

Chapter 2 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

As a healthy growing county, Sutter County's focus is on how to accommodate growth and change while preserving and enhancing the qualities and characteristics that make it such a desirable place to live and work. The County recognizes that the quality of life in Sutter County is dependent on both protecting and preserving the viability of its agricultural resources which make a considerable contribution to the Sutter County economy, and on creating a compatible and complementary mix of residential, employment, commercial and service uses in Sutter County's urban areas that can sustain a vibrant economy and a healthy environment. This chapter describes the existing development trends in the county, in addition to demographic and economic trends. A special focus on the contribution of agriculture to Sutter County's economy is also included in this chapter.

The Community Development chapter is divided into the following sections:

2.1 Land Use

2.2 Demographic and Economic Analysis with subsections addressing Demographic Trends and Conditions (2.2.1), Economic Development Trends and Conditions (2.2.2), and Agricultural Economics (2.2.3).

2.1 LAND USE

■ INTRODUCTION

The Land Use section summarizes existing development trends and land uses within Sutter County. Information in this section primarily focuses on the unincorporated portions of Sutter County and those areas that influence the unincorporated county. The section describes the following items within the county:

- Existing planning boundaries;
- Existing land uses;
- Important farmlands;
- Zoning districts;
- Future development plans; and
- Physical form.

■ SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- The county is dominated by agricultural land uses. Exceptions are the land uses within the cities of Yuba City and Live Oak. The rural community of Sutter also contains a variety of non-agricultural land uses within its adopted boundaries.
- Communities within the county, including the incorporated cities, are located primarily along major transportation corridors.

- 49 ranchette projects were approved between 1998 and 2007. The potential impacts of ranchettes and large rural lots on agriculture include replacing previously productive farmland and/or creating incompatibilities between ranchette residents and agricultural operations.
- The cities of Yuba City and Live Oak are both in the process of expanding into their Sphere of Influences (SOI), which would remove those lands from the jurisdiction of the County's General Plan.
- Sutter County is in the process of reviewing a proposed specific plan for approximately 7,500 acres located in south Sutter County adjacent to the boundary of Sacramento County and near the boundary of Placer County. The area is currently used for agricultural purposes and includes two industrial facilities. The proposed plan will attract new employers to Sutter County and will include the development of employment uses, including both industrial and commercial uses, residential, parks and open space, as well as associated services and public utility facilities.
- The highest-intensity land uses within the county are found within and immediately surrounding the cities and communities.

■ **BACKGROUND**

Regional Setting

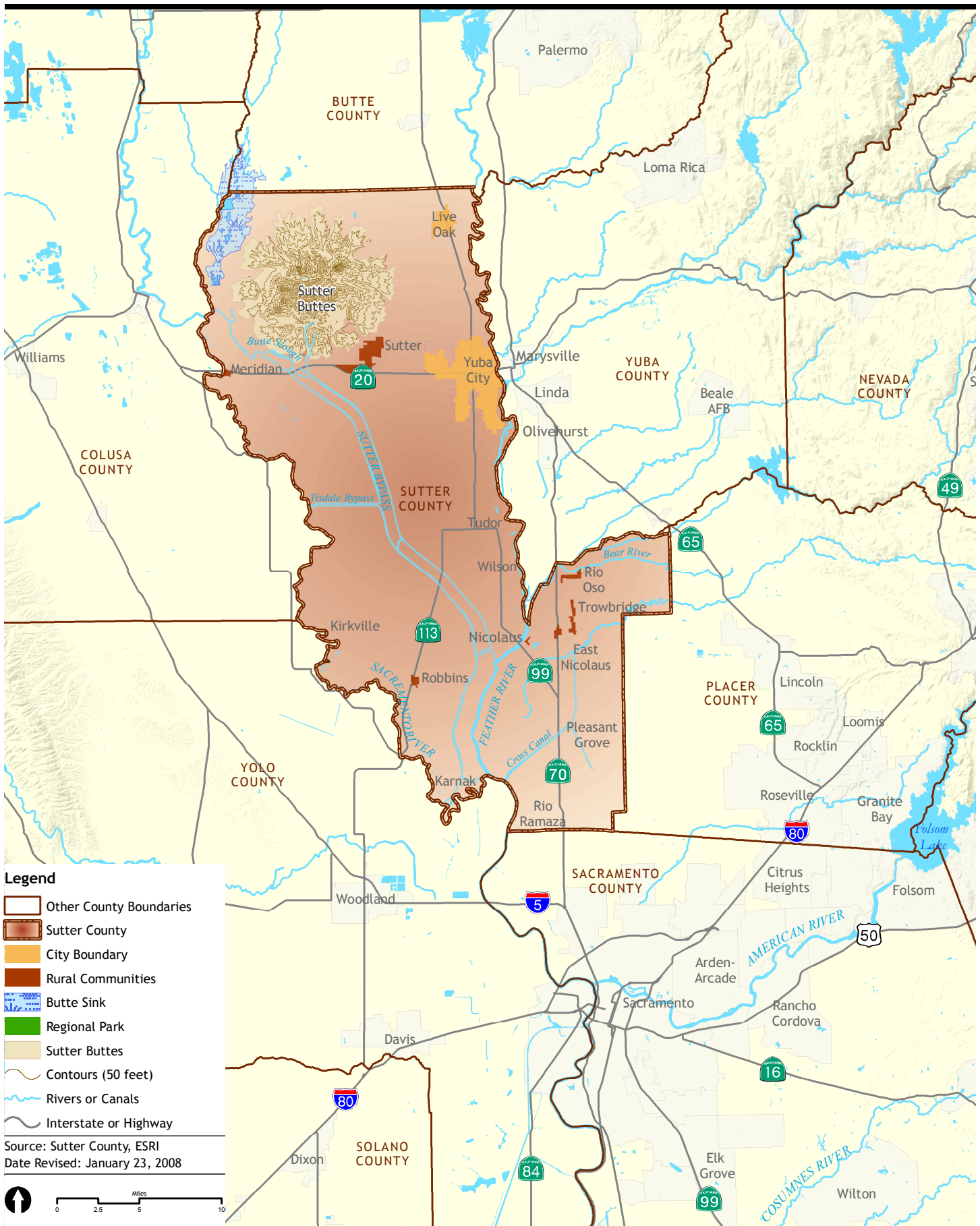
Sutter County lies in a portion of north central California known as the Sacramento Valley. The County encompasses approximately 607 square miles (388,358 acres) and is considered to be a part of the six-county greater Sacramento region. Sutter County's jurisdictional boundaries are generally defined by Yolo and Colusa counties to the west, with the Sacramento River and Butte Sink forming the western boundary; Butte County forming the northern boundary; Yuba and Placer counties to the east with the Feather and Bear Rivers forming a portion of the eastern boundary; and Sacramento County to the south, with the southern boundary south of Riego Road. Figure 2.1-1 shows the County and its surrounding areas.

State Highway 99, which extends in a north-south direction through the County, defines the principal transportation corridor connecting the County to the region. State Route 20 is the principal east-west corridor between Highway 99 and Interstate 5, located west of the County. Other major transportation corridors within the county include Highway 113, which generally runs north-south through the southwestern portion of the County until it merges with Highway 99 south of Yuba City, and Highway 70, which also runs north-south in the southeastern portion of the County, where it splits from Highway 99 and runs north into Yuba County.

Sutter County

The County's topography is primarily flat, with the exception being the Sutter Buttes rising out of the valley floor in the northern portion of the County. The Bear River converges with the Feather River in the southern portion of the County near the community of Nicolaus, and from there, the Feather River flows south through the south-central portion of the County, where it converges with the Sacramento River at the County's boundary with Yolo County. The County also contains several major flood control canals including the Sutter Bypass, running through the center of the County from north to south, the Tisdale Bypass, connecting the Sutter Bypass to the Sacramento River near the center of the County, Cross Canal and Natomas East Main Drainage Canal in the south, and Wadsworth Canal, east of the community of Sutter.

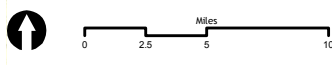
SUTTER COUNTY General Plan Update



Legend

- Other County Boundaries
- Sutter County
- City Boundary
- Rural Communities
- Butte Sink
- Regional Park
- Sutter Buttes
- Contours (50 feet)
- Rivers or Canals
- Interstate or Highway

Source: Sutter County, ESRI
Date Revised: January 23, 2008



**Sutter County & Surrounding Areas
Figure 2.1-1**

Both generally run south from the Butte Sink, in the northwest corner of the County and next to the western edge of the Sutter Buttes, through the center of the County until they meet with the Sacramento River west of its convergence with the Feather River. The central portion of the County also includes the Tisdale Bypass, which runs east-west, connecting the Sacramento River and the Sutter Bypass.

The unincorporated area of the County includes several rural communities including: Meridian, adjacent to the western boundary in the north; Sutter, located in the north-central portion of the County abutting the Sutter Buttes; Robbins, located in the southwest between the Sacramento River and the Sutter Bypass along Highway 113; and the communities of Rio Oso, Trowbridge, Nicolaus, and East Nicolaus, all clustered near the convergence of the Bear and Feather Rivers in the southeast portion of the County. Other, smaller communities within the County that do not have adopted community boundaries include Tudor and Wilson, both located south of Yuba City along Highway 99; Kirkville, located along the Sacramento River in the southwest; Karnak, located in the south in the area where the Sutter Bypass meets the Sacramento River; and Pleasant Grove, in the southeast portion of the County.

In addition to the rural communities, the County is home to two incorporated cities; Yuba City and Live Oak. The City of Yuba City is the major urban center within the county and is located along the Feather River in the east-central portion of the County where Highway 99 and State Route 20 intersect. The City of Live Oak is located in the northeast corner of the County north of Yuba City. Highway 99 is the major transportation corridor through both cities. Figure 2.1-1 shows the locations of the cities and rural communities within the county. Table 2.1-1 provides the total acreages for each of the communities, with the exception of those that do not have adopted boundaries.

Table 2.1-1. Sutter County Cities and Rural Communities

	Acres
Incorporated Cities	
Yuba City	8,965
Live Oak	1,165
<i>Total</i>	<i>10,130</i>
Rural Communities	
Sutter	1,715
Trowbridge	320
Rio Oso	260
Robbins	188
East Nicolaus	163
Meridian	122
Nicolaus	47
<i>Total</i>	<i>2,815</i>

Source: Sutter County, 2008.

The cities of Yuba City and Live Oak each have their own General Plans, which guide development within each city’s incorporated boundary. These cities also have adopted SOIs that extend beyond their incorporated boundaries. The cities’ General Plans may include policy guidance for future annexations into these SOIs, but ultimately, unincorporated lands technically remain within the jurisdiction of the County. However, the County generally defers planning for these areas to the cities, although planning activities within the SOIs should be done in cooperation with the County.

General Plan History

Sutter County adopted its first General Plan in 1964. Since then, various new elements, amendments, and modifications have been made to the plan. The last comprehensive General Plan update was adopted in 1996.

■ EXISTING CONDITIONS

Existing Land Use

The following describes the different types of land uses that currently exist within the county. This information is based on the actual uses of the land, which differs from adopted General Plan land use designations and zoning, described in subsequent sections of this report, in that they describe the actual uses of the physical environment within the county, rather than the uses for which the land is intended.

Existing land uses in the county have been grouped into the following seven general categories:

- Agricultural – includes lands used for agricultural purposes, including agricultural preserve areas, ranchettes, and agricultural residential.
- Residential – includes single-family homes, multi-family homes, mobile homes, and vacant residential lands.
- Public and Vacant – includes cemeteries, churches, schools, government lands and facilities, day cares, hospitals, parks, and miscellaneous vacant lands.
- Commercial and Office – includes all commercial uses, general office uses, and vacant commercial lands.
- Industrial – includes low, general, and heavy industrial uses, and vacant industrial lands.
- Open Space – includes all of the County’s designated open space lands, which may be used for agricultural, recreational, limited residential, and mining. These areas may also contain significant vegetation or wildlife areas.
- Transportation and Utilities – includes highways, airports, railroads, and natural gas and mining facilities.

As shown in Table 2.1-2 and on Figure 2.1-2, approximately 83 percent of the County’s land is currently used for agricultural purposes, although these lands may not necessarily be in active agricultural production. In addition to lands currently used strictly for agricultural purposes, approximately 11 percent of the County (nearly 45,000 acres) is currently used as open space areas, primarily in areas susceptible to flooding, such as along rivers and within the Sutter Bypass and Tisdale Bypass. These areas may also act as lands used for agricultural purposes, which would make over 90 percent of the County agricultural, making this the predominant land use within the county.

The balance of the County’s lands are used for a variety of purposes, including less than four percent for residential uses, and less than one percent for public, commercial, industrial, transportation and utilities uses.

Table 2.1-2. Existing Land Uses

Land Use	Acres ¹	Percentage of Total County Land Area
Agricultural	322,240	83%
Residential	14,645	4%
Public and Vacant	2,293	0.6%
Commercial	1,424	0.4%
Industrial	1,743	0.4%
Open Space	44,581	11%
Transportation and Utilities	2,517	0.6%
Total	389,443	100%

Source: Sutter County, 2008.

¹Includes acreages within incorporated cities and rural communities.

The following describes the general distribution of existing land uses within Sutter County’s boundaries, by area:

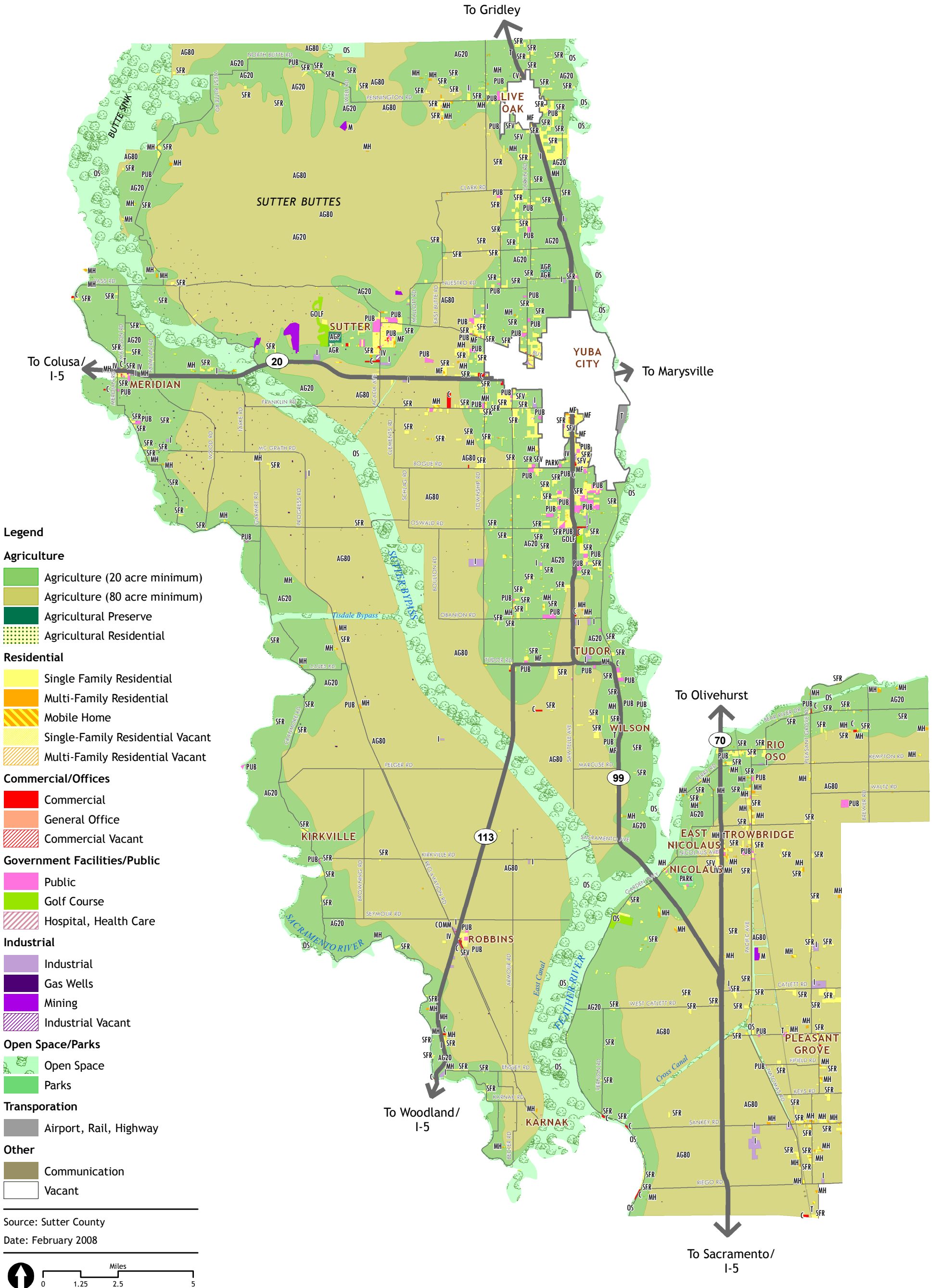
Unincorporated County

Land use throughout the unincorporated areas of the County is dominated by agriculture. The majority of the agricultural land, approximately 321,544 acres (not including the open space lands that may be used for agricultural purposes), is located in the unincorporated areas of the County outside of the boundaries of the unincorporated rural communities of Meridian, Sutter, Robbins, Nicolaus, East Nicolaus, Trowbridge, and Rio Oso. In addition, only 1,287 acres of agricultural land uses exist within the boundaries of the rural communities.

The second-most prominent land use within the unincorporated county is open space. Most of this open space is located within the Sutter Bypass. Open space areas are also located along the Sacramento, Feather, and Bear Rivers and Tisdale Bypass. Frequent flooding in most of these areas explains the difficulty of the County in placing other, more permanent uses on these lands.

Although residential uses are clustered in the cities and rural communities of the County, approximately 8,800 acres of residential uses are scattered throughout the remainder of the County. Most of these residential uses are located in unincorporated areas surrounding the cities, including the spheres of influence, and outside of the boundaries of the rural communities. Other clusters of residential land use occur along major transportation corridors, such as Highway 99 and State Route 20, as well as along each of the rivers and surrounding the Sutter Buttes.

Other smaller concentrations of industrial and public areas are also scattered throughout the unincorporated county, most often near the concentrations of residential uses mentioned above and outside of the rural communities’ boundaries. Small clusters of commercial uses exist outside of the cities and rural communities, but in large, occur either within or immediately surrounding these areas. Other notable land uses located in the unincorporated portion of the County include: two active mines in the vicinity of the Sutter Buttes; another mine in the southeast portion of the County south of the community of Trowbridge; natural gas wells in areas southwest of the Sutter Buttes and southeast of the community of Meridian; and two golf courses, one west of the rural community of Sutter and one near the Feather River southwest of the community of Nicolaus.



Rural Communities

Table 2.1-3 below shows the acreages of each existing land use within each of the rural communities. Each of the rural communities, except for Sutter, contains a majority of residential uses. Unlike the other rural communities within the County, Sutter contains a majority of agricultural uses. Sutter's existing land uses include 58 percent agricultural, 30 percent residential, 7 percent public and vacant, 2 percent industrial, and 2 percent commercial. Generally, each community, with the exception of Robbins and Sutter, is occupied by at least 40 percent residential uses or more. In most of the communities, the top land uses are residential, agricultural, and public uses. Communities such as Meridian and Robbins also have large industrial areas. For example, East Nicolaus is occupied by 53 percent residential, 16 percent agricultural, and 13 percent public and vacant land uses. Meridian has nearly the same distribution of land uses, with 44 percent residential, 18 percent agricultural, and 15 percent public and vacant. The distribution of land uses in the community of Trowbridge is also similar with 47 percent residential, 28 percent agricultural, and 19 percent public and vacant.

