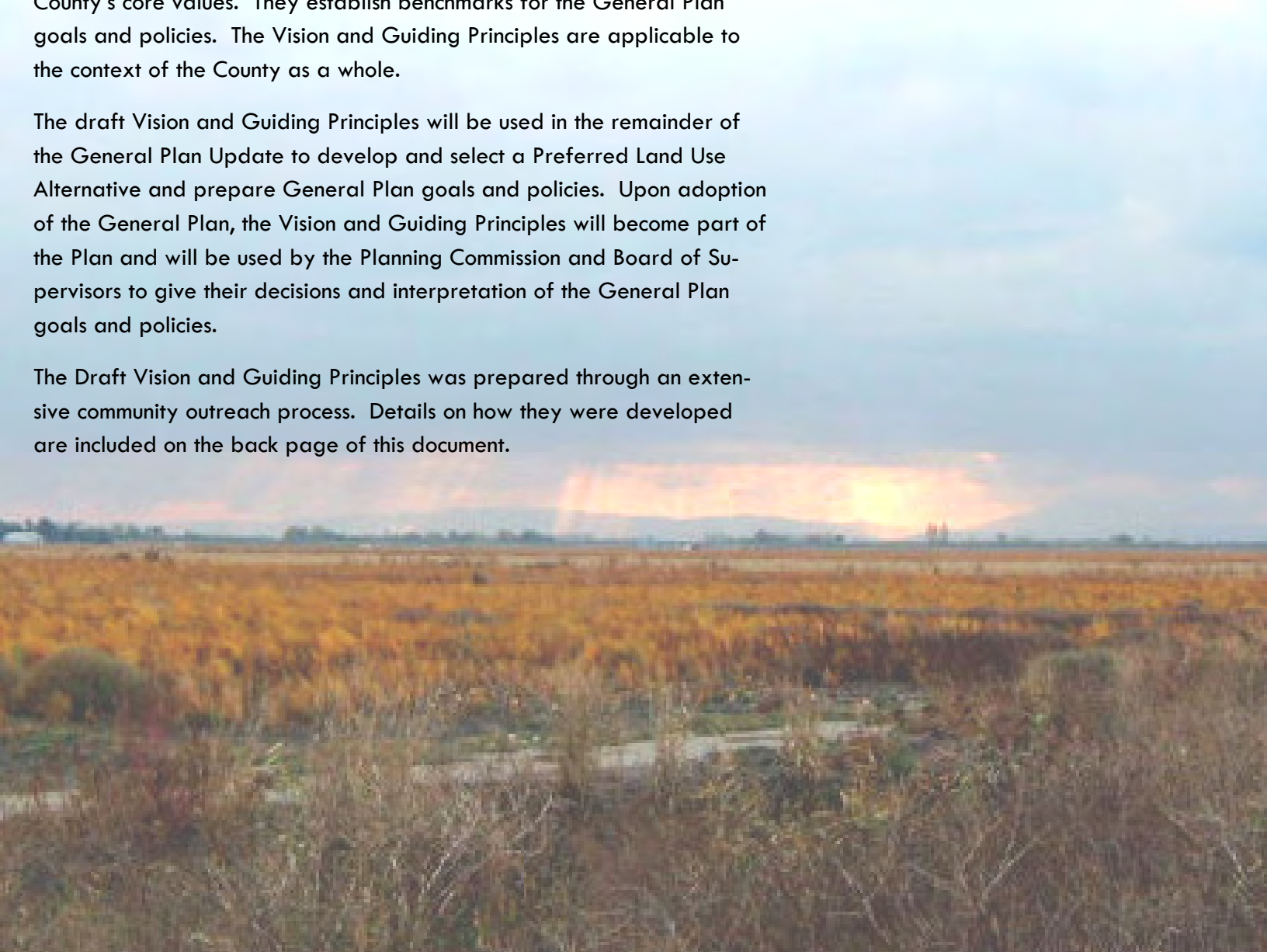
February 5, 2010

## DRAFT VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The General Plan Vision and Guiding Principles will be used to shape the future of San Joaquin County. The Vision represents the ideal future for San Joaquin County in 2030 and it paints a picture of what the County will strive to be in 20 years. The Guiding Principles represent the County's core values. They establish benchmarks for the General Plan goals and policies. The Vision and Guiding Principles are applicable to the context of the County as a whole.

The draft Vision and Guiding Principles will be used in the remainder of the General Plan Update to develop and select a Preferred Land Use Alternative and prepare General Plan goals and policies. Upon adoption of the General Plan, the Vision and Guiding Principles will become part of the Plan and will be used by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors to give their decisions and interpretation of the General Plan goals and policies.

The Draft Vision and Guiding Principles was prepared through an extensive community outreach process. Details on how they were developed are included on the back page of this document.



