



## Item #13-6-9 Information

### Transportation Committee

May 30, 2013

#### Rural-Urban Connections Strategy Stakeholder Workshops Update

**Issue:** Staff continues to work with agricultural stakeholders and report to the SACOG Board of Directors to inform and get direction from board members on the Rural-Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS).

**Recommendation:** None, this item is for information only.

**Discussion:** The RUCS project is a result of an EIR Mitigation Measure and Transportation Control Measure for the 2008 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The project framework was set by the SACOG Board of Directors at the board retreat in 2008. Since that initial framework development, staff has reported back to the board on various levels of work and conducted multiple agricultural tours including most recently in 2011, a tour focused on different pieces of infrastructure needed for agricultural processing.

Beginning in November 2012 through April of this year, staff conducted 12 stakeholder workshops. Workshops were coordinated with support from the county agricultural commissioners and farm bureaus. Yuba and Sutter counties had joint meetings at the request of the agriculture commissioners. The first series of workshops was to update stakeholders on the progress of research and tools development and a general overview of the work that lies within RUCS. The second series was transportation specific, highlighting current and future work on farm-to-market routes and upcoming goods movement and I-80 Corridor studies. A single meeting with health and human services representatives was held by request in Yolo County and another meeting was held for the Director and staff at the California Department of Public Health.

One key comment heard at both series was the significant differences between foothill and valley agriculture operations in the SACOG region. Challenges in labor, water, and goods movement exist in each area but each have different solutions. Positive feedback was given on the use of the Return on Investment tool which was used to compare operation costs of a start-up farm versus keeping an established farm in operation. Attached are meeting summaries collated by county.

Attachment A: El Dorado County Meeting Summaries

Attachment B: Placer County Meeting Summaries

Attachment C: Sacramento County Meeting Summaries

Attachment D: Sutter & Yuba Counties Meeting Summaries

Attachment E: Yolo County Meeting Summaries

Attachment F: CA Department of Public Health

Approved by:

Mike McKeever  
Chief Executive Officer

MM:MH:ts

Key Staff: Matt Carpenter, Director of Transportation Services, (916) 340-6276  
David Shabazian, Supervising Senior Planner (916) 340-6231  
Monica Hernández, Associate Public Information Coordinator (916) 340-6237

1300509

## Rural-Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS)

### County-by-County Update & Input Meetings

Summary for: El Dorado County Stakeholders

Meeting Date: November 28, 2012

Meeting Location: Agricultural Commission Conference Room  
311 Fair Lane, Placerville, 95667

Participants represented: El Dorado County Department of Agriculture, Apple Hill Growers Association, Resource Conservation District, El Dorado County Farm Bureau, El Dorado County LAFCO, El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce, El Dorado County Economic Development Advisory Committee, Private Grape Grower, Private Cattle Operation

Staff: David Shabazian, Monica Hernández, Libby O'Sullivan, Deborah Schrimmer

Total external participants: 13

Summary: Some stakeholders had participated in the early meeting for RUCS, for about one-third of the attendees information was completely new. This meeting was slightly modified from the previous meeting in Placer County based on the participant evaluations and staff observations. This meeting was designed as an active participation meeting with a PowerPoint presentation driving the discussion for RUCS.

A very active dialogue occurred during the meeting with many comments from private growers, the farm bureau, and the chamber. There were specific questions and comments related to the RUCS research including, the agricultural economic development multiplier used may be too low and not represent non-traditional sectors supported by El Dorado County agriculture and agritourism including hotel/hospitality and restaurant.

Stakeholders were very helpful informing SACOG staff where to look for data and information on forested and grazing forested lands in El Dorado and Placer counties—which has been a missing piece in our regional cropping data. The group also helped staff some of the historical and current challenges facing cattle operations in the Sierras. Specific challenges around the gap in the Federal Government's ability to assess new permit applications because there is not sufficient staff to do the required environmental review associated with permits, and once old permitted operations fall out of service, those permits are not reclaimed. Another comment was made that the cost of operations between valley and foothill grazing need to be assessed especially for use in RUCS tools.

The participants noted that the cost of productions studies may be too broad and not reflect individual operations, particularly those in El Dorado County. These comments were similar to what was said at the Placer County meeting. With the cost of production studies there was also concern that some of the information contained within (though not grower/site specific) could be taken out of context and used against growers. It was stated that the regulations that are put on large-scale farm operations are also put on small growers, and it is often debilitating to running a profitable operation.

When the discussion turned to economic opportunities associated with biomass/carbon sequestration at a large scale and the forested areas of El Dorado County, the stakeholders agreed with the potential, but

stated it was far off because there is no infrastructure to support that type of operation, and no funds on the horizon. It was noted that real connections and action are needed to move away from talking about biomass/carbon sequestration and make something real happen for the county. It would be helpful to assess the forested landscape to better understand how many acres could be viable for biomass/carbon sequestration.

There was broad discussion about the need for an agriculture aggregation facility within El Dorado County. In addition to cost, and infrastructure challenges there was concern about the loss of branding and name recognition with the use of an aggregator. El Dorado has had much success with value-added products and agritourism.

There was a sense of agricultural operations being a target for environmental criticism over urbanized areas. Discussion occurred around UC Davis research that shows urbanized areas have higher per acre greenhouse gas emissions compared to agricultural operations. The group discussed the need for environment and habitat programs and regulations to be flexible. Locally, noise conflicts from agricultural operations continue to be a conflict.

When SACOG staff modeled the return on investment for starting a farm today for a new grower with no previous investments compared to maintaining an established farm, there was concern about the gap of next generation of farmers. As part of the modeling discussion, the topic of rural, urban and suburban development as a conflict with agriculture was discussed. Stakeholders talked about suburban development as being perceived as beneficial to the local economy, but that is one-time investments and not a sustainable land economy-but agriculture is. The stakeholders demonstrated desire to have tools that could show the long term economic benefits of keeping land in production versus developing. The idea of cities like Placerville being planned as, and recognized as agricultural commerce centers, serving the many professional and personal needs of the agricultural community surrounding the cities was discussed.

There was consensus that growers need to become stronger advocates to show the value of agriculture to not only fend off intrusion of development, but to be more effective in planning processes specifically when infrastructure investments are being made throughout the county and region.

SACOG next steps:

- Look for opportunities to develop a SACOG region agricultural multiplier, versus using the federal multiplier
- Schedule follow-up meeting
- Staff to seek out foothill grazing data from US Forest Service

Stakeholder next steps:

- Provide comments on Cost of Production studies
- Provide comments on El Dorado County crop map
- Provide comments on El Dorado County Agriculture Infrastructure map

Evaluation Results & Comments:

<b>RANKING:</b> 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree
<b>This meeting was well-organized.</b>
Average: 4.5/5
<b>The length of the meeting was appropriate to get through the material.</b>
Average: 4.1/5
<b>I felt that my personal background and experience helped contribute to the meeting's objectives.</b>
Average: 3.8/5
<b>Receiving the materials in advance helped me feel more prepared for the meeting.</b>
Average: 3.7/5
<b>Were there any parts of the meeting that should be avoided in the future?</b>
No
No
No
No

<b>What should be done next time to make these agricultural stakeholders meetings more effective?</b>
Allow lots of time
Feedback
Better map tool to evaluate in greater resolution for feedback since we are a large number of small farms
Probably invite farmers through the Farm Bureau & Ag Commissioner so that you see more input and buy-in
Provide clear objective statement and identify our role. Also identify what we are going to receive
Focus on specifics
I think this was a very effective meeting
Perhaps have a less ambitious agenda
Was a good dialogue
It is our responsibility to get more participants

