



Santa Barbara County
2003-08 Housing Element Action Phase

The County's Plan to Address Housing Needs on Agricultural Land

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Policies to Encourage Residential Development on Agricultural Land

Executive Summary

This White Paper discusses current Santa Barbara County policy initiatives that encourage residential development on agricultural lands. Additionally, the paper addresses how these initiatives can meet the needs of agriculturalists, while upholding the community's strongly expressed desire to ensure the long-term preservation of the County's rural heritage and related economy.

The present housing supply is overwhelmingly inadequate to meet the needs of agriculture. In 2005 there were approximately 16,325 agricultural jobs in the County. The average annual salary of an agricultural worker is \$21,158.¹ In Santa Barbara County, the average farm worker currently pays between 150% in the North and 300% in the South of what they can afford for housing. In addition, agriculture is diversifying in ways that require more labor.

The County proposes to address the pressing need for agriculturalist housing through two separate, but related, policy initiatives: the County's adopted Housing Element and the Uniform Rules for lands under agricultural preservation contract with the County. These policy initiatives include proposed permit streamlining processes as well as measures specifically designed to increase opportunities for the development of housing on agricultural land.

To comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the County will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on its adopted Housing Element.² This EIR will analyze the proposed policy changes identified through the recent agricultural permit streamlining effort as well as the broad objectives established by farm worker housing policy in the Housing Element. Additionally, the EIR's cumulative impacts section will study the conclusions of the Uniform Rules Final EIR as it relates to housing supply on agricultural land.³

Within the County there are 5,015 privately held agricultural parcels.⁴ The zoning ordinances that govern these parcels allow for the development of 24,465 non-primary residential units including Residential Second Units (RSUs), Residential Agricultural Units (RAUs),⁵ and farm worker housing units in the rural area.⁶ However, the ordinances prohibit the development of RSUs on 610 of the 5,015 privately held parcels. The County's adopted Housing Element proposes a policy change that would allow construction of RSUs on these parcels. Should this

¹ UCSB Economic Forecast Project. 2006. *2006 Santa Barbara County Economic Outlook*. Santa Barbara: UCSB Economic Forecast Project.

² The Housing Element is one of seven mandatory components of the County's Comprehensive Plan. It was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in May 2006.

³ The Uniform Rules Final EIR is pending Board of Supervisors consideration.

⁴ The agricultural land discussed in this White Paper is limited to the County's AG-I (inner rural) and AG-II (rural) lands. Agricultural land that is governed by the provisions of Ordinance 661 are not included in the calculations outlined here, since 661 parcels are not affected by any of the proposed changes.

⁵ RAUs are only permitted on contracted land and are not permitted at all within the Coastal Zone.

⁶ 24,465 assumes either one RSU or one RAU per parcel where currently allowed and four farm worker dwellings on each of the 5015 agricultural parcels discussed here. Staff is currently engaged in a multi-year data collection effort that will enable the County to identify how many of these units have already been constructed, but that information was not available at the time of the drafting of this White Paper.



proposed change be implemented, the net impact would increase the maximum potential buildout from 24,465 to 25,075.

In addition, proposed changes to the Uniform Rules that govern parcels under Williamson Act contract would allow construction of second primary residences. This change would increase the maximum buildout potential by an additional 233 residential units. When combined with the potential 610 RSUs discussed above, a maximum of 25,308 residential units could be constructed on County agricultural lands. These 843 units (610 RSUs and 233 second primary residences) are insignificant when compared to the 24,465 residential units already allowed under current zoning ordinances governing agricultural land. However, historical permit trends and the high cost of building indicate that significantly fewer than 843 units are likely to be built on these lands.

Initial research in preparing the Housing Element EIR project description indicates that up to 522 new residential dwellings will likely be built on agricultural lands between now and 2013. This projection is supported by trend data, forecasting models, an economic feasibility analysis, and the needs and preferences of the agricultural community.