Looking east across the San Joaquin Delta as the sun breaks through in the distance.



# DRAFT VISION STATEMENT:

## SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY 2030

*The overarching Vision of the General Plan is that San Joaquin County will be the agricultural heart of California with sustainable and abundant water resources, desirable and safe communities, a strong and globally-connected economy, and thriving and pristine natural resources.*



As the agricultural center of California, San Joaquin County's farmland and agricultural heritage are preserved. Farms continue to produce a diverse array of the highest quality agricultural produce and products. Both traditional and innovative agricultural practices flourish throughout the County. Residents understand, appreciate, and are proud of the role agriculture plays in the history and economy of the County.

The County's economy is diverse and strong in its global role as: a source of food and agricultural commodities; a destination for tourists (The Delta, Agritourism, Wineries); and a supply of high-tech and "green" manufactured products. Expanded educational opportunities and a highly interconnected shipping system provide a broad range of jobs across diverse industries, including those related to small, local businesses and new start-ups. Excellent schools and leadership programs prepare youth as the next generation of the County's workforce.

San Joaquin County is linked to regional, state, and international destinations through an extensive network of roads, railways, waterways, and airports. Residents and businesses throughout the County are connected to the world through high-speed communications infrastructure. Communities are internally connected through an efficient and safe system of roadways, bridges, transit, bikeways, and pedestrian trails and sidewalks. County residents and farm equipment move together safely on well managed and maintained roads.

Natural assets, such as air quality, the Delta, river corridors, and soils, are preserved and residents are aware of their importance. Aggregate resources supply the long-term development needs of the region and state. Energy efficiency and use of alternative modes of transportation conserve energy resources, and new, sustainable energy resources are fully developed, providing clean and inexpensive energy.

The County values and protects its natural and cultural resources with expanded opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy the County's heritage and natural setting. Recreation opportunities, such as the Delta, waterways, and regional parks are available and accessible to all County residents and visitors.

Surface and groundwater resources are of high quality and available and sufficient to meet the County's water needs. Agriculture, residents, and natural habitats receive a continuous, cost effective, and adequate supply of clean water. The groundwater basin is rejuvenated and maintained in a state of equilibrium. Groundwater recharge is in harmony with pumping and saltwater intrusion is an issue of the past.

The Delta is a "Place" of statewide significance and maintains its historical role in the County. Delta channels convey water which supports a thriving agriculture industry, diverse wildlife populations, world-class recreational opportunities, navigable boating routes, and the transportation of commercial goods. Fortified and well-maintained Delta levees provide safety and security to residents, patrons, infrastructure, and crops.

Communities and cities maintain their unique geographic identities, separated by agriculture and open space lands. Growth and development occurs predominantly within and adjacent to existing communities and cities. New development is carefully planned, including the establishment of community services and facilities, in keeping with existing community character.

Every community is a desirable place to live because of its range of housing choices, local job opportunities, access to services and shopping, great schools and parks, and sufficient infrastructure. Residents and businesses celebrate the rural heritage and small-town feel of their communities and the ethnic diversity of residents.

Finally, San Joaquin County is celebrated for the health and well-being of its residents. Residents and businesses proactively minimize their impacts on climate change and air quality. The County maintains plans and safeguards against potential hazards, such as flooding and wildland fires.



# FUTURE PLANNING AND DECISIONS

## ***Efficient Growth and Development***

- Maintain clear boundaries (e.g., agricultural and open space separators and wildlife corridors) among cities and unincorporated communities.
- Focus new, higher-density growth within incorporated cities and adjacent areas outside of cities with full urban services.
- Promote infill and redevelopment, including economic development, within unincorporated communities.
- Ensure unincorporated communities are planned with a balanced mix of residential, commercial, and employment uses.
- Ensure development is compatible with farming operations and minimizes conflicts.
- Designate commercial and industrial areas suitable for the development of new industries.
- Ensure development is compatible with planned airport improvements.

## ***Community Character and Lifestyle***

- Preserve and enhance the rural, small town character and agricultural heritage of the unincorporated communities.
- Promote the development of healthy communities that include access to quality health care services. Ensure opportunities for existing and future generations to live, work, and succeed.

## ***Economic Growth and Sustainability***

- Ensure agriculture and ag-related industries remain the County's strongest economic sector.
- Promote the Port and Stockton Airport as major economic growth centers.
- Support education and job training institutions and programs that are available to all residents.
- Encourage creation of jobs that provide a living wage and upward mobility, and retain an educated, skilled workforce.

## ***Mobility and Connectivity***

- Promote regional and interstate transit connections (e.g., ACE Train, High Speed Rail) to reduce automobile trips.
- Create safe and efficient connections (e.g., auto, transit, bike, and pedestrian) between cities and unincorporated communities.
- Enhance goods movement infrastructure (i.e., truck routes, railways, shipping channels, and airports) efficiency to regional and international destinations.
- Ensure goods movement facilities and terminals operate in a safe and effective manner, consistent with surrounding land uses.