<b>Who else do you think should be invited to participate in these meetings?</b>
US Forest Service
Board of Supervisors and planners
Good audience
More forestry and timber producers. It would probably be good to invite a processor (ex: Barsotti)
I didn't see anyone from the Board of Supervisors
Board appointed & EDAC group, ag groups, farm bureau, Christmas Tree growers, etc.
Again, we need to spread the work

**How can SACOG make the materials presented at the meeting more meaningful and useful to you?**

Less technical

Cost of Production "blank" form or easy edit ability with existing charts

I look forward to its conclusions once you factor in El Dorado County data

Focus more on El Dorado County

Just continue to add data we provide to have more accurate Foothill data

Materials were well done-no suggestions

I appreciate it all

**Additional comments:**

Big program. Provide timelines, benchmarks, deliverables. Identify tools that we will be able to use

I appreciate that David took time to go off agenda to discuss topics important to this group

## Rural-Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS)

County-by-County Update & Input Meetings

Summary for: El Dorado County Stakeholders

Meeting Date: January 22, 2013

Meeting Location: Agricultural Commission Conference Room

311 Fair Lane, Placerville, 95667

Participants represented: El Dorado County Department of Agriculture, Apple Hill Growers Association, El Dorado County Farm Bureau, El Dorado County LAFCO, Private Grape Grower, Private Cattle Operation, CalVANS, El Dorado County Transportation Commission, El Dorado County Planning Department, El Dorado Winery Association

Staff: David Shabazian, Robert McCrary, Libby O'Sullivan, Sharon Sprowls, Christine O'Rourke, Deborah Schrimmer

Total external participants: 11

**Summary:** Some stakeholders that had participated in the previous RUCS agricultural stakeholder meeting weighed in on SACOG's infrastructure and crop maps. It was noted that the maps were too complicated and should be simplified by numbering infrastructure sites and having a corresponding chart with their names. Another idea was to create transparent layer for the different kinds of infrastructure and to overlay them, but allow the viewer to look explicitly at any one layer.

SACOG staff first presented on the transportation elements of the Rural-Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS) project. Robert McCrary shared staff's work on identifying corridors for trucking produce from farms to markets. Stakeholders stressed that transportation patterns were different in El Dorado County- primarily their traffic flow is not farm-to-market, but market-to-farm. Stakeholders expressed interest in seeing SACOG develop maps on their agritourism transportation, rather than trucking intensities. They explained that large trucks are not as prevalent on the roads; most traffic comes from family vehicles visiting local wineries and Apple Hill. Also production is on a much smaller scale. One stakeholder stated looking at the goods movement of Yolo County is like trying to use the New York subway systems as a blueprint for transportation, it doesn't compare to El Dorado County. Goods move more frequently in smaller trucks.

The transportation patterns of grapes were discussed extensively. Participants noted that grapes (and other specialty crops) are typically driven to processing sites in pick-up trucks if they are not being processed on-site. Due to the microclimates of different grape varieties, they mature at different times and thus require smaller trucks and more frequent truck trips. However, there has been an increase in combining fruit when shipping it out of the region. When consolidating grape deliveries, fruits are usually aggregated in Placerville and then driven to Clarksburg. Stakeholders estimated that nearly 30 percent of crop production leaves the county.

Meeting participants next discussed changes in rural road use and the rural-urban interface. Stakeholders identified bicycle and pedestrian conflicts—especially on Highway 49—as a major challenge. El Dorado County stakeholders also explained that they favored increased urban traffic because it reflects who is buying their products. A long term goal and economic development strategy for the county is to both encourage and manage traffic from urban residents through Apple Hill.

Next, stakeholders discussed land use and transportation challenges such as rural sprawl and poor school siting. Most schools in El Dorado County are far away and school buses are expensive. As a result, most kids have to be driven, and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) for rural school traffic continues to grow. Meeting participants then briefly discussed the viability of legitimizing home occupations, telecommuting and improving broadband connection as VMT reduction strategies.

Next, the group discussed road quality in the Apple Hill district. In recent years, Caltrans has tried to mitigate congestion with new road geometry and intersection designs. Some participants were concerned that these improvements compromise some of the history and identity of the area's roads. A challenge for the county is to balance efficiency of the roads with the charm of the road and its terrain. Another congestion mitigation effort has been to increase public transportation at Apple Hill. For the last ten years, Apple Hill has tried to get people out of their cars by offering shuttle buses in partnership with the local transit authority. Currently, Apple Hill has two bus stops.

The tourism dynamic of El Dorado County lends itself to very different peak travel times. Most traffic is on the weekend from 11 AM to 5 PM. Over the years, more farmers in the area have diversified their farms to extend the tourist season at Apple Hill. In addition to the fall apple season, the summer brings berries and Christmas trees bring in traffic through the winter. It was noted that between almost 1/3 of Apple Hill tourists come from Nevada.

Transportation challenges for livestock were discussed next. Heavy truck regulations from the Air Resources Board prevent out-of-state trucks from coming into El Dorado County to pick up livestock. For example, the length/width of cattle hauling trailers are not allowed in California and new regulations at the end of the year will require changes in emissions. It is too costly for these trucks to be retrofitted to California standards; so as a result, there are increasingly more lost economic opportunities. Additionally, the California truck fleet that meets ARB requirements is not very large, so during peak season, there are consistently truck shortages to move cattle. Also there has been overall consolidation in the cattle industry. Right now there is only one location to sell product.

Staff then shared the findings of the transportation survey that was administered to the meeting participants. The responses from the questions revealed that wayfinding and supporting agritourism is one of the biggest concerns for the county. They also said one of the major roles SACOG should pursue is leading “marketing or branding efforts for regional agricultural goods and services and recreational opportunities”. David asked a follow-up question whether or not these efforts should be regionally based or specific to El Dorado County. The stakeholders responded that it should be broad and encompass the SACOG region.

The meeting then transitioned to the labor component of the Rural-Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS) project. One of the major labor issues in El Dorado County is that the county's topography and crops make mechanized labor unlikely. As a result, the long term availability of skilled workers is a primary concern for farmers growing specialty crops.

El Dorado County growers acknowledge that there is considerable demand for local foods (many are specialty crops and require hand operations). These markets, however, will remain untapped if there is not a dependable supply of local labor. Some stakeholders felt that this unrealized economic opportunity could be realized if a guest worker/ bracero program was implemented. Another option would be to create a more formalized labor cooperative. Currently, informal borrowing labor is a popular strategy for growers with small operations. One of the stakeholders explained that labor is an increasing problem with immigrants to the region. She went on to explain that for people that buy a vineyard it's more straightforward, and she can recommend a contractor that will help with harvest and pruning but with orchards it is much more challenging.

El Dorado County stakeholders expressed interest in learning more about labor issues in Napa Valley, which is believed to face similar year-round labor challenges. El Dorado County sees the importance of keeping both workers and their families in the county. Their farmworker housing opportunities provide much room for improvement – this will be addressed in their upcoming Housing element update.

Stakeholders shared concern for the long-term sustainability of agriculture in the region if there is not a steady supply of labor. Modern culture does not teach or put an emphasis on farming, so there is no reliable labor force. Participants agreed that securing an agricultural labor force is of chief importance; everything else will fall into place after that.