The proposed policies under the Housing Element and Uniform Rules initiatives each have a number of elements that may create incentives for additional housing units to be constructed on agricultural land.

- Policy 1.6, Action 1 of the Housing Element states that the County shall amend zoning ordinances to allow RSUs with a ministerial unit on all agricultural parcels not under an agricultural preserve contract or located in the Coastal Zone within one year of the adoption of the Housing Element. Initial estimates of new RSU construction are projected at 109 units. This estimate is based on historic trend data and the demonstrated need balanced with projected building costs, a simplified permit process, and the total number of parcels affected. Additional analysis conducted in the Housing Element EIR should establish quantitative validity of these initial estimates.
- Initial quantitative analysis shows that proposed process improvements related to both Housing Element Policy 1.6 and Housing Element Policy 2.2 will decrease time and costs for permitting new units. Yet the associated savings of \$1,600 in permit costs and up to two months in processing time is *insignificant* when compared to the high cost of building a new unit (see Figure A). Based on recent permit trend data and projected building costs staff estimates that approximately 180 new farm worker dwellings will be constructed.
- The cumulative impact of proposed Uniform Rules changes on agricultural preserve lands (74% of County agricultural land) will allow up to 233 new residential units to be built on 158 acres.⁷

The cumulative impacts of all proposed policy changes and permit processing improvements will be evaluated as part of the State mandated environmental review of the County's adopted 2003-2008 Housing Element. Once this full analytical study is complete, staff will recommend a course of action, including proposals for any necessary zoning ordinance amendments. As

⁷ 233 new primary residences is the *maximum* number of units that would be added through the proposed Uniform Rules update. The actual number of units built is likely to be much lower.



provided by State Law, the public will have multiple opportunities to review and comment on the findings of the Housing Element EIR prior the Planning Commission review and Board of Supervisors consideration and certification of the document and the related package of staff-recommended ordinance revisions.



The Need for Affordable Farm Worker Housing

Agriculture ranks as Santa Barbara County's top producing industry, with over \$997 million in gross product in 2005, a 10% increase in gross values from 2004.⁸ Historic trend data demonstrate that agriculture in Santa Barbara County has moved away from animal industries and dry farming to more intensive and diverse agricultural activities. The cultivation of vegetables, fruits, nuts, and nursery crops as well as the development of niche products such as flowers, lavender and olives are labor-intensive.⁹ Agricultural diversification also has attracted a large number of both permanent and seasonal agricultural employees to the County. Agricultural sector employers understand that adequate affordable housing ensures a consistent supply of workers to harvest, process and pack their crops. Currently, agriculturalists are experiencing increased difficulty in securing sufficient workers because of the high cost of housing.¹⁰

In 2005, approximately 16,325 agricultural jobs were filled in the County. The average annual income of those agricultural workers was \$21,158.¹¹ Farm workers in California continue to rank among the state's lowest-paid workers and have one of the highest unemployment rates.¹² The average farm employee cannot obtain adequate housing due to low wages and high migration rates. Using the standard assumption that 30% of annual income equates to an "affordable" monthly rent, the average agricultural worker in Santa Barbara County has \$529 to spend toward shelter each month. The average monthly rent for a modest (870 square foot) two bedroom apartment in northern areas of the County is \$825 and escalates to \$1,651 on the South Coast. This equates to rents that are, at a minimum, respectively 150% and 300% more than the average farm worker can afford.

The Santa Barbara County Department of Housing and Community Development (CHCD) recently conducted a survey of farm worker housing needs and service preferences. The three findings in the April 2006 study most relevant to this White Paper are:

- **Overcrowding:** On average throughout the County, farm workers live in households composed of five people (related and unrelated). Those residences typically contain two bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen, and one bath.¹³
- **Predominately migratory North County workforce:** The farm worker population in the South County is relatively permanent compared to that in the North. The average number of years worked in the County was 12 for South County survey participants, and 4 for North County participants. Similarly, the South County participants had more steady jobs, working on average between nine and twelve months a year, while the North County participants worked an average of five to nine months per year.¹⁴

⁸ Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commissioners Office. 2005. *2005 Agricultural Production Report*. Santa Barbara: Agricultural Commissioners Office.

