



# County of Yolo

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January 11, 2006

Gregory Chew  
Community Designer/Program Manager  
Sacramento Area Council of Governments  
1415 L Street, Suite 300  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Chew:

Yolo County and its partner Capay Valley Vision (CVV) are pleased to request \$185,000 for a planning grant from the SACOG Community Design Fund to create an actionable Esparto downtown revitalization plan. Extensive public forums and studies in the unincorporated Esparto-Capay Valley area over the past several years have led to community consensus that bringing suitable development to five key properties in downtown Esparto is a top priority. The community's desired uses for these properties and the downtown area mirrors SACOG's seven blueprint principles and we believe this planning grant will allow CVV to harness the areas' growing population and regional employment as a catalyst for implementing a model, collaborative approach to community planning for unincorporated, rural towns that can be replicated around the region. This project also dovetails nicely with Yolo County's agricultural land protection programs.

There is great urgency in this planning process. In 2002 the Cache Creek Casino Resort, dramatically expanded its operations at its site only miles from Esparto. The Casino is owned by the Rumsey Band of Wintun Indians and situated on tribal lands and thus development there is not in the jurisdiction of Yolo County. California State Highway 16, which is the main street in Esparto, is the only way to reach the Casino. As of spring 2005 the Casino attracts 5,000 to 7,000 people on weekdays, 13,000 to 17,000 on weekends. It also now employs 2,500 workers and is the second largest employer in Yolo County.

Prior to 2002 the area was already experiencing a shortage of housing for farm workers vital to the agriculture that is the economic engine for the area. When the Casino expanded its employment base in 2002 the need for quality affordable housing and improved infrastructure and services throughout unincorporated Capay Valley-Esparto Region increased further.

In the past three years Capay Valley Vision has been able to build community consensus amongst a broad range of community groups, secure support from Yolo County and create property owner and developer buy-in to creating a downtown Esparto revitalization plan. The agreed upon focus is creation of attractive, mixed-use buildings that takes advantage of downtown's historic structures and the community's agricultural character. An additional goal is bringing in quality compact housing units that are affordable to very low- to moderate-income working families and independent seniors.