Table 2.1-3. Rural Communities Existing Land Uses

Community and Land Use	Acres ¹
East Nicolaus	
Agricultural	25
Residential	87
Public and Vacant	21
Commercial	3
Industrial	14
Open Space	0
Transportation and Utilities	13
<i>Total</i>	163
Meridian	
Agricultural	22
Residential	54
Public and Vacant	18
Commercial	3
Industrial	20
Open Space	>1
Transportation and Utilities	5
<i>Total</i>	122
Nicolaus	
Agricultural	13
Residential	29
Public and Vacant	3
Commercial	>1
Industrial	0
Open Space	>1
Transportation and Utilities	0
<i>Total</i>	47
Rio Oso	
Agricultural	85
Residential	171
Public and Vacant	>1
Commercial	0
Industrial	0
Open Space	0
Transportation and Utilities	3

Table 2.1-3. Rural Communities Existing Land Uses

Community and Land Use	Acres ¹
<i>Total</i>	260
Robbins	
Agricultural	57
Residential	66
Public and Vacant	12
Commercial	21
Industrial	27
Open Space	0
Transportation and Utilities	5
<i>Total</i>	188
Sutter	
Agricultural	995
Residential	523
Public and Vacant	113
Commercial	33
Industrial	40
Open Space	0
Transportation and Utilities	11
<i>Total</i>	1,715
Trowbridge	
Agricultural	90
Residential	150
Public and Vacant	60
Commercial	0
Industrial	2
Open Space	0
Transportation and Utilities	18
<i>Total</i>	320

Source: Sutter County, 2008.

Although most of the rural communities within the county have similar distributions and percentages of residential, agricultural, and public and vacant land uses, three communities differ substantially from the general trend. The communities of Nicolaus and Rio Oso are both dominated by residential and agricultural land uses, but other land uses within these communities are very minor. For example, Nicolaus contains 63 percent residential uses and 27 percent agricultural uses; the remaining 10 percent includes small areas of land spread between public and vacant uses, commercial, and open space uses. In Rio Oso, residential and agricultural land uses comprise 66 percent and 33 percent of the community’s area, respectively. With other land uses making up only one percent of the community’s area, this is the least diverse of the rural communities in terms of types of land uses.

On the other hand, the rural community with the most diversity in terms of land use distribution is Robbins. The community of Robbins contains a larger presence of industrial and commercial land uses than the other rural communities. While the residential and agricultural land uses are still the largest land uses within the community, the percentages of those land uses are smaller than they are in the other communities. Residential land uses make up 35 percent of the total land area of the community, followed by 30 percent agricultural, 15 percent industrial, and 11 percent commercial.

Ranchettes

Ranchettes, an existing land use found primarily south and west of the City of Yuba City, outside of Yuba City's SOI, are residences built on large lots generally in rural or agricultural areas. These large lot residences provide an attractive option to those seeking housing in a rural setting. As the price of urban and suburban housing increases, ranchettes and large rural lots have become more competitive as a housing alternative. Some agricultural activities may take place on ranchette properties.

Ranchettes have become an increasingly controversial issue in Sutter County, as well as in other agricultural and rural communities throughout California. Concerns have been expressed about such development leading to inefficient land use patterns, overloading limited rural infrastructure, and impacting the cost-effective delivery of services.

Depending upon their location, ranchettes may replace previously productive farmland and/or create a restrictive impact on adjacent commercial agricultural operations. Issues of compatibility often arise between the ranchette residents and agricultural operators leading to complaints about dust and noise from farm equipment; odors from livestock, fertilizers, and pesticide use; and issues with other common agricultural practices. Instances of trespassing and vandalism may also occur. In addition, the market demand for ranchettes and large rural lots may lead to the inflation of adjacent agricultural land prices. These issues all pose economic and legal risks for commercial agriculture.

Between 1998 and 2007, 49 ranchette projects have been approved by Sutter County resulting in 151 lots on 665 acres. The lots range in size from 3 to 10 acres. In most cases, they involve the subdivision of farmland or grazing land, but not prime farmland.

Cities

As the urban centers of the County, the cities of Yuba City and Live Oak contain the bulk of the urban-type land uses within the county, such as residences, commercial uses, industrial uses, parks, and public facilities. Yuba City's jurisdictional boundaries include approximately 14 square miles (8,965 acres) of land; the City of Live Oak is approximately two square miles (1,165 acres). Although the increased intensities of land uses found within the cities do not allow very large tracts of agricultural lands and open space, some of these areas do exist within the jurisdictional boundaries of Yuba City and Live Oak.

Specifically, the City of Yuba City contains approximately 598 acres of agricultural uses and 383 acres of open space; however, the agricultural parcels are not the large-tract agricultural parcels (80-acre minimum) found throughout much of the County, and the open space is located primarily along the river within the floodplain area. Residential uses are the largest land use within Yuba City, making up almost 5,000 acres, or nearly 56 percent, of the City's incorporated area, followed by nearly 1,100 acres of commercial and office uses, approximately 900 acres of public uses, and 800 acres of industrial uses.

The City of Live Oak contains approximately 98 acres of smaller agricultural parcels and no open space areas. The predominant land use in Live Oak is residential, making up approximately 70 percent of the City's existing land uses, followed by public uses, agricultural, transportation and utilities, commercial, and industrial uses.

Important Farmlands

In the early 1980s, the California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, began a Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP). This program was

designed to inventory important farm and grazing lands by preparing Important Farmland Series maps. Its purpose is to monitor conversion of the state’s agricultural land to and from agricultural use, and to report such conversion to the Legislature, local governments, and the public. Advisory guidelines and preliminary maps were published by the Department of Conservation in 1984. The guidelines identify five categories of farmland: Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance, and Grazing Lands. These categories are described in Section 4.2, Agriculture, Soils, and Mineral Resources.

Table 2.1-4 summarizes the types of farmland within the county, which is also illustrated on Figure 4.2-3 in Section 4.2, Agricultural, Soils, and Mineral Resources.

FMMP Classification	Acres in County
Prime	169,749
Unique	20,239
State	111,242
Local	8
Grazing	50,826
Other	24,180
Urban	11,359
Total	387,603

Source: California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, 2006.

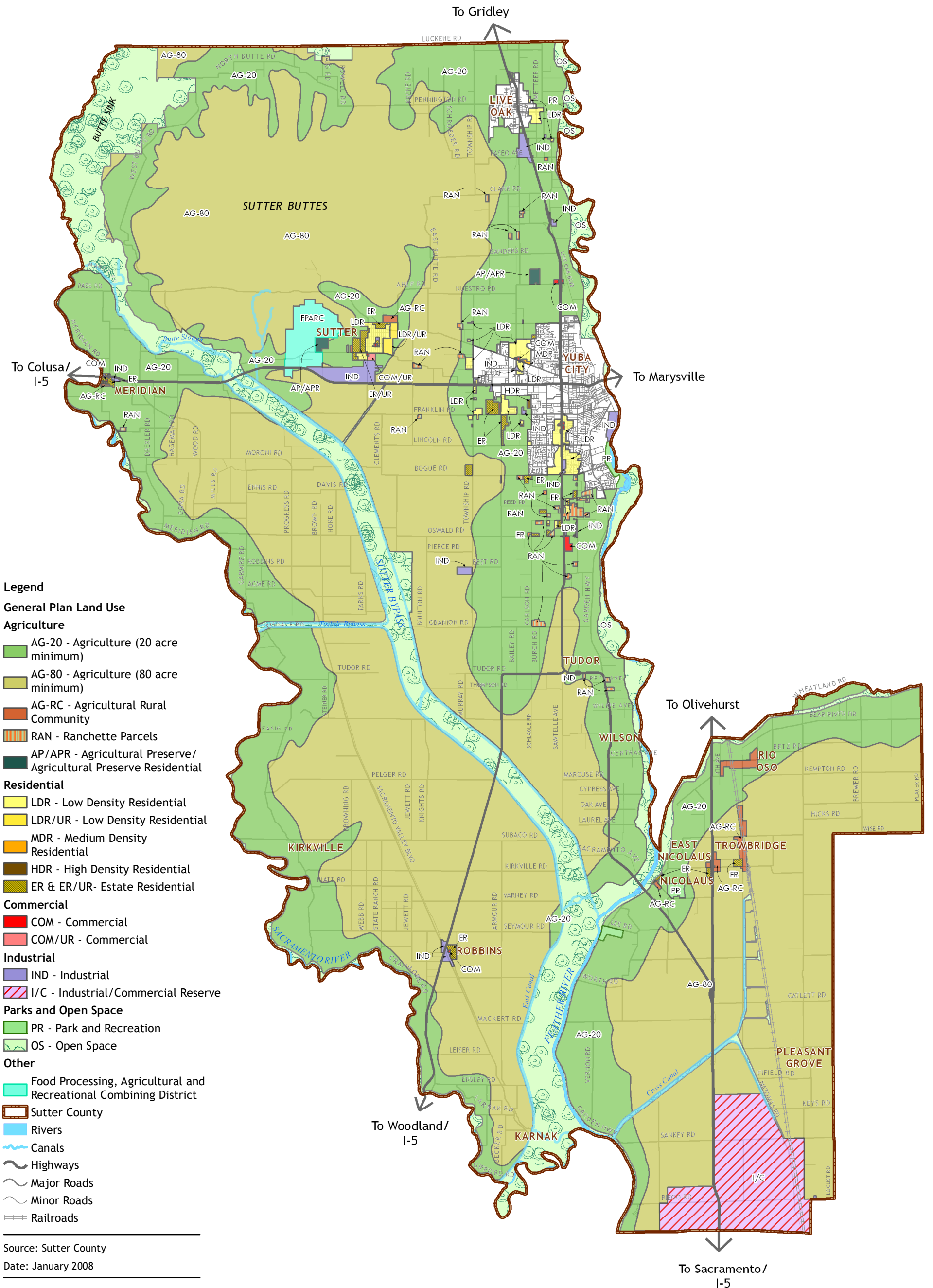
Williamson Act

The Williamson Act is a non-mandated State policy that creates contracts between private landowners and counties and cities to voluntarily restrict their land to agricultural and compatible open-space uses. In return, restricted parcels are assessed for property tax purposes at a rate consistent with their actual use, rather than potential market value. As of December 31, 2007, Sutter County has 64,302 acres protected as agricultural land under the Williamson Act. These parcels are shown on Figure 4.2-3. The Williamson Act is described in more detail in Section 4.2, Agricultural, Soils, and Mineral Resources.

Existing General Plan Land Use Designations

A General Plan defines a jurisdiction’s policy for land use development within its boundaries. General Plan land use designations identify the proposed distribution, location, and extent of planned uses to guide development within the county. Land use designations provide guidelines for the maximum intensity and density of development, such as the number of dwelling units per acre in residential areas and building square footage in non-residential areas, typically expressed as floor areas ratios (FAR). General Plan land use designations are not always consistent with actual land uses, as they are used as a tool in the planning process to guide future development. In many cases, future development plans may differ from actual existing land uses.

The adopted General Plan land use designations for the unincorporated county areas are shown below on Figure 2.1-3 and in Table 2.1-5.



EXISTING GENERAL PLAN LAND USE
Figure 2.1-3

The incorporated cities of Yuba City and Live Oak each have their own adopted General Plans to guide development within their boundaries. The cities' General Plans may also include development plans for areas outside of their current city boundaries, but within their spheres of influence. Areas within the spheres of influence are generally slated for eventual annexation into the cities, but until such time, are still within the jurisdiction of the County and its General Plan. The County General Plan guides development in the unincorporated area of Sutter County, which includes all rural communities.

Table 2.1-5. General Plan Adopted Land Use Designations

Land Use Designation	Code	Acres in County
Agriculture (20-acre minimum)	AG-20	111,614
Agriculture (80-acre minimum)	AG-80	205,237
Agriculture Rural Community	AG-RC	754
Agricultural Preserve / Agricultural Preserve Residential	AP/APR	224
Commercial	COM	201
Commercial / Urban Reserve	COM/UR	39
Estates Residential	ER	842
Estates Residential / Urban Reserve	ER/UR	78
Food Processing, Agriculture and Recreational	FPARC	1,819
High Density Residential	HDR	42
Industrial / Commercial Reserve	I/C	9,400
Industrial	IND	1,479
Low Density Residential	LDR	2,017
Low Density Residential / Urban Reserve	LDR/UR	194
Medium Density Residential	MDR	27
Open Space	OS	44,063
Park and Recreation	PR	640
Ranchette	RAN	643
Live Oak	Live Oak	1,165
Yuba City	Yuba City	8,965
Total		389,443

Source: Sutter County, 2008.

Descriptions of the County's land use designations are described below:

- Agriculture (AG) (20-acre minimum). This designation identifies land for the production of food and fiber, including areas of prime agricultural soils, and other productive and potentially productive lands where commercial agricultural uses can exist without creating conflicts with other land uses, or where potential conflicts can be mitigated. Lands designated AG 20 typically has soils with characteristics that are particularly suited for orchard crops as defined or described in the USDA Soil Survey for Sutter County. Typical land uses allowed include: crop production, orchards, grazing, pasture and rangeland, resource extraction activities, facilities that directly support agricultural operations such as agricultural products processing, limited residential, and necessary public utility and safety facilities.
- Agriculture (AG) (80-acre minimum). This designation identifies land for the production of food and fiber, including areas of prime agricultural soils, and other productive and potentially productive lands where commercial agricultural uses can exist without creating conflicts with other land uses, or where potential conflicts can be mitigated. Lands designated AG 80 typically have soils with characteristics that are particularly suited for field crops, row crops, and range land as defined or described in Sutter County's Soil Survey. Typical land uses allowed include: crop

production, orchards, grazing, pasture and rangeland, resource extraction activities, facilities that directly support agricultural operations such as agricultural products processing, and necessary public utility and safety facilities.

- Agriculture Rural Community (AG-RC). This designation identifies land in rural communities that can be utilized for small scale ranching and farming operations with 2½ acre minimum parcel sizes. Typical allowed uses include: single family dwellings and one permanent or temporary secondary unit per existing lot, agricultural uses such as crop production and grazing, equestrian facilities, and public utility and safety facilities.
- Ranchette (RAN). This designation is intended to accommodate small farms and large lot residential areas in rural portions of the County. This designation allows for expanded agricultural uses than are permitted by the Estates Residential (ER) land use designation, located on parcels ranging from 3 to 10 acres in size.
- Agriculture Preserve/Agricultural Preserve Residential (AP/APR). This designation is applied to areas where, instead of subdividing a large agricultural parcel to its 20 or 80 acre minimum underlying parcel size, the subdivider has chosen to cluster the permitted residential density onto small residential parcels and to retain a large agricultural preserve parcel. This land use designation is subject to certain criteria contained in the Zoning Code. By allowing the permitted residential density of the agricultural parcel to be clustered together into small parcels and requiring that an agriculture preserve parcel be created, it is intended that the agricultural use of the preserve parcel will be retained. Typical land uses allowed include: crop production, orchards, grazing, pasture and rangeland on the agricultural preserve parcel and detached single family dwellings on the residential parcels.
- Estates Residential (ER). This designation is applied to areas located within rural communities and the Yuba City sphere of influence. This designation is comprised of dispersed residential development on larger parcels with densities ranging from 0.5 to 3.0 dwelling units per acre (1/3 to 2 acre parcel size). The primary use is large lot single family residences including guest houses. Secondary uses include: crop and tree farming, private stables, public parks and playgrounds, schools and necessary public utility and safety facilities.
- Low Density Residential (LDR). This designation is applied to suburban and urban areas suitable for single-family residential neighborhoods, with individual homes on lots ranging in area from 5,000 square feet to one-half acre. The density range is between 2 to 8 dwelling units per acre. Typical land uses include: detached single family dwellings, and residential accessory uses; churches, schools, parks, child care facilities, and necessary public utility and safety facilities. Secondary dwelling units may be permitted subject to County standards.
- Medium Density Residential (MDR). This designation is applied to those areas within the urban areas suitable for multi-family residential neighborhoods. The density range is 8 to 25 dwelling units per acre. Typical land uses allowed include: attached single-family dwellings, secondary dwellings, and a wide range of multi-family dwellings, and residential accessory uses; churches, schools, parks, child care facilities, and necessary public utility and safety facilities.
- High Density Residential (HDR). This designation is intended to provide for residential neighborhoods of multi-family units such as apartments and/or condominiums. The density range is 25 to 45 dwelling units per acre. This

designation is applied within urban areas of the County where residential development will be near transportation corridors, downtowns, village centers, other major commercial centers, schools and community services. Typical land uses would include: attached single-family dwellings, all types of multi-family dwellings (e.g., apartments, senior housing projects, etc.) and residential accessory uses; churches, schools, parks, child care facilities; and necessary public utility and safety facilities.

- Commercial (COM). This designation is intended to encompass the existing community and regional commercial areas where general commercial and retail sales facilities are necessary for public service and convenience. Typical land uses include: highway service types of commercial uses such as service stations, restaurants, motels, trailer courts, retail nursery sales, and agricultural product sales. It also accommodates retail business or service enterprises such as: banks, business offices, food, drug, and clothing stores, business colleges, music and dancing studios, catering shops, art and antique shops, hotels, theaters, auditoriums, social clubs, specialty commercial-recreational uses such as racing facilities, amusement parks or other outdoor recreation oriented uses, commercial printing shops, mortuaries, bakeries, studios, clinics, public utility offices and substations, and communication equipment buildings. Types of commercial industrial uses with this land use designation may include: repair garages, automobile sales and service, warehouses and wholesale distribution, garden supply and pre-cut retail lumber sales within buildings and storage within fenced yards, adult entertainment businesses, and public utilities and safety facilities.
- Industrial (IND). This area is intended to accommodate industrial type uses. Typical uses include: manufacturing, assembling, processing, fabricating, bulk handling of products, storage, warehousing, heavy trucking, refining, repairing, packaging or treatment of goods. Light and heavy industries would conduct their operations in designated areas and minimize the external effect of traffic congestion, noise, glare, air pollution, fire, and safety hazards on adjoining districts.
- Park and Recreation (PR). This designation is intended to identify and protect mountainous, river bank, lake shore, or other such areas identified by the County as having particular natural beauty, historical importance, or other importance for use as public or private parks or outdoor recreational facilities. Typical land uses allowed within this designation include outdoor recreational activities such as golf courses, campgrounds, marinas, natural and undeveloped recreation areas, parks, off-highway vehicle parks, riding clubs and stables.
- Open Space (OS). This designation is intended to identify and protect important open space lands within Sutter County, including: non-agricultural areas which contain significant vegetation, wildlife, and/or habitat resources, areas which present conditions hazardous to rural and urban development, and areas required for the managed production of mineral resources. Typical land uses allowed within Open Space areas include agriculture, mining, limited residential and public recreation. Necessary public utility and safety facilities are also permitted.
- Food Processing, Agricultural and recreational Combining District (FPARC). This designation provides an area where food processing and associated industries, together with appurtenant functions thereof, may locate outside the urban centers and in close proximity to recreation and open space areas in a manner which

minimizes adverse environmental impacts and protects and enhances agricultural productivity.

Unincorporated County

In general, the unincorporated areas of the County outside of the rural communities are designated for agricultural uses in the existing General Plan. The distribution of the agricultural land is similar to that distribution described above under Existing Land Uses, with the larger parcel agricultural designations being located toward the center portions of the County, and the smaller parcel agricultural General Plan designations being located along the rivers at the edges of the County. The Sutter Buttes are designated as large-parcel (80-acre minimum) agricultural parcels, and the Sutter Bypass and Butte Sink are designated as Open Space, similar to the existing land uses in those areas.

Although General Plan land use designations may not necessarily coincide with actual existing land uses, in Sutter County, they are generally matched or compatible. A major exception to this is a large area of approximately 10,500 acres, located in south Sutter County adjacent to the Sacramento and Placer County borders. This area is designated in the General Plan as Industrial/Commercial Reserve (I/C), approximately 7,500 acres of which is intended to be developed as the Sutter Pointe Specific Plan area in the future. This area is currently used primarily for agriculture, although it does contain a 50-acre warehousing and distribution center operated by Sysco Corporation, as well as a Holt Tractor Manufacturing facility.

Rural Communities

The rural community of Sutter contains a variety of General Plan land use designations, but is dominated by industrial and low density residential. The community also contains land use designations for estates residential, agriculture (20 and 80-acre minimum), and commercial.

The southern portion of the community of Sutter contains a large area of land designated in the General Plan as industrial along State Route 20. West of the community of Sutter is the County's only area containing the FPARC land use designation.

Other rural communities within the county do not have the same diversity of General Plan land use designation as the community of Sutter. Overall, General Plan land use designations within the boundaries of the rural communities, with the exception of Sutter, are dominated by General Plan land use designations for very low density residential housing, such as the Agricultural-Rural Community (AG-RC) and Estates Residential (ER) designations. Some of the communities, such as East Nicolaus and Meridian, include smaller areas designated for commercial and industrial uses. Unlike any of the other rural communities, Meridian also has a few small areas designated for High Density Residential (HDR). Robbins has a small area designated in the General Plan as Commercial (COM) and a relatively large area (104 acres) designated as Industrial (IND). Table 2.1-6 includes the acreages for each of the General Plan land use designations found within the boundaries of the rural communities (see Figure 2.1-1 for location of these rural communities within Sutter County).