⁹ Santa Barbara County Department of Planning and Development. 2003. *Santa Barbara County 2030: The Open Lands, Agriculture and Open Space*. Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara County Department of Planning and Development, p. 52.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹¹ UCSB Economic Forecast Project. 2006. *2006 Santa Barbara County Economic Outlook*. Santa Barbara: UCSB Economic Forecast Project.

¹² Mines, R. 2001. "Who Does California Farmwork?" *Rural California Report* v. 12(3) (Davis, CA: California Institute for Rural Studies).

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 34-35.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 35.



- **North County preference for rental housing:** Corresponding to the more permanent nature of the South County farm worker population, 81% of participants stated a desire to purchase a home in the community rather than rent. In the North County only 26% of participants expressed an interest in homeownership.¹⁵

Agricultural workers have very limited access to a range of housing options that sufficiently address their basic needs for safe, stable housing and reliable community services. The shift to more labor-intensive forms of agriculture in the County is increasing the need for farm workers, leading to an even greater demand for the limited supply of housing that is affordable to this population.

Due to the combination of an affordable housing shortage, low incomes, and a rising demand among agricultural workers for housing, these workers tend to live in overcrowded and sometimes substandard living conditions throughout Santa Barbara County. These issues place a burden on essential governmental services and impact the quality of life in neighborhoods where overcrowding occurs.¹⁶ These issues also create a burden on the agricultural community to actively address the housing needs of its workforce.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 35-36.

¹⁶ Santa Barbara County Housing Finance Division. 2006. *Agricultural Workers' Housing and Service Needs Study*. Santa Barbara: County Department of Housing and Community Development, p. 8.



Policy Initiatives that Address the Housing Needs of the Agricultural Community

Agriculture in Santa Barbara County

The California Land Conservation Act (1965), known as the Williamson Act, requires local jurisdictions to implement agricultural preserve programs for the purpose of long-term protection of agricultural land through a system of voluntary contractual agreements and tax incentives to landowners. In Santa Barbara County, about 74% (555,000 acres comprising 4,409 parcels) of agriculturally-zoned land is enrolled in the County's Agricultural Preserve Program.

Williamson Act contracts restrict parcels to agriculture and open space uses in exchange for lower property tax assessments. Contracts are automatically renewed each year following the first year of a 10-year Williamson Act contract¹⁷ unless the landowner or County serves a notice of nonrenewal or the contract is terminated as provided for by the Act.

Twelve per cent (118,920 acres comprising 610 parcels) of agricultural parcels in the County that are not under an Agricultural Preserve contract ("non-contracted land") are controlled by Article III zoning ordinances.¹⁸ The remaining 10% of agricultural land in the County is covered under rules established through Ordinance 661; these lands are not affected by the policies affecting agricultural lands.

Current Housing-Related Policy Initiatives

Two current County policy initiatives may affect the number of residential units available for occupation on agricultural land:

1. The Comprehensive Plan's adopted 2003-2008 Revised Housing Element and
2. The Uniform Rules Update.

The policies of the Housing Element that affect housing on agricultural lands generally apply to properties that are not under contract. Changes to the Uniform Rules will establish the terms for building additional residential units on lands that are contracted. The Board of Supervisors' Agricultural Preserve Advisory Committee (APAC) and Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC)¹⁹ have contributed significantly to the discussions about how to increase housing on both contracted and non-contracted agricultural land, as well as how best to preserve the rural heritage and the economic viability of agricultural activities.

¹⁷ In Santa Barbara County, agriculturalists may also engage 20-year contracts under the Farmland Security Zones provision of the Uniform Rules.

¹⁸ Although non-contracted agricultural land comprises 16% of the land itself, it represents 24% of AG-II *parcels* in the County.

