

# Capay Valley Vision

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## For More Information

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### **CAPAY VALLEY VISION: A Community Planning Process For A Sustainable Future**

ESPARTO – Like so many rural areas in California, the Capay Valley in recent years has experienced growth pressures from expanding urbanization in the region. Seeking to strengthen the community's ability to manage growth, key stakeholders in the region formed Capay Valley Vision, Inc. (CVV) in 2000.

Dedicated to protecting the rural character of the Valley and charting a course for the future of the small communities that lie along Cache Creek, CVV is a non-profit organization composed of community members with a variety of skills and connections. The eight founders of the Board of Directors represent a range of interests and communities, including local residents, representatives of the Rumsey Band of Wintun Indians, the agricultural community and business owners. They are committed to an open and honest exchange of information and idea. Working collectively, CVV hopes to:

- Strengthen communications and personal relationships;
- Develop a viable economic strategy;
- Encourage appropriate development;
- Preserve residents heritage and sense of place;
- Preserve farm lands, rangelands, wild lands and the rural character of the Valley;
- Enhance community health and well being; and,
- Help local businesses remain competitive.

Though the Board meets monthly to discuss matters such as existing infrastructure and needs, regional resources, demographics and economic trends pertinent to the area, the directors are committed to establishing a community-wide consensus for the future of Capay Valley. To help ensure this, a Community Advisory Council consisting of a delegate from each community organization has been created. The Council meets several times a year and is charged with advising the Board on policy matters and electing the directors. As a way of further involving Valley residents in the planning process, CVV conducts workshops and sponsors five task forces: transportation, agriculture and environment, economic development, communication and recreation.

As a result of input from the Community Advisory Council, CVV submitted a proposal to the Department of Transportation for funds to create a "Corridor Concept Plan". The plan will address such issues as traffic flow and operation, access to roadways and their interaction with Valley merchants, and the visual character of Hwy 16 in terms of its natural setting and rural character. The CVV Board is presently working with the Sacramento Area Council of

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Governments (SACOG) to hire a program manager and retain a firm of transportation planning experts who will advise the community and CVV throughout the corridor-planning process. Other members of the organization are working to educate the community, bus drivers, and tourists about road safety.

The agriculture and environment task force is focused on ways to enhance the marketing of Capay Valley produce, just as Apple Hill growers market their fruit and Napa Valley growers their grapes. Members of this task force are also working with the Yolo Land Trust to encourage the implementation of conservation easements to stabilize agricultural land uses while assisting current farmers in retiring debt and encouraging the entry of new farmers.

The CVV Board feels strongly that an economic development strategy is needed to guide the Capay Valley, Madison and Esparto region. Members of the economic development task force are developing a strategy that addresses issues such as attracting and retaining local business, understanding local economic trends, exploring the role of "eco-tourism" and "agri-tourism" in Capay Valley and promoting the role of agriculture in the local economy. Creating a community kitchen or having a community owned and operated hotel have been discussed as possible tools to help in the revitalization of Esparto.

Those affiliated with CVV recognize that the area's character and uniqueness stems from the diversity of the residents and their interests. As such, CVV believes it is important for community members to accommodate and celebrate their neighbor's cultures. Outreach and education efforts aimed at stimulating cultural development in the community is supported by CVV; there is hope that residents will be able to recognize different points of view and find common ground on which to plan for the years to come.

Though CVV has ~~only~~ been in existence for a mere two years, its efforts have already been recognized with small grants from the Great Valley Center, State Departments of Water Resources and Conservation and the Rumsey Community Fund. In awarding a \$30,000 grant to CVV, Department of Conservation Director Darryl Young said, "We [Department of Conservation] believe CVV has an outstanding plan to set the stage for an integrated regional planning strategy that will have significant community support...the work being done could ultimately lead to more long-term farmland protection and could prove a valuable model for other rural areas." Other grant proposals are in progress and the organization welcomes private donations.

CVV hopes to have drafted and made public the *Capay Valley Action Plan* within the next year. Given community support, it is anticipated that CVV will be established as a permanent, ongoing organization dedicated to refining the collectively defined vision and implementing the actions outlined in the plan.

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