It should be noted that due to the individual nature of each of the rural communities, the County's 1996 General Plan included separate specific land use policies for each rural community. As a result, the County determined that additional land use planning for these areas would be carried out on an individual basis.

Cities

The City of Yuba City adopted a new General Plan in 2004. According to the General Plan Diagram, last updated in April 2006, the City's General Plan land use designations are primarily for low density residential uses, although areas of medium and medium/high density residential do occur within the City's planning area. In particular, the higher-density residential uses are found in the older portions of the City closest to the Feather River, along major transportation corridors such as Highway 99 and State Route 20, as well as nearby commercial centers. Commercial, public, and light industrial land use designations in the City tend to be distributed in a similar fashion: older portions of the City and along Highway 99 and State Route 20.

Table 2.1-6. Rural Communities GP Land Use Designations

Community and Land Use	Acres
East Nicolaus	
AG-RC	104
COM	7
ER	37
IND	15
<i>Total</i>	<i>163</i>
Meridian	
AG-RC	22
COM	5
ER	67
HDR	2
IND	26
<i>Total</i>	<i>122</i>
Nicolaus	
AG-RC	25
COM	2
ER	20
<i>Total</i>	<i>47</i>
Rio Oso	
AG-20	1
AG-RC	259
<i>Total</i>	<i>260</i>
Robbins	
COM	4
ER	80
IND	104
<i>Total</i>	<i>188</i>
Sutter	
AG-RC	74
COM	11
COM/UR	39
ER	187
ER/UR	78
IND	710
LDR	422
LDR/UR	194
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,715</i>
Trowbridge	
AG-RC	270
ER	50

Table 2.1-6. Rural Communities GP Land Use Designations

Community and Land Use	Acres
<i>Total</i>	320

Source: Sutter County, 2007.

Open space and park land use designations are primarily located along the Feather River, although some park areas are distributed throughout the City. Areas within Yuba City’s sphere of influence are dominated by low density residential land use designations, along with supporting uses, such as public uses like schools and parks, as well as neighborhood-supporting commercial areas.

The City of Live Oak is currently in the process of updating their General Plan. The new General Plan will account for major growth and changes in land use that have occurred in the City since the last update of the General Plan that occurred in the mid-1990s. At this time, the General Plan update process has two potential alternatives for the new General Plan land use designation diagram. Both alternatives include the addition of some commercial, civic, historical, and mixed use land use designations to the City’s central area, within the current city limits. Outside of the City’s boundary, both alternatives propose primarily single family residential land use designations, with some areas designated for higher density residential, along with supporting uses, such as schools, parks, and commercial spread throughout the sphere of influence. Although the various land use designations vary slightly between the two alternatives, both are quite similar in the general distributions.

Area Plan and Future Development

Existing Area Plan

In 1982, Sutter County voters approved Measure A, which created the approximately 1,800 acre Food Processing, Agriculture and Recreation Combining (FPARC) Area Plan. The original purpose of the plan was to provide a place for a food processing plant, powered by a co-generation facility that utilized wastewater from the processing facility to irrigate a golf course. While the food processing plant was not constructed, the golf course has since been developed. The plan area is located west of the community of Sutter along the foothills of the Sutter Buttes, including an area south of South Butte Road and north of Highway 20. The FPARC Area Plan boundaries are shown on Figure 2.1-3.

Future Development

Lincoln East Specific Plan

Most of the County is of a rural, agricultural nature, so large-scale development projects are rarely outside of the Yuba City and Live Oak City limits. However, such projects are anticipated to occur within the cities’ spheres of influence in the future. Until these areas are annexed into the cities, they remain under the jurisdiction of the County. The Lincoln East Specific Plan is in the process of being prepared by the City of Yuba City, which would include the annexation and development of approximately 1,160 acres of unincorporated county land located adjacent to the City’s southwest boundary. The Specific Plan area is bound by Franklin Road to the north; George Washington Boulevard to the west; Bogue Road to the south; and Sanborne Road, Cherry Street, and Harding Road to the west. The plan includes primarily single family residential uses and some medium to high density residential use, along with parks, schools, public facilities, and neighborhood-serving commercial uses. This area is currently within the

City's sphere of influence, and upon annexation into the City, the County's General Plan will no longer have jurisdiction over these lands.

Sutter Pointe Specific Plan

The Sutter Pointe Specific Plan is a large-scale development project that is currently on file with, and being processed by, Sutter County. This plan area is located in the southernmost portion of the County adjacent to the Sacramento County line and a portion of the Placer County line, within the Industrial/Commercial Reserve (I/C) area designated under the 1996 General Plan. The plan area includes the development of approximately 7,500 acres. This plan is the result of the approval of Measure M in 2004, an advisory ballot measure approved by Sutter County voters. In an attempt to attract new employers to the County to provide jobs, industry, commerce, education, housing, recreation, and open space are included in the proposal. The plan includes a maximum of 3,600 acres of commercial and industrial parks; a minimum of 1,000 acres for schools, parks, open space, libraries, and other community facilities; and 2,900 acres or less of residential uses, as well as all necessary infrastructure and public service facilities necessary to serve the plan area.

Sacramento Area Council of Governments Blueprint Project

The Sacramento Region Blueprint Transportation Land Use Study was a regional planning effort initiated by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) in 2002 that examined how transportation and land use planning could be better linked to accommodate future growth. Through a two-year process, SACOG, in concert with participating jurisdictions in the six-county region, developed a number of land use growth scenarios, depicting how the region could accommodate an additional population of 1.7 million people, and associated homes and jobs, by the year 2050. The effort culminated in December 2004 when SACOG adopted a "Preferred Scenario" for growth in the region's six counties, which included seven key growth principles. These growth principles include providing transportation choices for development projects, promoting mixed use developments, compact development, providing housing choice and diversity, promoting the use of existing assets such as development on infill or vacant lands, quality design, and natural resource conservation.

The Preferred Blueprint Scenario assumes certain levels and locations of both "reinvestment" (i.e., additional development on already-built parcels) and greenfield development (i.e., large-scale development on vacant land). The purpose of this mapping is to illustrate, generally, the amount and locations for these types of growth. It is not intended to indicate that a specific parcel should or should not be developed in a particular manner. That level of planning is the responsibility of local governments, and is beyond the specificity appropriate for regional-scale, long-term scenario planning.

As part of the Blueprint effort, transportation projects were added to the region's road and transit systems to help evaluate the various land use development scenarios being studied. An objective of each scenario was to match the transportation system with the land use parameters. While a list of projects was developed and is available for the Preferred Scenario, the purpose of the project list is to provide a generalized priority of transportation investments that fit with the location and amount of development and with the smart growth planning concepts. Application of these concepts in places like Sutter County will better integrate land use and transportation planning to reduce the emission of criteria air pollutants, thus improving air quality in the region. For further information, refer to Section 4.4, Air Quality, of this TBR.

Zoning

Zoning is an implementation tool that establishes districts of permitted and prohibited uses to control the physical development of land consistent with the General Plan. In addition to permitted uses, zoning may also establish development standards relating to issues such as minimum lot sizes, maximum lot coverage, setbacks, building height, and parking. Zoning districts determine specific intensity and density of development allowed on a given parcel and may be more restrictive than the General Plan. California law requires that zoning be brought into conformance with the General Plan within a reasonable time period. Projects submitted for review and approval are evaluated for consistency with both the General Plan and Zoning Code.

As of February 2007, the Sutter County Zoning Code provides for a total of 28 zoning districts, including 24 base districts and four special "combining districts." The four special "combining districts" included in the Zoning Code are districts not used by themselves, but when added to other zone districts, can provide specific additional uses and/or requirements. For example, adding the A (Agricultural) Combining District to the R-1 (Single Family Residential) District would result in a R-1-A District which would provide for the addition of certain limited agricultural uses such as keeping of animals (i.e., horses and cows) not normally permitted in the standard R-1 District. In addition to the combining districts, Sutter County has an overlay zone specifically for the Sutter Buttes. Similar to the combining districts, this overlay zone provides additional development standards within these lands.

The following information from the February 2007 Sutter County Zoning Code identifies each zoning district and summarizes the primary uses occurring in each of the districts and the shortened map code used for reference.

Agricultural Zoning Districts

- Upland Agricultural District (U-A). This district classification is intended to be applied in the mountainous and foothill areas of the County in which light agriculture and grazing are desirable predominant uses, and in which protection of the uplands from fire, pollution, erosion, and other detrimental effects is important to the general welfare. This district is consistent with the AG 80 General Plan land use designation.
- Exclusive Agricultural District (A-2). This district classification is intended to be applied in the fertile valley and foothill areas of the County in which intensive agriculture is and should continue to be the predominant land use, and in which the protection of this use is important to the general welfare. This district is consistent with the AG-20 or AG-80 General Plan land use designation.
- General Agricultural District (AG). The AG District is established to provide areas for general farming, low density uses, open spaces, and by use permit limited retail service uses which in the opinion of the Planning Commission support the local agricultural industry. It is intended that this classification may be applied to rural communities where the predominance of land use is of a general agricultural nature, however, the needs of the agricultural community may require the location of retail, commercial and service establishments. This district is consistent with the AG-20 or AG-80 and AG-RC General Plan land use designations.
- Agricultural Preserve Residential and Agricultural Preserve District (APR/AP). This district classification, comprised of two "categories", is intended to be applied to subdivision requests of agriculturally zoned land that propose parcels

for residential use that are less than the minimum designated parcel size while still meeting overall General Plan density requirements for the subject parcel. The district allows residential density permitted by the agricultural designation at the time of the subdivision to be clustered onto small residential lots provided that a large agricultural “preserve” parcel with a limited number of permitted agricultural uses is retained. The residential parcels shall have the APR classification while the AP classification will be placed on the agricultural preserve parcel. It is intended that the residential parcels will not adversely affect surrounding agricultural operations. This district is consistent with the Agricultural Preserve (AP) General Plan land use designation.

- Ranchette District (RAN). This district classification is intended to be applied to areas located outside of rural communities and the Yuba City and Live Oak spheres of influence, which are suitable for rural residential development and small scale farming operations. These areas should be compatible in character with neighboring properties and located where such development will have minimal impact on surrounding agricultural operations. Ranchette applications are considered with a strict reliance upon meeting the evaluation criteria and development standards. The evaluation criteria and procedures are established by resolution to require a unique review process to ensure suitability of the site for ranchette development. This district allows limited residential uses with a density between 0.1 and 1/3 dwelling units per acres (3-10 acres parcel size). The Ranchette District will allow a smaller than 20-acre parcel to be divided into four or fewer parcels. This is intended to allow small-scale agricultural uses and residential development with a more rural character than the R-E district. This district is consistent with the AG-20 and AG-80 General Plan land use designations.

A point system has been established to determine the suitability of property proposed to be rezoned for ranchettes. This point system focuses on whether the surrounding area has already been fragmented into parcels too small for commercial agriculture, the location of proposed lots to minimize exposure to conflicts with agricultural operations, proximity to schools and public services, and other factors. A proposed project must score at least 70 percent on the ranchette evaluation criteria to be considered for approval. The County continues to monitor and reevaluate this system.

Residential Zoning Districts

- Residential Estates District (RE). This district classification is intended to be applied in the Yuba City Sphere of Influence and rural communities in areas which are particularly suited to large lot developments for one family residences. This district is consistent with the Estate Residential General Plan land use designations.
- One-Family Residence District (R-1). This district classification is intended to provide areas for low density residential development within an urban environment that has adequate services and amenities which will support a desirable and stable living environment. The R-1 District is consistent with the Low Density Residential and Estates Residential General Plan land use designations.
- Two-Family Residence District (R-2). This district classification is intended to provide areas for low to medium density residential development within an urban environment that has adequate services and amenities which will support a

desirable and stable living environment. To provide affordable housing in a similar atmosphere as in the R-1 District and also provide for the lowest density of attached residences. This district is consistent with the Low Density Residential General Plan land use designations.

- Neighborhood Apartment District (R-3). This district classification is intended to provide areas for medium density residential development within an urban environment that has adequate services and amenities which will support a desirable and stable living environment as well as providing opportunities to meet affordable housing needs. The R-3 District is consistent with the Medium Density Residential General Plan land use designation.
- General Apartment District (R-4). This district classification is intended to provide areas for high density residential development within an urban environment that has adequate services and amenities which will support a desirable and stable living environment as well as providing opportunities to meet affordable housing needs and provide for the general welfare. This district is consistent with the High Density Residential General Plan land use designation.
- Mobile Home Subdivision District (M-H-S). This district classification is intended to be applied to those portions of the county where the public interest may be served by the establishment of a mobile home on individual lots within a recorded subdivision as a means of human habitation; such use shall be subject to performance standards considered necessary for the public health, safety, general welfare and for the orderly growth and development of the area. The MHS District is consistent with the Low Density Residential General Plan land use designation.

Commercial Zoning Districts

- Highway Service Commercial District (CH). This district classification is intended to provide for commercial services along main roads and highways for the traveling public in developments designed for safety, convenience and fitting appearance. This district is consistent with the Commercial General Plan land use designation.
- Neighborhood Commercial District (C-1). This district classification is intended to provide for small commercial areas that cater to the daily convenience shopping and service needs of the surrounding residential neighborhood. The scale and design of buildings within this district must be compatible with the neighboring residential uses and generally located on collector or local streets. This district is consistent with the Commercial General Plan land use designation.
- General Commercial District (C-2). This district is established to provide for a full range of retail sales and personal services to meet the needs of the residents of the entire county and provide for the general welfare. The facilities may range from a single building to a neighborhood center with a supermarket as the primary tenant to a community center that may have several major tenants and should be located along major thoroughfares and arterials. This district is consistent with the Commercial General Plan land use designation.
- Commercial-Industrial District (C-M). This district is established to provide opportunities to combine commercial and industrial uses. The district provides for selected sales and services that are often considered inappropriate in primary retail areas due to size or operating characteristics or because products are

manufactured onsite, as well as, various light industrial type uses. This district is not intended to provide typical retail sales normally found in the retail districts. This district is consistent with the Commercial and Industrial General Plan land use designations.

Industrial Zoning Districts

- Light Industrial District (M-1). This district classification is intended to provide suitable areas for low intensity assembly, processing or manufacturing activities, product distribution, and related activities, all of which do not create nuisance or otherwise unacceptable levels of noise, dust, odor, smoke, bright light or vibration in order to provide for the general welfare. This district is consistent with the Industrial General Plan land use designation.
- General Industrial District (M-2). This district classification is established to provide areas for a full range of industrial, manufacturing and related uses to expand the economic base, employment opportunities and provide for the general welfare. Due to potential high intensity operational characteristics and features, this district should be located away from residential neighborhoods and other potentially sensitive uses. This district is consistent with the Industrial General Plan land use designation.
- Limited Manufacturing District (M-L). This district is designed to accommodate a limited group of business, professional, research and technical manufacturing uses which may have unusual requirements for space, light and air, and the operations of which are clean and quiet in order to provide for the general welfare. This district is consistent with the Industrial General Plan land use designation.
- South Sutter County Commercial District/South Sutter County Industrial District (SSCC/SSCI). This district classification is established to implement that portion of Section 9 of the Sutter County General Plan relating to the South Sutter County Industrial/Commercial Reserve area. The district is intended to allow large scale industrial and commercial development in South Sutter County because of the area's proximity to major transportation corridors, metropolitan areas, and the Sacramento International Airport. The establishment of this district is also intended to provide for the general welfare and increase the economic base and employment opportunities. This district is consistent with the South Sutter County Industrial/Commercial Reserve General Plan land use designation.

Miscellaneous Zoning Districts

- Food Processing, Agricultural and Recreational Combining District (FPARC). The FPARC District was established by a vote of Sutter County citizens in 1982. The FPARC District provides an area where food processing and associated industries, together with appurtenant functions thereof, may locate outside the urban centers and in close proximity to recreation and open space areas in a manner which minimizes adverse environmental impacts and protects and enhances agricultural productivity.
- Airport District (AV). This district classification is intended to be applied to properties used, or planned to be used, as airports, and where special regulations are necessary for the protection of life, property and the general welfare. The AV District is consistent with the Industrial General Plan land use designation.

- Public District (P). This district classification is intended to provide for the general welfare with areas for public facilities in which parks, governmental, educational, utility, and other community facilities of a public nature are the principal use. The district may be used for private facilities when combined together with Planned Development Combining District (PD). This district is consistent with all General Plan land use designations.
- Park-Recreation District (PR). This district classification is intended to be applied in mountainous, river bank, lake shore and other such areas as may contain natural resources or potential park or recreation features, in which agriculture may be a desirable secondary use, and in which protection for such uses is in the public interest. This district is consistent with the Park and Recreation and Open Space General Plan land use designations.

Special Combining Districts and Overlay Zones

- Sutter Buttes Overlay Zone (SB). The Board of Supervisors finds that the Sutter Buttes constitute a significant historic, cultural, scenic, and geographic feature of the area. Dubbed “the smallest mountain range in the world,” the Sutter Buttes rise to over 2,100 feet above sea level and provide the only geographic relief in the otherwise level Sacramento Valley. This range is considered by the Maidu (a Native American people) as the spiritual center from which life originated. Development in certain areas of high or critical visual sensitivities, such as on ridgelines, is particularly damaging to the Sutter Buttes’ scenic and cultural qualities. It is therefore in the best interest of the residents of Sutter County, in preserving the cultural, historic, geologic, and visual values of the Sutter Buttes, that specific development standards be applied in the Sutter Buttes.
- Agricultural Combining District (A). This district is established in order to provide for additional uses common to residential areas located in the more rural areas of the county.
- Planned Development Combining District (PD). The purposes of this district are: (a) To encourage creative and more efficient approaches to the use of land through lot design, use of open space, mixture of land usage and/or densities, adjustment of setbacks or other means to create a better environment; or (b) To allow development whose type, or design, require special consideration in order to assure compatibility with adjacent land use.
- Special Building Site Combining District (B). The Special Building Site District is established to provide assurance that General Plan policies are achieved and development standards suited to a particular site are maintained. In any district with which a B District is combined, the following regulations shall apply in lieu of the respective regulations as to building site lot areas, depth of front yards, and widths of side yards as set forth in the principal district; provided however, application of the B District shall not be made when any of the following regulations are less restrictive than the corresponding regulations in the principal district.
- Historic Preservation Combining District (HP): The Historic Preservation Combining District is established to implement the Cultural Resource policies of the General Plan; to promote the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, reconstruction, and protection of historic and cultural resources; to encourage and promote public knowledge, understanding, appreciation of the County’s history; to promote appreciation and use of historic resources; to encourage

preservation of resources, which may potentially be considered eligible for historic preservation zoning; to promote public awareness of the benefits of preservation; and to encourage public participation in identifying and preserving historic resources, thereby increasing community pride and awareness of the County's cultural and historical heritage.

- Special Flood Plain District (FP). To provide for the welfare of county residents by identifying those lands within Sutter County that are not protected by flood control systems and are subject to flood hazards and/or seasonal inundation that limit(s) the practical uses of the property otherwise permitted within the primary district with which the "FP" District is combined. In any such district, the regulations of Section 1500-7912 shall apply in addition to those specified for such district, provided that if conflict in regulations occurs, the regulations of Section 1500-7912 shall govern.

Table 2.1-7 shows the various zoning districts of the Sutter County Zoning Code that can be used to consistently implement each of the land use designations used in the Sutter County General Plan. In addition, these basic zone districts have a variety of overlay zones or combining districts described in the zoning ordinance that can be used to implement the General Plan. Figure 2.1-4 shows the distribution of these zones throughout the unincorporated areas of the County. Approximate acreages for each of the zoning districts, special combining districts, and the overlay zone are shown below in Table 2.1-8. As one can see, the County's unincorporated lands are overwhelmingly zoned for agricultural purposes. It should be noted that areas zoned as agricultural may contain other uses, as long as the uses are compatible with the requirements for the zoning district. Approximate zoning acreages for each of the rural communities is also provided in Table 2.1-9.

■ PHYSICAL FORM AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

This section describes the structure and appearance of Sutter County's physical environment. The physical environment is a key component in planning for future county growth since it contributes directly to the perceived desirability of the county as a place to live and work, as well as shape possible development patterns and influence a community's identity or character. This, in turn, has consequences for the economic vitality of the county in that it affects the types and quantity of businesses and residents that ultimately will settle in Sutter County. For this reason, it is important to consider issues of form and character when considering the formulation of the County's land use policies.