¹⁹ APAC and AAC do not make any ordinances, rules, regulations or laws, nor does either body have the authority to approve or deny projects.



2003-2008 Housing Element: Creating Affordable Housing for Special Needs Groups

Of the seven state-required elements of the Comprehensive (General) Plan, the Housing Element is the most regulated and reviewed, underscoring the statewide need for adequate housing opportunities for residents of all income levels. The State of California has identified farm workers as a “special needs group” or segment of the population that circumstantially has more difficulty finding acceptable affordable housing opportunities than other segments of the population. State Housing law requires that, through the Housing Element, barriers to the production of affordable housing for special needs groups be directly addressed. Given both of these mandates and the expressed needs of the agricultural community, the County is presently engaged in a process to evaluate a number of program options that aim to provide stable and decent housing for farmworkers.

As part of the Comprehensive Plan, provisions in the Housing Element supersede provisions in Community Plans and other planning documents in the County that address zoning or otherwise restrict land use. State CEQA law requires that an Environmental Impact Report be conducted to evaluate the cumulative environmental impacts that may result from the policy changes established through the Board’s adopted Housing Element. The EIR must be conducted and certified by the Board prior to the adoption of related ordinance changes. As the Housing Element establishes the parameters for all housing-related policies in the County, the cumulative effects of changes to housing policy that result from updates to the Uniform Rules must be studied as part of the Housing Element EIR. The community and key decision-makers will have extensive opportunity to fully understand, question, and provide comment on the cumulative effects of the changes from both programs prior to final Board consideration of the Housing Element EIR in 2007.

Efforts to deal with farm worker housing needs are specifically addressed by Housing Element Policy 1.6 and Policy 2.2. Policy 1.6 and associated actions commit the County to amend the zoning ordinance to allow Residential Second Units (RSUs) with a ministerial permit on parcels not under an agricultural preserve contract in agricultural zone districts not in the Coastal Zone. Policy 2.2 and associated action items commit the County to amend the zoning ordinance to require only a Land Use Permit (LUP) to allow up to four farm employee units and a Minor Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for five or more farm employee units on non-contracted agriculturally zoned property.

Housing Element 1.6: Expanded Opportunities for Residential Second Units

As part of the County’s efforts to encourage the expansion of residential units on agricultural land, the Planning and Development (P&D) Department has established a Process Improvement Oversight Committee (PIOC). The PIOC has been working to provide recommendations to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors to improve the permitting process for activities that support the economic viability of agricultural operations.²⁰

²⁰ The PIOC is composed of a broad cross-section of stakeholders including the five Supervisor’s Assistants, architects, community representatives, project expeditors and County staff. Improving agricultural permitting is one of the five PIOC priorities adopted by the Board of Supervisors on May 24, 2005. The four other priorities were streamlining ministerial permits, clarifying the County’s appeal process, improving customer service, and reformatting the County’s zoning ordinances.



Specific to housing, the agricultural permit streamlining process has addressed the need for additional residential opportunities on non-contract agricultural land by reducing the permitting requirements associated with developing RSUs and housing for agricultural employees. Currently, a single attached RSU is allowed in the AG-I Zone with an LUP. A Minor CUP is required if the unit is proposed to be detached from the primary residence. Projects permitted through the LUP process must still undergo design review and interested parties are given the opportunity to express concerns about any LUP-permitted project, just as they would in a Minor CUP permitting process. Neither attached nor detached RSUs are currently allowed in the AG-II Zone.

Consistent with Housing Element Policy 1.6, the Housing Element EIR will study the feasibility of allowing RSUs on all agricultural lands not under a Williamson Act contract. The Housing Element EIR also will evaluate the potential impacts associated with a streamlined building permit process. Additional options also will be considered, as required by CEQA.²¹

RSUs are broadly supported as an approach to providing new rental housing opportunities on agricultural lands. As a result of their traditional size limitation, the majority of RSUs are considered “affordable by design.” Occupancy of RSUs is not restricted and therefore could be used to provide stable, decent housing for agricultural sector employees, or as a “granny” unit for immediate family of the landowner, or be rented to augment a property owner’s income. Any of the potential uses of RSUs on agricultural land will increase the long-term viability of the activities associated with the land.