SACOG next steps:

- Simplify agricultural infrastructure map
- Create boundaries on active grazing lands on crop map
- Send out electronic survey of transportation issues to Apple Hill

Stakeholder next steps:

- Provide GIS crop layers and digital corrections to crop/infrastructure maps
- Invite SACOG to speak at upcoming meetings and events



Evaluation Results & Comments:

This meeting was well-organized
Average: 3.6/5
The length of the meeting was appropriate to get through the material
Average: 4.1/5 Could have been a little longer to cover everything- presentation was good and the discussion was very helpful
I felt that my personal background and experience helped contribute to the meeting's objectives
Average: 4.1/5
<b>Were there are parts of the meeting that should be avoided in the future?</b>
<p>Couldn't think of anything</p> <p>I think that as you give the transportation element presentation to Central Valley areas it will be more pertinent than it was in El Dorado County. It might have been more effective to tailor that presentation to a market-to-farm discussion.</p> <p>More local info- yours wasn't very helpful. We are so different.</p> <p>Shorten first presentation- more time allotted for county-specific feedback</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p>
<b>What should be done next time to make these agricultural stakeholders meetings more effective?</b>
<p>Have more producer participation</p> <p>Issues that are foothill issues rather than valley issues</p> <p>Focus more on the specific county you are presenting in</p> <p>Maybe get a few more farmers involved</p>
<b>Who else do you think should be invited to participate in these meetings?</b>
<p>Regulators enforcing regulations</p> <p>More ag stakeholders</p> <p>local growers association, BOS members</p> <p>Local supervisors?</p>
<b>How can SACOG make the materials presented at the meeting more meaningful and useful to you?</b>
<p>Show local problems/issues</p> <p>Provide other county info via email but don't spend as much time on it</p> <p>Follow up meetings</p>
<b>Additional information:</b>
Appreciate your willingness to listen to us.

## Rural-Urban Connections Strategy

### County-by-County Update & Input Meetings

Summary for: Placer County Stakeholders  
Meeting Date: November 2, 2012

Meeting Location: Larry Oddo Finance and Administrative Building  
2962 Richardson Drive  
Auburn, CA 95603

Participants represented: Placer County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, Foothill Farmers' Market, Placer County Farm Bureau, UC Cooperative Extension, Small Farm Advisor, Private Mandarin Grower, Private Cattle and Organic Vegetable Grower and Placer County Department of Planning

Staff: David Shabazian, Monica Hernández, Libby O'Sullivan, Deborah Schrimmer

Total external participants: 7

Summary: Some stakeholders had some context for RUCS, but for some this information was completely new. The meeting started with an overview PowerPoint presentation on RUCS, where participants were encouraged to ask questions or make comments throughout the presentation.

Participants asked many questions and had many comments including, much of Placer County agriculture is in the foothills. When assessing crop types, because of the differences between foothill and valley operation practices, SACOG should consider creating Valley and Foothill profiles. It was noted that the foothill profiles would also apply to El Dorado County and parts of Yuba County.

Much of Placer county agriculture is wholesale and direct to market sales (farmers' markets, CSAs). The portion of direct to market sales skews county-wide market and revenue estimates, which needs to be considered in SACOG's cost and revenue data. Placer County growers are starting to break into the "local wholesale" market (local grocery chains) while this appears on its face to be a desirable market, there are still conflicts with ensuring sufficient product and purchase guarantees. Additionally, farmers' markets while creating opportunity for many, present many other fiscal challenges that are not figured into cost of production studies. When discussing regional and Bay Area demand for locally grown produce it was noted that there is not only opportunity, but capacity to enhance local grown labeling.

In reviewing the various types of estimating capacity for rural interests that exist in the iPLACE<sup>3</sup>S model, participants noted the value of the maps for growers to have as part of annual discussions with water purveyors. If water agencies know which properties are in active agriculture, they can prioritize those properties for water deliveries, particularly when supplies are short.

It was also pointed out that local and regional agricultural organizations need to hear more information on the symbiotic relationship between small- and large-scale agriculture. A good example is farm suppliers locating where there is more large-scale agriculture. Placer County growers face unusual challenges in accessing adequate supplies for standard farm operations. This includes lack of farm suppliers within the county. Stakeholders noted frequent travel to Yuba, Sutter and San Joaquin counties and travel to Nevada

for common pesticides and herbicides, heavy motorized equipment and implements. Also noted was a lack of technical expertise in local shops including the fact there is no Pest Control Advisors working in any of the farm supply outlets in the county.

SACOG Next steps:

- SACOG revise ag infrastructure map to include names of locations identified, where possible include names of farms
- SACOG send Excel file of livestock and other cost of production studies for stakeholder input
- SACOG works with county to update the crop map

Stakeholder next steps:

- Investigate opportunity to present at Placer County Small Farm Conference in January 2013
- Review farms on crop map
- Provide historical packing shed information to SACOG and other ag infrastructure information

#### Evaluation Results & Comments

<b>RANKING:</b> 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree
<b>This meeting was well-organized.</b>
Average: 3.86/5

<b>The length of the meeting was appropriate to get through the material.</b>
Average: 3.67/5

<b>I felt that my personal background and experience helped contribute to the meeting's objectives.</b>
Average: 4.14/5

<b>Receiving the materials in advance helped me feel more prepared for the meeting.</b>
Average: 4/5

<b>Were there any parts of the meeting that should be avoided in the future?</b>
This was a good, open minded group.
Technical difficulties
Bogged down at points, but overall great

<b>What should be done next time to make these agricultural stakeholders meetings more effective?</b>
You could use two meetings to get through the materials. Folks had a lot to share
Probably need more time
Try to narrow down what is really relevant to participants
Narrow focus
Stick to timeline a little more
Excellent Meeting

<b>Who else do you think should be invited to participate in these meetings?</b>
Rice, commodity farmers
A few more farmers, more ranchers

Good group present
--------------------

This core group seemed well-targeted
--------------------------------------

<b>How can SACOG make the materials presented at the meeting more meaningful and useful to you?</b>
---

Labels on infrastructure businesses
-------------------------------------

Interactive, spreadsheets, notations on maps
--

## Rural-Urban Connections Strategy

County-by-County Update & Input Meetings

Summary for: Yuba and Sutter County

Meeting Date: January 25, 2013

Meeting Location: Placer County Community Center

3091 County Center Drive

Auburn, CA 95603

Participants represented: Placer County Community Development Resource Association, University of California Cooperative Extension, Placer County Planning Department, CalVans-California Vanpool Authority, Placer County Agriculture Department

Staff: David Shabazian, Robert McCrary, Libby O'Sullivan, Sharon Sprowls, Amy Lee

Total external participants: 6

**Summary:** SACOG staff first presented on the transportation elements of the Rural-Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS) project. Robert McCrary shared staff's work on identifying corridors for trucking produce from farms to markets, and truck trips by month through an animated map series.

Placer County stakeholders had similar comments and suggestions to El Dorado County participants. They explained that their roads are in poor conditions, particularly for large trucks, and they feel there is a reluctance to improve the roads because it can create an arterial becoming a de facto highway. One stakeholder commented that farmers are okay with potholes now and then if it keeps the number of commuter vehicles down. Also, the issue in Placer County is not a goods movement constraint. In the flat lands, where there is commodity production, there is sufficient infrastructure and product moves easily. There are some small conflicts associated with the movement of implements and people that want to go fast on country roads. The issue is more with livestock and small scale agriculture and agritourism in the foothills. One stakeholder pointed out that 90 percent of the livestock goes outside of the county for processing and this is a major lost opportunity. There have also been issues with licenses for the livestock truck drivers. In regards to locally serving agriculture, there is a shortage of supply to meet the growing demand. This is true for raw product and agritourism.

Staff also presented the harvest truck trip data. Stakeholder comments were similar to what we heard in Sutter and Yuba counties. The stakeholders pointed out the problem of comparing all other crops to trucks trips produced from processing tomatoes and the need to include input transport, particularly with rice. One stakeholder also asked if train trips are going to be included in the study, it plays an important role in the movement of grain.

The transportation presentation sparked a large conversation about the role of SACOG. Stakeholders wanted to understand more clearly the relationship between data collection and analysis and inciting change. They wanted to understand how SACOG could effect change particularly in a state with crumbling infrastructure and extreme fiscal constraints, and what SACOG could do to prioritize funding for construction and maintenance of roadways and other transportation facilities in rural areas. One of the stakeholders responded to these questions by pointing out that SACOG Board of Directors is one of the few if not the only site for these kinds of conversations to occur, and that SACOG Board is in one of the best positions to shift the way that funding is prioritized.