The concept of "physical form" encompasses the physical qualities of a place at different scales: regional, sub-regional, and local. In addition, individual perception of the county's form and character is influenced by context and intent. For example, individual sense of physical form can be influenced by the way a region appears on a map, by sub-regional geographic features observed during automobile travel, or by architectural qualities observed when walking a local neighborhood street. All three experiences contribute to the sense of the County as a unit.

Sight is the dominant sense used to identify physical features in the environment, but the mental pictures or images we form of the places in which we live, work or travel are not objective images like photographs. A sense of place is subjective; perceptions are colored by values, intentions, and intellect. People tend to remember the environment because of elements of contrast or change that mark the landscape and make it distinctive. For example, the openness and flatness of the valley floor made memorable (i.e., distinctive) by the visibility of distant features such as the Sutter Buttes and the Coast Ranges. Memorable characteristics can be

positive or negative in their effect. For this reason, the visual quality and character of a place is often referenced in discussions of physical form.

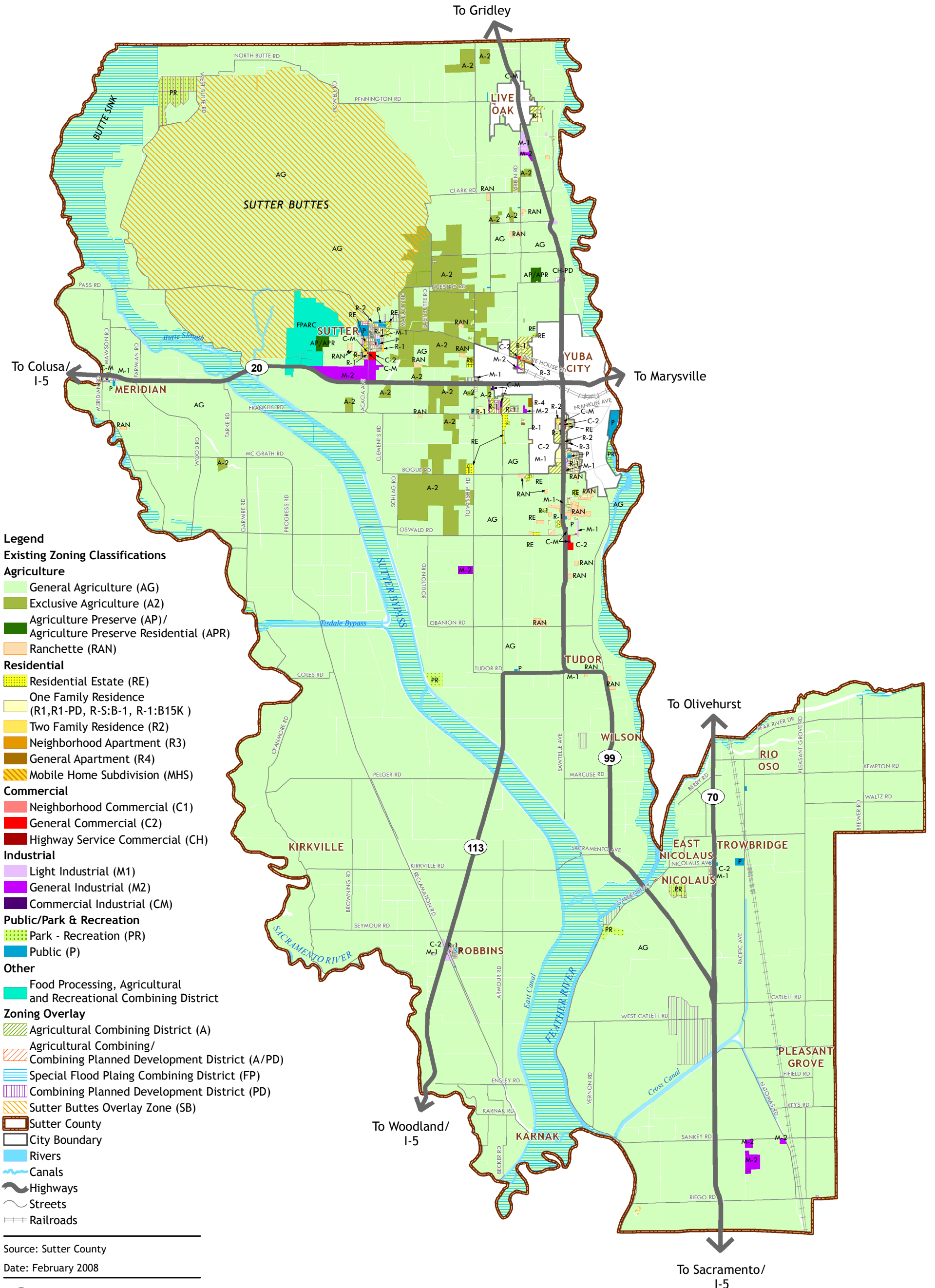
Components of Physical Form

Physical form and visual character are the result of the interaction of natural and man-made boundaries and elements. Natural elements, including topography, hydrology, vegetation, and climate, create the basic physical context, which can in turn, shape development of a region. For example, communities that are divided by a river, freeway, or mountain range can develop very different characters, although they may be located in the same geographic region, and influence a person’s perception of a place. Man-made elements, including buildings, roads, infrastructure, and settlement patterns, are secondary elements that act upon the natural context to establish a particular physical or visual environment. While planning cannot significantly alter the natural context, it can do much to influence the interaction between the natural and the man-made, and help to establish a balance which enhances the quality of life for County residents and visitors. The following discussion examines in more detail the natural and man-made components and describes their contribution to the County's physical form and community character.

Table 2.1-7. General Plan Land Use Designations and Implementing Districts

General Plan Land Use Designation	Implementing Zoning Districts
Agriculture-80 acre minimum (AG-80)	General Agricultural (AG), Exclusive Agricultural (A2), Upland Agricultural (UA), Public (P), Ranchette (RAN)
Agriculture-20 acre minimum (AG-20)	General Agricultural (AG), Exclusive Agricultural (A2), Upland Agricultural (UA), Public (P), Ranchette (RAN)
Agriculture Rural Communities (AG-RC)	General Agricultural (AG), Public (P)
Agriculture Preserve/Agricultural Preserve Residential (AP/APR)	Agriculture Preserve Residential (APR), Agriculture Preserve (AP)
Estates Residential (ER)	Residential Estate (RE), One Family Residence (R1), Public (P)
Low Density Residential (LDR)	Residential Estate (RE), One Family Residence (R1), Two Family Residence (R2), Mobile Home Subdivision (MHS), Public (P)
Medium Density Residential (MDR)	Neighborhood Apartment (R3), Public (P)
High Density Residential (HDR)	General Apartment (R4), Public (P)
Commercial (COM)	Neighborhood Commercial (C1), Highway Service, Commercial (CH), General Commercial (C2), Commercial Industrial (CM), Public (P)
South Sutter County Industrial/Commercial Reserve (SSCI/C)	South Sutter County Industrial/Commercial District (SSCI/C), Public (P), General Agricultural (AG)
Industrial (IND)	Airport (AV), Commercial Industrial (CM), Light Industrial (M1), General Industrial (M2), Limited Manufacturing (ML), Public (P)
Park-Recreation (PR)	Park-Recreation (PR), Public (P)
Open Space (OS)	General Agricultural (AG), Exclusive Agricultural (A2), Upland Agricultural (UA), Park-Recreation (PR), Public (P)

Source: Sutter County General Plan Policy Document, November 26, 1996, Land Use, Table 3, p. 9.



EXISTING ZONING DISTRICTS
Figure 2.1-4

Table 2.1-8. County Zoning Districts

Zoning District	Map Code	Acres	Percentage of County ¹
Upland Agricultural	UA	0	
Exclusive Agricultural	A-2	10,168	
General Agricultural	AG	345,345	
Ag Preserve/Ag Preserve Res	AP/APR	223	
Total Agricultural		355,736	92%
Neighborhood Commercial	C-1	3	
General Commercial	C-2	145	
Commercial-Industrial	C-M	82	
Highway Service Commercial	C-H	5	
Highway Service Commercial/Planned Development	C-H-PD	11	
Total Commercial		246	>1%
Food Processing, Agricultural and Recreation Combining	FPARC	1,878	
Total Food Processing, Agricultural and Recreation Combining		1,878	>1%
Light Industrial	M-1	341	
General Industrial	M-2	1,102	
Limited Manufacturing	M-L	0	
Total Industrial		1,443	>1%
South Sutter County Commercial	SSCC	0	
South Sutter County Industrial	SSCI	0	
Total South Sutter County Industrial/Commercial District		0	0%
Airport	AV	0	
Public	P	436	
Park-Recreation	PR	1,409	
Total Public/Park-Recreation		1,845	>1%
Mobile Home Subdivision	MHS	3	
One-family Residence	R-1	1,901	
One-family Residence/Agricultural	R-1-A	4	
One-family Residence/Planned Development	R-1-PD	1	
One-family Residence/Special Building Site, 15,000 sf lot minimum	R-1:B-15K	6	
One-family Residence/Special Building Site, 1-acre lot minimum	R-1:B-1	21	
Two-family Residence	R-2	35	
Neighborhood Apartment	R-3	21	
General Apartment	R-4	38	
Ranchette	RAN	651	
Residential Estates	RE	289	
Total Residential		2,970	>1%
Combining Districts			
Combining Planned Development	PD	n/a	n/a
Agricultural Combining	A	n/a	n/a
Special Building Site	B	n/a	n/a
Special Flood Plain	FP	n/a	n/a

Source: Sutter County, 2008.

¹Percentages are based on total County acreage rather than zoned acres.

Table 2.1-9. Rural Communities Zoning Districts

Community and Zoning District	Acres
East Nicolaus	
AG	79
C-2	4
M-1	11
P	17
R-1	25
R-2	>1
Meridian	
AG	24
C-2	>1
C-M	4
M-1	23
P	11
R-1	32
R-4	1
Nicolaus	
AG	24
C-2	2
R-1	15
Rio Oso	
AG	253
Robbins	
AG	8
C-2	2
M-1	70
P	6
R-1	41
Sutter	
AG	337
C-2	41
C-M	7
M-1	6
M-2	678
P	81
R-1	327
R-1:B 15K	6
R-2	15
RE	31
Trowbridge	
AG	253
P	47

Source: Sutter County, 2008.

Natural Features

In the rural setting of Sutter County, geographic features including the Sutter Buttes; the Feather, Sacramento and Bear rivers, and associated levee system; localized drainage courses; oxbow lakes; the Butte Sink; and the expansive valley floor give shape and profile to the natural environment, which then shapes how a region develops. Climate, vegetation and geography interact to differentiate sub-regional landscape units within the larger environmental context. The county can be divided into two major geographic units: the valley and uplands. The following discussion identifies six major categories of natural features which contribute to the overall character and visual quality of Sutter County based upon soil types, vegetation and topography: 1) Uplands, 2) Dissected Uplands, 3) Valley Orchards, 4) Valley Floor, 5) Butte Sink, and 6) Riparian.

Uplands

The uplands consist of land ranging in elevation from approximately 100 feet mean sea-level up to the highest elevation in Sutter County (2,117 feet). The only land areas in the county reaching upland elevations are located in the Sutter Buttes. There are approximately 32,000 acres of uplands in the Sutter Buttes. The majority of uplands in Sutter County are covered by oak woodlands and valley grasslands consisting of tall trees with scattered brush and grassland between the trees. The periphery of the upland area contains open grasslands generally used for agricultural purposes. Several vernal pools have been inventoried on the State of California's Department of Fish and Game's Natural Diversity Data Base. These pools are generally located in the southwestern and eastern portions of the Sutter Buttes.

The Sutter Buttes are volcanic in origin with many interesting and significant rock out-croppings. These upland areas contain shale, sandstone and soft sandstone. Upland soils are generally shallow with underlying fractured bedrock near the surface. Some small pockets of deeper soil are located in the canyon floor areas between ridges. The primary land use activity in the uplands is grazing with some more intensive agricultural uses located in the pocket areas. Two open-pit mines are located in the Buttes. Mined mineral is primarily used as material for construction base. The majority of the uplands area is not suitable for cultivation. The land capability map was prepared from the U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service's capability classification of soil types.

Dissected Uplands

The classification "dissected uplands" is from the Agricultural Land Capability Map prepared for the 1972 Sutter County Conservation Element. It applies to the southeastern part of Sutter County adjacent to Placer County. Dissected uplands are characterized by open grass lands with some row or field crops and with a slight rolling terrain where the land has been eroded by various streams and creeks running through it. The soils have a slow permeability and have difficulty complying with regulations for septic system design. Although generally medium to deep soils, the area contains a hard pan layer at or near the surface to give it the slow permeability. The area identified as dissected uplands in Sutter County has several dairies, stables and cattle ranches.

Valley Orchards

The valley orchards are characterized as having some of the best soils in Sutter County. Soils are alluvial in origin having been laid down by countless flooding of the Sacramento, Feather and Bear rivers. Valley orchards are located relatively close to Sutter County's rivers and are typically flat with slopes of generally less than two percent. The primary orchard crops in Sutter

County based on acreages harvested are prunes, walnuts, peaches and pears. Soil types contained in valley orchards are considered to be the best of the soil classification types according to the U.S.D.A. Soils Conservation Service. As shown in the Figure 4.2-3 (see Section 4.2, Agriculture, Soils, and Mineral Resources) most of the county's important farmland is located on the valley floor.

The valley orchards have encountered the most significant urban intrusion due to the proximity of valley orchards to the urbanizing areas. Historically, urban development has occurred at the confluence of rivers in the county; e.g., Yuba City, Nicolaus, Rio Oso, and Meridian. These locations also happen to be the locations of the valley orchard areas. Any enlargement of Yuba City north, south, and to a lesser extent west, has been and continues to be into valley orchards. As the County's agricultural community grew, other agricultural service centers developed in locations having transportation crossroads; e.g., Live Oak, Robbins, Sutter, and East Nicolaus.

Valley Floor

The valley floor is a large area of Sutter County which is characterized by flat topography and open row or field crop type agricultural uses. This is the largest single physiographic area in Sutter County. Generally, the valley floor runs from the Butte County line on the north southward in a relative narrow band until reaching the southern side of the Sutter Buttes. South of the Buttes the valley floor widens to encompass the area between Township Road and the community of Meridian. From Highway 20, it runs south southeast encompassing the Sutter Basin to the confluence of the Feather and Sacramento Rivers. Another band of the valley floor area runs northward from the Sacramento County line, through the remainder of the North Natomas Basin, along Highway 70 almost to the Bear River.

The valley floor has an extremely low population density and is dominated by large scale farming operations. Primary crops based upon total acreage are rice, wheat, beans, tomatoes and various types of hay. Soil types are categorized as being moderately good by the USDA Soil Conservation Service.

Butte Sink

The Butte Sink is located in the northwestern portion of Sutter County, east of Butte Slough, west of the 50 foot mean sea level contour (which is west of West Butte Road), north of Pass Road and south of the Butte County Line. The Butte Sink is a wetland, subject to annual flooding from the Sacramento River and Butte Slough with summer drought.

Vegetation in the Butte Sink is generally oak woodland. Some of the area contains species typified in a fresh water marsh environment. Due to the winter flooding which occurs in the Butte Sink, the area is used extensively for waterfowl hunting. Hunting clubs and related facilities are scattered throughout the area. Some agricultural activity is located in the area while other properties are being allowed to revert to natural conditions for hunting operations. In recent years, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have been actively acquiring conservation easements in the area to maintain and improve waterfowl habitat.

Riparian Areas

The riparian areas are those very narrow bands of wetland habitat adjacent to the rivers and streams in Sutter County. The streamside natural communities are characterized by the abundance of water, shade and dense cover. Trees and understory are either dense or widely spaced in clumps. Riparian areas are the most popular wildlife habitat in the area due to the availability of water, food, protection from the sun and large scale human disturbance. Threats to riparian areas are generally from flood protection measures conducted within the levees, pollution, recreational activities, and agricultural uses.

Manmade Features

Human intervention also plays an important role in shaping the County's physical form. Some of the more important manmade features that shape development patterns and influence community character include freeways and the County's flood control system, including the Sutter Bypass, Tisdale Bypass, Cross Canal, and levee system located along the Sacramento, Feather, and Bear Rivers.

Automobile Transportation Corridors

The county contains four transportation corridors that connect communities within the county to areas outside of the county. These major transportation corridors include Highway 99, State Route 20, Highway 70, and Highway 113. In the more rural portions of the county, these corridors are limited to two-lane roads, but do carry relatively large volumes of inter-county traffic through the county's smaller, more rural communities. These transportation corridors have provided linkages between County communities, as well as with larger communities outside of the County, including Sacramento, which have influenced the county's development. However, although these corridors provide connections between communities, they can also serve as barriers between communities, thus dividing the region and influencing the character of each community.

Flood Control System

Like rivers and freeways, the associated levees, canals, and bypasses located throughout the community can serve to divide communities within the county. Especially due to the lack of bridges crossing these features in many places, during times when bypasses are full, connectivity from some communities such as Meridian and Robbins to other communities in the county may be adversely affected. This can cause communities such as these to experience different types of development patterns from other communities in the county that may be more connected to each other due to a lack of these types of physical barriers. For example, the communities of Rio Oso, Trowbridge, and East Nicolaus are closer together and can share commercial areas and services due to the lack of physical barriers between the communities. Communities like Robbins, however, although relatively close to these communities, lack connectivity, and therefore must develop their own land uses and services that can serve citizens in that community, since travel between communities may be a challenge due to the physical barriers.

The County is essentially divided into two halves by the Sutter Bypass. The bulk of the County's population, infrastructure, and services are located east of the Sutter Bypass. The communities located east of the bypass also have better connectivity with one another, as well as other communities outside of the county, such as Marysville and Sacramento. The communities located west of the bypass tend to lack connectivity to these areas, which gives these communities unique characteristics.

■ **REGULATORY CONTEXT**

There is no regulatory context for Section 2.1, Land Use.

2.2 DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

2.2.1 Demographic Trends and Conditions

■ INTRODUCTION

This section analyzes broad demographic trends in Sutter County, in particular countywide rates of population growth and changes in the location of employment for County residents, both historically and projected to 2030. The County's relationship to the region is examined in broad terms, the analysis of which will inform the County's land use policies over the time horizon of the General Plan Update. Information for this section was obtained from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the California State Department of Finance (DOF), the California State Economic Development Department (EDD), and the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG).

■ SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- Sutter County's prospects for growth are closely tied to the growth potential of the SACOG region, differentiating it from other counties in the Northern Sacramento Valley. As one of the region's major growth areas for industrial, retail, and residential real estate, Sutter County benefits from economic expansion in Sacramento, Placer, and neighboring counties. Large amounts of industrial and residential development are currently planned for South Sutter County, and additional residential development is planned for the cities of Yuba City and Live Oak.
- An increasing share of the County's total population lives in a city. Local governments in the county have directed increasing amounts of its growth into the cities of Live Oak and Yuba City, so that the population living in cities grew from 40 percent in 1970 to 75 percent in 2007.
- Sutter County's ratio of jobs to housing is improving but lags that of the SACOG region as a whole. For each housing unit in 2005, the County had 0.85 jobs. Sutter County has added significant numbers of jobs since 1990, but development has added new housing units at a similar rate. The result is that, in the latest year for which data is available, fewer jobs are located in the county compared to workers who live in the county. In fact, 6,000 more workers leave Sutter County for work each day than enter from points outside the county.
- The net result of a lower jobs to housing ratio is that Sutter County is more likely than some of its neighboring counties to have resident workers with long commutes. Sutter County is also more likely to provide services to these residents without as much revenue support from employment-related land uses.
- Sutter County's strongest workforce linkages, as measured by the commute into or out of the county, are with Yuba, Sacramento, and Butte Counties. Workers flow into Sutter County from Butte County, and flow out to Sacramento County from Sutter County. Roughly equal numbers of residents in Sutter and Yuba Counties cross the Feather River to work in the other county each day.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

DOF estimates that 93,919 people live in Sutter County as of January 2007. The population has become more ethnically diverse since 1990, with the largest gains made by Hispanic and Asian groups (Table 2.2-1). The rate at which the County’s total population changes over the next 23 years depends on employment conditions, growth pressures in adjacent regions, and the land use policies of the County and its cities.

