

Agricultural Conservation Mitigation Program (REF220044)



Building Industry Association Bay Area Meeting
August 3, 2022

Presentation Overview



Policy Framework



What is Agricultural Conservation Mitigation?



Process & Timeline



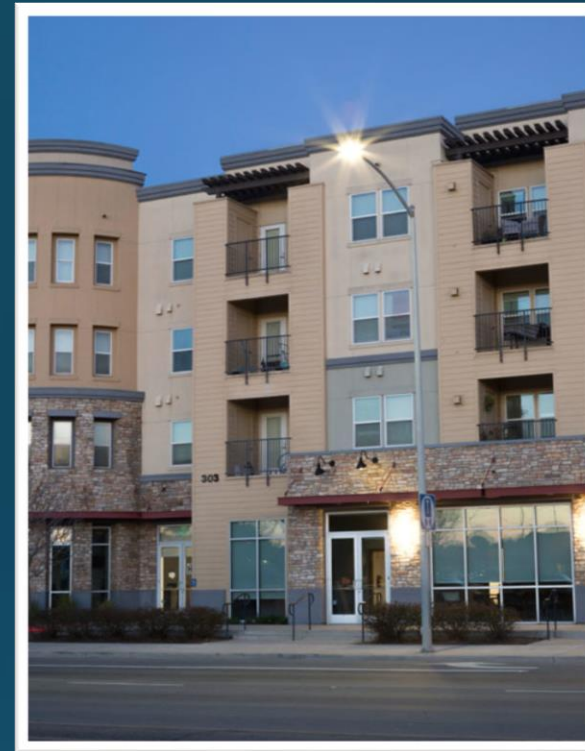
Building Industry Engagement & Input



Discussion

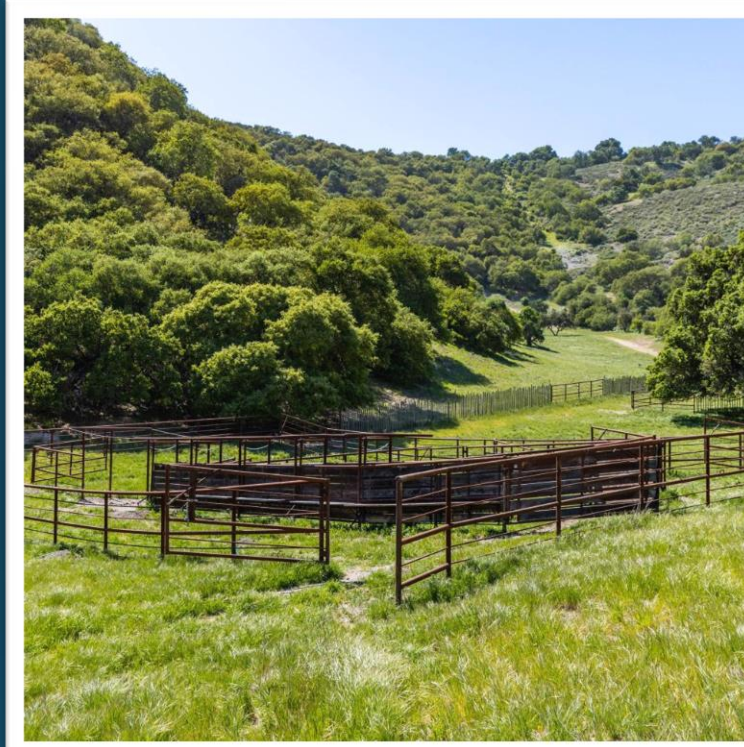
Policy Framework

- 2010 General Plan: Policies that address existing and future land use for the large rural areas that are predominantly for agricultural purposes and for diversity of unincorporate communities
- Land Use Element: Creates a general framework that encourages growth within or near developed/developing areas in order to reduce impacts to agricultural production, natural resources, or public services
- Community Areas & Rural Center



Policy Framework

- 2010 General Plan: Preserve, protect, and enhance farmland in order to maintain the productivity and viability of the County's agricultural industry.
- Agricultural Element: Promote the long-term protection, conservation and enhancement of productive and potentially productive agricultural lands.
- Agricultural Conservation Mitigation Program: Mitigate loss of farmland to development