Then SACOG staff presented the agricultural infrastructure map. This started a very lively discussion. There is a dearth of processing in the region and they do not feel that the map adequately reflects that. There is only one commercial kitchen in the county (Twin Peaks). Participants stated that SACOG staff should be more explicit about their criteria for selection and might need to narrow down our definition. There are a lot of farms that pack product in the area but they should not be considered packing sheds because they only pack their own product. One stakeholder suggested that a facility should only be considered if they add value to products from multiple producers. They once again stressed the importance of differentiating agriculture as a commercial business from small scale home ownership. Stakeholders disagreed about whether or not different farms would respond to changes in demand, and shift from small-scale/landscaping niche to agricultural.

The workshop topics also included broad discussions on land use. One of the stakeholders brought up the increasing acreage going into conservation and added it is still unclear if this will be an opportunity or a limitation. They also pointed to the repercussions of 1950-60s land use decisions that cut up all the land into 5-10 acre parcels, compared to El Dorado County with 10-20 acres. Participants commented that the parcel sizes make it very difficult to get enough land to build a viable farming operation. Currently, there are only contiguous parcels in the flat lands. Small and separated parcels can make it difficult to find long term leases. There are a handful of examples of ranchers cobbling together grazing land but irrigated pasture is in short supply. There have been other efforts to aggregate land but owners are not responsive. A lot of people in the area do not understand the realities of agriculture, and that people who don't work in agriculture think that it should be a non-profit.

During the transportation survey, stakeholders identified regulations as an important challenge. The stakeholders went on to explain for wineries there are limitations about what they can do and where. The regulation challenge for fruit and vegetable growers in the county are centered on the process of hosting on farm events. The procedures and permits can be daunting for growers, and costly. One example of a challenge is the assumption that farm driveways should meet the same standards and requirements as roads. There is movement within the county to streamline some of the regulations.

The meeting then transitioned to the labor component of the RUCS project. During interviews with Placer stakeholders, Participants added that labor was not a significant issue in Placer County because the small scale of production did not require hiring outside labor, this matched the findings of staff's research.

Producers in Placer County are developing enterprises that are working really well if you just look at gross product, but many of them are not paying themselves enough. If they want to expand to increase their own salary, they often have to hire someone else. This requires doubling their size which is not doable. This is attributable to the land use issues discussed earlier and the shortage of labor in the region. There is also an issue with workers compensation and the increased liability with using multiple workers. This is just an additional cost. In particular, skilled agricultural labor is very difficult to come by, especially because of the reliance on direct marketing, quality is paramount.

Many of the growers commented that they refuse to use contract labor because the quality of labor doesn't match the need. The other problem is the seasonal nature of the work in the foothills. Producers cannot offer year round labor, so workers do not have the incentive to come up here. So finding labor when you need it and being able to rely on it is a challenge. Also with the small acreage problem it just takes less time to do the work, making it less attractive to workers. It is also expensive to live in the foothills so most of the labor is coming from the valley around Yuba City and Marysville. The county passed new zoning ordinances allowing on farm housing, but so far there are only a few people testing it out.

Two of the cooperative extension specialists were meeting with growers later in the day to talk about the challenges of capitalizing small farming operations.

SACOG next steps:

- Placer County Pesticide Use GIS layer

Stakeholder next steps:

- Help SACOG staff identify and gain access to interviewees for Baseline Road Case study

Evaluation Results & Comments:

<b>The length of the meeting was appropriate to get through the material</b>	
Avg: 3.2/5	
<b>I felt that my personal background and experience helped contribute to the meeting's objectives</b>	
Avg: 4/5	
<b>Were there parts of the meeting that should be avoided in the future?</b>	
Transportation section might be a little more focused The transportation maps were difficult to understand and may need to be broken down further	
<b>What should be done next time to make these agricultural stakeholders meetings more effective?</b>	
Short meeting More data	
<b>Who else do you think should be invited to participate in these meetings?</b>	
More farmers Farmers/business/ processors More growers	
<b>How can SACOG make the materials presented at the meeting more meaningful and useful to you?</b>	
Number/figures/ better raw data	
<b>SACOG would like to continue this conversation. What is the best way to keep stakeholders engaged?</b>	
More meetings similar to this one, 4 votes Monthly newsletters, 1 votes Shorter check-ins and project updates at ongoing gatherings, 4 votes	
<b>Other:</b>	Report shared Planned breakfasts or lunches



**Rural-Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS)**  
County-by-County Update & Input Meetings

Summary for: Sacramento County Stakeholders

Meeting Date: November 29, 2012

Meeting Location:

4137 Branch Center Road

Sacramento, CA 95627

Participants represented: Small scale rancher, Farm Bureau, Sacramento County Agricultural Commission, small scale farmer, California Rice Commission, University of California Cooperative Extension

Staff: David Shabazian, Monica Hernández, Libby O'Sullivan, Deborah Schrimmer

Total external participants: 6

Summary: Most stakeholders were familiar with the RUCS project, but had not heard about the project for a few years. The meeting started with an overview PowerPoint presentation on RUCS, where participants were encouraged to ask questions or make comments throughout the presentation. The PowerPoint then gave an update on its technical tools and research aspects.

Participants spent most of the meeting evaluating the Cost of Production (COP) studies and other inputs of SACOG's iPLACE<sup>3</sup>S model. Participants expressed concern in using the COP studies as the underlying data source for the iPLACE<sup>3</sup>S model because they are derived from an average of both large and small scale farmers, which makes them more highly theoretical. There was a suggestion to break up the model into small scale and large growers as a way to provide a more realistic picture of agriculture in the region.

Establishment costs were identified as a contentious input in the model. The model currently factors in buying land, which adds an additional overhead cost for farmers. Participants said that many farmers go into farming because they already own or have access to land. There was a suggestion to remove land costs as an overhead cost in the iPLACE<sup>3</sup>S model.

A participant suggested that the COP studies be better formatted because they are currently very difficult to follow. Including an overview scenario of a farm—number of acres on the farm, quantities of yields, % of produce going to market, etc. Other participants agreed on this idea. There was also a recommendation to re-examine grazing land in the model. It is not a form of production, but a combination of beef production and other activities on the land. This could be better captured in the model. A participant also said that the establishment cost of grapes should be spread out over 20 years.

Another idea to make the COP studies more accessible was to break them into two scenarios—a theoretical scenario based on an average year on the farm, and then another scenario which would be for starting a new farm. That way, the establishment costs associated with both scenarios could be differentiated.

The group next discussed regulations in the agricultural industry. A major complaint was that many of these regulations require farmers to fix things that they don't necessarily know how to fix. There was a general

consensus that ARB and other environmental regulations are overly bureaucratic and punish farmers who are trying to do the right thing.

A representative from the rice industry emphasized the role of rice fields providing a habitat for endangered species. Other participants weighed in on the important connection between agriculture and habitat conversation.