Policy 1.6 also calls for an evaluation of permitting processes related to the construction of RSUs. With regard to feasibility, initial analysis of the time and cost savings that can be attributed to permit downshifting recommendations would result in approximate savings of \$1,600 in permitting costs and one to two months in processing time. Since these cost and time savings are marginal in light of the total expense associated with constructing such a unit, it is unlikely that these downshifts will be the deciding factor for a landowner who is contemplating constructing an RSU. The costs of construction of an RSU range from an estimated \$245,000 for a high-quality modular unit to \$420,000 for a traditional site-constructed unit, even with the proposed reduction in permit fees. Therefore, the barrier to entry for a landowner who might wish to build an RSU is not reduced significantly through County efforts to simplify the cost and time associated with the permit application process. Rather, the purpose of permit downshifting is to improve the efficiency of P&D and to improve customer service for landowners who wish to construct RSUs on their property. Figure A illustrates the limited time and cost benefits that will result from these efforts to downshift the permit requirements for RSUs.

Cumulative permit trend analysis indicates that 60 RSUs have been constructed since 2001. If the quantitative analysis in the Housing Element EIR confirms this initial

²¹ For instance, the AAC has suggested that the size limitation on RSUs be increased in both AG-I and AG-II zoned lands. Several options for adjusting the allowed square footage of secondary agricultural units will be studied in the Housing Element EIR, including the option of retaining the current 1200 square foot limit on these units.



analysis *and* RSUs are extended to all agricultural lands, approximately 109²² new RSUs will be constructed by 2013.²³ This number reflects the expansion of the RSU program to non-contracted AG-II lands, a slight expected increase in production associated with a less cumbersome permitting process, and an additional slight increase in production due to the growing need for housing associated with the labor-intensive nature of the types of agriculture that are currently underway in the County.

Housing Element Policy 2.2: Additional Housing for Agricultural Employees

The purpose Housing Element Policy 2.2 is to promote and facilitate the development of farm employee housing on agriculturally zoned land. This housing might include single family dwellings, mobile homes, and group quarters such as dormitories.

Currently up to four units for on-site employee housing are allowed in the AG-I and AG-II Zones with a Minor CUP. This allowance translates to a maximum of approximately 20,000 farm worker dwelling units under today's restrictions. In these zones, the development of five or more units for on- and off-site employees requires a Major CUP. These restrictions apply to both contracted and non-contracted agricultural lands.

Increasing the amount of housing available on farms and ranches for agricultural employees has received unanimous backing by the agricultural community. Consistent with Housing Element Policy 2.2, the AAC has conceptually recommended that the permit requirements for agricultural employee housing be reduced to an LUP for less than four units and a Minor CUP for 5 or more. Again, the purpose of the permit downshifting efforts is to reduce bureaucratic barriers that might deter landowners from constructing housing for agricultural workers. In addition, the Planning Commission has recommended allowing small agricultural employee housing (less than four units) to be for both on- and off-site employees, consistent with the allowance for large agricultural employee housing (five or more units). This expansion provides flexibility to meet both site specific and regional farm worker housing needs. The potential impacts of all of these options will be analyzed as part of the Housing Element EIR.

Cumulative permit trend analysis indicates that approximately 116 farm worker housing units were either constructed or planned between 2001 and 2006.²⁴ Additionally, data indicate that approximately 100 permits were issued for farmworker units between 1993 and 2000. If the County's zoning ordinances are amended to allow the permit downshifts recommended above, it is estimated that approximately 180 new farm worker housing units will be constructed by 2013.²⁵ This number reflects a slight expected increase in production associated with a less cumbersome permitting process and an

²² The estimated number of new RSUs is based on the assumption that production of these units will increase from an average of 12 per year to approximately 16 per year. This projected 30% increase is a reflection of the expansion of the RSU program to non-contracted AG-II lands, the changing agricultural economy and the ongoing affordable housing shortage.