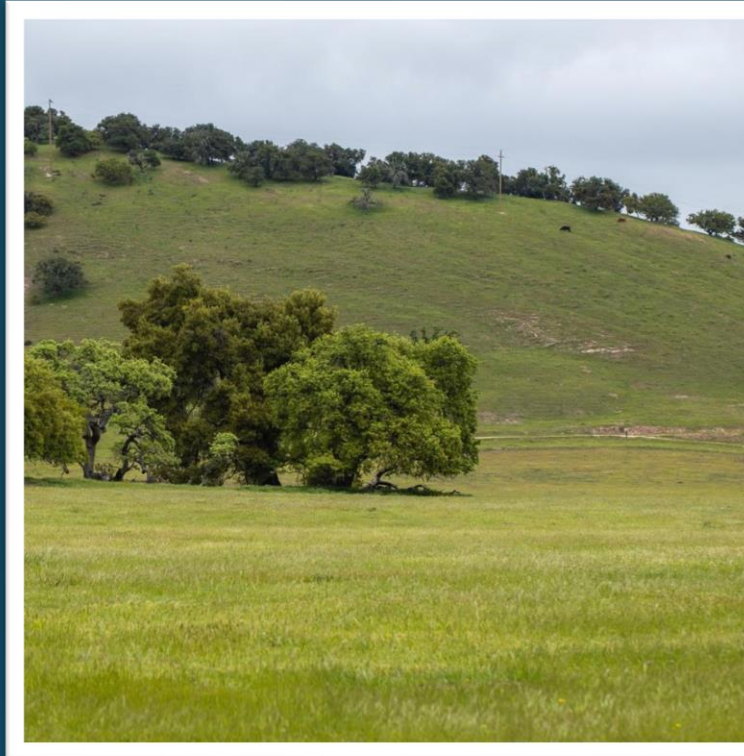


What does mitigation look like?

- Purchase of Permanent Agricultural Conservation Easement
- Payment of In-Lieu Fees
- Other (Select) Mitigation Tools
 - Conservation of Soil at Development Sites
 - Improve or Create Farmland via Preservation of Prime Soils

Timeline

- Meetings & Workshops
 - 5/26 – AAC
 - 7/5 – North County
 - 7/14 – Salinas Valley Cities
 - 7/18 – South County (*Sp*)
 - 7/28 – AAC Workshop
 - 7/28 – City of Salinas
 - 7/29 – Countywide (*Sp*)
 - 8/3 – Building Industry Association
- Planning Commission Workshop (*Sp*) – 9/2022





Policy Input

- Agricultural Conservation Mitigation Program Purpose & Goals
- Meaningful Measure or “Value” of Loss of Agricultural Land
- Eligibility Criteria of Mitigation Receiving Site
- Exceptions or Special Considerations
- Alternative Protection Measures



Join the Discussion

To follow the policy development, provide comment and feedback:

Sign In today – include your email & check the box

Or email - hcdcomments@co.monterey.ca.us

Questions?

Contact Melanie Beretti, AICP, Principal Planner

Phone | 831-755-5285 Email | berettim@co.monterey.ca.us

Program Purpose & Goals (Draft)

Purpose

- Provide clear and consistent policies to mitigate the loss of agricultural land due to development or conversion to non-agricultural uses

Goals

- Promote the long-term protection, conservation, and enhancement of productive and potentially productive agricultural lands
- Ensure the commercial viability of Monterey County's agricultural industry
- Support growth management policies that encourage growth in or near developed or developing areas and away from valuable agricultural land

Policy Input

- Meaningful Measure or “Value” of Loss of Agricultural Land
- Eligibility Criteria of Mitigation Receiving Site
 - Fair Market Appraised Value
 - Easement diminution value as agricultural conservation
 - Important Farmland
 - Gradient: (1)Prime; (2)Statewide Importance; Unique; Locally Important; and (3) Grazing/Rangeland)
 - Clear definition of “Prime” farmland
 - Location
 - All – Mitigate within Planning Area
 - Annexations, Community Areas, Rural Centers – Prioritize mitigate at urbanized/ag boundary
 - Blanco Drain Area – Prioritize mitigation in Blanco Drain Area
 - Quality & Character
 - Water source and quality
 - Other?

