

COUNTY OF VENTURA

FARMWORKER HOUSING STUDY

AUGUST 6, 2002



PREPARED BY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY • PLANNING DIVISION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ventura County Board of Supervisors

Steve Bennett	First District
Frank Schillo	Second District
Kathy I. Long	Third District
Judy Mikels	Fourth District
John K. Flynn	Fifth District

Farmworker Housing Study Committee

Earl McPhail/Julie Bulla, Agricultural Commissioner's Office
Rex Laird, Ventura County Farm Bureau
Rob Roy, Ventura County Agriculture Association (VCAA)
Karen Flock, Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation (CEDC)
Ellen Brokaw, Agricultural Community Representative
Eileen McCarthy, California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA)
Barbara Macri-Ortiz, Labor Advocate
Sue Kelley, League of Women Voters
Socorro Lopez-Hanson, Environmental Defense Center
Ralph/Richard DeLeon, Agricultural Labor Contractor
Sylvia Schnopp, Ventura County Economic Development Association (VCEDA)
Rondi Guthrie, Building Industry Association (BIA)

Resource Management Agency Staff

Bruce Smith, Manager, General Plan Section
Kelly Scoles, Project Manager
Rita Graham, Staff Planner
Alan Brown, Graphics / Web Master
Gloria Hennety, Graphics Division
Shelah Wilgus, Graphics Division

Cover Photograph

David Buettner, Courtesy of Agricultural Commissioner's Office

TABLE OF CONTENTS
Farmworker Housing Study

	<u>Page</u>
1. Introduction	1
2. Farmworker Survey	2
3. Future Farmworker Housing Needs	14
4. Site Suitability Analysis for Farmworker Housing Complexes	16
5. Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments for Farmworker Housing	22

APPENDICES

- “A” Survey Questionnaire (English) •[Click here](#)•
- “B” Instructions for Completing Survey Questionnaire (English) •[Click here](#)•
- “C” Map of Contractors/Growers/Organizations Returning Surveys
- “D” Survey Tally Summary •[Click here](#)•
- “E” Potential Farmworker Housing Sites (Maps)
- “F” Areas of Interest (Map)

VENTURA COUNTY FARMWORKER HOUSING STUDY

1. INTRODUCTION

On June 19, 2001, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors approved the County's 1998-2005 Housing Element and directed the Planning Division to begin implementation of program 3.3.3-5(14), which reads as follows

"The Planning Division will, in consultation with farmworker housing organizations and as part of the FY 2001-2002 budget, undertake a more detailed study of farmworker households, farmworker housing needs, and additional methods to address those needs. The study should specifically address the following:

- Survey of a representative sample of farmworker households to more accurately estimate median family size, family income, housing conditions and amount of rent paid.
- With the help of the Agricultural Commissioner's Office, analyze trends in changes of agricultural crop type and an estimate of future farm labor demand and housing need.
- Prepare an evaluation of AE and OS-zoned sites that are suitable for farm labor housing projects.
- Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow farm labor housing projects on AE and OS zoned land subject to a Planned Development permit instead of a Conditional Use Permit, and revisit ministerial farmworker housing and lot coverage standards."

To ensure adequate consultation with farmworker housing organizations and help staff in completing the program components, the Planning Division convened a "Farmworker Housing Study Committee" ("Committee") comprised of various parties interested in farmworker housing issues. Invitations were made and received from the following individuals or organizations, for participation on the Farmworker Housing Study Committee ("Committee"):

- Earl McPhail/Julie Bulla, Agricultural Commissioner's Office
- Rex Laird, Ventura County Farm Bureau
- Rob Roy, Ventura County Agriculture Association (VCAA)
- Karen Flock, Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation (CEDC)
- Ellen Brokaw, Agricultural Community Representative
- Eileen McCarthy, California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA)
- Barbara Macri-Ortiz, Labor Advocate
- Sue Kelley, League of Women Voters

- Socorro Lopez-Hanson, Environmental Defense Center
- Ralph/Richard DeLeon, Agricultural Labor Contractor
- Sylvia Schnopp, Ventura County Economic Development Association (VCEDA)
- Rondi Guthrie, Building Industry Association (BIA)

In addition, representatives from the Board offices periodically attended the Committee meetings. The Committee met 12 times between September 2001 and June 2002.

The sections that follow discuss the process and results of the four specific program tasks in program 3.3.3-5(14):

- Farmworker Survey
- Future Farmworker Housing Need
- Site Suitability Analysis for Farmworker Housing Complexes
- Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments for Farmworker Housing

2. FARMWORKER SURVEY

Survey Preparation

The overall objective of the farmworker survey was to give the Board of Supervisors the clearest possible picture of farmworker household and housing conditions in Ventura County. Within the budgetary and time limitations of the Farmworker Housing Study program, the Planning Division undertook, with the help of the Committee, preparation and distribution of written surveys in order to reach the greatest possible number and diversity of farmworkers. To ensure the accuracy and consistency of the survey, it was important that the surveys be directed to persons committed to distributing and assisting in completing the survey, if necessary.

The Farmworker Housing Study Committee met for the first time on September 27, 2001. As part of that first meeting, the Committee and staff discussed the process to be utilized to prepare, disseminate, and tally housing surveys from the largest possible “representative sample of farmworker households.”

The Committee’s first task was to prepare a survey questionnaire for completion by farmworkers (see Appendix “A”). Five meetings were devoted to creating and refining the survey questions. It was determined that, because of the “field circumstances” in which the survey would be administered, every effort should be made for clarity and simplicity so that completion of the survey would not be burdensome to the grower, contractor, or farmworker. It was also determined that the survey should not exceed one page in length. An effort was made to frame the questions so that one-word, or a selection from multiple-choice, responses would comprise an answer.

Once the survey questions were finalized, Ventura County Agriculture Association (VCAA) agreed to absorb the cost of acquiring a Spanish translation of the survey questionnaire. The Farm Bureau donated pens for inclusion in the survey packets.

The second task was to determine how and to whom the surveys would be disseminated. The Committee determined that the optimum opportunity to reach farmworkers would be to conduct a survey of workers in the field rather than trying to contact them in their homes. VCAA provided a list of approximately 166 growers and farm labor contractors who were asked to disseminate and collect questionnaires from their employees. In addition, the CRLA, United Farm Workers, the County Superintendent of Schools, and Oxnard Elementary School District agreed to disseminate and collect the questionnaires from their farm worker families/clients. An Instruction Sheet (Appendix "B") was prepared to provide direction in completing the survey questionnaire.