## ***Community Services and Utilities***

- Enhance and maintain existing infrastructure and services to meet the unique circumstances of each unincorporated community and the needs of residents and businesses.
- Ensure development does not outpace the provision of services and infrastructure (e.g., water, sewer, drainage).
- Maintain law enforcement and fire protection services to protect residents and property.
- Enhance availability of communications infrastructure (i.e., broadband) to residents and businesses.

## ***Agricultural Productivity and Heritage***

- Plan agricultural land uses that support large-scale commodity farming, value-added agriculture, and specialized farming practices.
- Preserve agricultural land and rich prime soils for productive farming and rangelands.
- Promote agritourism on vineyards and farms to attract visitors and create value-added industries.
- Promote agricultural practices that support farmers ability to be productive, viable, and profitable.

## ***Resource Conservation and Sustainability***

- Preserve environmental resources, including the Delta, waterways, habitat areas, fish and wildlife, and other significant resources for future generations.
- Promote alternative energy use, water conservation, waste reduction and recycling, and other sustainable practices.
- Encourage development patterns, transportation systems, "green" building practices, and renewable energy projects that reduce emissions and improve air quality.

## ***The Delta***

- Maintain local governments' sovereign right to govern land use decisions in the Delta.
- Ensure development does not conflict with Delta ecosystems, habitats, or agricultural operations.
- Protect the legal right of local Delta water users to divert water of adequate quantity and quality.
- Promote recreational opportunities in and around the Delta.
- Ensure the public health and safety for those who live, work, and play in the Delta.

## ***Water Resources & Quality***

- Ensure that future generations will have access to sustainable water supplies of adequate quantity and quality.
- Promote the concept of regional self-sufficiency for water resources.
- Implement water conservation and water use efficiency best management practices.
- Support integrated regional water management planning processes undertaken by local and regional water interests.
- Effectively manage stormwater through low impact development concepts to improve water quality and increase water resources.
- Utilize and preserve groundwater recharge areas to restore groundwater levels and reduce saltwater intrusion.

## ***Recreation and Cultural Resources***

- Promote the County's recreational attractions.
- Enhance parks and recreational opportunities for all County residents and visitors.
- Promote appropriate access to rivers and waterways throughout the County, while limiting impacts to property owners and agricultural operations.
- Support the planning and creation of more regional hiking, biking, and equestrian trails.

## ***Safety***

- Minimize risks from major floods and fire hazards.
- Ensure the continued maintenance and enhancement of flood control infrastructure (i.e., levees).



# DEVELOPMENT OF THE DRAFT VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The draft Vision and Guiding Principles are based on information and ideas gathered during the first four phases of the General Plan Update, including: the Background Report findings, Community Workshop #1, and the Issues and Opportunities Report. They were further developed during the second round of community workshops (i.e., Workshop #2). Workshop #2 was an extensive, Countywide public outreach process in which participants helped prioritize principles for future decisions and form a vision. Following the workshops, County staff, the General Plan Update consultants refined the community’s input and prepared the draft Vision and Guiding Principles. The draft Vision and Guiding Principles will be used in the remainder of the General Plan Update to develop and select a Preferred Land Use Alternative and prepare and refine General Plan goals and policies. The steps used to prepare the draft Vision and Guiding Principles are outlined below.

## Community Workshop #2: Exercise #1-Guiding Principles

The draft Guiding Principles began as a range of different priorities based on input and data from the first four phases of the Update program. In Exercise #1 workshop participants were asked to prioritize principle statements by their importance to future planning and decision-making. After rating each principle, participants picked the three most important to use in future planning and decision-making. Then, participants worked in groups to discuss and choose the three highest principles that represented their core values.

## Community Workshop #2: Exercise #2-Vision 2030

The draft Vision is based on the workshop participants ideal for San Joaquin County 20 years in the future. In Exercise #2, workshop participants were given a blank canvas with an outline of San Joaquin County. Working in groups, participants used statements and sketches to convey what their ideal San Joaquin County would be in 2030.

## Draft Vision and Guiding Principles Refinement

Based on all of the input received during Community Workshop #2, a set of draft Vision and Guiding Principles were prepared. County staff and the General Plan Update Consultants refined the input received during Exercise #1 to develop a set of Guiding Principles that focus on the most important priorities identified by participants. County staff and the Consultants also consolidated the visioning statements and sketches developed during Exercise #2 and prepared a Vision that represented the public’s ideal San Joaquin County. The draft Vision and Guiding Principles was then submitted to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors for review and further refinement in October 2009 and January 2010.

