



CHAPTER 3 -- THE LAND USE PLAN: RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES AND POLICIES

3.2 AGRICULTURE

[Narrative](#)

Coastal Element Policies: Agriculture

- 3.2-1 All agricultural land use, as represented within the agriculturally designated boundaries on the land use maps, shall be designated AG 60 or RL 160 for the purpose of determining density.
- This will support continued coastal agriculture use. One housing unit will be allowed for each existing parcel. Additional dwellings for resident agricultural workers shall be considered as conditional uses, subject to the provisions of this plan.
- 3.2-2 An owner requesting agricultural preserve status under a Williamson Act contract shall meet the requirements of the County Agricultural Preserve Ordinance. (See Appendix A 11)
- 3.2-3 If legislation permits any public agency to acquire agricultural land, this plan would urge that such acquisition should be carried out only if the property owner is a willing seller. This policy protects existing agricultural operations by limiting public acquisitions of viable agricultural operations.
- 3.2-4 Zoning regulations shall not discourage compatible activities that enhance the economic viability of an agricultural operation. These may include cottage industry, sale of farm products, timber harvesting, not subject to the Forest Practices Act and limited visitor accommodations at locations specified in the plan. Visitor accommodations shall be secondary to the agricultural activity. Proposed projects shall be subject to a conditional use permit. Granting of the permit shall require affirmation findings to be made on each of the following standards. The project shall:
- maximize protection of environmentally, sensitive habitats;
 - minimize construction of new roads and other facilities;
 - maintain views from beaches, public trails, roads and views from public viewing areas, or other recreational areas;
 - ensure adequacy of water, sewer and other services;
 - ensure preservation of the rural character of the site; and
 - maximize preservation of prime agricultural soils;



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- ensure existing compatibility by maintaining productivity of on site and adjacent agricultural lands.

No permit shall be issued to convert prime land and/or land under Williamson Act to non-agricultural uses, unless all of the following criteria are met:

1. all agriculturally unsuitable lands on the parcel have been developed or determined to be undevelopable; and
2. agricultural use of the soils can not be successfully continued or renewed within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, social, and technological factors (Section 30108 of the Coastal Act); and
3. clearly defined buffer areas are developed between agricultural and non-agricultural uses (see Policies 3.2-9, 3.2-12 and 3.2-13); and
4. the productivity of any adjacent agricultural lands is not diminished, including the ability of the land to sustain dry farming or animal grazing; and
5. public service and facility expansions and permitted uses do not impair agricultural viability, either through increased assessment costs or degraded air and water quality; and
6. in addition, for parcels adjacent to urban areas, the viability of agricultural uses is severely limited by conflicts with urban uses, and the conversion of land would complete a logical and viable neighborhood and contribute to the establishment of a stable limit to urban development.

- 3.2-5 All other lands suitable for agricultural use shall not be converted to non-agricultural uses unless (1) continued or renewed agricultural use is not feasible, or (2) such conversion would preserve prime agricultural land or concentrate development consistent with Section 30250. Any such permitted conversion shall be compatible with continued agricultural use on surrounding lands.
- 3.2-6 Existing agricultural ponds constructed on dry land and designed to store water for irrigation, fire protection or livestock shall not be classified as wetlands or regulated as such. Future proposals for agricultural ponds which involve the use of streams for their water source and may also involve or affect extensive areas of riparian vegetation shall be subject to conditional use permit review.
- 3.2-7 Current agricultural use of seasonal wetlands shall be recognized and allowed to continue. In instances where existing agricultural practices have a detrimental effect upon wetland areas, every attempt shall be made by the concerned property owner and responsible public agencies to mitigate the impact. Expansions of existing agricultural operations involving cultivation or construction of drainage systems into wetlands shall not be permitted.
- 3.2-8 The County should implement an effective dog and coyote control program to



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reduce predation levels. Stringent regulations applying to public and private development proposals and signs designating special dog control zones shall be used as necessary.