The third task was to determine when the surveys would be disseminated and returned. After much discussion, the Committee and staff determined that the surveys would be mailed or delivered on December 17, 2001, with a return due date of February 11, 2002. This relatively short period of time was needed in order to complete the survey process and record the data, as well as complete the other components of Program 3.3.3-5(14) by the target completion date of June 30, 2002.

Approximately 9,000 surveys and accompanying directions in English and Spanish were mailed or delivered to 170 growers, labor contractors and farmworker advocate organizations, as well as the County Superintendent of Schools and Oxnard Elementary School District. Return envelopes were provided. Of the number disseminated, 1,516 completed surveys were returned to the Planning Division by 31 growers, contractors, or organizations (see Appendix "C", Farmworker Housing Study Responses). The number of completed surveys exceeded expectations and was due to the extraordinary efforts of several of the Committee members and their organizations.

Limitations of the Survey Tally Results

At various points in the process, the Committee discussed the factors that would affect the validity of the data received through the survey responses. Some of the observations and considerations that were raised regarding the survey results are:

1. The limited survey period and the time of the year in which the survey was conducted garnered only a portion of those of the farmworkers who labor in agricultural fields throughout the year.
2. The surveys were not administered in a controlled environment. For the most part, the survey was distributed by the recipient of the survey

packet (the grower, labor contractor or farmworker advocate) which included survey forms, directions in Spanish and English, two pens, and an addressed return envelope) or their designee. Even though directions were provided, staff cannot attest to what supervision or assistance was actually rendered in “the field.”

3. The time allotted to complete the survey by farmworkers on the job was very likely “volunteer” time not compensated by the employer, which may have influenced the focus and time commitment of the responder in answering the questions. Some organizations, such as the Superintendent of Schools, may have provided generous time in assisting responders in completing the survey, while responders completing the survey in the field may have had little or no assistance.
4. While most of the questions are straightforward, several (those involving financial information) require information, focus, and in one instance, calculation; we have no information as to whether appropriate responses were given.
5. Staff had no control over which grower, contractor, or organization that received the survey packets would respond or fail to respond. Of the 170 recipients of survey packets, 31 returned them to the Planning Division in time to be tallied. While that number was disappointingly low, those recipients who returned surveys appeared to have thoroughly canvassed their employees.
6. Many of the responses are incomplete, i.e., not all questions were answered. For example, a survey may indicate that a specified annual salary is made by an unrelated person living in the household (Question 17, part 3), but the question regarding the number of unrelated persons living in the household (Question 14) is left blank.

The Committee recognized that the methods proposed for conducting the survey could not produce a controlled, exhaustive study of farmworker household or housing conditions in the County. The methodology would, however, produce a useful “snap shot” of conditions experienced by the surveyed farmworkers during the period December 17, 2001 – February 11, 2002 in Ventura County and would provide a “representative sample of farmworker households.”

Farmworker Housing Survey Tally

Planning Division staff assigned a document number, a code as to origin (farm labor contractor, agricultural business, organization) and language of response (Spanish or English) to each completed returned survey. No other identification was placed on the completed survey forms.

Staff established appropriate protocols for processing the returned surveys. These protocols include the following:

- As the survey responses were recorded in electronic format, staff did not attempt to interpret individual responses.
- Illegible responses were not recorded.
- If a response could be made clear with reference to ordinary knowledge (one zero after a decimal point) the number was correctly written in red pencil so that staff alterations to the document could be easily identified.
- All clear, readable responses were tallied. Where it was apparent that an answer could not be accurate, for instance when personal rent (Question 18, part 2) multiplied by 12 months exceeded yearly personal income (Question 17, part 1), that response was tallied because it was clear and readable. However, in the calculation to determine the median rent-to-income ratio for all responders, if an individual response did not exceed zero, the response to that particular question only was discarded.
- Percentages were generally indicated as a share of the total number of returned surveys (1,516) rather than as the number of responses to a particular question; therefore, the number of surveys “Failing to State (‘FTS’)” is also indicated. The exceptions to this practice are those questions relating to incomes and rents, where the percentage indicates the share of usable responses.
- In Questions 13 through 16, averages were calculated using the responses to the question (i.e., excluding “FTS”). In Question 17 through 19, averages and medians were calculated only from those responses to the question that exceeded zero.

A summary of the tally of 1,516 survey responses is provided in Appendix “D.”

The first item of information indicated in the Tally Summary is that, of the surveys returned, 52 (3%) of the responders utilized English and 1,464 (97%) utilized the Spanish translation of the survey questionnaire. Assuming that the choice of language indicates the primary language of the responder, almost all responders to the survey were Spanish speaking.

The next item of information indicates responses to a query as to “Crop” type and responses are listed in descending order of frequency of response. Because the survey was conducted from late December through early February, it was no surprise that “strawberries,” alone or in combination with other crops, was the dominant crop. Had the survey been conducted in the summer growing season, a larger response for lemons and vegetable crops would be expected.

Question 1 – Male/Female

The purpose of Question 1 was to determine the sex of the responder. Of the 1,516 responders, 1,060 (70%) were male and 439 (29%) were female. Female responders were represented in nearly all crop types.

Question 2 – *Incorporated/Unincorporated*

The purpose of Question 2 was to determine whether the responder resides in a city or in the unincorporated County. Survey responses indicated that 1,391 (92%) responders lived in incorporated areas, and 109 (7%) lived in the unincorporated County, with 1% of responders failing to state (FTS). By comparison, the State Department of Finance Population and Housing Estimate for 2001 shows the unincorporated population at 12% of the County total.

Where the responder indicated residence in an incorporated area, (s)he was asked to specify the city of residence. The City of Oxnard emerges as the City of residence of 918, or 60%, of the responders. This result, while not startling, should be balanced with the fact that many of the growers and contractors who returned surveys are located in the Oxnard Plain (13 of 31), and those were the source of a substantial number of returned surveys (647, or 43%).

Question 3 – *Description of Residence*

Question 3 was devised to report responders' type of residential accommodation. While 70% reported that they reside in a house, a room in a house, an apartment or a mobile home, a sizable number reported living in a room of an apartment, a motel, or a garage.

One caveat for this question and for many of the questions is that, because consistency of administration of the survey could not be assured, it is not certain that all responders used the same criteria in answering the question. For instance, a responder might indicate that (s)he lived in a "house" when, in fact, he lived in a room in a house.

Question 4 – *My Residence Has at Least One (Bathroom Facilities)*

Question 4 was devised to report bathroom amenities available to the responder. While a clear majority reported having at least one bathroom sink, toilet, and tub/shower, 10% reported not having a bathroom sink, 8% reported no toilet and 7% reported no tub/shower.

