

Planning for Agriculture

Saving Farms and Ranches
in Fast Growing Communities





Saving the land that sustains us

- Protecting the best land
- Planning for agriculture
- Keeping the land healthy





Farming on the Edge: findings

- Every single minute of every day, America loses two acres of farmland
- We lost farm and ranch land 51% faster in the 90s than in the 80s
- We're losing our best land – most fertile and productive – the fastest





Farming on the Edge



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Strategic Ranchland



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Land Prices Increasing

- Rural land is cheap for developers
- More development increases land prices
- This makes it difficult for farmer to enter or expand
- Tougher to pass land to the next generation

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Property Taxes Are Increasing

- New residents demand expanded services
- These services = higher property taxes
- Large landowners bear disproportionate burden of new taxes





Non-Farm Residents Bring Conflicts

- Increase in new neighbors and conflicts
- Remaining operations become fragmented by development
- New residents resent sights, sound and smell of production agriculture





Impact On The Larger Community

- Decreasing number of farms, ranches and operators
- Increased development of farmland
- Weakened rural economies
- Urban public divorced from agriculture





So what?





Natural Resource Protection

- Water quality:
erosion control,
floodplains,
groundwater
recharge,
wastewater filters
- Wildlife habitat:
food and cover





Heritage and Community Character

- Scenic amenities
- Rural heritage
- Community and tourist appreciation of farming





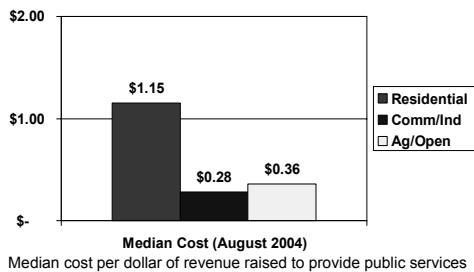
Fiscal and Economic Stability

- Agriculture contributes directly to the local economy: on-farm production and input businesses
- Privately owned agricultural land generates more in taxes than it uses in services



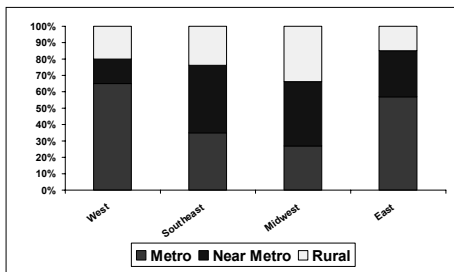


Cost of Community Services Studies





Farming is a Local Industry



Planning for Agriculture,
not just around it

- Vision
- Land use policies
- Economic development programs

Land Use Comprehensive Plans

- Agriculture's role in the county
- Existing and planned water and sewer
- Locating public facilities: schools, industrial parks
- Setbacks and regulations for farm-based businesses
- Outreach to the farming community



Agricultural Protection Zoning

- Prohibits high number of residential units per acre
- Limits non-farm uses
- Requires small building envelopes for houses
- Restricts subdivision of land into parcels too small to farm
- Equity issues: Farmers pay for public good?





Purchase of Development Rights

- Landowners compensated for permanently restricting development
- Open space: privately owned and managed, stays on the tax rolls
- 50 local programs nationwide
- Matching state and federal funds





Right-To-Farm Laws

- Discourage neighbors from suing farmers
- Help protect farmers using sound agricultural practices
- Document state or local support of farming
- Limit ability to alter farming ordinances
- Gives farmers a sense of security





Agricultural District Laws

- Allow farmers to form areas where commercial ag is encouraged
- Authorized by state legislatures and implemented locally: 18 ag district programs in 16 states
- Partnership of commissioners, planners, and farmers
- Each county writes their own ordinance





Transfer of Development Rights

- Voluntary
- Market driven
- Uses private, not public \$
- Clusters development on a county level
- Directs growth where you want it





Agricultural Economic Development

- Planning for ag viability
- Recruitment of input and output businesses
- Individual business plans
- Farmers Markets/Community Supported Agriculture
- Agri-tourism/recreation
- Purchase of Development Rights





Agricultural Economic Development



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Rocky Mountains

- TDR and PDR
- Ag. advisory board
- Ag/forestry subdivision exemptions
- Right to farm and ranch ordinance
- Ag. enterprise zone
- Code of the West
- Leveraging federal funding

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Marin, California



- 160,000 acres in plan
- 1:60 acre zoning
- 35,000 acres under easement
- \$20 million invested
- Extension workshops

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Skagit County, Washington

- Agricultural zoning 90,000 acres with ag processing as a permitted use
- 2,500 acres protected with PACE program
- County tourism centered on "Tulip Festival"
- Ag economic development plan in process
- County Agricultural Advisory Board
- Pro-active stance to balance the needs of farming with resource needs to protect endangered fishing stocks





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