²³ Santa Barbara County's Housing Element is required by State law to be renewed every six years. The 2001-2007 Housing Element will expire next year, with the next cycle running from 2008-2013.

²⁴ Of these 116 units, 69 permits were approved and 47 were pending at the time of the writing of this White Paper.

²⁵ As with RSUs, the projected 30% increase (up from approximately 23 units per year to 30 new units per year) is a reflection of the possible extension of allowed off-site farm worker housing on AG-I lands, the changing agricultural economy and the ongoing affordable housing shortage. The Housing Element EIR will explore a number of alternatives that might affect this projection, including a range of maximum allowed units for each parcel in both agricultural zones in coastal and inland regions.



additional slight increase in production due to the growing need for housing associated with the labor-intensive nature of the types of agriculture that are currently underway in the County.²⁶ It is theoretically possible that the changing nature of agriculture in the County may lead to an increase in construction of units that are specifically designed to accommodate agricultural labor, but realistic projections of the degree of these changes will not be available until the Housing Element EIR analysis is completed.

Uniform Rules Update

The Williamson Act requires every participating local government to have a set of rules for implementing its Agricultural Preserve Program in an equitable manner consistent with the requirements of the Act. The *Santa Barbara County Uniform Rules for Agricultural Preserves and Farmland Security Zones* (Uniform Rules) is the set of rules by which the County administers its Agricultural Preserve Program. The last time Santa Barbara County amended its Uniform Rules was in 1999. The only changes at that time were to provide for the farmland security zone option (i.e., the option of an extended 20-year contract) and to include provisions for residential agricultural units (RAUs) on contracted premises. No other revisions to the rules have occurred since 1984.

The RAU Ordinance is a mechanism to allow additional housing opportunities on agricultural land enrolled in the Agricultural Preserve Program. The RAU program was established initially as a 5-year pilot program. The pilot program required the lead county agency, within five years of program adoption, to report back to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors as to the cumulative effects of the program and, specifically, the level of participation in the program. Program effectiveness is still being studied to allow sufficient time to provide a comprehensive analysis of the role of the RAU program in the wider housing context. The pilot program has been extended through 2008. To date, fewer than 20 RAUs have been constructed since the implementation of the program in 1999. The relationship of this pilot program and its affects on farm worker housing policy will also be considered within the context of the cumulative impacts section in the Housing Element EIR.

In April 2003, the Board of Supervisors directed Comprehensive Planning staff to draft an update to the Uniform Rules, and in doing so, to consider revisions to the Uniform Rules proposed by the agricultural community. The initial process entailed working with the APAC, the AAC and other representatives from the agricultural community to discuss the suggested changes. This process, which extended over a 13 month period, culminated in a single set of proposed amendments to the Uniform Rules.

Related to housing, the Uniform Rules Update includes the following key amendment:

- **Principal dwellings.** Increase housing options to meet the needs of multi-generation farm families by allowing additional housing opportunities on non-prime land (subject to zoning and parcel size limitations) and allowing for increases to the development envelopes on superprime land if more land is devoted to agricultural production.

According to the amendment language proposed in the Uniform Rules Update, the expansion of the allowance for a principal dwelling would potentially result in the construction of up to 233

²⁶ Figure A (attached) shows that while the overall permit process time for an RSU may be reduced by up to 50%, the overall cost of unit production remains constant. The overall affect of streamlined permitting costs and timelines is likely to be only one small factor in the projected increase of agricultural employee housing unit construction.



new residential units beyond current allowances, consuming up to an additional 158 acres of agricultural land throughout the County for residential use.²⁷ The goal of the proposed change is to allow landowners to maintain their landholdings in larger single contracts rather than splitting them up in order to meet their residential needs. This new policy will encourage agricultural landowners to retain and preserve large agricultural parcels for future generations.