In the aggregate, 14% of survey responders reported that their residence lacked *at least one* bathroom amenity (lacked a bathroom sink, toilet or tub/shower). Moreover, two percent of survey responders indicated having no bathroom sink, toilet and tub/shower. In contrast, the 1990 Census reported that 0.4 % of the Countywide dwelling units lacked at least one of the following plumbing facilities; hot/cold running water, a flush toilet, or a tub/shower.

Question 5 – *My Residence Has (Kitchen Facilities)*

Question 5 was devised to report kitchen facilities available to the responder. While a clear majority reported having a kitchen sink refrigerator, and stove, 10% reported not having a kitchen sink, 6% not having a refrigerator, and 7% reported not having a stove.

In the aggregate, 14% of survey responders indicated the lack of at least one listed kitchen facility, while two percent of survey responders indicated the lack of any kitchen facility. In contrast, the 1990 Census reported that the number of dwelling units countywide without complete kitchen facilities (sink, stove, refrigerator) was approximately 1%.

Question 6 – *My Residence Has (Heating Mechanisms)*

Question 6 was designed to indicate whether the responder had access to a heating mechanism and, if so, whether the source was a furnace or plug-in heater. Twenty-two percent reported no heater, while 56% reported having furnace heat and 14% relied on a plug-in heater. The 1990 Census indicated that less than one-tenth of one percent of the existing dwelling units Countywide did not have heating.

Question 7 – *My Residence Has (Hot Water)*

Question 7 was designed to indicate whether the responder had access to hot water in the bathroom and kitchen. While most responders reported hot water in the kitchen (86%) and in the bathroom (79%), it should be noted that nearly 10% have no hot water available to them in their residence.

The U.S. Census queries the availability of hot water in the bathroom, but not in the kitchen. As noted in the discussion of Question 4, above, the 1990 Census reported that 0.4% of the Countywide dwelling units did not have hot water in the bathroom. The 1990 Census also indicated that less than one percent of the dwelling units countywide were without the use of some sort of heating fuel (natural or bottled gas, kerosene, or electricity) required to heat running water.

Question 8 – *My Residence Has (Number of Bedrooms)*

Question 8 was devised to indicate the number of bedrooms in responder's residence. The survey indicated that most responders live in dwelling units of 1-4 bedrooms.

SCAG defines "household overcrowding" as a housing unit that contains over 1.01 persons per room as defined by the U.S. Census (not counting bathrooms, hallways, porches, balconies, etc.). Unfortunately, the survey did not ask for the number of rooms in each dwelling, although the number of bedrooms was queried. Time did not allow an analysis of the number of household occupants (related and unrelated) compared to the number of bedrooms for each responder. It may be helpful to note, however, that in response to the more subjective question posed in Question 12, "Housing Problems," 41% of the responders indicated that they felt "overcrowding" was a significant housing problem.

Question 9 – *My Residence is Owned By*

Responses to this question indicate that 51% of farmworkers live in a dwelling unit owned by a landlord, and an additional 8% described the owner as their employer. Approximately 27% live in homes owned by the farmworker or someone in their family.

Survey results indicate that where the residence is owned by a landlord or employer, the average number of related persons per residence (Question 13) is 4.8 persons and unrelated persons per residence (Question 15) is 2.3. Where, however, the responder or his family owns the residence, the average number of related persons per the residence increases to 5.6 persons, but the number of unrelated persons decreases to 0.9 per residence. While it does not utilize the same measure, it is interesting to note that the 2000 Census indicates an average of 3.042 Persons Per Household for the County.

Question 10 – *I Get to Work By (Transportation)*

This question was devised to reveal how farmworkers reach their place of employment. While 46% use their own car, 41% indicated that carpooling is their primary way of getting to work.

Question 11 – *Most of My Income Comes From*

This question was designed to identify the source of income of the responders. Most of those surveyed indicated that their income is derived from work in the fields (72%), 17% indicated that a packing house is the primary source of their income, and 5% of those surveyed work in a nursery. The relatively high number of strawberry field workers at the time the survey was taken (December to mid-February) influenced the number of responses to "the field" as the workplace.

Question 12 – *My Biggest Housing Problems*

This question was devised to allow the responder to subjectively identify the most pressing housing problems. The responses are not mutually exclusive, so that responders could indicate any number of applicable problems. In Question 12, “Overcrowding” was experienced by 41% of responders. Problems with housing costs were experienced by 30% of the responders. Noise was a problem for 10% of the responders, and dilapidation by 8% of those surveyed.

Question 13 – *Number of Related Persons in the Home*

Question 13 was intended to disclose the household size of related persons in the responder’s home. Most of the responders (84%) live in households with related persons, with 61% living with 2 to 6 related persons, 15% living with 7 to 10 related persons, while the average number of related persons is 4.9. The 2000 Census Population and Housing figures reveal that the average household size in the County (without regard to relationship among household members) is 3.042 persons/household. The average household size among the responders substantially exceeds the County unincorporated average household size, even when the comparison is limited to related persons in the household.

Relatively high numbers of related persons in the household may be due to preference or may be related to economic need, or a combination thereof.

Question 14 – *Number of Related Persons Under 18 Years*

Question 14 was designed to discover the number of related children under 18 years of age living in the household. One of the objectives of Question 14 was to ascertain the incidence of children in households experiencing housing problems or lack of income. The responses to Question 14 reveal that the question was unclear since it was misunderstood by many of those surveyed.

Unfortunately, the responses to Question 14 must be discarded because they do not correlate as a subset to Question 13. For example, responses to Question 13 indicate that 59 responders live with one related person in the household, but 248 responders live with one related individual under 18 years of age.

Question 15 – *Number of Unrelated Persons in the Home*

Responses to Question 15 indicate that 31% of those surveyed have unrelated persons living in the household, and the average number of unrelated persons per household is 2.0. Although there is no Census or other data with which to compare the results, it is suspected that this number substantially exceeds the experience in most County households. In addition, where high household size due to the number of related persons sharing a residence may be due to preference or economic need, it seems likely that increased household size due

to numbers of unrelated persons in the household is a reflection of the economic need in many farmworker households.

Question 16 – Number in Household Who Are Employed in Agriculture

Question 16 was intended to reveal the number of households that rely upon agriculture as the primary source of income. Sixty-one percent of the responders indicated that between one to four persons in the household are employed in agriculture, and 17% indicated that between 5 and 8 householders were so employed. These numbers, while anticipated, demonstrate farmworker household reliance on agriculture for sustenance.

The response of 79 persons that “None”, or no members of the household were employed in agriculture is an anomaly since nearly all responders were themselves so employed.