Table 2.2-1. Change in Race of Sutter County Residents, 1990-2006

Group, Alone or in Combination	1990		2000		2006	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
White	49,521	77%	56,027	68%	68,821	70%
African American	1,041	2%	1,858	2%	2,661	3%
Asian ¹	6,079	9%	10,256	12%	12,499	13%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	941	1%	2,335	3%	3,546	4%
Some Other Race ²	6,833	11%	12,318	15%	9,538	10%
Total, All Races	64,415	100%	82,794	100%	97,065	100%
Hispanic Spanish Speaking Population ³	10,592	16%	17,529	21%	24,353	25%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000 Census, 1990 Census, and 2006 American Community Survey.

¹Includes peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, East Indian, Thailand, and Vietnam. It also includes Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, and Other Asian.

²Includes Non-White Hispanic.

³As a language group, these residents are also identified with one of the groups above.

Growth in Sutter County and the Region

Sutter County can be viewed as the northwestern member of the Sacramento Region (SACOG Region), made up of El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba Counties, or as the southernmost county in the North Sacramento Valley Region, made up of Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Nevada, Sutter, and Yuba Counties. Growth in the SACOG Region has led growth in the North Sacramento Valley between 1990 and 2007, as shown in Table 2.2-2.

Sutter County’s growth rate during the same period was the highest in the North Sacramento Valley Region but ranked in the middle of SACOG Region counties. Although just four percent (one in twenty-five) of SACOG Region residents live in Sutter County, the data suggests that the County’s pattern of growth is tied more closely to that region. Other sections of the TBR analyze patterns of land use and proposed development in the County and confirm its demographic and economic linkages with the SACOG Region, in particular Sacramento, Placer, and Yuba Counties.

For nearly 40 years and in particular since 1990, most of the growth in Sutter County has taken place in its two cities. As shown in Table 2.2-3, annexations and new development have increased the share of the County’s incorporated population from 40 percent in 1970 to 75 percent in 2007. Fewer people resided in unincorporated areas of the County in 2007 than did in 1970 and this trend is assumed to continue during the time horizon of the General Plan Update.

Table 2.2-2. Regional Historical Population Shares and Growth, 1990-2007

Region / Jurisdiction	1990	Sutter County 1990 Share (%)	1995	2000	2005	2007	Sutter County 2007 Share (%)	Rate of Change, 1990-2007 (%)
SACOG Region								
Placer	172,796	11.2%	207,159	246,712	307,653	324,495	14.8%	3.8%
Sutter	64,415	4.2%	73,548	78,631	88,947	93,919	4.3%	2.2%
El Dorado	125,995	8.2%	143,863	155,702	173,668	178,674	8.1%	2.1%
Yolo	141,210	9.1%	152,924	167,551	187,610	193,983	8.8%	1.9%
Sacramento	1,041,219	67.4%	1,118,579	1,217,219	1,368,192	1,406,804	64.0%	1.8%
Yuba	58,228	3.8%	61,927	60,220	67,291	70,745	3.2%	1.2%
Subtotal, SACOG Region	1,545,635	100.0%	1,696,073	1,865,815	2,126,070	2,197,875	100.0%	2.1%
North Sacramento Valley Region								
Sutter	64,415	15.2%	73,548	78,631	88,947	93,919	17.6%	2.2%
Colusa	16,275	3.8%	17,694	18,734	20,995	21,951	4.1%	1.8%
Nevada	78,510	18.5%	86,426	91,642	98,698	99,766	18.7%	1.4%
Yuba	58,228	13.7%	61,927	60,220	67,291	70,745	13.3%	1.2%
Butte	182,120	42.9%	196,394	202,658	213,812	218,069	40.9%	1.1%
Glenn	24,798	5.8%	26,161	26,405	28,094	28,915	5.4%	0.9%
Subtotal, North Sacramento Valley Region	424,346	100.0%	462,150	478,290	517,837	533,365	100.0%	1.4%
Total, Ten County Region	1,905,566		2,084,675	2,265,474	2,554,960	2,637,321		1.9%

Source: State Department of Finance, E-5 and E-5a tables. Current as of September 10, 2007.

Table 2.2-3. Incorporated Area Share of County Population, 1970-2007

Jurisdiction	Year ¹					Rate of Change 1970-2007
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2007	
Cities						
Live Oak	2,645	3,103	4,320	6,229	8,126	3.1%
Yuba City	13,986	18,736	27,385	36,758	62,083	4.1%
Subtotal, Cities	16,631	21,839	31,705	42,987	70,209	4.0%
Unincorporated County	25,304	30,407	32,710	35,943	23,710	-0.2%
Total	41,935	52,246	64,415	78,930	93,919	2.2%
Share in Cities	40%	42%	49%	54%	75%	

Source: State Department of Finance E-1 and E-4 tables. Current as of September 10, 2007.

¹Includes Yuba City area annexations in 2001 and 2006.

Future Growth in Sutter County

Projections of population and employment in the County vary widely between data sources. The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) projects significantly lower growth rates compared to growth over the last 17 years in the County (Table 2.2-4). Strong demand for housing during a ten-year period beginning in 1995 and a tightening of regulatory restrictions on land development in much of the rest of the Region sustained the County’s growth during recent years, and these conditions will likely persist in the future.

Major projects proposed for the County include the Sutter Pointe Specific Plan and other master plan communities in Yuba City and Live Oak. SACOG’s detailed projections of population, housing, and jobs for the year 2035 are shown in Table 2.2-5.

Jobs and Housing Balance

Both the SACOG Region as a whole and Sutter County have increased the ratio of jobs to housing units since the early 1990s. The ratio, however, is lower in Sutter County than in the Region as a whole. For every housing unit in the County there are 20 percent fewer jobs in the County compared to the jobs per housing unit ratio in the Region (Table 2.2-6).

The implication of this land use pattern is that, according to Census data, 13,000 of the County’s 30,000 workers left the County to reach their place of work (Table 2.2-7), and of the 24,000 jobs located in the County, 7,000 were filled by workers from outside the County (Table 2.2-8). The net commute of 6,000 workers from Sutter County suggests that other counties in 2000 were receiving some of the economic benefits of the jobs held by these workers. Most experts in economic development believe the net commute has worsened in the years since 2000 as large amounts of new housing was built in the County.

The net result of a comparatively lower jobs to housing ratio is that Sutter County is more likely than some of its neighboring counties to have resident workers with long commutes. The County is also more likely to provide services to these residents without as much revenue support from employment-related land uses. Because these outcomes affect the quality of life for County residents, the issue of jobs and housing balance needs to be addressed.

Table 2.2-4. Sutter County Growth Projections, 2007-2035

Projection / Source	Year										Countywide ⁶	
	2007		2012		2020		2030		2035		Rate of Change	Absolute Change
	Unincorp.	Total	Unincorp.	Total	Unincorp.	Total	Unincorp.	Total	Unincorp.	Total	2007-2035	2007-2035
Population											1.0%	31,678
DOF ¹	23,710	93,919				141,159		182,401				
SACOG ²									31,134	125,597		
Housing³											1.4%	15,972
DOF ⁴	8,607	33,069										
SACOG ²									12,009	49,041		
Employment												
SACOG ²									8,487	50,288		
EDD ⁵		39,800		44,700								

Sources: State Department of Finance Tables P3 and E-5, Economic Development Department Industry Employment Projections 2002-2012, and SACOG 2035 Projections for Population and Employment by Sector.

¹California State Department of Finance 50 Year Projections for Sutter County. Current as of November 16, 2007.

²Sacramento Area Council of Governments 2035 Population, Households, and Employment Projection. Includes Farm jobs. Current as of September 10, 2007.

Unincorporated area estimate is based on whole county projection minus the projections for the Yuba City and Live Oak regional analysis districts. These districts are larger than city boundaries.

³Based on SACOG 2035 Projections, with an increase of enough units to allow for 5.0 percent vacancy.

⁴California State Department of Finance E-5 Table. Current as of November 16, 2007.

⁵California Economic Development Department Non Farm Industry Employment for Yuba-Sutter MSA, July 2007 and Projections 2002-2012. Sutter County is a portion of the total, so the SACOG and EDD estimates are not directly comparable.

⁶Growth rates shown are based on the SACOG 2035 projection and a 2007 estimate of actual population, housing, or jobs, if available.

Table 2.2-5. SACOG 2035 Projections in Detail

Regional Analysis Districts (RADs)	2035									
	Population		Households			Jobs				
	Total	SF	MF	Total	Retail	Office	Medical	Indust	K-12	Total
Sutter County, All RADs¹	125,597	35,927	10,662	46,589	15,011	16,694	2,816	13,056	2,711	50,288
Individual RADs										
South Sutter	13,100	3,877	953	4,830	1,211	1,721	149	2,725	386	6,192
Meridian - Robbins	1,219	390	47	437	173	196	18	591	32	1,010
Sutter	3,974	1,363	32	1,395	110	92	8	221	123	554
Live Oak	12,841	3,694	1,053	4,747	1,136	872	73	850	231	3,162
Tudor	2,469	750	150	900	243	185	16	262	25	731
Yuba City	91,994	25,853	8,427	34,280	12,138	13,628	2,552	8,407	1,914	38,639
All RADs less Yuba City and Live Oak RADs²	31,134	9,324	2,085	11,409	1,737	2,194	191	3,799	566	8,487

Source: SACOG 2035 Projections for Population and Employment by Sector.

¹Total reflects sum of RAD data and may be slightly different from SACOG data for whole County.

²Sacramento Area Council of Governments 2035 Population, Households, and Employment Projection. Includes Farm jobs. Current as of November 16, 2007.

Unincorporated area estimate is based on whole county projection minus the projections for the Yuba City and Live Oak regional analysis districts. These districts are wider than city boundaries.

Table 2.2-6. Jobs-Housing Ratio for Sutter County, 1990-2005

Item	1993	1995	2000	2005
Sutter County				
Jobs ¹	20,800	21,800	25,000	26,400
Housing Units ²	26,230	27,400	28,306	31,175
Ratio	0.79	0.80	0.88	0.85
SACOG Region				
Jobs ¹	671,700	709,600	849,200	932,200
Housing Units ²	696,763	715,833	762,773	863,156
Ratio	0.96	0.99	1.11	1.08

Sources: State Department of Finance, E-5 and E-8 Reports; State Economic Development Department Industry Employment Tool Query. Both Current as of September 12, 2007.

¹Farm and nonfarm jobs.

²Includes mobile homes and unoccupied single family, multi family, and mobile home units.

Table 2.2-7. Work Location for Sutter County Workers, 2000

Place of Work	Number of Workers in 2000	Share
County		
Sutter	17,060	56%
Yuba	5,703	19%
Sacramento	2,476	8%
Placer	1,487	5%
Yolo	1,251	4%
Butte	870	3%
Colusa	479	2%
Solano	187	1%
Nevada	173	1%
Other Counties, States	673	2%
TOTAL	30,359	100%
Workers Leaving Sutter County	13,299	44%

Source: Census 2000 Transportation Planning Package. Current as of September 10, 2007.

Table 2.2-8. Place of Residence for Those Working in Sutter County, 2000

Place of Residence	Number of Workers in 2000	Share
County		
Sutter	17,060	70%
Yuba	4,408	18%
Butte	1,202	5%
Sacramento	391	2%
Placer	273	1%
Colusa	228	1%
Nevada	214	1%
Yolo	182	1%
Other Counties, States	258	1%
TOTAL	24,216	100%
Workers From Outside Sutter County	7,156	30%

Source: Census 2000 Transportation Planning Package. Current as of September 10, 2007.

■ REGULATORY CONTEXT

There is no regulatory context for Section 2.2.1, Demographic Trends and Conditions.

2.2.2 Economic Development Trends and Conditions

■ INTRODUCTION

This section presents the employment and real estate market data necessary to identify shifts in the County's job base and describe prospects for future job growth. Starting with an analysis of changes in employment by industry and a comparison of wages and business activity in the region, the discussion moves to an assessment of the performance of key real estate sectors within the County. An understanding of these two topics provides a sound basis for positioning the County's land use policy to capitalize on market opportunities and trends. Information for this section was obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the State Economic Development Department, Yuba Sutter Economic Development Corporation, and real estate industry experts.

■ SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- As the County grows, its employment base continues to diversify. The County's job base has expanded most in the area of education and health services since 1990. Other large gains occurred in professional and business services, leisure and hospitality, and retail trade. Population growth has injected enough market support required to open new service commercial establishments, hotels, and stores. Job counts fell between 1990 and 2005 in the County's wholesale trade, manufacturing, and forestry and mining sectors.
- Wage growth in the County leads the region, but business creation lags the region. From 2001 to 2006, annual wages grew at a strong pace in Sutter

County, averaging 3.9 percent per year. Only Yuba County's growth in wages was higher. The rate at which new businesses were formed in Sutter County, net of business closures, was matched by Butte County and outpaced net business creation in Yuba and Colusa Counties. In contrast, the pace of net business creation in Placer, Sacramento, and Yolo Counties surpassed Sutter County's rate by more than half.

- Despite recent downturns in residential real estate, over the long term the County has strong potential for additional residential development given its more affordable market position. Sutter County experienced dramatic increases in the sales prices of homes between the late 1990s and a peak in prices during 2005. Between 2002 and 2006, unit sales fell by 50 percent and prices per square foot leveled off and then declined by 10 percent compared to peak amounts. Through all parts of the real estate cycle, the average Sutter County new or existing home costs less than similar homes in Sacramento, Yolo, Placer, or El Dorado Counties by a 20 to 30 percent margin.
- The County's industrial market faces several key hurdles to large-scale expansion, most notably infrastructure funding and competitive incentive packages to prospective companies. Vacancy rates remain much lower in the Marysville-Yuba City submarket than in the region as a whole. Construction of industrial space has slowed in the submarket, however, and more space has become available than was leased in recent quarters. In the future, investment in key public infrastructure, such as additional capacity in the County's road network to move goods to major interstate routes and in local wastewater treatment, is needed to attract interest in the County from industrial users.

■ EXISTING CONDITIONS

Sutter County has experienced rapid changes in the employment levels of many industries since the early 1990s. On the whole, changes in the composition of businesses in the County have increased average worker wages and retained a higher share of retail spending within the County.

Measures of Economic Performance

From 2001 through 2006, the number of Sutter County businesses participating in the state's unemployment insurance program grew at a 2.8 percent annual rate (Table 2.2-9). As a general measure of business activity, this statistic suggests that business activity is expanding at a comparable rate to the population's growth rate. Business growth rates in Sutter County lag those in Placer, Sacramento, and Yolo Counties, but leads growth rates in Butte, Yuba, and Colusa Counties.

Growth in the number of workers covered by the State unemployment insurance program in Sutter County, however, was almost one percentage point lower than growth in the number of employers. The trend indicates an increased share of smaller businesses in the County, which ranks in the middle of a group of 7 adjacent counties in both covered worker and business activity measures.

Wage growth during the same time period in both Sutter and Yuba Counties, as measured by the annualized rate of change, has led the region. Average wages in Sutter County (in nominal dollars) increased to nearly \$32,000 per year in 2006, starting from \$26,000 in 2001.

Table 2.2-9. Business Establishments, Wages, and Covered Employment in Region, 2001-2006

Variable / County	Year						Change	Annualized Change
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2001-2006	2001-2006
Business Establishments¹								
Sutter	2,413	2,468	2,540	2,629	2,655	2,775	362	2.8%
Sacramento	39,683	42,750	44,979	46,385	47,284	50,149	10,466	4.8%
Placer	8,083	8,496	9,039	9,338	9,578	10,397	2,314	5.2%
Yolo	4,298	4,557	4,909	5,039	5,123	5,386	1,088	4.6%
Yuba	1,512	1,567	1,524	1,519	1,527	1,568	56	0.7%
Colusa	863	864	840	867	858	882	19	0.4%
Butte	6,749	7,111	7,185	7,334	7,383	7,675	926	2.6%
Annual Wages								
Sutter	\$26,206	\$27,191	\$27,867	\$29,111	\$29,938	\$31,717	\$5,511	3.9%
Sacramento	\$39,173	\$40,642	\$42,110	\$43,196	\$44,732	\$46,533	\$7,360	3.5%
Placer	\$34,773	\$35,845	\$36,917	\$38,695	\$39,960	\$41,779	\$7,006	3.7%
Yolo	\$35,352	\$35,591	\$34,991	\$37,086	\$38,145	\$39,208	\$3,856	2.1%
Yuba	\$30,091	\$31,626	\$34,268	\$33,628	\$35,511	\$36,755	\$6,664	4.1%
Colusa	\$25,435	\$26,587	\$26,793	\$27,470	\$28,232	\$28,879	\$3,444	2.6%
Butte	\$26,499	\$27,190	\$27,856	\$29,082	\$30,007	\$31,562	\$5,063	3.6%
Total Covered Employment²								
Sutter	25,566	25,884	26,526	26,354	26,697	28,090	2,524	1.9%
Sacramento	588,426	593,016	596,559	606,297	624,259	637,225	48,799	1.6%
Placer	116,185	118,429	124,399	130,723	133,102	137,000	20,815	3.4%
Yolo	88,020	87,251	95,689	96,295	98,819	99,410	11,390	2.5%
Yuba	17,438	17,289	16,664	17,492	17,345	17,294	-144	-0.2%
Colusa	7,348	7,467	7,524	7,659	8,055	8,131	783	2.0%
Butte	72,018	73,303	72,773	73,211	74,827	76,142	4,124	1.1%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, from September 7, 2007.

¹Measures general business activity. The Bureau of Labor Statistics defines an establishment as an economic unit, such as a farm, mine, factory, or store that produces goods or provides services. It is typically at a single physical location or predominantly one, type of economic activity for which a single industrial classification may be applied.

²Jobs covered by unemployment insurance or unemployment coverage for federal employees. The jobs included provide a virtual census (97.1 percent nationwide) of jobs on nonfarm payrolls.

Higher levels of educational attainment have accompanied and supported this wage growth, as shown in Table 2.2-10. The County has increased the share of its population 25 years and older with college degrees (associate, bachelor, and graduate level) from 24 percent in 1990 to 31 percent in 2006. Commensurate declines occurred in the share of this population without a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Table 2.2-10. Change in Educational Attainment in Sutter County, 1990-2006

Population 25 years and over	1990		2006	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
Graduate or professional degree	1,901	5%	3,339	6%
Bachelor's degree	4,229	11%	7,131	13%
Associate degree	3,570	9%	6,905	12%
Subtotal, College Degree or More	9,700	24%	17,376	31%
Some college, no degree	9,175	23%	11,603	21%
High school graduate (or GED)	9,935	25%	14,603	26%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	5,893	15%	6,169	11%
Less than 9th grade	5,151	13%	6,848	12%
Subtotal, No Diploma	11,044	28%	13,018	23%
Total	39,854	100%	56,599	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Table P057, 1990 Census and Table S1501, 2006 American Community Survey.

Shifts in the County's Employment Base

Growth in the County's population and average worker wages has gradually diversified the job base that in prior years relied more on agriculture and its supporting industries. Sectors making large gains between 1990 and 2005 include educational and health services, information, professional and business services, retail trade, and construction (Table 2.2-11). The increasing size of the Yuba City market for basic needs such as education, healthcare, financial services, and household retail goods, both in dollars and the number of households, explains most of the growth in these jobs.

Typical large employers in the County are listed in Table 2.2-12. As examples of the employment found in the County, Holt of California sells and services farm and construction machinery, and EPA Provco provides tree trimming and other vegetation control services for large utilities such as Pacific Gas & Electric.

Employment data suggests that farm, mining, and manufacturing jobs have declined during the same period. Shifts in the economy, including increasing global competition in agricultural products and equipment, consolidation of food processing plants in the Central Valley, and mechanization in farm and mining operations, have precipitated these and other changes in County employment and land use.

Job growth is projected to be the highest (in absolute jobs) for the natural resources, mining, and construction; retail trade; and professional and business services sectors. Strong growth rates are projected to occur in the financial activities and information sectors (Table 2.2-13).

Real Estate Markets

Demand for residential property in the County has fallen sharply since its peak in 2005. As shown in Table 2.2-14, current average single family home prices (new and existing units) are approximately \$270,000 or \$170 per square foot.