The impact of these proposed amendments to increase residential opportunities, along with additional amendments to eligibility requirements and compatible uses, were analyzed in the Uniform Rules Final Draft EIR, which was released in August 2006. The Uniform Rules Final Draft EIR did not analyze the policy changes to agricultural housing as proposed by the Housing Element because at the time of the release of the EIR the proposals were too conceptual in nature to allow for a thorough review of potential environmental impacts.

Going forward, the impacts of the changes proposed in the Uniform Rules Update will be studied as part of the cumulative impacts section of the Housing Element EIR. The purpose of including the findings of the Uniform Rules Final Draft EIR into the Housing Element EIR is to ensure that the cumulative impacts of all proposed policy changes that affect agricultural land will be considered and discussed holistically.

²⁷ 233 new units is derived by counting the number of enrolled parcels that presently contain one residential dwelling but will now be allowed to build an additional primary residence per parcel enrolled under contract. Because this provision is new in the Uniform Rules, no historic trend data are available. It is likely that this number will be shifted downward after the Housing Element EIR study is completed.



Conclusion

Currently, agricultural employers are experiencing increased difficulty in securing sufficient workers due to the high cost of housing in the County. Recent studies indicate that farm worker salaries are far below the necessary income level to secure decent and affordable housing in the County's rental market. In addition, agriculture is diversifying in ways that require more labor.

The potential programs discussed in this White Paper would allow the construction of a moderate number of new residential units on agricultural parcels. The purpose of the proposed policies is to provide agriculturalists with a number of choices to meet their individual needs. The decision of whether to build a new residential agricultural unit (RSU, RAU, or agricultural employee dwelling unit) would fall to the discretion of the landowner, and whether landowners opt to build ultimately depends on whether the agricultural operation would benefit from additional on-site housing. The cost of building these units will be the major factor that influences the landowner's decision. These proposed policy shifts reflect the county's desire to provide additional housing to the workforce that supports agriculture. These policy initiatives attempt to make that goal feasible by giving landowners increased choice while decreasing the time and costs required to obtain a permit and build housing on agricultural land.

Current ordinances allow for a total of up to 24,465 RSUs, RAUs, and farm worker housing units on AG-I and AG-II lands. Proposed changes to extend the availability of RSUs to all agricultural parcels would increase this number by 610 units. Proposed changes to the Uniform Rules that would allow the construction of a second primary residence on contracted agricultural lands would increase the total number of possible residential dwellings on such lands by an additional 233 residential units. A maximum of 843 new units could therefore be built as a result of these proposed changes. However, historic permit trends and the high cost of building indicate that significantly fewer than 843 units are likely to be built on these lands.

Initial efforts to prepare the Housing Element EIR project description indicate that up to 522 new residential dwellings may be built by 2013. This projection is supported by trend data, forecasting models, economic feasibility analysis, and the expressed needs and preferences of the agricultural community.

Initial efforts to prepare the Housing Element EIR project description have shown that past development of residential agricultural units has been limited. By extending the allowance of RSUs to all non-contracted agricultural lands and easing permitting timelines and costs for both RSUs and agricultural worker dwelling units, it is projected that approximately 289 new residential dwellings are likely to be constructed on agricultural lands throughout the County over the next decade. Changes to the County's Uniform Rules for lands participating in the County's Agricultural Preservation Program also may lead to the addition of 233 new primary residences built on these properties. Although not all of these units will be used to house farm workers, the general increase in housing on agricultural lands will result in increased stability for agriculturalists as well as a meaningful increase in supply of affordable housing in agricultural zones.

The County is working to meet the needs of property owners and farm workers, while upholding the community's strongly expressed desire to ensure the long-term preservation of the County's rural heritage. The upcoming Housing Element EIR will incorporate the findings of the Final Uniform Rules EIR and general County farm worker housing policies. A full analysis regarding



the cumulative impacts of all proposed agricultural housing program revisions will be included in the Final Housing Element EIR.