Question 17 – Annual Incomes: My Personal/All Related Persons/Unrelated Persons

Question 17 was designed to provide information regarding the incomes of the responder and others in the household, whether or not related. The question is the most complex of the survey:

- Part 1 required the responder to indicate personal income.
- Part 2 required responder to calculate the income of all related persons in the household including responder.
- Part 3 required indication of the income of persons living the household unrelated to responder.

Incomes are listed in the Tally Sheet as both “average” and “median” incomes. The median figure for incomes in all three parts of Question 17 is the most reliable, since the process of computing a median deletes unrealistically high or low-income figures from the calculation.

Personal Income. Incomes reported by responders to the survey are meaningful when compared to the “HUD Income Limits” (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development dated 12-01-01). HUD defines the categories of “extremely low-income” as 30% or less of County median income, “very low-income” as 50% or less of County median household income, and “low-income” as between 50%-80% or less of County median income, adjusted for family size.

To Part 1 of Question 17, 83% of those surveyed responded. Responders indicated a median personal income of approximately \$11,760 (average personal income of approximately \$13,350). These incomes indicate that the median personal income for responders is within the “extremely low-income” category (30% or less than County median income) of the HUD Income Limits for a household of one person (\$15,700). Of the 1,254 responders to this question,

30% (382) reported incomes in excess of the HUD “extremely low-income” limit, and 70% (872) reported incomes within the limit.

At the request of the Committee, the Tally Summary compares salaries, Question 17, Part 1 (personal income), by crop type and place of employment. The first comparison is of salaries of farmworkers based upon the crop they were working at the time of the survey. In order to effectuate this request, staff combined “strawberries” and responses that included strawberries in crop identification (“strawberries/celery,” for instance), workers who work in orchards (e.g., oranges, lemons, avocados), row crops workers (including celery, vegetables, mushrooms, broccoli, etc., but excluding strawberries), sod workers, and nursery/flower workers. Strawberry workers are the lowest paid (median income of \$8,000) and sod workers the highest (median income of \$33,200). The second comparison is one of salaries of field workers, nursery workers and packinghouse workers. This analysis indicates that packinghouse workers are the highest paid (median of \$15,000), and field workers the lowest of the compared categories (median of \$10,000).

Income of All Related Persons in the Household. To Part 2 of Question 17, 52% of those surveyed responded to this part of the question. Responders indicated a median income of all related persons living in the household, including responder, at approximately \$22,000 (average income approximately \$25,350).

Utilizing the information in Question 13 that results in an average of 4.9 (round to 5) related persons in the household, reference to the HUD Income Limits indicates that the County median income in 2001 for households of 5 persons is considered “low-income” at \$58,750, “very low-income” at \$40,350, and “extremely low-income” at \$24,200. Survey results indicate that the median household income of the average-sized household of related persons can be generally categorized as “extremely low-income.”

In processing the surveys, staff noticed that in some instances the income indicated by the responder for Part 2 of Question 17 was clearly erroneous. For instance, surveys were encountered that indicated personal income (Part 1) at a specified amount, but indicated family income at a lesser amount, or an equal amount though there were related persons living in the household. Accordingly, staff edited the survey tally to exclude those responses that were clearly based upon a mistaken reading of the query or were simply erroneous.

The edited figures indicate an average income of approximately \$27,000 and a median income of all related persons in the household at \$24,000. Household average income (for a household comprised of 5 related persons) of responders exceeds the HUD median income limit for the “extremely low-income” category (\$24,200), but is significantly under the “very low-income” limit of \$40,350. Responders’ household median income (for a household of 5 related persons) is under the HUD “extremely low-income” limit of \$24,200. Of the 793 responders

to this question, 43% (343) reported incomes in excess of the HUD “extremely low-income” limit, and 57% (450) reported incomes under the limit.

Income of Unrelated Persons in the Household. To Part 3 of Question 17, only 19% of those surveyed responded with an entry for this part of the question. By contrast, 31% percent of the respondents stated that s(he) lived in a household that included unrelated individuals (Question 15).

Utilizing all entries to part 3 of the question, the average income of all unrelated persons living in the household at approximately \$23,430 and a median income of \$15,000. However, staff felt it was even more important to delete those responses that also indicated, in Question 15 (Number of Unrelated Persons in Home), that there were no unrelated persons in the household. The result was that of the 11% response rate, the average income was approximately \$28,370, and the median was \$20,000, figures that are significantly higher than the unedited incomes.

Staff believes that it is inappropriate to combine the unrelated persons income figures with the income of related persons in the household and compare these figures to the HUD Income Limits, as we did with “Personal Income” and “Related Persons Income,” for the following reasons:

- The number of surveys from which those numbers can be derived is limited (11% for edited responses).
- The response to the question may have been beyond the knowledge of the responder.
- The responder may have misunderstood the question and combined the income of related with unrelated persons, where the question asked that the income of unrelated persons be listed separate from related persons.

Question 18: *Housing Payment*

Question 18 was designed to identify the cost of housing, whether rent or mortgage, and the contribution of the responder to the total housing cost. With an 83% response to the question of total household housing cost, the average household payment was \$825 and the median was \$700 per month. With a 70% response to the question of individual responder’s contribution to the total household housing cost, the average payment was of \$541 and the median was \$400 per month.

Recent data derived from the local real estate market, compiled by Dyer Sheehan Group, indicates that the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in the City of San Buenaventura is \$926; average rent for a two-bedroom unit is \$1,210. The average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in the Oxnard/Port Hueneme area is \$916; average rent for a two-bedroom unit is \$1,259.

Comparison of these figures to the survey responses indicates that the average apartment rent in the real estate market as a whole exceeds the average rental experience of the farmworkers included in the survey. There is insufficient information to ascertain the reasons for these differences.

Staff also attempted to utilize the survey data to determine the percentage of personal and household income spent on housing. Staff excluded surveys that indicated there were unrelated persons living in the household because less than 20% of responders reported the annual earnings of unrelated persons in the household and, of those reporting, many had had indicated that no unrelated persons were living in the household (Question 13). Of 1,516 surveys, 569 (38%) were usable for this purpose.

Using the commonly-accepted criteria utilized by the U.S. Census and SCAG for “overpayment” of housing at 30% of gross household income, 45% of the responders personally spent 30% or less on housing, while 55% spent more than 30% of their income for housing. When rental costs are measured against the income of all related persons in the household, 48% of responder households spent 30% or less on housing, while 52% spent in excess of 30%.