SACOG Next steps:

- Staff will talk to Karen Klonsky about land costs and land values in the COP studies
- Staff will look into reorganizing the COP studies so they are more accessible
- Staff will look into creating new farmer vs. established farmer COP studies

Stakeholder next steps:

- The Sacramento County Agricultural Commission will send GIS pesticide reports and other data layers to SACOG so they can be used update their county's crop map

Evaluation Results & Comments:

<b>RANKING:</b> 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree
<b>This meeting was well-organized.</b>
Average: 4/5
<b>The length of the meeting was appropriate to get through the material.</b>
Average: 4.2/5
<b>I felt that my personal background and experience helped contribute to the meeting's objectives.</b>
Average: 4.2/5
<b>Receiving the materials in advance helped me feel more prepared for the meeting.</b>
Average: 4/5
<b>Were there any parts of the meeting that should be avoided in the future?</b>
No, all were useful
<b>What should be done next time to make these agricultural stakeholders meetings more effective?</b>
Better spreadsheets- labels, units, etc.
Present info to a group of growers who are already meeting to get a bigger a group
Having the agenda ahead of the meeting
<b>Who else do you think should be invited to participate in these meetings?</b>
<b>How can SACOG make the materials presented at the meeting more meaningful and useful to you?</b>
It would be nice to get a powerpoint- either hard copy or electronic

## Rural-Urban Connections Strategy

County-by-County Update & Input Meetings

Summary for: Sacramento County Stakeholders Meeting Date: March 5, 2013

Meeting Location: Sacramento Farm Bureau Conference Room  
8970 Elk Grove Blvd  
Elk Grove, CA 95624

Participants represented: CalVans, Sacramento County Farm Bureau, Sacramento Agricultural Commissioner's office

Staff: David Shabazian, Robert McCrary, Libby O'Sullivan, Sharon Sprowls

Total external participants: 5

SUMMARY: The meeting started with a presentation on the transportation pieces of the Rural-Urban Connections Strategy. The follow-up discussion centered on road conditions within Sacramento County. The group contended that road improvements are generally for housing and not agriculture. The participants are interested in ways to improve road conditions but in a way that does not make a call to build more houses on agricultural land. Participants stated that goals for south Sacramento County should be to keep agricultural land in production, and make road improvements without inducing more residential development. Grant Line Boulevard was cited as an example.

Participants commented that road conditions aren't the only challenge in distributing agricultural goods. It was noted that general efficiency is a challenge— sometimes packing houses have to be shut down because goods simply can't be moved there in an efficient manner. It was stressed that the best way to improve efficiency is by using big trucks to transport goods. Yet, there are certain barriers with using big trucks (e.g. certain parts along the I-5 corridor do not allow trucks over 65 feet).

The group also reviewed SACOG's map of goods movement and Farm-to-Market corridors. Participants were especially interested in the connection between Highway 99 and Interstate 5. Eschinger Road was identified as an important route for markets, but one that tickets trucks for traveling. A cost share between land owners, the County of Sacramento, and trucking companies helped fund the improvements to the roads so trucks could travel on them. Stakeholders felt this was not the best way to address the issue.

The group commented that regulatory issues pose a bigger threat to agriculture than transportation issues. Stakeholders explained that they have shared information with other groups in the past about the cost of regulatory compliance for production agriculture and would like to see SACOG work more closely with the California Farm Bureau. It was noted that cost of compliance for regulations vary by county, and that finding the specificity will be difficult. However, there are also many regulations at the state and national level. There is incredible disconnect of decisions being made at a high level and the people at the bottom of the chain get having to pay for them. Stakeholders would like to see SACOG Board of Directors use its regional political position to collectively organize arguments against these regulations, and/or influence future regulations.

The topic broadened to both transportation and land use planning. Participants discussed how they would like to see jurisdictions be more thoughtful in their land use and transportation planning. They would like to see SACOG's information be better disseminated and play a larger role in the decision making process. There was concern that Elk Grove could continue to grow in a way which undermines agricultural viability. Stakeholders suggested that in future transportation funding rounds, there should be added criteria about economic impact on agriculture in the financing application. There should also be more emphasis in looking at surrounding land uses to the roads being included in projects that the county considers.

Stakeholders mentioned that Sacramento County's General Plan has a map with expanding county roads from two lanes to four lanes. They mentioned trying to find a way to require that rural road expansions are for rural purposes (i.e. agriculture) and not to shift urban commuter traffic onto rural roads.

The conversation then switched from transportation to labor. Participants discussed labor- intensive crops in the county, particularly emphasizing cherries and olives. All crops (but especially these ones) had labor shortages. Labor intensive crops cannot be mechanically harvested. Some olive farmers are shifting to mechanization, but some crops (i.e. pears) have to be hand harvested.

Stakeholders commented on their efforts to maintain labor camps in the county. They explained that it is as expensive to rent a place in Courtland as it is in Sacramento. However, having the labor camps hasn't helped the area keep its laborers. During the conversation, labor shortages were extensively related to the construction industry. There was concern that when construction ramps up again, the labor shortages will be further magnified.

### Next Steps:

- Maintain communication about upcoming work on CDFA specialty crop grants: (1) multiplier of agriculture cost and (2) county fair infrastructure
- Identify gaps in regulatory costs
- SACOG should look into developing an ombudsman for the region to look at unfair regulatory costs on farmers

## Evaluation Results &amp; Comments:

<b>RANKING: 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree</b>
<b>This meeting was well-organized</b>
Average: 3.3
<b>The length of the meeting was appropriate to get through the material</b>
Average: 3.6
<b>I felt that my personal background and experience helped contribute to the meeting's objectives</b>
Average: 3.6
<b>Receiving materials in advance helped me feel more prepared for the meeting.</b>
Average: 1.6
<b>What should be done next time to make these agricultural stakeholders meetings more effective?</b>
Clearly state the propose of the meeting Try to get more stakeholders to attend- difficult
<b>How can SACOG make the materials presented at the meeting more meaningful and useful to you?</b>
Be able to explain the maps Get electronic copies of pdfs

**Rural-Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS)**  
County-by-County Update & Input Meetings

Summary for: Yuba and Sutter County Stakeholders  
Meeting Date: November 9, 2012

Meeting Location: Sutter County Agricultural Commissioner's Office  
142 Garden Highway  
Yuba City, CA 95991

Participants represented: Yuba-Sutter Farm Bureau, small farmer, Yuba City, Sutter County Planning Department, Sutter County Agricultural Commission, Orchards farmer, Yuba County Agricultural Commission, Yuba County Economic Development, University of California Cooperative Extension

Staff: David Shabazian, Monica Hernández, Libby O'Sullivan, Deborah Schrimmer

Total external participants: 10

Summary: Some stakeholders were familiar with the Rural-Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS) project, but for others this information was completely new. The meeting started with an overview PowerPoint presentation on RUCS, where participants were encouraged to ask questions or make comments throughout the presentation.

Participants agreed that the major challenge facing farmers is staying on the farm. It was noted that government agencies should be careful when implementing new regulations because farmers already do a lot of mitigation strategies. The group said communicating the importance of agriculture to policymakers is a major challenge. There was a perception that policymakers often only see agriculture as an industry to regulate and not support. Participants said that farmers do not currently get rewarded for their mitigation efforts (i.e. crop rotation); government just continues to add new measures for farmers to follow and face penalties if they do not.

The peach industry has dropped dramatically in Yuba and Sutter County. Eight years ago, Yuba County had 7,000 acres in peaches, now there are only 4,000 acres. As a result, many of the peach processing plants have relocated. Walnuts are increasing in acreage in both counties- there are nearly 12,000 acres in production. There has also been a downward trend in almond and dried plum production. Production of dried plums has gone down by almost 10,000 acres, and now there are only 4,000 acres in almond production.

When discussing labor issues, it was noted that the 2012 growing season had labor shortages for peaches. Participants wanted to know if access to healthcare for laborers is a component of the RUCS project. Staff reported that this will be included in an update meeting in 2013, when staff will present information on labor and transportation elements of the RUCS project.

In reviewing the inputs of the iPLACE<sup>3</sup>S model, participants noted that the seasonality of food products could be incorporated. Participants also suggested including the payback of loans on capital investments. There was also a suggestion to include agritourism into the iPLACE<sup>3</sup>S model, as this is becoming a significant economic driver for both counties. Meeting attendees expressed interest in learning how to easily create bed-and-breakfast and agritourism sites.