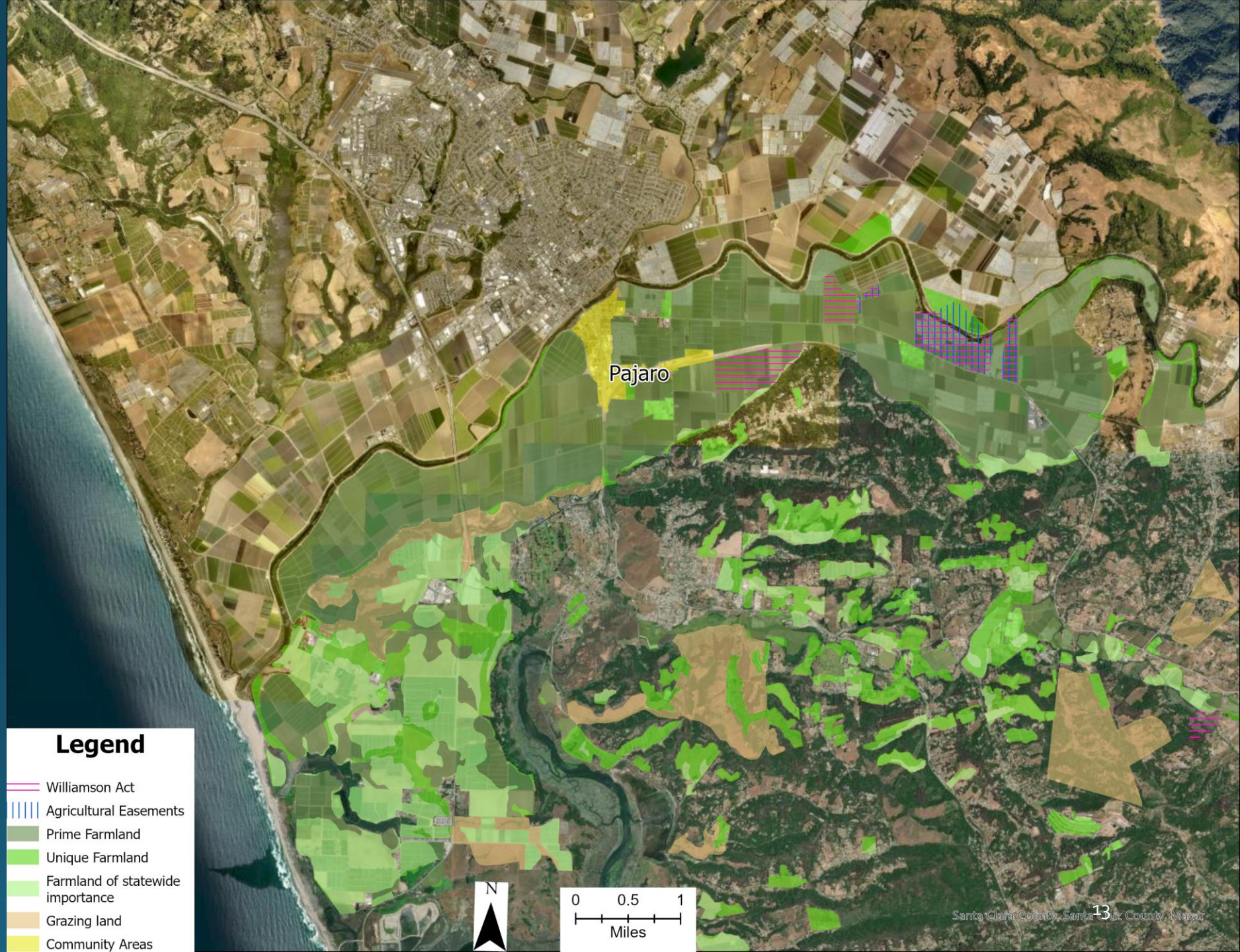
Policy Input

- Exceptions or Special Considerations
 - Exemptions - Required by AG-1.12
 - Acreage within project/annexation utilized for inclusionary housing
 - Community Plan or Rural Center Plan that includes a mitigation program
 - Consistent with Salinas-County MOU
 - Exemptions – Other
 - Agricultural Support Services/Facilities
 - Agricultural Worker and Families Housing
 - Thresholds for Requiring Easement (“good faith”) versus In-Lieu Fees versus Other
 - Easement Required (“good faith offer(s)”) – 40 acres minimum
 - In-lieu Fee - Option to Easement = <40 to 10 acres; Only = <10 acres
 - Annexations versus Other Development
 - Others?