Question 19: Residency in Ventura County

Question 19 was designed to determine the number of permanent residents among the surveyed, and the number of months of residency of those responders who resided in the County for less than a full year. This information might be useful in determining the type of housing required for resident, as opposed to migratory, farmworkers.

Of the surveyed, 76% indicated that they were permanent residents of the County. Of the 14% of surveyed who were part-time County residents, the average number of months spent in the County was 6-6.5 months. This result is significantly lower than the estimated migratory farmworker rate of 36% indicated in the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Enumeration Profiles Study cited in the County’s 2001 Housing Element.

The number of responders indicating permanent residency in the County indicates that the overwhelming need for housing is for long- or extended-term dwellings. It should be noted, however, that 14% of responders, almost exclusively male, indicated part-time residency in the County and should not be ignored as a housing target group.

Conclusions

- Most farmworkers surveyed (92%) live within existing cities.
- 70% of responding farmworkers have personal median incomes within the HUD “extremely low-income” category (less than 30% of median County income for a household of one person).
- 57% of responding farmworkers who reside with related persons only live in households with median incomes within the HUD “extremely low-income” category (less than 30% of median County income for a household of 5 persons).
- 14% of farmworkers surveyed live in dwellings that lack adequate bathroom facilities.
- 14% of farmworkers surveyed live in dwellings that lack adequate kitchen facilities.
- 22% of farmworkers surveyed live in dwellings that lack adequate heating.
- A sizable number of farmworkers surveyed (5 to 10%) reported problems with housing dilapidation, noise, vermin, and inadequate sanitation.
- 41% of farmworkers surveyed live in dwellings where there is reported overcrowding, which appears to be validated by the fact that, on average, the farmworkers surveyed lived in housing where the household size is substantially larger than the county-wide population.
- 30% of farmworkers surveyed report the cost of housing is a problem. This is validated by the fact that 55% of surveyed farmworkers personally paid more than 30% of their income for housing and/or 52% lived in households with related persons where more than 30% of the household income was paid toward housing.

3. FUTURE FARMWORKER HOUSING NEEDS

One component of Program 3.3.3-5(14) requires that the Planning Division, with the assistance of the Agricultural Commissioner’s office, to “analyze trends in changes of agricultural crop types and estimate future changes in farm labor demand and housing need.”

The Agricultural Commissioner provided a copy of the Annual Crop Report - 2000, which indicates actual crop production for the Year 2000.

In order to estimate future trends in agricultural production, and to determine what effect those estimates would have on the future need for farm labor, Planning staff consulted with the leading agricultural authorities in the County,

including Agricultural Commissioner Earl McPhail, Ventura County Farm Bureau Executive Director Rex Laird, Rob Roy of the Ventura County Agriculture Association, and Farm Advisor Larry Yee.

With the passage of SOAR initiatives in the unincorporated area and in most of the cities of the County, it appears that over the next two decades agricultural lands will be largely protected from urban development, except where voters approve annexation and development. We can assume that there will not be a significant loss of irrigated agricultural acreage for that duration of time, and the need for farm labor will not be reduced significantly by loss of agricultural acreage.

When cities do convert existing agricultural lands within their Spheres of Interest to urban uses, that loss of agricultural lands, and coincident loss of need for farm labor, is expected to be offset by more labor-intensive crops on the remaining agricultural land.

The Annual Crop Report 2000 indicates that while lemons, a long-time leading commodity in the County, were again the top crop in 2000, another former significant product, Valencia oranges, dropped 73% in value for that year. The Report also records the increasing significance of crops such as strawberries, nursery crops, celery and peppers. Agricultural authorities that were consulted believe that the apparent trend toward these high cash "specialty crops" will continue into the next decade, and that existing agricultural acreage will increasingly be utilized for these and other labor-intensive crops.

The percentage of farmworkers required to service these labor-intensive crops is expected to increase at the same rate as the acreage allotted to the crops. In addition, higher financial yields may influence the need for increased crop-tending and, therefore, a greater number of farmworkers and worker hours.

These trends in agriculture in Ventura County indicate that, while it would be extremely difficult to determine exactly how many additional farmworkers will be needed over the next 10-20 years, there is every reason to expect that the need for farm labor, and housing for that work force, will not decrease. Moreover, while the Farmworker Survey indicates that the vast majority of agricultural laborers are permanent residents of the County, it also revealed that there are significant numbers of migrant families and single individuals working in agriculture who require housing.

Based upon the trends in agricultural production anticipated by leaders in agricultural operations, there is clearly a need for all types of housing for farmworkers in Ventura County: for permanent and seasonal or migrant farmworkers, for families and for single male laborers. Any housing that is constructed to provide decent, safe, and affordable shelter for farmworkers will be needed and utilized by that constituency for many years to come.

4. SITE SUITABILITY ANALYSIS FOR FARMWORKER HOUSING COMPLEXES

Background

The Land Use Appendix of the County General Plan summarizes the results of a 2001 analysis of the number of parcels in the unincorporated area of the county that are potentially suitable for development of farmworker housing complexes. A portion of the text reads as follows:

Farmworker housing complexes “are conditionally permitted in the AE and OS zones. The ideal parcel size for such facilities is between one acre and 10 acres..., and should be located in proximity to the places(s) of employment. Using this criteria, there are up to 542 parcels that could be potentially utilized...”

Program 3.3.3-5 (14) of the County General Plan specifically directs the Planning Division to conduct a more detailed evaluation of the AE and OS zoned sites that may be suitable for farmworker housing complexes.

From September of 2001 to May of 2002, the Planning Division worked with the Farmworker Housing Advisory Committee (Committee) to refine the site suitability criteria for farmworker housing complexes, and used the recently acquired County GIS mapping data to identify potential parcels. The following sections summarize the results of that work.

Site Suitability Criteria

The Committee held extensive discussions regarding potential siting criteria for farmworker housing complexes in the unincorporated area of the County. The following criteria were discussed and either utilized or rejected as indicated below:

1. Parcel Characteristics – The site analysis utilized in the County General Plan included those privately owned, undeveloped parcels that were one to 10 acres in area and zoned “A-E” (Agricultural Exclusive) or “O-S” (Open Space). The Committee further refined this criteria to include the following:
 - Privately owned, and
 - Substantially undeveloped (containing no more than one single-family dwelling), and
 - Zoned “A-E” or “O-S”, and
 - 10-20 acres in area (A priority), not in LCA (Land Conservation Act) contract, or
 - 5-10 acres in area (B priority), not in LCA contract, or
 - 2-5 acres in area (C priority), including land under LCA contract.