Participants asked many questions and had many comments about the role of Community Supported Agriculture and Farmers Markets in Yuba and Sutter County. Participants discussed the importance of scale, and the challenges these direct markets present for small farmers. The group identified cost barriers and the need for niche markets. Large processors do not want to take the time to deal with niche markets, so they provide competitive opportunities for smaller growers and processors. Stakeholders agreed that farmers need time, patience and education will be needed to break into new markets throughout the region.

It was noted that if the region is going to invest in new infrastructure for processing, it should consider labeling. Labeling is expected to be the “next big thing”, especially as more overseas investors buy land in California for agriculture. There is an expected high demand for different sizes, labels, marketing, logos, and packing by foreign interests. For example, the first warehouse in China that only carries American produce just opened. They are willing to pay a lot to market the produce as American grown. Participants expect to see these sorts of opportunities in Yuba and Sutter County.

SACOG Next steps:

- SACOG will pass along Cost of Production studies to Chris Greer and Jenine Hasting
- SACOG will create a seed crop/ nursery cost of production study
- SACOG works with county to update the crop map

Stakeholder next steps:

- The Farm Bureau and Agricultural Commissioners will work on getting more growers engaged in project

## Evaluation Results & Comments

<b>RANKING:</b> 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree
<b>This meeting was well-organized.</b>
Average: 4.6

<b>The length of the meeting was appropriate to get through the material.</b>
Average: 4.2

<b>I felt that my personal background and experience helped contribute to the meeting's objectives.</b>
Average: 3.4

<b>Receiving the materials in advance helped me feel more prepared for the meeting.</b>
Average: 4.4

<b>Were there any parts of the meeting that should be avoided in the future?</b>
Well run meetings
No. All was helpful, especially being unfamiliar

<b>What should be done next time to make these agricultural stakeholders meetings more effective?</b>
Involve UC + Farmers
More farmers
More growers, although they are hard to nail down!

<b>Who else do you think should be invited to participate in these meetings?</b>
UC + Farmers
Farmers, growers, processors
Farmers
Farmers
UCCE crop advisors. Pest control advisors- i.e. Helenda, Grower's Ag Service. The PCAS has a thorough understanding of inputs and are familiar with crop locations.

<b>How can SACOG make the materials presented at the meeting more meaningful and useful to you?</b>
Was very well presented for being what I consider a complicated topic. Real examples of how the program has actually been out to use would be helpful.



**Rural-Urban Connections Strategy**  
County-by-County Update & Input Meetings  
Summary for: Yuba and Sutter County  
Stakeholders Meeting Date: January 24, 2013

Meeting Location: Yuba-Sutter Farm Bureau  
475 Palora Avenue  
Yuba City, CA 95991

Participants represented: Pacific Coast Producers, CalVANS, Yuba County, California Highway Patrol, Sutter County, Yuba-Sutter Farm Bureau, University of California Cooperative Extensive, Growers

Staff: David Shabazian, Robert McCrary, Libby O'Sullivan, Sharon Sprowls, Clint Holtzen

Total external participants: 11

Summary: The meeting began with staff presenting the transportation elements of the Rural-Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS). Robert McCrary shared staff's work on identifying corridors for trucking produce from farms to markets, and truck trips by month. Participants suggested that it might be useful to include more information on the map like cities and more distinct county boundaries. The stakeholders also had a number of questions regarding goods movement. They wanted to know if SACOG staff was able to determine the movement of goods originating from Yuba and Sutter versus traveling through them. The stakeholders suggested that much of the goods movement in the county was goods movement from Colusa County. Staff then presented an animated map showing season truck trip generation by crop type in the region. For this map, they suggested that staff exclude processing tomatoes because the tomato trucks/acre are much higher than any other crop.

The transportation patterns of rice production were discussed in detail. This was one example where the stakeholders felt that production truck trips were significant. For rice it is the movement of seed, inputs (particularly fertilizer) and implements. This also sparked a conversation about the destination for lots of the crops. They explained that rice was stored and then transported to a mill. One stakeholder suggested that we sit down with growers of different commodities and create goods movement maps, showing where and when truck trips take place. This would include inputs, movement of implements, and final transport of product.

The meeting then transitioned to the labor component of the RUCS project. Before the formal presentation got started one farmer spoke about his own challenges as a walnut grower. For the last few years he has offered his employees, after one year of working on the farm, ownership shares, 401k, and healthcare. Yet he has struggled to attract and retain labor. He speculated this was because people are primarily concerned with the wage, and can't think outside of the box. He thought this might have something to do with differences in personal values or language barriers.

Another farmer agreed with these difficulties. He sits on the Farm Bureau board, and explained that peaches had labor shortages during May and June of 2012. He estimates a 20 percent shortage. He went on to state that it is not necessarily a labor problem but indicative of much larger issues. He met with an official from Mexico who identified much of the same rationale for the shortage as those presented by SACOG staff – a stronger Mexican economy, a more dangerous border, and declining birth rates. At this point one of the other stakeholders commented that it cost somewhere between \$8,000-\$10,000 to come into the United States, and that due to the increased danger, no one is willing to cross alone.

We then discussed alternative sources of labor (convicts, young people, foreign students). The peach farmer spoke of one UC Davis undergraduate who came to his on farm to work. They usually start the pick at 5:30 a.m. and she showed up at 9 a.m. This started a conversation about larger trends in changes in work ethics amongst different generations. These issues were supported and repeated by other growers.

Then the conversation turned to services offered to agricultural labor to make working in the region more attractive. They pointed out that the coming and going of agriculture labor makes the issue of health care very difficult. A small percentage of farmers in the region offer any kind of healthcare package. They thought that most of the workers would be more interested in housing, and thought it would be a major asset in the region. This was the first time SACOG staff had heard this from any of the stakeholder groups. A fluctuation in prices at one of the affordable housing locations, Richland, is directly felt by workers. It was commented by more than one participant that offering on-farm housing was very costly and not a viable option for most growers.

Finally the conversation turned to solutions. One farmer speculated that the market conditions would correct themselves. Growers would start to shift to less labor intensive crops. This has already started to happen in the region between the shift from peaches and prunes to walnuts. There was a lot of talk about over production of walnuts, and expectations of drops in prices. Nearly all of the stakeholders agreed that one strong labor shortage solution would be a better guest worker program.

#### SACOG Next Steps:

- Continue to provide work updates

#### Stakeholder Next Steps:

- Invite SACOG staff to present at other agricultural stakeholder meetings

Evaluation Results & Comments:

<b>RANKING: 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree</b>
<b>This meeting was well-organized</b>
Avg: 3.6/5
<b>The length of the meeting was appropriate to get through the material</b>
Avg: 3.2/5
<b>I felt that my personal background and experience helped contribute to the meeting's objectives</b>
Avg: 4/5
<b>Were there parts of the meeting that should be avoided in the future?</b>
Transportation section might be a little more focused The transportation maps were difficult to understand and may need to be broken down further
<b>What should be done next time to make these agricultural stakeholders meetings more effective?</b>
Short meeting More data
<b>Who else do you think should be invited to participate in these meetings?</b>
More farmers Farmers/business/ processors More growers
<b>How can SACOG make the materials presented at the meeting more meaningful and useful to you?</b>
Number/figures/ better raw data
<b>SACOG would like to continue this conversation. What is the best way to keep stakeholders engaged?</b>
More meetings similar to this one, 4 votes Monthly newsletters, 1 vote Shorter check-ins and project updates at ongoing gatherings, 4 votes <b>Other:</b> Report shared Planned breakfasts or lunches

## Rural-Urban Connections Strategy

### County-by-County Update & Input Meetings

Summary for: Yolo County Stakeholders

Meeting Date: Friday, January 11, 2013

Meeting Location: Yolo County Farm Bureau  
69 Kentucky Avenue  
Woodland, CA

Participants represented: Yolo County Farm Bureau, large-scale alfalfa, large-scale processing tomatoes, co-operative tomato processing, Yolo County Planning Department, Yolo County Board of Supervisors, Yolo County Department of Agriculture, Davis Farmers' Market, cattle operation, meat processing and distribution, wine grape grower and processor, and almond production