New home construction and sales activity, most of which is located in the cities of Yuba City and Live Oak, slowed by almost 50 percent from 2002 to 2006. New and existing home prices, however, remain 60 percent above 2002 levels. Rising land prices and a widening affordability gap during the expansionary phase of the real estate cycle reduced the average home size from

Table 2.2-11. Sutter County Employment Trends, 1990-2005

NAICS	Industry	Share in					Share in 2005 ¹ (%)	Rate of Change 1990-2005 ² (%)
		1990	19901 (%)	1995	2000	2005		
11	Farm			4,200	4,000	3,800		
21	Natural Resources and Mining	200	1.3%	200	100	100	0.5%	-4.5%
23	Construction	1,000	6.5%	1,000	1,200	1,600	7.1%	3.2%
30	Manufacturing	1,700	11.0%	1,500	2,100	1,500	7.1%	-0.8%
40	Trade, Transportation and Utilities							
41	Wholesale Trade	800	5.2%	700	800	600	3.5%	-1.9%
42	Retail Trade	2,500	16.2%	3,300	3,800	4,400	19.9%	3.8%
43	Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	400	2.6%	400	600	500	2.7%	1.5%
	Subtotal, Trade, Transportation and Utilities	3,700	24.0%	4,400	5,200	5,500	25.9%	2.7%
50	Information	100	0.6%	200	200	200	0.9%	4.7%
55	Financial Activities	800	5.2%	1,000	1,000	1,000	4.4%	1.5%
60	Professional and Business Services	1,100	7.1%	1,100	1,500	2,100	9.7%	4.4%
65	Educational and Health Services	1,600	10.4%	2,200	2,600	3,400	16.5%	5.2%
70	Leisure and Hospitality	1,400	9.1%	1,800	2,000	2,200	11.4%	3.1%
80	Other Services	600	3.9%	800	1,000	600	2.9%	0.0%
90	Government							
91	Federal Government	200	1.3%	200	200	200	1.1%	0.0%
92	State Government	100	0.6%	100	200	200	0.9%	4.7%
93	Local Government	2,900	18.8%	3,100	3,800	4,100	18.2%	2.3%
	Subtotal, Government	3,200	20.8%	3,400	4,200	4,500	20.4%	2.3%
	Total Non Farm	15,400	100.0%	17,600	21,100	22,700	100.0%	2.6%
	Total Farm and Non Farm³			21,800	25,100	26,500		

Source: State Economic Development Department, Industry Employment & Labor Force - by Annual Average, March 2006 Benchmark.

¹Percent of total nonfarm jobs.

²Change in the number of jobs using 1990 as a base.

³Farm employment not reported by EDD for 1990.

Table 2.2-12. Top 20 Sutter County Employers, 2007

Name	Jobs	Sector
Fremont Medical Center	1,600	Educational and Health Services
Holt of California	600	Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities
Sunsweet Growers, Inc.	500+	Manufacturing
Sysco Food Service of Sacramento	450	Wholesale Trade
EPA Provco	400	Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities
Harter Packing Co.	400	Manufacturing
Melaleuca & Associates	400	Unknown
Wal-Mart	400	Retail Trade
Home Depot	300	Retail Trade
Sunset Moulding Co.	300	Manufacturing
Landstar Ranger, Inc.	275	Trucking
Sutter North Surgery Center	250+	Educational and Health Services
Live Oak Unified School District	201	Educational and Health Services
Larry Geweke Ford	200	Retail Trade
Yuba City Unified School District	200	Educational and Health Services
Yuba-Sutter Gleaners Food Bank	177	Non-Profit
WinCo Foods	175	Retail Trade
Sierra Central Credit Union	166	Financial Activities
Sam's Club	160	Retail Trade
Sierra Gold Nurseries	150	Farm
Siller Bros., Inc.	150	Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities

Source: Yuba Sutter Economic Development Corporation, Yuba-Sutter Census, January, 2007.

Table 2.2-13. Sutter County Employment Projections, 2002-2012

NAICS	Industry	2002	Share in	2012	Share in	Rate of
		(jobs)	(%)	(jobs)	(%)	Change
						2002-2012 (%)
21	Natural Resources, Mining, and Construction	2,300	6.0%	3,500	7.8%	4.3%
30	Manufacturing	3,000	7.9%	3,000	6.7%	0.0%
40	Trade, Transportation and Utilities					
41	Wholesale Trade	1,300	3.4%	1,400	3.1%	0.7%
42	Retail Trade	5,500	14.4%	6,800	15.2%	2.1%
43	Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	1,100	2.9%	1,100	2.5%	0.0%
	Subtotal, Trade, Transportation and Utilities	7,900	20.7%	9,300	20.8%	1.6%
50	Information	300	0.8%	500	1.1%	5.2%
55	Financial Activities	1,300	3.4%	1,900	4.3%	3.9%
60	Professional and Business Services	2,700	7.1%	3,800	8.5%	3.5%
65	Educational and Health Services	5,000	13.1%	5,900	13.2%	1.7%
70	Leisure and Hospitality	3,600	9.4%	3,900	8.7%	0.8%
80	Other Services	1,400	3.7%	1,500	3.4%	0.7%

Table 2.2-13. Sutter County Employment Projections, 2002-2012

NAICS	Industry	2002	Share in 2002	2012	Share in 2012	Rate of Change 2002-2012
		(jobs)	(%)	(jobs)	(%)	(%)
90	Government					
91	Federal Government	1,500	3.9%	1,600	3.6%	0.6%
92	State Government	1,100	2.9%	1,600	3.6%	3.8%
93	Local Government	8,000	21.0%	8,200	18.3%	0.2%
	Subtotal, Government	10,600	27.8%	11,400	25.5%	0.7%
	Total Non Farm	38,100	100.0%	44,700	100.0%	1.6%

Source: State Economic Development Department, Industry Employment Projections for Yuba City MSA, March 2003 Benchmark.

Table 2.2-14. Residential Market Performance, 2002-2007, Sutter County

Residential	Label	Year						2007 Jan-Jun	Change 2002-2006
		2002	2003	2004	2005	2006			
New and Existing Single Family									
Number of Sales	units	1,315	1,312	1,220	1,089	683	374	-48%	
Price per sq ft	\$/sq ft	\$118	\$129	\$138	\$199	\$192	\$174	63%	
Average Unit Size	sq ft	1,792	1,767	1,659	1,594	1,568	1,597	-13%	
Average Sales Price	\$/unit	\$181,022	\$213,657	\$255,931	\$303,836	\$290,298	\$266,750	60%	
Existing Condominiums									
Number of Sales	units	32	44	67	71	48	31	50%	
New SF Units									
Permits Issued	permits	658	991	1,300	1,328	357	170	-46%	

Sources: Sutter County, Yuba City, and City of Live Oak Building Departments (September 2007); Yuba-Sutter Economic Development Corporation, *Yuba-Sutter Census*, January, 2007; and Dataquick data purchase from July, 2007.

1,800 square feet in 2002 to 1,600 square feet in 2007. SACOG projected the supportable mix of single family and multifamily households for the County in Table 2.2-5, given broad trends in development costs, affordability constraints, and planning requirements.

Marysville-Yuba City, the industrial real estate submarket most closely approximating Sutter County, has reported recent negative net absorption (vacancies were greater than new leases) of warehouse space (Table 2.2-15). The submarket's inventory includes approximately 4.8 million square feet of warehouse space and 600,000 square feet of flex space.

Table 2.2-15. Industrial Market Performance, 2Q 2007, Sutter County

Use / Market Area	Inventory (sq ft)	Share of Market	Vacancy Rate		Net Absorption		Construction	
			1Q	2Q	2Q (sq ft)	YTD (sq ft)	Completed (sq ft)	In Progress (sq ft)
Warehouse								
Marysville-Yuba City ¹	4,770,214	3%	4.30%	5.10%	(37,343)	(55,965)	-	-
Region Total	155,744,059	100%	11.30%	11.20%	569,783	317,002	296,039	829,271
Flex								

Table 2.2-15. Industrial Market Performance, 2Q 2007, Sutter County

Use / Market Area	Inventory (sq ft)	Share of Market	Vacancy Rate		Net Absorption		Construction	
			1Q	2Q	2Q (sq ft)	YTD (sq ft)	Completed (sq ft)	In Progress (sq ft)
Marysville-Yuba City ¹	575,928	3%	0.30%	0.30%	-	5,000	-	-
Region Total	18,220,971	100%	15.70%	15.30%	105,098	(83,915)	49,674	180,129

Source: Colliers International, The Knowledge Report, 2Q2007 Sacramento.

¹Market area tracked by Colliers International that most closely corresponds to Sutter County.

No new construction of either warehouse or industrial flex product is planned for the Marysville-Yuba City submarket, even as vacancy rates are lower than the region’s by almost 50 percent. As a major factor affecting industrial development feasibility in Sutter County, many sites will require costly road, drainage, and/or wastewater treatment infrastructure before new industrial parks can be built.

Because a significant development pipeline exists for both warehouse and flex products elsewhere in the region, the small size of Sutter County’s more warehouse-dominated industrial market appears to make it more sensitive to periodic slowdowns that have weakened the broader market. Real estate experts believe that lower demand for smaller lease sizes (those under 100,000 square feet in size) has signaled a change in this submarket, reflecting lower output in the building trades connected to residential homebuilding.

■ **REGULATORY CONTEXT**

There is no regulatory context for Section 2.2.2, Economic Development Trends and Conditions.

2.2.3 Agricultural Economics

■ **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the food and agriculture industry’s contribution to the Sutter County economy. The section covers the topics of soils and farmlands, characteristics of farms, agricultural production, employment in the food and agriculture industries and the regulatory setting specific to farming.

Sutter County has several intrinsic advantages that position it well for sustained agricultural activity well into the future. These include an abundant supply of water, a moderate, Mediterranean climate favorable to many types of crops, availability of transportation infrastructure connecting producers to the ocean and other ports, proximity to centers of research and development at the nearby cities of Davis and Biggs, and relatively flat lands. It is especially suited to the growing of several varieties of rice as well as tree fruits and nuts. Sutter County’s long history of agriculture has resulted in a concentration of agriculture and food processing expertise.

Success in agriculture depends upon knowledge of the markets in terms of demand for commodities and products combined with knowledge of the suitability of a particular area of land for those products. While an area’s suitability for particular crops is linked to its unique mix of soils, topography, water supply, temperature and latitude, proper management of these resources is key to success. Historical crop yields, usually available through agricultural

commissioners, county agents or universities, are the best source of information about crop suitability. However, use of appropriate agricultural technologies, whether used to change the soil chemistry, to increase the availability of water or to develop seeds better suited to available soils, has greatly expanded the array of crops suitable to any given area. For example, throughout the western United States, many once arid regions have been transformed into highly productive agricultural lands. In many ways, only market demand limits what can or should be grown within a given region.

■ **SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS**

- The California Department of Conservation (CDC) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) classified 88 percent (343,772 acres) of land in Sutter County as agricultural land (including Important Farmland and grazing land) in 2006. Of this area, 48 percent is classified as Prime Farmland and another 31 percent is classified as Farmland of Statewide Importance. As of 2007, there were about 64,302 acres in Williamson Act contracts in Sutter County.
- On average, Sutter County loses approximately 1,000 acres of agricultural land each year through conversion to other uses (Table 2.2-16). However, while the amount of agricultural land has decreased, the productivity has increased by over 25 percent.¹
- Agricultural production varies widely from year to year depending upon weather, market and other conditions. Total annual production was as low as \$264 million in 1999 and as high as \$358 million in 2006.
- Sutter County is ideally suited to the cultivation of rice given its flat topography and its abundant supply of water. Rice makes up 30 percent of Sutter County's total agricultural production value. In 2006, the value of rice production exceeded \$108 million.² Sutter County rice, as with most of the Sacramento Valley medium grain rice, is exported to Asia. Exports of rice are expected to rise slowly with the growth in global population.
- The second-highest value crop is dried plums, generating nearly \$68 million in 2006. Production of dried plums has declined in the last couple of years due to unfavorable weather in the spring, resulting in reduction of blooms.
- Over the last 14 years, the greatest improvement in production values has been in English walnuts, almonds, sunflower seeds, rice seed and apiary products. The greatest declines in production value have been in vegetable crops and wheat. The price of almonds has increased about 31 percent since 1992 and as a result the number of acres devoted to almonds has also increased. The value of almond production increased by 140 percent since 1992.
- Farm employment has remained fairly stable, taking into account both on-farm and agricultural services employment, farm employment. According to the California Employment Development Department, total farm-related employment was about 3,608 in 2006.

1 Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, California Department of Conservation, 2007.

2 2006 production value includes both rice and wild rice.

- It is estimated that there are approximately 12 food processing establishments in Sutter County. Of these, three are commercial bakeries and the others process fruits, meats, nuts and grain. Due to greater efficiencies in food processing, employment has dropped from 700 in 1992 to 570 in 2006.

■ EXISTING CONDITIONS

Sutter County's existing soils and farmland types, farm characteristics, types of crops produced, as well as farm and food processing plant employment trends are measures of the industry's contribution to the county's economy, as discussed in detail below.

Soils and Farmlands

The California Department of Conservation (CDC) has created maps for each county in the state that depict four categories of important farmlands: prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, unique farmland and farmland of local importance. Prime farmland is defined by the CDC as having soils that, "meet the physical and chemical criteria for Prime farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance as determined by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)".³ In addition, the land "has been used for irrigated agricultural production for some time during the four years prior to the Important Farmland Map date."

The CDC classified 88 percent of all land in Sutter County in 2006 as agricultural land (including Important Farmland and grazing land). As indicated in Table 2.2-16 below, the County encompasses 389,439 acres (607 square miles), of which approximately 165,817 acres is classified by the CDC as Prime Farmland and another 107,194 acres is classified as Farmland of Statewide Importance. In general, Prime Farmland is found in the valleys made by Sutter County's many rivers and sloughs, primarily between the Sacramento River and the Sutter Bypass. The Farmland of Statewide Importance is generally located east of the Bypass. Unique Farmland, located primarily within the boundaries of the Sutter Bypass, the Butte Sink and along the banks of the Feather River, makes up another 19,245 acres. There are no farmlands of local importance. These classifications depicting Sutter County Farmland are shown on Figure 4.2-3 Important Farmlands and Williamson Act Lands in Section 4.2 Agricultural, Soils, and Mineral Resources. In addition to cropland, there are 51,516 acres of grazing land located in the northwestern corner of the county, on the Sutter Buttes. The grazing land has limited agricultural value due to the steepness of the terrain.

Ranchettes

Ranchettes are residences built on large lots generally in rural or agricultural areas. The potential impact of ranchettes and large rural lots on agriculture has become an issue, as in most cases, they involve the subdivision of farmland or grazing land. Depending upon their location, ranchettes may replace previously productive farmland and/or create a restrictive impact on adjacent commercial agricultural operations. Issues of compatibility often arise between the ranchette residents and agricultural operators leading to complaints about dust and noise from farm equipment, odors from livestock and fertilizer use, and issues with other common agricultural practices. In addition, the market demand for ranchettes and large rural lots may lead to the inflation of adjacent agricultural land prices. These issues all pose economic and legal risks for commercial agriculture.

3 Factors considered by NRCS in qualifying soils include available water capacity or developed irrigation water supply; soil temperature range; acid-alkali balance; water table; soil sodium content; flooding; erodibility; permeability rate, rock fragment content and soil rooting depth.

Between 1998 and 2007, 49 ranchette projects have been approved resulting in 151 lots on 665 acres. The lots range in size from 3 to 10 acres. Most of these ranchettes are located south and west of Yuba City, outside its Sphere of Influence.

Trends

Approximately 1,075 (Table 2.2-16) acres of Important Farmland is lost each year in Sutter County amounting to approximately 5.3 percent of 1992's total acreage lost to other uses. In 1992, there were 308,598 acres of Important Farmland. By 2006, the acreage had dropped to 292,256. Still CDC's FMMP classified 88 percent of all land in Sutter County in 2006 as agricultural land (including Important Farmland and grazing land). Modern cultivation and harvesting processes have led to a doubling of productivity on a per acre basis. So, while the number of acres of Prime Farmland has decreased this has not resulted in a decrease in productivity. Since 1992, agricultural production value has increased by over 25 percent. This is partly due to an increase in prices for almonds and an increase in the acreage devoted to that crop.

In comparison, the state of California has increased its total Agricultural Land by about 21 percent since 1992, as shown in Table 2.2-17. Urban development pushes crop production into areas once used only for grazing, especially when prices for commodities increase.

Farm Characteristics

Every five years, the United States Department of Agriculture conducts a Census of Agriculture. The latest census was conducted in 2002. In that year, there were 1,391 farms on 371,964 acres in Sutter County. The average farm size was about 267 acres. In that year, there were 81 farms over 1,000 acres in size. Slightly less than half of all farms (625) were no larger than 49 acres.

Of the total number of farm operators, 68 percent (943) consider farming their primary occupation. The total value of farm products sold, based on a sample of farms, was \$250,620,000. 505 farms each sold more than \$100,000 in products in 2002. 264 farms received government payments amounting to \$9,982,000. According to the Census, there were 257 rice farms in 2002. Rice is one of several U.S. crops that benefits from price supports and import limits.

Farming requires significant assets, including land, buildings and machinery. In 2002, the estimated market value of land and buildings per farm, based on a sample of farms, averaged \$1,032,558. The average per farm value of equipment and machinery was \$118,498.

Agricultural Production

Sutter County farmers cultivate a wide range of crops, though tree fruits, tree nuts, other fruits, vegetables and grains, especially rice, make up the majority of total production. For most fruits, the harvesting season is early to mid-summer, while harvesting of tree nuts and rice occurs from late summer to early fall. Some vegetable crops can be harvested three or more times each year.

Table 2.2-16. Farmland Conversion, Sutter County, 1988-2006

Category	1988	1990	1992	1994	Acreage by Category			2000	2002	2004	2006	Average Annual Acreage Change	1988-2006 Net Acreage Changed	1998-2006 % Change
					1996	1998	2000							
Prime Farmland	170,907	170,754	170,714	170,554	170,171	170,229	168,493	166,019	166,202	165,817	-283	-5,090	-2.98%	
Farmland of Statewide Importance	116,559	115,773	114,777	114,027	113,441	113,680	111,505	109,760	107,742	107,194	-520	-9,365	-8.03%	
Unique Farmland	24,147	24,171	23,107	23,354	23,252	22,235	21,178	19,917	19,480	19,245	-272	-4,902	-20.30%	
Farmland of Local Importance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	
Important Farmland Subtotal	311,613	310,698	308,598	307,935	306,864	306,144	301,176	295,696	293,424	292,256	-1,075	-19,357	-6.21%	
Grazing Land	51,188	51,590	50,224	49,734	49,478	49,821	50,958	50,317	50,636	51,516	18	328	0.64%	
Agricultural Land Subtotal	362,801	362,288	358,822	357,669	356,342	355,965	352,134	346,013	344,060	343,772	-1,057	-19,029	-5.25%	
Urban and Built-Up Land	8,533	9,010	9,948	10,354	10,618	10,669	11,362	11,850	12,582	12,928	244	4,395	51.51%	
Other Land	16,327	16,333	18,861	19,610	20,718	21,044	24,060	29,693	30,914	30,856	807	14,529	88.99%	
Water Area	1,779	1,808	1,808	1,807	1,762	1,762	1,883	1,883	1,883	1,883	6	104	5.85%	
Total Area Inventoried	389,440	389,439	389,439	389,440	389,440	389,440	389,439	389,439	389,439	389,439	0	-1	0.00%	

Source: California Department of Conservation: Farmland Mapping & Monitoring Program, 2007.

Other Land -Land not included in any other mapping category. Common examples include low density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities; strip mines, borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than forty acres. Vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as Other Land.