The Committee selected parcel size ranges different than that contained in the 2001 General Plan analysis for the following reasons:

- The State Land Conservation Act (LCA) does not allow farmworker housing projects that exceed five acres in area on land under LCA contract, therefore parcels that met this criterion were excluded.
 - Karen Flock, Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation (CEDC) and Committee member, reported that, based on her experience, the ideal site for farmworker housing complexes is between 10 and 20 acres in area based on economies of scale and the necessity of providing onsite buffers from adjacent agricultural land.
 - Although parcels of 5 to 10 acres can be utilized for smaller complexes, these sites would have a lower economy of scale and would not be able to provide as much buffer area as 10 to 20 acre sites.
 - The LCA allows farmworker-housing complexes on land of five acres or less that are under LCA contract. Because two acres was thought to be the smallest feasible parcel size on which to build a small farmworker-housing complex, the parcel size range for this category was 2 to 5 acres.
2. Proximity to Agricultural Areas – The Committee believed that housing for farmworkers should be located in relatively close proximity to the agricultural area in which they work. As a result, the unincorporated areas around the cities of Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley, and Port Hueneme were excluded from the study. Those cities do not have an appreciable amount of irrigated agriculture located within those cities' Area of Interest.
 3. Agricultural Buffering – The County Agricultural Department is responsible for evaluating discretionary projects on a case-by-case basis for land use conflicts (e.g., chemical spraying/application). As such, the Agricultural Department frequently recommends that residential projects establish onsite “buffer” areas to separate living quarters and outdoor play areas from adjacent agricultural uses. Because there is currently no adopted standard that establishes a minimum distance of separation and because most potential parcels are located in or adjacent to irrigated agricultural areas, the Committee could not agree on this criterion. Nonetheless, the relative priority of the parcel size categories of the potential sites (see parcel characteristics above) is reflective of the relative ability to provide onsite buffers.
 4. Floodway – The Committee recognized that parcels that are substantially located in the floodway of a river or stream are not viable sites for farmworker housing.
 5. Sewer Service – The County Sewer Policy requires sewer service for housing complexes containing densities higher than two dwelling units

per acre. Although the County conditionally allows the use of onsite “package” sewage treatment plants, the cost of constructing and operating these types of plants is currently too expensive for very low-income housing projects. Because of these constraints, the Committee believed that potential sites needed to be located within or adjacent to the Sphere of Influence of either: 1) a special district that provides sewer service, or 2) a city that provides its own sewer system.

6. Community Services – The Committee believed that farmworker housing complexes should be ideally located in close proximity to existing cities and unincorporated urban communities (Urban designated areas on the County General Plan) where community services can be provided to serve the farmworkers and their families. In addition, the Committee believed that it is important to not segregate farmworkers from the rest of the population. The Committee believed that applying the sewer service criteria (see above) generally fulfilled this criterion.
7. Slope – Based on information provided by Rondi Guthrie, Building Industry Association and Committee member, the Committee determined that parcels containing a substantial area with slopes exceeding 20 percent should not be considered as suitable for farmworker housing complexes. Land grading costs on slopes of greater than 20 percent are considered prohibitively expensive.
8. Water Service – The County General Plan discusses the development constraints associated with potable water supply and delivery. In all agricultural areas of the County, water supply and delivery is not considered a significant constraint. As such, this criterion was not used.
9. Access – The Committee discussed transportation access to sites as a possible criterion. More specifically, the Committee believed that the following criteria were important factors to consider:
 - Access roads that meet PWA or FPD standards including two means of ingress/egress and road width.
 - Proximity to public bus routes/stops (1/8 mile).

Unfortunately, the GIS data was not detailed enough to evaluate parcels using this criteria.

Results of the Site Suitability Analysis

The following are the number of parcels meeting the above criteria (parcel characteristics, proximity to sewer and community services, floodways, and slope):

<u>City/Sanitary District Sphere of Influence</u>	<u># Parcels 10-20 ac.</u>	<u># Parcels 5-10 ac.</u>	<u># Parcels 2-5 ac.</u>
Camarillo/Camrosa S.D. • Click here for map •	2	0	0
Fillmore • Click here for map •	6	5	4
Ojai Valley S.D. • Click here for map •	10	12	10
Oxnard • Click here for map •	13	8	6
Santa Paula • Click here for map •	18	11	14
Ventura/Saticoy S.D. • Click here for map •	10	8	6
WWD #1 (Moorpark) • Click here for map •	10	8	13
<u>WWD#16 (Piru)</u> • Click here for map •	<u>12</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>10</u>
Total	81	60	63

Maps depicting the above parcels are attached to this report in Appendix “E”.

The analysis demonstrates that there are many potentially suitable parcels in close proximity to existing cities or unincorporated urban communities (e.g., Piru). The notable exception is around the City of Camarillo where there are only two potentially suitable parcels.

It should be also noted that, although the Las Posas Valley area contains the existing community of Somis, Somis does not currently have sewer service. Therefore, the Las Posas Valley does not contain any parcels that currently meet the criteria for farmworker housing complexes.

Use of the Site Suitability Analysis

The above site suitability analysis is useful for several reasons:

1. It provides useful information to farmworker housing development organizations (e.g., CEDC), cities, and the County regarding potential farmworker-housing complex sites.
2. It demonstrates that there are over 200 existing parcels in proximity to existing cities and unincorporated urban communities that are potentially suitable for building farmworker-housing complexes.
3. It demonstrates that an amendment to the County General Plan and zoning ordinance to allow for the creation of new parcels of less than 40 acres in the “A-E” zone or 10 acres in the “O-S” zone may be necessary to

accommodate farmworker housing complexes in proximity to the City of Camarillo.

To ensure that the cities are informed, the Committee recommended that copies of this study be sent to each city and that County staff make presentations to each of the city councils and/or at a countywide forum on farmworker housing.

The Committee also recognized the possibility that the existing cities may not be willing to provide city sewer or water service to potential sites and may oppose the County's attempts to build farmworker housing complexes within the city Sphere of Influence for the following reasons:

- City housing elements do not recognize city responsibility for providing housing for farmworkers employed in the unincorporated area, even though the vast majority of farmworkers live within existing cities year round.
- City general plans establish non-agricultural land use designations for land within their Sphere of Influence, which may not allow farmworker-housing complexes (e.g., commercial, industrial, lower-density residential).
- Cities may regard farmworker-housing complexes as an urban use (similar to apartments), claiming that such uses would be inconsistent with the Ventura County Guidelines for Orderly Development.