- 3.2-9 In order to minimize agricultural-residential conflicts, land divisions or site plans in a residential area shall not result in a residential structure being closer than 200 feet from a parcel designated for agricultural use unless there is no other feasible building site on the parcel.
- 3.2-10 The County should actively seek technical and marketing assistance to aid agricultural landowners wishing to intensify production, including livestock forage, truck crops formerly produced in the area, and potential new crops such as bulbs and agricultural products from small farms used intensively.
- 3.2-11 Light and local scale agriculture, is defined in the Coastal Element Glossary and shall be recognized as a principal use in the Rural Residential and Remote Residential land use classification in the Coastal Zone.
- 3.2-12 Limit residential uses and subdivisions adjacent to Type I Ag Preserve land to a low density standard to provide a buffer to minimize the conflicts between agricultural operations and residential land uses. New parcels created adjacent to an Ag Preserve shall be limited to a five (5) acre minimum. For parcels beyond the 5-acre minimum buffer (parcels which would be separated from the Ag Preserve by the buffer), the minimum parcel size would be dictated by the land use classification and applicable policies of the Coastal Element. If parcels adjacent to Type I Ag Preserve are designated Clustering (:CL) or Planned Development (:PD), the density will be dictated by the General Plan Land Use classification provided that the residential development is located not closer than 200 feet from the property line(s) of the protected agricultural resource or at the farthest feasible point from said property line(s). For residential development within 200 feet of the agricultural parcels(s), density shall not exceed one dwelling unit per 5 acres. (There shall be a minimum of 5 acres of lot area for each dwelling unit located within the 200-foot limit). Approval of any land divisions shall be consistent with Policy 3.9-2 and only when the creation of new parcels at the proposed acreages will not adversely affect the long term productivity of agricultural lands.
- 3.2-13 Limit residential uses and subdivisions adjacent to Type II Ag Preserve to a low density standard to provide a buffer to minimize the conflicts between agricultural operations and residential land uses. New parcels created adjacent to an Ag Preserve shall be limited to a ten (10) acre minimum. For parcels beyond the 10-acre minimum buffer (parcels which would be separated from the Ag Preserve by the buffer), the minimum parcel size would be dictated by the land use classification and applicable policies of the Coastal Element.



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If parcels adjacent to Type II Ag Preserve are designated Clustering (:CL) or Planned Development (:PD), the density will be dictated by the General Plan Land Use classification provided that the residential development is located not closer than 200 feet from the property line(s) of the protected agricultural resource or at the farthest feasible point from said property line(s). For residential development within 200 feet of the agricultural parcel(s), density shall not exceed one dwelling unit per 10 acres. (There shall be a minimum of 10 acres of lot area for each dwelling unit located within the 200-foot limit). Approval of any land divisions shall be consistent with Policy 3.9-2 and only when the creation of new parcels at the proposed acreages will not adversely affect the long term productivity of agricultural lands.

- 3.2-14 Where the lands west of Highway 1 are designated Rangeland or Agriculture, no vertical or lateral blufftop access shall be required at this time if it is found that the effects of the proposed access could not be mitigated and therefore would adversely affect the agricultural operation. Should the Agricultural use of the land be changed or augmented by use or uses other than Agriculture then offers for vertical and lateral access shall be obtained consistent with Policy 3.6-5.
- 3.2-15 All land divisions of prime agriculture lands designated AG or RL shall require an approved master plan showing how the proposed division would affect agricultural use on the subject property and the overall operation. The County shall make the following findings during master plan review and before approving land divisions: (1) the division will protect continued agricultural use and contribute to agricultural viability; (2) the division will not conflict with continued agricultural use of the subject property and overall operation; (3) the division is only for purposes allowed in AG or RL designations; (4) the divisions will not contribute to development conflicts with natural resource habitat and visual resource policies. In approving master plans, the County will require conservation easements, covenants against any further land divisions or other similar guarantees to ensure long-term agricultural uses for the affected parcel.
- 3.2-16 All agricultural lands designated AG or RL shall not be divided nor converted to non-agricultural uses unless (1) continued or renewed agricultural use is not feasible, or (2) such conversion would preserve prime agricultural land or (3) concentrate development consistent with Section 30250. Any such permitted division or conversion shall be compatible with continued agricultural use of surrounding parcels.

"Feasible", as used in this policy, includes the necessity for consideration of an economic feasibility evaluation containing both the following elements:

1. An analysis of the gross revenue from the agricultural products grown in the area for the five years immediately preceding the date of the filing of proposed local coastal program or an amendment to any local coastal



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program.

2. An analysis of the operational expenses beyond the control of the owner/operator associated with the production of the agricultural products grown in the area for the five years immediately preceding the date of the filing of a proposed local coastal program or an amendment to any local coastal program.

For purposes of this policy, "area" means a geographic area of sufficient size to provide an accurate evaluation of the economic feasibility of agricultural uses for those lands included in the local coastal plan.