Table 2.2-17. Farmland Conversion, State of California, 1992-2006

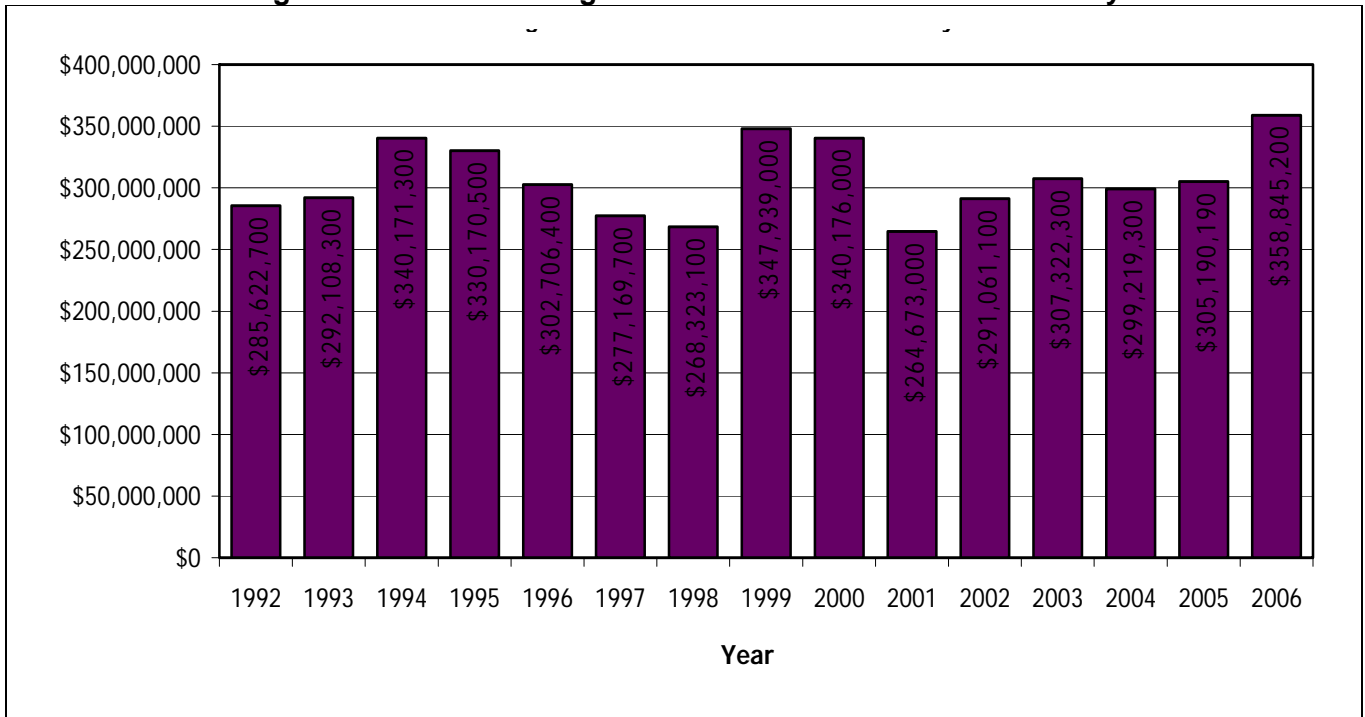
Category	Acreage By Category							California 1992-2004 % Change	Sutter County 1992-2004 % Change
	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004		
Prime Farmland	4,317,754	4,264,489	4,349,298	4,315,886	4,784,390	5,181,712	5,076,207	17.57%	-2.64%
Farmland of Statewide Importance	2,099,193	2,096,144	2,083,548	2,062,777	2,383,024	2,718,533	2,691,258	28.20%	-6.13%
Unique Farmland	1,026,444	1,015,914	1,052,303	1,074,796	1,224,328	1,266,779	1,275,092	24.22%	-15.70%
Farmland of Local Importance	2,121,237	2,138,219	2,757,845	2,766,149	3,036,514	2,991,655	2,854,727	34.58%	N/A
Important Farmland Subtotal	9,564,628	9,514,766	10,242,994	10,219,608	11,428,256	12,158,679	11,897,284	24.39%	-4.92%
Grazing Land	13,721,148	13,719,523	13,674,271	13,603,365	13,553,757	15,407,663	16,353,432	19.18%	0.82%
Agricultural Land Subtotal	23,285,776	23,234,289	23,917,265	23,822,973	24,982,013	27,566,342	28,250,716	21.32%	-4.11%
Urban and Built-Up Land	2,795,519	2,845,074	2,910,121	2,977,657	3,109,133	3,278,002	3,379,658	20.90%	26.48%
Other Land	11,093,594	11,093,988	11,563,955	11,589,368	11,812,562	13,749,040	12,969,764	16.91%	63.90%
Water Area	598,676	600,214	666,503	667,846	674,909	704,433	705,949	17.92%	4.15%
Total Area Inventoried	37,773,565	37,773,565	39,057,844	39,057,844	40,578,617	45,297,817	45,306,087	19.94%	0.00%

Source: California Department of Conservation: Farmland Mapping & Monitoring Program, 2007.

Other Land -Land not included in any other mapping category. Common examples include low density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities; strip mines, borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than forty acres. Vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as Other Land.

Annual agricultural production varies widely from year to year. Factors such as weather have catastrophic impacts on production. Anticipated market prices affect decision-making as to how much of each crop to plant and/or harvest. Over the last 14 years, annual production values ranged from a low of \$264,673,000 in 1999 to a high of \$358,845,200 for 2006.⁴ This total production value is 25.6 percent greater than that in 1992 as illustrated on Figure 2.2-1. This is partially due to decreased production of lower-valued commodities (such as cling peaches) and increased production of higher-valued commodities (such as almonds and sunflower seeds). For instance, the price of almonds increased by 83 percent and the production of almonds increased by 560 tons resulting in an increase in almond production value of 141 percent. Tables 2.2-18 through 2.2-21 below, tabulate agricultural production in 1992 and 2006 in terms of crop values, total production, price per unit and harvested acres.

Figure 2.2-1. Value of Agricultural Production in Sutter County



Tables 2.2-18 through 2.2-21 compare Sutter County crop values, production, prices, and acreage in 1992 and 2006. This data is based on Crop Reports published by the Sutter County Agricultural Commissioner’s office. Since production and crop values varies significantly from year to year, the presentation of data for 1992 and 2006 is not to show a trend, but to emphasize how fluid the food and agriculture industry really is. The industry must remain dynamic and respond to changes in the global marketplace. Expected demand and prices for each potential crop plays a big role in a farm operator’s decision as to what to plant and/or harvest.

Table 2.2-18 specifically shows the value of Sutter County crops in 1992 and 2006. During this time, the value of almond production increased by over 140 percent, while the production value of processing tomatoes decreased by nearly 60 percent. In 1992, vegetable crops comprised 17 percent of the total agricultural crop value, while in 2006, vegetables comprised only 6 percent of the total.

⁴ Sutter County Crop Report, 2006.

Table 2.2-18. Sutter County Crop Values, 1992 & 2006

	1992 Value	2006 Value	1992-2006 % Change
Fruits & Nuts	\$115,187,800	\$158,918,900	37.97%
Walnuts, English	\$22,328,300	\$44,782,800	100.57%
Almonds	\$4,268,300	\$10,286,000	140.99%
Prunes, Dried Plums	\$44,364,700	\$67,867,000	52.98%
Peaches, Cling	\$34,821,200	\$27,360,800	-21.42%
All other Fruits and Nuts ¹	\$9,405,300	\$8,622,300	-8.33%
Field Crops	\$94,164,000	\$130,626,000	38.72%
Rice ²	\$69,978,900	\$108,905,000	55.63%
Wheat	\$5,995,800	\$458,500	-92.35%
All other Field Crops ³	\$18,189,300	\$21,262,500	16.90%
Vegetable Crops	\$48,115,800	\$21,564,300	-55.18%
Honeydew Melons	\$12,129,500	\$7,065,400	-41.75%
Tomatoes, Processing	\$30,474,900	\$12,266,800	-59.75%
Watermelons	\$1,327,200	\$594,800	-55.18%
All other Vegetables ⁴	\$4,184,200	\$1,637,300	-60.87%
Seed Crops	\$9,956,100	\$14,951,900	50.18%
Rice Seed	\$2,103,900	\$9,031,200	329.26%
Sunflower Seed	\$336,100	\$2,548,300	658.20%
All other Seed Crops ⁵	\$7,516,100	\$3,372,400	-55.13%
Nursery Products⁶	\$6,150,600	\$12,736,500	107.08%
Fruit and Nut Trees and Vines	\$5,481,000	\$12,644,700	130.70%
Apiary Products	\$725,500	\$3,973,400	447.68%
Livestock Products	\$13,983,600	\$16,074,200	14.95%
Cattle & Calves	\$11,174,500	\$10,854,000	-2.87%
Sheep & Lambs	\$1,352,400	\$1,509,600	11.62%
All other Livestock Products ⁷	\$1,456,700	\$3,615,700	148.21%
Total	\$288,283,400	\$358,845,200	24.48%

Source: Sutter County Agricultural Commissioner, 2006.

¹Includes Pears, Kiwifruit, Persimmons, Apples, Apricots, Bushberries (Blackberries, Boysenberries & Raspberries), Cherries, Chestnut, Feijoa/Guava, Figs, Grapefruit, Grapes, Jujube, Lemon, Limes, Nectarines, Olives, Oranges, Peaches (Freestone), Pecan, Pistachios, Plum, Pomegranates, Strawberries, Tangerines, Walnuts (Black), and other miscellaneous fruit and nut crops of a limited number of growers.

²Includes rice and wild rice.

³Includes Dry Beans (Lima, Black Bean, Black Turtle Bean, Canerio, Cranberry, Garbanzo, Kidney, Pink), Corn, Hay, Oats, Pasture, Safflower, Sorghum, Straw, Cotton, Popcorn and other miscellaneous field crops of a limited number of growers.

⁴Asparagus, Basil, Beans (Green String), Beet, Bok Choy, Broccoli, Cabbage, Cantaloupe, Carrot, Chard (Swiss/Red), Cilantro, Corn (Sweet), Cucumber, Kiakon, Eggplant, Garlic, Gourds, Herbs, Jicama, Lettuce, Melons (Mixed), Okra, Onion, Peas (Blackeye), Peppers (Bell, Red Chili, Yellow Wax), Potatoes, Pumpkin, Squash, Tomatoes (Greenhouse, Fresh), Tomatillo and other miscellaneous vegetables of a limited number of growers.

⁵Also includes Dry Beans, Cantaloupe & Honeydew, Cucumber, Pumpkin and Squash, Safflower, Watermelon, Wheat, Cabbage, Carrot, Cauliflower, Celery, Gourd, Mustard, Onion, Pepper, Radish, Tomato, Triticale-Juan, Vetch and other seed crops of a limited number of growers.

⁶Also includes Ornamental Trees, Shrubs and other Nursery Stock.

⁷Includes Angora Fur, Aquaculture, Fish Bait, chickens, Chicken Eggs, Ducks, Geese, Goats, Milk (Market), Hogs, Partridge, Pheasants, Pigeons, Rabbits, Rabbit Hides, Turkeys and other miscellaneous livestock and poultry of a limited number of growers.

Table 2.2-19. Sutter County Crop Production (Tons), 1992 & 2006

	1992 Production (Tons)	2006 Production (Tons)	1992 -2006 % Change
Fruit & Nut Crops	243,999	193,202	-20.82%
Walnuts, English	17,444	26,374	51.19%
Almonds	1,781	2,341	31.44%
Prunes, Dried Plums	43,666	51,297	17.48%
Peaches, Cling	160,311	108,325	-32.43%
All other Fruits and Nuts ¹	20,797	4,865	-76.61%
Field Crops	555,832	560,876	2.01%
Rice ²	312,002	385,884	23.68%
Wheat	55,388	3,695	-93.33%
All other Field Crops ³	188,442	171,297	-9.10%
Vegetable Crops	793,512	241,442	-69.57%
Honeydew Melons	50,004	26,874	-46.26%
Tomatoes, Processing	661,778	209,760	-68.30%
Watermelons	11,721	2,632	-77.54%
All other Vegetables ⁴	70,009	2,176	-96.89%
Seed Crops	33,611	30,445	-9.42%
Rice Seed	9,563	25,087	162.33%
Sunflower Seed	365	1,416	287.95%
All other Seed Crops ⁵	23,683	3,942	-83.36%
Nursery Products⁶	n/a	n/a	
Fruit and Nut Trees and Vines			
Apiary Products	n/a	n/a	
Livestock Products	n/a	n/a	
Cattle & Calves			
Sheep & Lambs			
All other Livestock Products ⁷			
Total	1,626,954	1,025,965	-36.94%

Source: Sutter County Agricultural Commissioner, 2006.

¹Includes Pears, Kiwifruit, Persimmons, Apples, Apricots, Bushberries (Blackberries, Boysenberries & Raspberries), Cherries, Chestnut, Feijoa/Guava, Figs, Grapefruit, Grapes, Jujube, Lemon, Limes, Nectarines, Olives, Oranges, Peaches (Freestone), Pecan, Pistachios, Plum, Pomegranates, Strawberries, Tangerines, Walnuts (Black), and other miscellaneous fruit and nut crops of a limited number of growers.

²Includes rice and wild rice.

³Includes Dry Beans (Lima, Black Bean, Black Turtle Bean, Canerio, Cranberry, Garbanzo, Kidney, Pink), Corn, Hay, Oats, Pasture, Safflower, Sorghum, Straw, Cotton, Popcorn and other miscellaneous field crops of a limited number of growers.

⁴Asparagus, Basil, Beans (Green String), Beet, Bok Choy, Broccoli, Cabbage, Cantaloupe, Carrot, Chard (Swiss/Red), Cilantro, Corn (Sweet), Cucumber, Kiakon, Eggplant, Garlic, Gourds, Herbs, Jicama, Lettuce, Melons (Mixed), Okra, Onion, Peas (Blackeye), Peppers (Bell, Red Chili, Yellow Wax), Potatoes, Pumpkin, Squash, Tomatoes (Greenhouse, Fresh), Tomatillo and other miscellaneous vegetables of a limited number of growers.

⁵Also includes: Dry Beans, Cantaloupe & Honeydew, Cucumber, Pumpkin and Squash, Safflower, Watermelon, Wheat, Cabbage, Carrot, Cauliflower, Celery, Gourd, Mustard, Onion, Pepper, Radish, Tomato, Triticale-Juan, Vetch and other seed crops of a limited number of growers.

⁶Also includes Ornamental Trees, Shrubs and other Nursery Stock.

⁷Includes: Angora Fur, Aquaculture, Fish Bait, chickens, Chicken Eggs, Ducks, Geese, Goats, Milk (Market), Hogs, Partridge, Pheasants, Pigeons, Rabbits, Rabbit Hides, Turkeys and other miscellaneous livestock and poultry of a limited number of growers.

Table 2.2-20. Sutter County Crop Prices Per Unit (\$/ton), 1992 & 2006

	1992 Price Per Unit	2006 Price Per Unit	1992-2006 % Change
Fruit & Nut Crops			
Walnuts, English	1,280.00	1,697.99	32.66%
Almonds	2,397.00	4,393.85	83.31%
Prunes, Dried Plums	1,016.00	1,323.02	30.22%
Peaches, Cling	217.00	252.58	16.40%
All other Fruits and Nuts ¹	-	-	
Field Crops			
Rice ²	210.00	275.60	31.24%
Wheat	108.00	124.09	14.90%
All other Field Crops ³	-	-	
Vegetable Crops			
Honeydew Melons	243.00	262.91	8.19%
Tomatoes, Processing	46.00	58.48	27.13%
Watermelons	113.00	226.00	100.00%
All other Vegetables ⁴	-	-	
Seed Crops⁵			
Rice Seed	220.00	360.00	63.64%
Sunflower Seeds	921.00	1,800.00	95.44%
Nursery Products⁶			
Fruit and Nut Trees and Vines	n/a	n/a	
Apiary Products			
	n/a	n/a	
Livestock Products			
Cattle & Calves	n/a	n/a	
Sheep & Lambs			
All other Livestock Products ⁷			

Source: Sutter County Agricultural Commissioner, 2006.

¹Includes Pears, Kiwifruit, Persimmons, Apples, Apricots, Bushberries (Blackberries, Boysenberries & Raspberries), Cherries, Chestnut, Feijoa/Guava, Figs, Grapefruit, Grapes, Jujube, Lemon, Limes, Nectarines, Olives, Oranges, Peaches (Freestone), Pecan, Pistachios, Plum, Pomegranates, Strawberries, Tangerines, Walnuts (Black), and other miscellaneous fruit and nut crops of a limited number of growers.

²Includes rice only, does not include wild rice.

³Includes Dry Beans (Lima, Black Bean, Black Turtle Bean, Canerio, Cranberry, Garbanzo, Kidney, Pink), Corn, Hay, Oats, Pasture, Safflower, Sorghum, Straw, Cotton, Popcorn and other miscellaneous field crops of a limited number of growers.

⁴Asparagus, Basil, Beans (Green String), Beet, Bok Choy, Broccoli, Cabbage, Cantaloupe, Carrot, Chard (Swiss/Red), Cilantro, Corn (Sweet), Cucumber, Kiakon, Eggplant, Garlic, Gourds, Herbs, Jicama, Lettuce, Melons (Mixed), Okra, Onion, Peas (Blackeye), Peppers (Bell, Red Chili, Yellow Wax), Potatoes, Pumpkin, Squash, Tomatoes (Greenhouse, Fresh), Tomatillo and other miscellaneous vegetables of a limited number of growers.

⁵Also includes: Dry Beans, Cantaloupe & Honeydew, Cucumber, Pumpkin and Squash, Safflower, Watermelon, Wheat, Cabbage, Carrot, Cauliflower, Celery, Gourd, Mustard, Onion, Pepper, Radish, Tomato, Triticale-Juan, Vetch and other seed crops of a limited number of growers.

⁶Also includes Ornamental Trees, Shrubs and other Nursery Stock.

⁷Includes: Angora Fur, Aquaculture, Fish Bait, chickens, Chicken Eggs, Ducks, Geese, Goats, Milk (Market), Hogs, Partridge, Pheasants, Pigeons, Rabbits, Rabbit Hides, Turkeys and other miscellaneous livestock and poultry of a limited number of growers.

Table 2.2-21. Sutter County Harvested Acres, 1992 & 2006

	1992 Acres	2006 Acres	1992-2006 % Change
Fruit & Nut Crops	46,519	50,603	8.78%
Walnuts, English	13,316	17,351	30.30%
Almonds	3,561	4,682	31.48%
Prunes, Dried Plums	19,581	19,654	0.37%
Peaches, Cling	8,068	7,782	-3.54%
All other Fruits and Nuts ¹	1,993	1,134	-43.10%
Field Crops	203,896	208,340	2.02%
Rice ²	76,614	92,984	21.37%
Wheat	20,514	2,415	-88.23%
All other Field Crops ³	106,768	112,941	2.06%
Vegetable Crops	30,543	10,074	-67.02%
Honeydew Melons	5,171	2,557	-50.55%
Tomatoes, Processing	19,790	6,900	-65.13%
Watermelons	607	81	-86.66%
All other Vegetable Crops ⁴	4,975	536	-89.23%
Seed Crops	18,572	17,057	-8.16%
Rice Seed	2,277	6,672	193.02%
Sunflower Seeds	666	4,383	558.11%
All other Seed Crops ⁵	15,629	6,002	-61.60%
Nursery Products⁶	n/a	256	
Apiary Products	n/a	162,527	
Livestock Products	n/a	n/a	
Total	299,530	286,330	-4.41%

Source: Sutter County Agricultural Commissioner, 2006.

¹Includes Pears, Kiwifruit, Persimmons, Apples, Apricots, Bushberries (Blackberries, Boysenberries & Raspberries), Cherries, Chestnut, Feijoa/Guava, Figs, Grapefruit, Grapes, Jujube, Lemon, Limes, Nectarines, Olives, Oranges, Peaches (Freestone), Pecan, Pistachios, Plum, Pomegranates, Strawberries, Tangerines, Walnuts (Black), and other miscellaneous fruit and nut crops of a limited number of growers.

²Includes rice and wild rice.

³Includes Dry Beans (Lima, Black Bean, Black Turtle Bean, Canerio, Cranberry, Garbanzo, Kidney, Pink), Corn, Hay, Oats, Pasture, Safflower, Sorghum, Straw, Cotton, Popcorn and other miscellaneous field crops of a limited number of growers.

⁴Asparagus, Basil, Beans (Green String), Beet, Bok Choy, Broccoli, Cabbage, Cantaloupe, Carrot, Chard (Swiss/Red), Cilantro, Corn (Sweet), Cucumber, Kiakon, Eggplant, Garlic, Gourds, Herbs, Jicama, Lettuce, Melons (Mixed), Okra, Onion, Peas (Blackeye), Peppers (Bell, Red Chili, Yellow Wax), Potatoes, Pumpkin, Squash, Tomatoes (Greenhouse, Fresh), Tomatillo and other miscellaneous vegetables of a limited number of growers.

⁵Also includes: Dry Beans, Cantaloupe & Honeydew, Cucumber, Pumpkin and Squash, Safflower, Watermelon, Wheat, Cabbage, Carrot, Cauliflower, Celery, Gourd, Mustard, Onion, Pepper, Radish, Tomato, Triticale-Juan, Vetch and other seed crops of a limited number of growers.