In response, the Committee recommended that the County and the cities engage in discussions regarding their respective responsibilities for accommodating and facilitating farmworker housing projects. The Committee suggested that, ideally, each city located in proximity to irrigated agricultural land should assume some responsibility to accommodate farmworker housing sites to meet the needs of existing and future farmworkers. More specifically, the Committee suggested that the city and county staff compare the identified potential sites with the city general plans to identify conflicts and opportunities.

Each city's proportional responsibility to accommodate farmworker housing sites could be based on the relative amount of irrigated agricultural land within the city's Area of Interest. This would not only recognize what has historically occurred in Ventura County, but would also ensure that farmworkers are integrated into the local community and in proximity to urban services, and that they reside in relatively close proximity to the area in which they work.

The following table depicts the amount of unincorporated, *irrigated agricultural land** within each city's Area of Interest:

<u>Area of Interest</u>	<u># Acres of Irrigated Farmland</u>	<u>% Of Total Irrigated Farmland</u>
Oxnard	19,521	19.8%
Camarillo	18,135	18.4%
Las Posas Valley	17,757	18.0%
Santa Paula	12,091	12.3%
Fillmore	8,862	9.0%
Ventura	7,214	7.3%
Moorpark	5,949	6.0%
Piru	5,577	5.6%
Ojai Valley	3,572	3.6%
Thousand Oaks	54	0.5%
Simi Valley	0	-%
Port Hueneme	0	-%
Total	98,732	100%

* - Irrigated agricultural land includes land classified as "Prime", Statewide Significance", and "Unique" in the State's Important Farmland Inventory.

A map depicting the above acreages is attached to this report in Appendix "F".

To accommodate and facilitate the construction of farmworker housing complexes, the Committee recommended that the County assume a more direct role by:

1. Amending the zoning ordinance to allow farmworker housing complexes by Planned Development Permit (by right) instead of Conditional Use Permit to resist potential public opposition to these types of projects,
2. Amending the Agricultural and Open Space designations and "A-E" and "O-S" zones to reduce the minimum lot size and building coverage standards in order to remove existing impediments to developing farmworker housing complexes,
3. Seeking new and utilizing existing Federal and State grants to defray the staff cost of coordinating with the cities and conducting a countywide forum on farmworker housing, and
4. Seeking new, and utilizing existing, Federal and State grants to help construct farmworker housing complexes; including "package" sewage treatment plants.

5. PROPOSED ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS FOR FARMWORKER HOUSING

Background

Program 3.3.3-5 (14) of the County General specifically includes the following action:

“Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow farm labor housing projects on “A-E” and “O-S” zoned land subject to a Planned Development permit instead of a Conditional Use Permit, and revisit the ministerial farmworker housing standards and lot coverage standards.”

From October 2001 to June 2002, the Planning Division worked with the Agricultural Department staff and the Farmworker Housing Advisory Committee (Committee) to review the current zoning ordinance and General Plan development standards that apply to onsite Farmworker Dwelling Units and offsite Farmworker Housing Complexes. The following sections summarize the results of that review and include the recommendations of the Planning Division and the Committee. Once the Board of Supervisors reviews these recommendations and gives appropriate direction to staff, the Planning Division will process a Zoning Code amendment to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

Definitions of Types of Farmworker Housing

The zoning ordinance currently allows two types of farmworker housing - “Farmworker Dwelling Unit” and “Farm Labor Group Quarters.”

Farmworker Dwelling Unit is listed as a use accessory to Agricultural uses and is defined as follows:

“A dwelling unit used by a farmworker, and his or her family, employed and working on the same lot on which the dwelling unit is located or on other land which is under the same ownership, lease, or contract as the subject lot.”

Farm Labor Group Quarters is listed as a principal use (not accessory to agriculture), but is not defined. It has been the interpretation of the Planning Director that this term encompasses any type of farmworker housing complex where the residing head-of-household of each dwelling unit are persons principally employed in agriculture, and that the farmworkers need not work on the same property where they reside. An example of this type of housing includes the Rancho Sespe farmworker housing project near Piru.

Because of the confusion associated with the term Farm Labor Group Quarters, the Planning Division is proposing, with the concurrence of the Committee, that the term “*Farmworker Housing Complex*” be substituted and defined as follows:

“A residential facility where the dwelling units or sleeping quarters are rented and occupied by heads-of-households or persons who are employed within

the County of Ventura as workers for Crop and Orchard Production (see Sec. 8105-4), and all uses listed there under.”

Types of Permits Required

Up to two *Farmworker Dwelling Units* are allowed in the “O-S”, “A-E”, “R-A” and “T-P” zones subject to a ministerial Zoning Clearance, if they meet the following specific standards (Sections 8105-4 and 8107.26.1 of the Zoning Code):

STANDARDS FOR MINISTERIAL FARM WORKER DWELLING UNITS	
<u>Agricultural Land Use</u>	<u>Farmworker Dwelling Units</u>
Fowl and poultry ranches.	One unit per 50,000 broiler chickens, or one unit per 50,000 egg laying hens, or one unit per 5,000 turkeys.
Horse ranches and equestrian facilities.	One unit per 10 brood mares, or one unit per 25 equines, where a stall exists for each animal.
Greenhouses and hothouses.	One unit per 100,000 sq. ft. of propagating greenhouse.
Irrigated row crops, specialty crops, orchards, vineyards and field-grown plant materials.	One unit per 40 acres in crops.
Irrigated pasture, field crops, grain and hay.	One unit per 40 acres in crops.
Dry farm orchards, beans and specialty field crops.	One unit per 160 acres in crops.
Grazing.	One unit per 320 acres in crops.

Additional farmworker dwelling units are conditionally permitted where the applicant can demonstrate the need (subject to a Planning Director approved Conditional Use Permit).

The APAC (Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee) recently recommended that the maximum number of farmworker dwellings allowed ministerially on a given property be increased from two to four, using the same formulas indicated above. The Planning Division and Committee concur with APAC’s recommendation.

Farm Labor Group Quarters (aka Farmworker Housing Complex) are conditionally permitted in the “O-S” and “A-E” zones subject to a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) approved by the Planning Commission. The Planning Division is recommending, with the concurrence of the Committee, that Farmworker Housing Complexes be allowed by a Planning Commission approved Planned Development Permit, which is a less stringent type of permit than a CUP. Although a Planned Development Permit involves discretionary decision-making for site plan review and conditioning, the use is allowed “by right” (i.e., if the applicant can meet all regulatory requirements, the permit must be approved).