Once the cumulative impacts of the proposed policy changes are determined, staff will recommend a course of action, including proposals for any necessary zoning ordinance amendments. As provided by State Law, the public will have multiple opportunities to review and comment on the findings of the EIR prior the Planning Commission review and Board of Supervisors consideration and certification of the Housing Element EIR and related ordinance changes.

County staff will actively work with AAC, APAC, agriculturalists and all interested community members to ensure the continued viability of agriculture in Santa Barbara County while striving to find an adequate solution to the current farm worker housing crisis.

FIGURE A

Project Example: 1,200 square foot RSU built on Agricultural Land

RSUs currently require a Discretionary Minor Land Use Permit; Process Improvement proposes to change the requirement to a Ministerial Permit^

Permit classification options	Detached			Modular	
	Ministerial (Proposed)	Discretionary - Minor (Current Process)	Discretionary - Major (Not proposed)	Ministerial (Proposed)	Discretionary - Minor (Current Process)
Staff review fee	\$1,500 D	\$3,801 F	\$8,796 D	\$1,500 F	\$3,801 F
Land Use Permit Fee	N/A	\$630	\$1,500 PC Fee	N/A	\$630
Time it takes for approval	1 - 2 months	2 - 4 months	4 - 8 months	1 - 2 months	2 - 4 months
Not proposed to change					
Building Fee (at average construction costs)	\$4,200	\$4,250	\$4,300	\$2,700	\$2,750
Grading Fee (average of 500 cubic feet)	\$957	\$957	\$957	\$528	\$528
School Fees i.e. example \$3/sf (vary by location)	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$3,600
Noticing Fee	\$55	\$55	\$55	\$55	\$55
Fire Fee (\$0.10/sf for sprinkled structures)	\$120	\$120	\$120	\$120	\$120
Parks Fee (\$362/unit or 1,000 sf)	\$362 plus	\$362 plus	\$362 plus	\$362 plus	\$362 plus
Water Fees**	\$5,000-\$9,000	\$5,000-\$9,000	\$5,000-\$9,000	\$5,000-\$9,000	\$5,000-\$9,000
Traffic Fees	\$465 plus	\$465 plus	\$465 plus	\$465 plus	\$465 plus
Time for building permit	1 month	1 month	1 month	1 month	1 month
Not County fees					
Design Fees (10% of construction costs for detached)	\$33,000	\$33,000	\$33,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
Construction costs (\$275/sf Detached, \$175/sf Mod.)	\$330,000	\$330,000	\$330,000	\$210,000	\$210,000
Site costs (roads, grading, etc.)	\$10,000-\$30,000	\$10,000-\$30,000	\$10,000-\$30,000	\$10,000-\$30,000	\$10,000-\$30,000
Septic costs	\$5,000 - \$7,500	\$5,000 - \$7,500	\$5,000 - \$7,500	\$5,000 - \$7,500	\$5,000 - \$7,500
Completion of construction	6 - 8 months	6 - 8 months	6 - 8 months	3 - 6 months	3 - 6 months
Total Cost:	\$394,259 to \$420,759	\$397,240 to \$423,740	\$403,155 to \$429,190	\$243,330 to \$269,830	\$246,311 to \$272,811
Total Time:	8 - 11 months	9 - 13 months	11 - 17 months	5 - 9 months	6 - 11 months

^Costs are estimates, actual costs may vary widely depending on location and design of the project

*Covers staff time for review; discretionary review includes Zoning Administrator (minor) or Planning Commission (major) decision

**Estimated fees represent service by a water district. If project is not within a water district, cost estimates are for well development.

D = deposit, F = Fixed

FIGURE B
Expected Number of New Units on Agricultural Lands and Environmental Review Process

Policy Initiative	Expected Number of New Units	CEQA Compliance	
		Program EIR	Cumulative EIR
Housing Element Policy 1.6 Policy 2.2	109 180	Housing Element	Housing Element
Uniform Rules	233	Uniform Rules	Housing Element
TOTAL:	522		