⁶Also includes Ornamental Trees, Shrubs and other Nursery Stock.

Table 2.2-19 shows the amount of crops produced in 1992 and 2006 in Sutter County. During this time frame, there was an approximate 32 percent decrease of cling peach production and a 93 percent decrease in wheat production. There was a 162 percent increase in rice seed production and 288 percent increase in sunflower seed production.

Table 2.2-20 shows the crop prices per unit in Sutter County. Almonds, watermelon, and sunflower seeds experienced the greatest increase in price between 1992 and 2006, while honeydew melons, wheat, and cling peaches had the least.

The amount of harvested acres in Sutter County is shown in Table 2.2-21. Farm operators planted fewer acres of vegetables and more acres of tree nuts (walnuts and almonds) and seeds in 1992 when compared to 2006. The acreage of sunflower seeds increased by 558 percent between 1992 and 2006.

Major Crops

As shown in Tables 2.2-18 and 2.2-19, rice, walnuts, almonds, and dried plums have the highest crop values and production volume in Sutter County. These crops are discussed in more detail below.

Rice

Sutter County produces about 386,000 tons of rice annually as shown in Table 2.2-22, about one-fifth of all California- grown rice. Sacramento Valley rice is primarily medium grain rice. The United States produces 10 million tons of rice, mostly in the Mississippi Valley states of Arkansas, Missouri, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. California’s rice crop represents one-fifth of U.S. production. Americans consume about 5 million metric tons of rice annually, including aromatic rice such as basmati and jasmine, imported from India, Pakistan and Thailand. More than half the total rice grown and processed in the U.S. is exported. California rice exports go primarily to eastern Asian countries including Japan while long-grain rice grown in the southern Mississippi Valley states is exported to Central and South America.

Table 2.2-22. Rice Production (tons), 1992-2006

Year	Sutter County (tons)	California (tons)	United States (tons)	Sutter Share of CA Percent
1992	309,876	1,674,500	8,982,900	18.5%
1993	333,166	1,813,550	7,805,500	18.4%
1994	456,521	2,061,200	9,888,950	22.1%
1995	427,202	1,767,600	8,693,550	24.2%
1996	349,365	1,872,950	8,566,050	18.7%
1997	378,027	2,127,300	9,149,600	17.8%
1998	321,103	1,634,900	9,402,550	19.6%
1999	375,326	1,834,500	10,301,350	20.5%
2000	470,666	2,176,050	9,543,600	21.6%
2001	338,069	1,924,500	10,652,250	17.6%
2002	427,210	2,149,450	10,548,000	19.9%
2003	404,585	1,951,800	9,994,850	20.7%
2004	522,075	2,537,950	11,618,100	20.6%
2005	366,754	1,941,800	11,161,750	18.9%
2006	385,884	2,002,000	9,686,800	19.3%

Source: United States Department of Agriculture: National Agricultural Statistics Services; ADE.

It is expected that expansion of domestic consumption of rice will be slow, slightly faster than population growth. In general, exports will remain steady as well, though likely to grow slightly with global population growth.

Walnuts

California's production of English Walnuts increased by 115 percent between 1992 and 2006. Sutter County's share of California's total annual production of English Walnuts varies from about 10 percent to 6 percent, as shown in Table 2.2-23. A nearly 33 percent increase in the price paid for English Walnuts combined with a 50 percent increase in walnut production in

Table 2.2-23. Walnut Production (tons), 1992-2006

Year	Sutter County (tons)	California (tons)	Sutter Share of CA Percent
1992	17,444	190,037	9.2%
1993	31,177	304,951	10.2%
1994	24,095	260,437	9.3%
1995	21,366	246,789	8.7%
1996	18,152	215,586	8.4%
1997	22,624	313,033	7.2%
1998	17,887	256,904	7.0%
1999	28,412	309,888	9.2%
2000	21,350	260,206	8.2%
2001	26,433	331,888	8.0%
2002	26,387	313,117	8.4%
2003	22,637	387,449	5.8%
2004	29,308	370,160	7.9%
2005	33,240	416,714	8.0%
2006	26,374	409,176	6.4%

Source: United States Department of Agriculture: National Agricultural Statistics Services.

Sutter County since 1992, resulted in a 100 percent increase in production value, rising from \$22.3 million in 1992 to \$44.7 million in 2006.

It is anticipated that walnut exports will decrease in 2007, by nearly 25 percent.

Almonds

California produces most of the world's almonds. The State's almond production rose 109 percent since 1992, increasing by over 306,000 tons in 14 years. Sutter County's share of the State's total annual almond production has remained below 1 percent since 1992, as shown in Table 2.2-24. Though almond production increased only 31 percent, total crop value increased by over 140 percent due to an 83 percent increase in the price paid for almonds.

Table 2.2-24. Almond Production (Tons), 1992-2006

Year	Sutter County (tons)	California (tons)	Sutter Share of CA Percent
1992	1,781	279,870	0.6%
1993	2,461	282,628	0.9%
1994	2,618	388,736	0.7%
1995	1,045	194,931	0.5%
1996	1,629	280,448	0.6%
1997	2,450	416,852	0.6%
1998	2,738	292,933	0.9%
1999	3,894	458,697	0.8%
2000	3,385	366,234	0.9%
2001	3,006	453,809	0.7%
2002	2,837	563,957	0.5%
2003	3,913	532,789	0.7%
2004	3,864	593,821	0.7%
2005	1,985	504,280	0.4%
2006	2,341	585,896	0.4%

Source: United States Department of Agriculture: National Agricultural Statistics Services.

The outlook for almonds is good. It is expected that the 2007/2008 crop of almonds will be 19 percent larger than in 2006. The number of bearing acres has increased and the yield per acre has also increased. Almond exports are expected to increase by 3 percent.

Plums for Drying

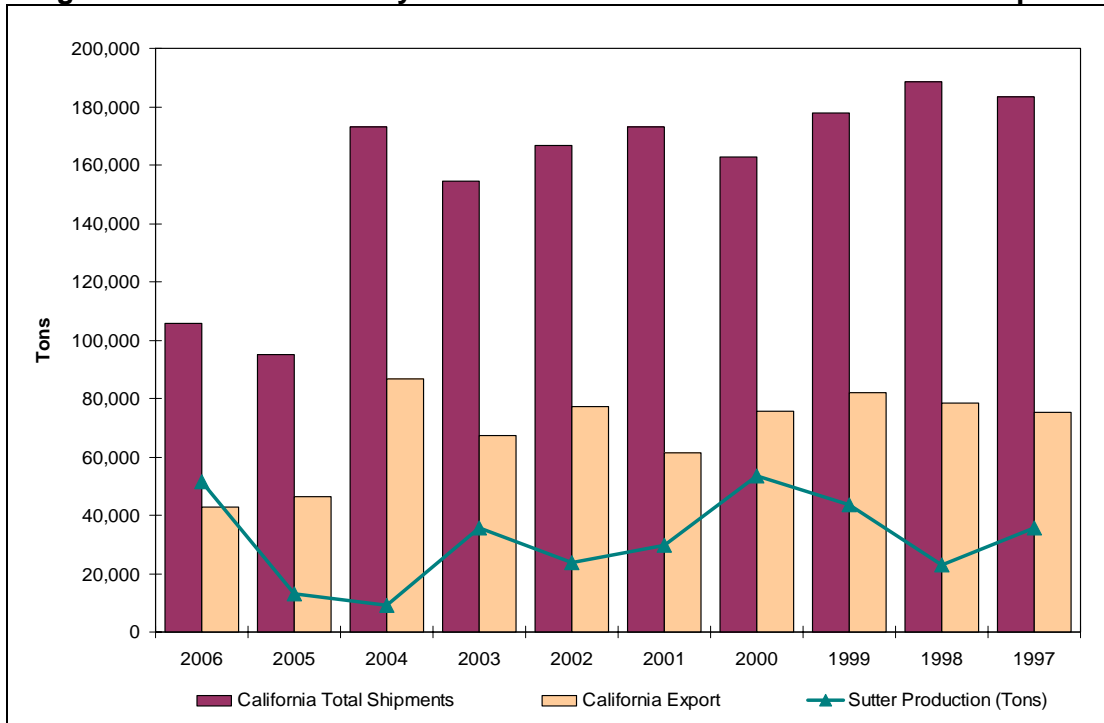
California’s production of dried plums decreased by over 77,000 tons since 1992, as shown in Table 2.2-25. Between 40 and 50 percent of the state’s dried plum production is exported to other countries. Sutter County’s production of dried plums has varied widely in the last 10 years, ranging from a low of 9,206 tons in 2004 to a high of 53,286 tons in 2000 (Figure 2.2-2). The total crop value for plums increased by nearly 53 percent since 1992, partially due to a 30 percent increase in price.

Table 2.2-25. Total Shipments, 2005-2006 Crop Year California Dried Plums

Year	California Total Shipments	California Export	Sutter Production (tons)
1997	183,252	75,167	35,820
1998	188,596	78,405	22,865
1999	177,947	82,066	43,542
2000	162,911	75,734	53,286
2001	172,936	61,258	29,805
2002	166,930	77,260	23,861
2003	154,508	67,145	35,688
2004	173,042	86,662	9,206
2005	95,060	46,388	12,900
2006	105,583	42,899	51,297

Source: United States Department of Agriculture: National Agricultural Statistics Services.

Figure 2.2-2. Sutter County and California Dried Plum Production & Exports



Source: ADE, 2007; USDA, NASS; Sutter County Crop Reports.

The forecast for 2007 prune (dried plums) production is down by 47 percent from 2006 due to warm temperatures in the spring that shortened the bloom period, resulting in a light fruit set. Reduced production has a significant impact on processors as California’s entire prune crop is sold to processors.

Trade competition will remain strong for all agricultural products as expanding production in other countries limits expansion opportunities for U.S. growers.

Employment

Farm Employment

Farm employment decreased from about 2,600 in 1992 to about 2,200 in 2006, a decrease of about 18 percent.⁵ At the same time, employment in agricultural services, including farm labor contractors, increased from about 900 to about 1,400. As a result, total farm-related employment actually remained constant over the last 14 years, as shown in Table 2.2-26. According to EDD, in 2006 there were 442 farming operations, including animal production.⁶

5 Employment data from the Employment Development Department through the ES202 employment insurance program does not usually include farm proprietors. Therefore, this data may underestimate total on-farm employment.

6 This may underestimate total number of farms, as sole proprietors and their farms may not be included.

Table 2.2-26. Food and Agriculture Cluster Employment Growth and Concentration, Sutter County

Description	1992 Employment	2005 Employment	Change in Study Area Employment, 1992 to 2005	% Change in Study Area Employment, 1992 to 2005	Location Quotient 1992	Location Quotient 2005	Shift-Share
TOTAL, ALL INDUSTRIES	17,058	22,481	5423	31.79%	1.00	1.00	7.86%
Crop Production	2,667	2,167	-500	-18.75%	25.6	19.4	-19.32%
Animal Production	0	43	43		0.0	1.0	
Agricultural Services	928	1,398	470	50.65%	17.8	21.3	32.49%
PROCESSING							
Meat Product Processing	21	0	-21	-100.00%	0.2	0.0	-114.77%
Fruit & Vegetable Processing	723	570	-153	-21.16%	17.4	15.9	-2.64%
Processed Grains & Bakeries	10	20	10	100.00%	0.1	0.3	107.81%
Processed Nuts	31	11	-20	-64.52%	1.2	0.3	-79.11%
SUPPLIERS							
Processing Machinery & Supplies	66	60	-6	-9.09%	0.2	0.2	-0.23%
Warehousing & Distribution	82	65	-17	-20.73%	0.8	0.4	-74.70%
TOTAL: Food & Agriculture	4,446	4,269	-177	-3.98%	5.2	4.6	-5.08%

Source: 1992 & 2005 Minnesota Implan Group; ADE, Inc.

Food Processing Employment

Throughout all regions of the globe and across all product types, the food processing industry has re-invented itself. Older, labor-intensive, plant and equipment has been replaced with newer automated equipment that requires fewer, but more highly skilled workers. The result is a near doubling of productivity with fewer than half the workers. The marked drop in employment has often, mistakenly, been associated with the demise of the food processing industry as a whole. Looking only at employment levels tells only part of the story. Tracking sales and productivity, in addition to employment within the entire food cluster, which includes suppliers as well as processors, paints the more accurate picture. While employment in food manufacturing has decreased, employment among suppliers, such as packaging, engineering, logistics, ingredient manufacturers, machinery and equipment and labor contractors has increased. As in other industries, food processors are purchasing specialized services and supplies from other companies as a means of focusing on their specialization, food manufacturing. This allows them the flexibility to respond quickly to changing consumer tastes and market demands.

While it is true that some communities have been economically devastated by plant closures, others continue to thrive. The reasons are many. In most cases, it is a result of new technologies that allow a doubling of production with half the workforce. In others, it is the need to reduce transportation costs by locating closer to growing markets. For instance, many California food manufacturers have opened processing plants on the East Coast to be closer to their largest market. For still others, it is the need to locate closer to their suppliers. For instance, as farming in Santa Clara and Los Angeles Counties was pushed out by rapid

urbanization, processing plants followed the farmers to the Central Valley, where farming and processing were more advantageous due to irrigation and low wages. The low wages allowed processors to merely transfer old equipment from coastal cities to Central Valley towns.

On the other hand, recent technological innovations allowing for increased productivity has been forced by the growth of emerging markets. As developing countries, including China, India, Chile, Argentina, Eastern European countries and Southeast Asian countries, increase their purchasing power and begin to build their own ability to export, they pose greater competition to U.S. manufacturers. For instance, the United State's largest trade partners, Canada, Mexico, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, United Kingdom, Germany and others, now have other suppliers for their food imports. More and more, Japan is purchasing its fruits and vegetables from China; Germany and the United Kingdom are purchasing both fresh and processed fruits and vegetables from emerging Eastern European nations. As a result, the market for American fresh and processed foods is shrinking. To compete with processed foods from these emerging markets, U.S. manufacturers have had to apply innovative processing technologies as well as innovative marketing approaches. These innovations have led to reduced costs of inputs on the one hand, and increased prices for finished goods on the other, leading to higher profitability.

Due to the increased reliance on innovation, both in technology and in marketing, food processing companies tend to be headquartered close to centers of research, which in the food industry are in New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Michigan and Minnesota. San Francisco and Los Angeles are centers of innovation for wine, fruit and vegetable marketing.

Table 2.2-26 depicts the change in employment, as well as in employment concentration, for the Sutter County food industry between 1992 and 2005. As with other regions within California and across the United States, Sutter County has seen a decline in food processing employment. Employment in the processing of fruits has declined from about 700 in 1992 to 570 in 2005. There are about 12 food processing establishments in Sutter County. Of these, three are bakeries and the remainder process fruits, animal products or grains. The largest food manufacturer, Sunsweet, processes and packages dried plums, which are exported to countries throughout the world. Other fruit processors include Valley View Packing Company and Wilbur Packing.

Employment in the food cluster⁷ has declined by 4 percent between 1992 and 2005 from 4,446 to 4,269. Likewise, employment concentration, measured by the location quotient⁸, has dropped from 5.2 to 4.6 in that same time period.

■ REGULATORY CONTEXT

This section describes two major regulatory policies used by Sutter County to identify and manage the use of Agricultural Lands within its jurisdiction. They include Williamson Act contracts and zoning.

7 An industry cluster is a geographic concentration of complementary, competing and interdependent firms. The food and agriculture cluster includes growers, processors, shippers and suppliers, including coolers, transportation, labor contractors, packaging, marketing and engineering. Table 11 includes employment for all firms in the food and agriculture cluster.

8 Location quotient is a means of measuring a region's specialization in a particular industry or cluster relative to the nation as a whole. A location quotient of 4.6 means that food and agriculture employment in Sutter County is 4.6 times more concentrated than at the national level. It is the ratio of an industry cluster's employment as a share of the region's total employment over the nation's employment in that cluster as a share of total national employment.

Williamson Act

The California Legislature passed the Williamson Act (The California Land Conservation Act) in 1965 as an incentive to encourage land owners to keep agricultural land in production. So far, a little over 16 million of the state's 29 million acres of farm and ranch land are currently protected under the Williamson Act.⁹ With the Act, private landowners contract with counties and cities to voluntarily restrict land to agricultural and open-space uses. The incentive is a property tax assessment rate consistent with their actual use (agriculture) rather than the land's potential market value. This is especially worthwhile to owners of land that is close to existing urban development. Agricultural landowners could save 20 to 75 percent in property tax liability each year depending upon the location of their parcels.

To be eligible for this incentive, a property owner's parcel(s) must be located within the boundaries of a locally-designated agricultural preserve. An agricultural preserve must be at least 100 acres. Property owners with less than 100 acres may combine with neighbors to form a preserve as long as the properties are contiguous. The minimum term of a Williamson Act contract is 10 years, but local jurisdictions may require a longer term up to 20 years. Contracts renew automatically each year unless the land owner files a notice of non-renewal. A contract may be cancelled at any time, but there are penalties for doing so. The local jurisdiction could assess a cancellation fee of 12.5 percent of the current fair market value of the land for which the contract is to be cancelled.

As of 2007, there were 64,302 acres in Williamson Act contracts in Sutter County, which are shown on Figure 4.2-3 Important Farmlands and Williamson Act Lands in Section 4.2, Agricultural, Soils, and Mineral Resources.¹⁰

Sutter County Zoning Ordinance

The Sutter County Zoning Ordinance has five distinct zoning districts for Agriculture as well as an Agriculture Combining District used to provide additional requirements in other districts, such as residential districts.

Upland Agricultural District

This district was intended to apply to the unique mountainous and foothill areas of the County in which light agriculture and grazing are desirable predominant uses. This area is located in the Sutter Buttes, a place of unique cultural, historical and geologic significance. Permitted uses include limited farming and ranching and non-commercial processing. The minimum lot size is 80 acres.

Agricultural Preserve Residential and Agricultural Preserve Districts

This district is intended to enable clustering of residences within agricultural zones so as to keep as much of the remaining parcel in agricultural uses. The zoning designation is to be applied to subdivision requests of agriculturally zoned land that propose parcels for residential use that are less than the minimum designated parcel size while still meeting overall General Plan density requirements for the subject parcel. The residential parcels are designated as Agriculture

9 California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, Questions & Answers Fact Sheet, 2007. www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/lca.

10 This is the latest data available from the California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection. www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/ca.

Preserve Residential (APR) while the remaining agricultural land is designated as Agricultural Preserve.

The residential parcels should not be more than 2 acres unless the Environmental Health Division deems that a larger lot is required for healthy sewage disposal. The remaining agricultural land must be at least 20 or 80 acres depending on the underlying General Plan Designation.

Exclusive Agricultural District

The Exclusive Agriculture District is intended to be applied in the fertile valley and foothill areas of the County in which intensive agriculture is and should continue to be the predominant land use, and in which the protection of this use is highly valued by the community. This district is consistent with the AG-20 or AG-80 General Plan land use designation.

Permitted agricultural uses in this district include farming, ranching and wholesale nurseries. Commercial processing and feed yards are permitted with a use permit only. The minimum lot size is either 20 acres or 80 acres, depending upon the underlying General Plan designation.

General Agricultural District

The General Agricultural District is intended to provide areas for general farming as well as low intensity uses, such as agricultural processing plants, apiaries, farming, ranching and nurseries. Use permits are required for many additional uses that would not be allowed in any of the other agricultural districts. These include farm labor family housing, feed yards, commercial agricultural equipment repair services, farm supply and equipment sales, agricultural transportation and warehousing services facilities, veterinarians, kennels, retail nurseries and other agricultural-related commercial activities. The minimum lot size is either 20 or 80 acres, depending upon the underlying General Plan designation.

Food Processing, Agricultural and Recreation Combining District (FPARC)

The FPARC district provides an area where food processing and associated industries, together with appurtenant functions thereof, may locate outside the urban centers and in close proximity to recreation and open space areas in a manner which minimizes adverse environmental impacts and protects and enhances agricultural productivity.

Ranchettes

The Ranchette District may be applied to areas located outside of the Yuba City and Live Oak sphere's of influence, which are suitable for rural residential and small scale farming operations. Allowed densities within the Ranchette zoning district range between 0.1 to 1/3 dwelling unit per acre (3-10 acre parcel size). Ranchette zoning allows a smaller than 20-acre parcel to be divided into four or fewer parcels.

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