Staff: David Shabazian, Monica Hernández, Libby O'Sullivan

Total external participants: 11

Summary: While two meeting attendees had had significant exposure to the Rural-Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS) project, for most this was new information. The meeting started with discussion about SACOG's authority for work in agriculture and operating budget. Staff explained the work within RUCS is a result of the 2008 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Environmental Impact Report Mitigation Measure and a Transportation Control Measure for the 2008 MTP. Statements from stakeholders included concern that SACOG plans (MTP/SCS) have no teeth and that counties will continue to develop and do what they want to. A discussion about the regulatory requirements for transportation dollars to be realized within any jurisdiction via the MTP/SCS followed. Participants questioned how the SACOG Board of Directors and/or staff work directly with developers in the region. Staff explained that SACOG serves at the direction of the SACOG Board, and at board member request will work with project developers. Staff were asked to discuss the infill development incentives under SB 375. The discussion also briefly talked about the IMPACS model, as a development tool for rural community planning, a full description was included during the RUCS presentation for the stakeholders. It was noted by a stakeholder that elected officials need to look at the IMPACS model when making development decisions and planning for growth.

The stakeholders had a substantive dialogue regarding the cost of production studies that feed into iPLACE<sup>3</sup>S model to test different land use scenarios. It was pointed out that the biggest issue with the cost of production studies were the capital start-up costs— the studies demonstrate the capital costs incurred in the first year of operation, but in reality those costs are spread over the first few years of the operation. Staff noted that while the studies show those costs in year one, that when staff runs individual scenarios, that those cost can be adjusted along with the other inputs in model. Staff noted that these types of comments were very important for staff to hear, and encouraged the continued input on the details within the cost of production studies and their application in the model. A gap identified in the studies was the differentiation of micro-sprinkler for orchards.

It was also noted that some stakeholders felt the data for RUCS only being within the SACOG region and not including Solano County, was a significant gap, and that Yolo County stakeholders need to have that information to truly assess and make decisions about land use and transportation planning. Staff noted the

jurisdiction of the SACOG region, but added that staff is currently working with staff at Solano County to enhance the data in the Crop Map. Staff also asked that Yolo County staff help to build the relationship and help obtain the appropriate data given the strong relationship between the two counties.

Stakeholders asked what role SACOG plays in easements. Understanding that SACOG did not have jurisdiction nor a formal role in easements, stakeholders asked staff to be another voice for farmers regarding easements. Participants said that more often farmers are leery of easement programs because of qualifying requirements changing year to year. Staff noted that addressing regulations is part of the RUCS open space work, but the work is more analytical versus legislative action.

When looking at the demonstration of the Predictive Model, a comment was made that while the model shows more fallowing under certain scenarios, it doesn't show that within that fallowing is likely transition to a higher value crop or double cropping, especially in Yolo County where there is a lot of high quality soil.

As the work for the local food market was presented, participants asked why there was such a low number (2 percent) for local food consumption. Staff commented on the missing infrastructure needed to support a more local food system, which would allow more of the agricultural value to be captured within in the region. Comments were made that the biggest challenge to local growers in building the needed infrastructure is regulations—over regulation, conflicting regulations, and the interpretation of regulations. Other challenges to the local system are the way large grocery stores want to purchase from a single source, which often displaces smaller diversified farms, they also require gap certification which is difficult for smaller growers. It was commented that we (growers and SACOG) need to look at both conventional and organic to open pathways to the largest markets. During this discussion, accessing international markets was also covered as a key piece to keeping our region's largest farms in production. One specific challenge pointed out for local growers is getting contracts beyond one year—consumers don't want to over commit (e.g. guarantee purchase price and quantity), but growers need a longer commitment. These types of contracts will never be realized until there is a strong centralized aggregation and distribution system within the region.

A robust conversation occurred regarding greenhouse gas emissions. It was noted that research from UC Davis indicates the urbanized land produces 70 times more greenhouse gas emissions than agricultural lands. Stakeholders asked about getting AB 32 funds invested into agricultural transportation infrastructure. This led to a broader discussion about rural transportation. The issue of processing leakage due to AB 32 was also discussed. During this discussion, the stakeholders explicitly said that SACOG help was needed in helping to align and address regulations, it was reiterated that agriculture needs another voice.

Stakeholders noted that load capacities are creating more truck trips and economic challenges in moving product, in order to compete in global markets, the load capacities have to be addressed. There was discussion of commuter driver conflicts on rural roads and specifically Highway 16. One stakeholder had specific questions about a road project he would like to see implemented, a brief dialogue about transportation planning processes occurred, but it was pointed out that the following RUCS meeting was the place for that dialogue, as it will have the transportation work as the topic.

SACOG next steps:

- Schedule follow up meeting with transportation focus
- Review crop data provided by Yolo County planning
- Email PDF of infrastructure map to stakeholders
- Prepare MTIP and project delivery information for next meeting

Stakeholder next steps:

- Invite SACOG to other standing meeting to present overview information to more stakeholders
- Invite other stakeholders to attend next RUCS meeting
- Mark up agricultural infrastructure and crop maps

Evaluation Results & Comments:

<b>RANKING:</b> 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree
<b>This meeting was well-organized.</b>
Average: 4
<b>The length of the meeting was appropriate to get through the material.</b>
Average: 4.1
<b>I felt that my personal background and experience helped contribute to the meeting's objectives.</b>
Average: 3.8
<b>Receiving the materials in advance helped me feel more prepared for the meeting.</b>
Average: 4.1
<b>Were there any parts of the meeting that should be avoided in the future?</b>
No
Keep and allow open discussion
All were helpful for me
You are trying to do too many projects
Not at this time
<b>What should be done next time to make these agricultural stakeholders meetings more effective?</b>
State up front what the purpose of the meeting is and what you hope to accomplish
More money for roads rural
Update mapping brought out
Good start for first meeting
I liked it
<b>Who else do you think should be invited to participate in these meetings?</b>
County manager, mayors
More growers

People from State regulation
Smaller organic industry farmers
More stakeholders
<b>How can SACOG make the materials presented at the meeting more meaningful and useful to you?</b>
Email out and summary
Ag is changing must be flexible
Keep updating ag production maps
I liked it all
<b>Additional comments:</b>
Next meeting show all of the rural transportation proposals that have been made to date. Do transportation and RUCS meeting by region.

## Rural-Urban Connections Strategy

County-by-County Update & Input Meeting

Summary for: Yolo County

Meeting Date: February 27, 2013

Meeting Location: Farm Bureau Conference Room

69 Kentucky Road

Woodland, CA 95695

Participants represented: CalVans, processing tomato farmer, wine grape grower, Yolo County Agriculture Commissioners office, and Yolo County Resource Conservation District

Staff: David Shabazian, Robert McCrary, Libby O'Sullivan, Sharon Sprowls, Amy Lee

Total external participants: 5

**Summary:** SACOG staff first presented on the transportation elements of the Rural-Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS) project. Work on identifying corridors for trucking produce from farms to markets was presented to the participants. Stakeholders stressed the importance of including input truck trips into the analysis. One larger processing tomato and grape grower explained that they typically buy inputs by the truck load. They will store the product on site and use it as needed. They often get multiple deliveries during the year. One stakeholder suggested that we contact some of the most widely utilized input sellers, since they are making deliveries they know exactly where product is coming and going. One farmer also worried that the truck trips did not accurately reflect the seasonality of wine grape harvest; it needed to continue through October.

During the meeting, one grower talked about innovations in agriculture. One was the use of drip irrigation in alfalfa and a 30 percent increase in processing tomato yields with the use of drip irrigation. While this wasn't part of the planned agenda, staff and others engaged in the dialogue.

