

# **HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The balance of agricultural, natural resource and urban lands in Sonoma County is continually shifting. The “History” section of the Sonoma County Land Use Audit focuses on the major trends and events that historically have shaped land uses in the County and identifies those factors that continue to influence land use patterns today. Please note that detailed analysis of land uses by acre from 1970 to the present will be completed in Task 2.5 Land Use Patterns and Trends (see Work Program Addendum dated October 23, 2002).

Figure 1 provides a graphic history of Sonoma County from the pre-1880s to the present. Key topics include county population, major events, agriculture, natural resources, urban development and infrastructure. This figure was prepared based upon input from the Land Use Audit Steering Committee and includes numerous historical events and activities, some that are discussed in the following memo and some that are not.

## **OVERVIEW OF MAJOR EVENTS**

This section will summarize the major regional, national and international events and the impacts they had on land use, natural resources, and/or agriculture in Sonoma County. Events to be discussed include:

- Designation of Statehood
- WW I & II
- Earthquakes
- Tourism
- Major Construction Projects – Golden Gate Bridge, Warm Springs Dam
- Prohibition
- Great Depression
- Dot-com bubble

## **POPULATION & HOUSING GROWTH**

This section will provide an overview of housing and population growth in Sonoma County. The discussion will address growth both in the cities and on unincorporated lands. The discussion will include economic and demographic information including population, housing units, income growth, and commute patterns, as available.

### **County Overview**

History of Urban Development – Native Americans, Spanish Settlers  
Current physical size – square miles and acres  
Population change over time

Employment sectors and high growth industries (30-year trends)  
Income change over time (30-year trends)  
Housing units and changes over time (30-year trends)

**Incorporated Cities and Towns** (population change over time, incorporation, sphere of influence boundaries, significant development bubbles/events)

- Sonoma
- Petaluma
- Cotati
- Rohnert Park
- Santa Rosa
- Sebastopol
- Windsor
- Healdsburg
- Cloverdale

**Unincorporated Developments** (population, history, size, implications)

Unincorporated Communities

- Occidental
- Monte Rio
- Guerneville
- Graton
- Forestville
- Penngrove
- Geyserville
- Freestone
- Others to be determined

Subdivisions/Ranchettes

- Sea Ranch

**ECONOMIC OVERVIEW**

This section will review economic trends and major employment sectors over time. Particular emphasis will be given to place-based industries that historically have characterized Sonoma County and continue to play a critical role even as more “foot loose” industries (such as telecom) emerge as major employment sectors. These sectors include:

- **Agriculture**
  - Key agricultural crops and periods
  - Factors influencing crop changes
  - Legislation affecting agriculture will also be identified.

- **Resource Extraction**
  - Timber Harvest
  - Use of Steamfields
  - Gravel mining
  - **Tourism**

## **NATURAL RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT**

This section will provide an overview of the natural resources of Sonoma County and the changes to these resources over time.

### **Description of Natural Resources**

- Climate
- Geology
- Hydrology
- Soils
- Vegetation
- Wildlife and Endangered Species
- Fisheries
- Significant Habitat

### **Environmental Quality Trends**

Loss of Habitat  
Degradation of Water Quality and Quantity

### **Protected Open Space**

### **Legislation Affecting Natural Resources**