Size Limitations for Farmworker Dwelling Units

Section 8107-26.2 of the Zoning Code limits the size of *Farmworker Dwelling Units* to 1,800 square feet (the size of a triple-wide mobile home), which allows for a large three-bedroom or a modest four-bedroom dwelling. The reason for this limitation is to reduce the likelihood that farmworker dwelling provisions will be utilized to build luxury homes for the landowner's family members. The Zoning Ordinance only allows one principal dwelling unit for the landowner and his/her family. Nonetheless, since there have been cases where the needs of the farmworker family required that the dwelling exceed 1,800 square feet, the Planning Division staff is proposing that additional square footage be allowed by Planning Director approved CUP.

There are currently no size restrictions for *Farm Labor Group Quarters*, and neither the Planning Division nor the Committee recommend such a requirement for Farmworker Housing Complexes.

Verification of Agricultural Production for Farmworker Dwelling Unit

Sec. 8107-26.4 of the Zoning Code requires the property owner to annually verify to the Planning Division that the property for which a *Farmworker Dwelling Unit* was granted is still being utilized for agricultural production. The Planning Division currently does not have the staff resources to proactively enforce this provision, but instead relies on enforcement on a complaint basis. Nonetheless, the Planning Division is not aware of any agricultural land being removed from production where a farmworker dwelling unit has been permitted. No changes to this provision of the ordinance are recommended.

On-site agricultural production is not a requirement for Farm Labor Group Quarters and is not proposed for Farmworker Housing Complexes.

Removal of Farmworker Dwelling Unit

Section 8107-26.3 of the Zoning Code requires that a *Farmworker Dwelling Unit* be removed within 45 days of termination of the property's use from agricultural production. As stated above, the Planning Division currently does not have the staff resources to proactively enforce this provision, but instead relies on enforcement on a complaint basis. Nonetheless, the Planning Division is not aware of any agricultural land being removed from production where a farmworker dwelling unit has been permitted. No changes to this provision of the ordinance are recommended.

Since Farm Labor Group Quarters are not tied to on-site agricultural production, this requirement does not apply and is not recommended for Farmworker Housing Complexes.

Verification of Farmworker Employment

Sec. 8107-26.5 of the Zoning Code requires verification that the farmworker residing in a *Farmworker Dwelling Unit* is performing duties and is being paid to work on the same parcel, or on other land in the vicinity which is under the same ownership, lease or contract as the property with the dwelling unit. The Planning Division currently does not have the staff resources to proactively enforce this provision, but instead relies on enforcement on a complaint basis.

The APAC recently recommended that the term “in the vicinity” be changed to “within the County.” The Planning Division and Committee concur with APAC’s recommendation.

Farm Labor Group Quarters currently have no explicit requirements for verification of farmworker employment. Nonetheless, the CUP for the Rancho Sespe farmworker housing project contains conditions for annual verification of employment. The Planning Division is recommending that the Zoning Code be amended to add employment verification requirements for *Farmworker Housing Complexes*.

Setback from Agricultural Operations

Currently, potential land use conflicts between discretionary, non-agricultural land uses and agricultural operations (e.g., chemical spraying, vandalism) are evaluated and mitigated on a case-by-case basis through the CEQA process. The APAC generally recommends that a 300-foot setback be considered for non-agricultural land uses located in proximity to agricultural operations. However, APAC also recognizes that setbacks can be reduced in consideration of topographic and meteorological conditions, acquiring of easements from property owners of adjacent agricultural operations, and innovative design techniques such as “shelter belts” (vegetative barriers).

If a strict 300-foot setback were imposed on a potential farmworker housing complex site that is completely surrounded by agricultural operations, the parcel would have to be approximately 18.6 acres in area in order to provide approximately two acres of building area (only 11 percent of the parcel area). In contrast, the Rancho Sespe farmworker housing project contains a required setback of 100 feet, contains 100 multi-family dwelling units on 19 acres, and contains 37 percent building area.

The Committee and the Planning Division recommend that no explicit buffering setback standard be adopted in the ordinance, but that the County continue its practice of evaluating and conditioning projects on a case-by-case basis.

Building Coverage Standards

The County General Plan establishes a maximum five percent building coverage standard for all conforming parcels in the Agricultural and Open Space land use designations. Non-conforming parcels (parcels smaller than the minimum parcel size requirements) have a building coverage standard based on a sliding scale of 50% lot coverage for 5,000 square feet parcels to 5% lot coverage for 10 acre parcels. These building coverage standards pose an impediment to developing Farmworker Housing Complexes. As such, the Planning Division is processing an amendment to the General Plan to exempt Farmworker Housing Complexes from these lot coverage standards on a case-by-case basis. This amendment is part of the General Plan Update program.

Creation of Substandard Size Parcels for Farmworker Housing Complexes

The County General Plan and Zoning Code establish a minimum lot size of 40 acres for Agricultural-designated and “A-E” zoned land, and 10 acres for Open Space-designated and “O-S” zoned land. As indicated by the farmworker housing complex site suitability analysis, there are an insufficient number of existing suitably sized parcels (2 to 20 acres) to build farmworker-housing complexes around the City of Camarillo and not all of the existing parcels around the other cities may prove to be viable. As such, the Planning Division is recommending that the General Plan and Zoning Code be amended to allow the creation of substandard-sized parcels for Farmworker Housing Complexes located within or adjacent to a city’s Sphere of Influence. This amendment is proposed to be part of the General Plan Update program.

Other Development Standards

The Planning Division and Committee reviewed and discussed other development standards, which included the following:

- Minimum Parcel Size
- Water Supply
- Sanitation
- Road Access
- Proximity to Services
- Landscaping
- Parking Standards

Because each of these issues were believed to be adequately addressed by other sections of the Zoning Code and other County and State ordinances, neither the Planning Division, APAC, nor the Committee recommended any changes.

Waiver of Development Fees

The APAC recently recommended that the County consider waiving development fees, similar to Sonoma and San Diego counties, to help lower the cost of constructing farmworker housing. Sonoma County waives park and traffic fees and San Diego County waives planning and building permit processing fees.

The County General Plan lists the fees currently collected by Ventura County. These include the following:

- Planning permit process fees (County fees based on actual service)
- Building Permit fees (County fees based on service)
- Sanitation fees (special districts)
- Water service fees (special districts)
- Flood Control District fees (special district)
- Traffic Impact Mitigation fees (County PWA/city)

- Local park fees (County GSA/park districts)
- School facility fees (school districts)
- Fire Protection District fees (special district)
- Other Governmental fees (other agencies)

As can be seen, the County has no or very little control over most of the above fees. The notable exceptions are planning and building permit-processing fees, park fees for projects involving subdivisions located outside a park district and project traffic impact mitigation fees (County only). Given the current financial constraints of Ventura County and the dire need for park and traffic capital improvement fees, the Planning Division does not recommend that the County absorb these costs.