The meeting then transitioned to the labor component of the RUCS project. The stakeholders felt that the SACOG findings were accurate and representative of the realities on the ground in Yolo County. They wanted to stress that there are different types of labor, skilled and unskilled. There are shortages in both segments of the labor force. Much like the second generation of farmers shrinking, the same holds true for the second generation of agricultural labor. The majority of their workers' children are not interested in agriculture.

One of the challenges to maintaining labor identified by participants was housing and local regulations for having on site housing. For the last year and half, Yolo County has been trying to streamline the process and make it easier to build clustered agricultural workers housing on site. One farmer explained that he is interested in offering housing to his year round workers but no for his seasonal employees. He is located in the Delta and explained that a lot of the housing has been taken out and that it is very unlikely that it will be rebuilt. He believes most of the workers live in nearby metropolitan areas like Elk Grove and West Sacramento.

Another challenge that the stakeholders spoke about was transportation for laborers. A lot of their employees can't/shouldn't drive because they don't have a driver's license.



## Attachment E

One result is, that one person who can drive transports more passengers than the vehicle can safely accommodate. A growing concern for farmers and labor contractors is increasing regulation and fining from California Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

SACOG next steps:

- Talk to each county about getting access to their pesticide use GIS file
- Consider selecting a second case study location

Stakeholder next steps:

- Invite SACOG to speak at upcoming meetings and events

### Evaluation Results & Comments

<b>RANKING: 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree</b>
<b>This meeting was well-organized</b>
Avg: 4.5
<b>The length of the meeting was appropriate to get through the material</b>
Avg: 4.25
<b>I felt that my personal background and experience helped contribute to the meeting's objectives</b>
Avg: 3.75 I do resource conservation in the ag setting; labor and transportation not really my expertise
<b>Were there parts of the meeting that should be avoided in the future?</b>
Lean more heavily toward getting input from attendees, less forward presentation
<b>What should be done next time to make these agricultural stakeholders meetings more effective?</b>
Possibly begin looking into specific issues (detailing) More feedback from local producers Poll your email list and ask why they didn't come: weather, farming needs, etc? Getting more farmers here will help you the most
<b>Who else do you think should be invited to participate in these meetings?</b>
County Transportation and Planning staff County Department agents that are specific to funding and project criteria More farmers, ranchers, producers I don't know who you invited so I can't answer that
<b>How can SACOG make the materials presented at the meeting more meaningful and useful to you?</b>
Handouts of powerpoints on larger than normal paper. Hard to see data on powerpoint presentations. Thought the material was quite meaningful Email preentations before and spend more time on interactions You did pretty well

## Attachment E

**SACOG would like to continue this conversation. What is the best way to keep stakeholders engaged?**

More meetings similar to this one, 1 vote

Monthly newsletters, 2 votes

Shorter check-ins and project updates at ongoing gatherings

## Rural-Urban Connections Strategy

### County-by-County Update & Input Meetings

Summary for: Health & Human Services Meeting in Yolo County, requested by former Yolo County Supervisor and SACOG Board Chair Helen Thomson

Meeting Date: April 9, 2013

Meeting Location: Yolo County Government Offices

Participants represented: Sutter Davis Hospital, Yolo Health, First 5 Yolo, Public Health & Agriculture Advocate, Davis Chamber of Commerce, Yolo County Housing, Davis Community Meals

Staff: David Shabazian, Monica Hernández, Libby O'Sullivan and Deborah Schrimmer

Total external participants: 8

Summary: The meeting started with an overview PowerPoint presentation on RUCS, where participants were encouraged to ask questions or make comments throughout the presentation. Of the meeting participants, only one had context for RUCS. In addition to the overview themes of bringing pieces of the food system back to the Sacramento regional and improving fresh food access within the RUCS suite of research, analysis, and modeling tools were covered.

Comments from participants were diverse and participants asked which consumers could the RUCS project influence to change. Participants asked for SACOG to consider leading a longevity study on healthy education/healthy eating over a lifetime. This was compared to popular smoking cessation studies. There was discussion on the healthy diet needs for mental health patients and that the mentally ill are often overlooked when addressing food access. Additional diet and public health comments included, pointing out that physicians are not typically trained in active transportation/active living and healthy eating strategies. There was concern that there was a lack of general understanding of the diets of residents of subsidized housing and what if any work could do address the need.

There was a lot of interest in the ability to address quality of life and social equity issues within RUCS, specifically noted is comments that RUCS should not be solely about the economics of farming and the food system. The conversation went deeper into opportunities to increase fresh food access to those in need particularly those with mental health or medical issues. The President of Sutter Davis Hospital offered her site as a pilot project location. Ideas to supplement the cold storage, aggregation and distribution gaps in our current regional system included:

- Accessing elderly nutrition programs with excess capacity,
- Accessing schools in off hours, with lease options, and
- Collect regional data on public facilities that have aggregation, distribution, and or cold storage potential that don't operate 24 hours-a-day.

Staff identified that we are currently funded to perform a business analysis using food banks as food hubs. This work is in partnership with Yolo and Sacramento food banks. Participants were pleased that food banks were engaged but were concerned that they could potentially create competition with other aggregators and/or distributors. Staff responded that a lack of aggregation and distribution is an identified gap for local consumption and this is just one piece of a potential solution.

## Attachment E

### SACOG next steps:

If opportunities for research grants in the interest of these stakeholders becomes available, advance information and opportunity to the group

When working on new data collection coordinate with Yolo Food Policy Council

### Stakeholder next steps:

Stakeholders will share new data as it is available regarding food consumption

Stakeholders will share information, meetings or webinars related to food access, and active living/transportation as they see fit

### Evaluation Results & Comments:

Evaluation forms were not included for this meeting.

### **Rural-Urban Connections Strategy**

Informational meeting with California Department of Public Health

Meeting Date: March 16, 2013

Meeting Location: California Department of Public Health

Staff: David Shabazian, Libby O'Sullivan, Deborah Schrimmer

Total external participants: 4

Summary: Some stakeholders were familiar with the Rural-Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS) project, but for others this information was completely new. The meeting started with an overview PowerPoint presentation on RUCS, where participants were encouraged to ask questions or make comments throughout the presentation.

The RUCS presentation gave an overview of SACOG's role as a regional metropolitan planning organization and its responsibilities to draft the region's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS). To help explain the MTP/SCS, the story of the region's regional visioning document, the Blueprint, was discussed. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) stakeholders then had an extensive conversation about how Blueprint principles support the CDPH's agency goals to encourage more active modes of transportation.

Because the CDPH is promoting a healthy eating campaign, the meeting participants were interested in RUCS' mission to help farmers break into more local markets. The group had a robust discussion about SACOG's work on food deserts and food access, as well as the infrastructure needed to support a local food system. CDPH expressed interest in wanting to learn more about how to leverage mobile food banks as a larger part of the food system. The CDPH mentioned that a newly created office, the California Farm-to-Table, is a jointly funded office by the CDPH and USDA. It was suggested that SACOG staff follow up with this new office and look for opportunities to collaborate.

The group then discussed greenhouse gas emissions and how they relate to public health. CDPH shared their findings with the CalEnviroScan, which measures air pollutant levels. The Highway 99 corridor had really severe pollutant levels as well as a high incidence of asthma. It was suggested that the CalEnviroScan be included in the equity section of SACOG's next MTP/SCS, as the analysis highlights air quality disparities in disadvantaged communities.

At the end of the meeting, the Director of the Department of Public Health agreed to write a letter of support for SACOG's grant application to the California Department of Food and Agriculture to research county fairgrounds and support limited resource food entrepreneurs with a food hub and business incubator.

No evaluation forms were provided for this meeting.