Policy Input

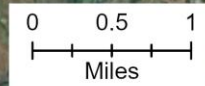
- County encourage the following additional protection measures
 - Conservation of Soil at Development Sites
 - Improve or Create Farmland via Preservation of Prime Soils
- Other methods
 - Development (density)-dependent
 - Mitigation of Condemned Conservation Properties
 - Discourage County-sponsored conversion of agricultural lands

Protected Agricultural Lands – Pajaro Valley

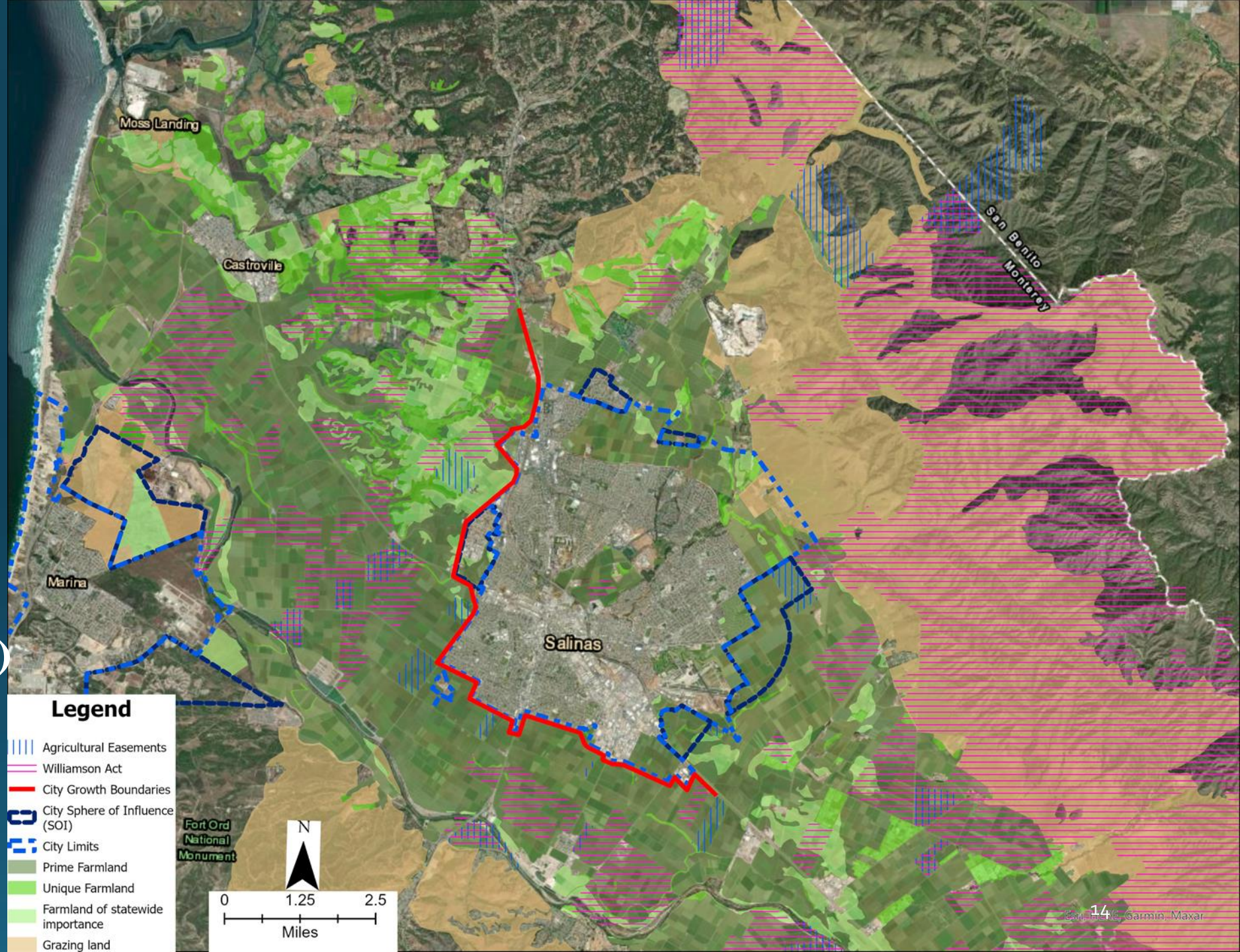


Legend

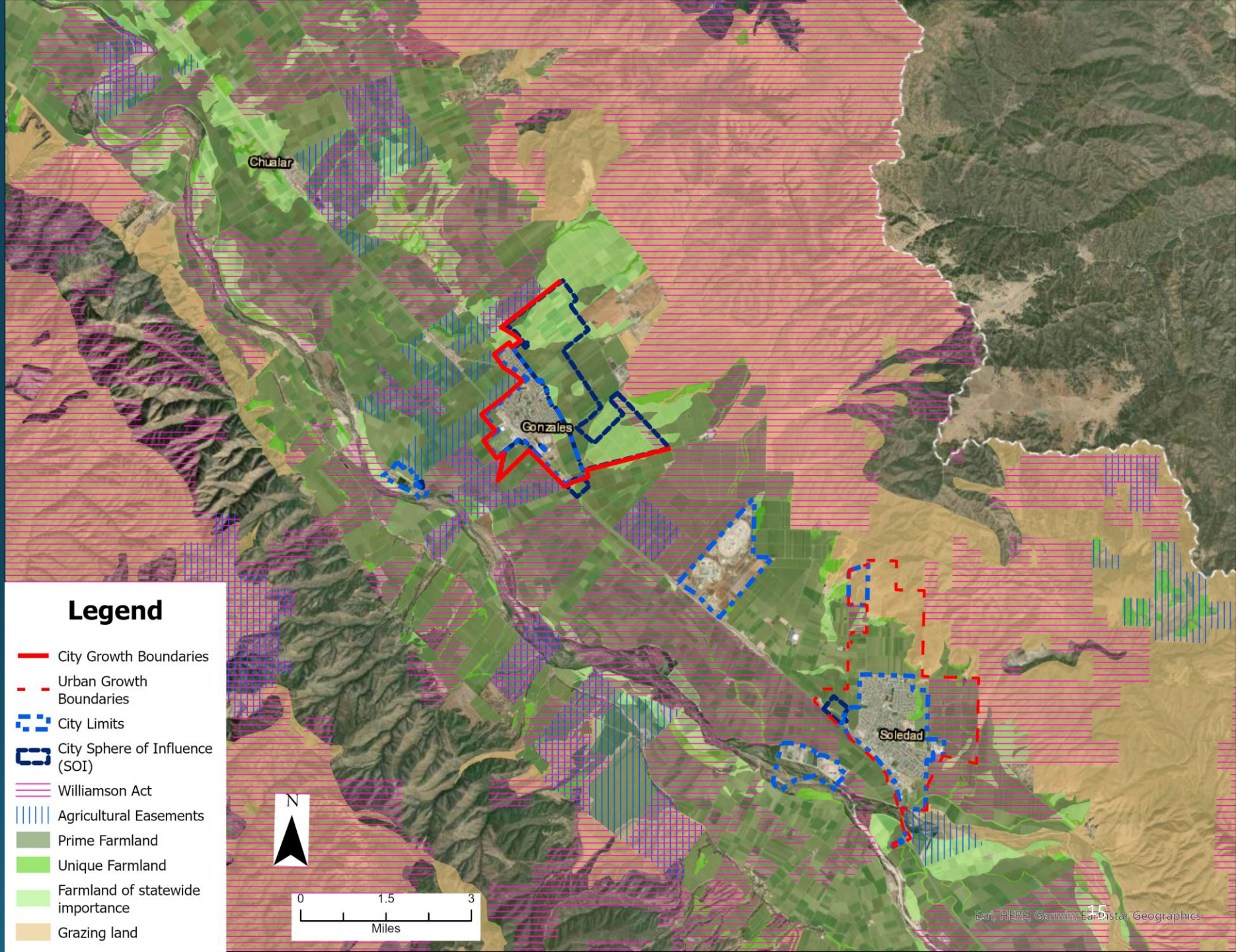
- Williamson Act
- Agricultural Easements
- Prime Farmland
- Unique Farmland
- Farmland of statewide importance
- Grazing land
- Community Areas



Protected Agricultural Lands – Salinas Valley (Moss Landing to Salinas)

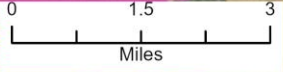


Protected Agricultural Lands – Salinas Valley (Chualar to Soledad)

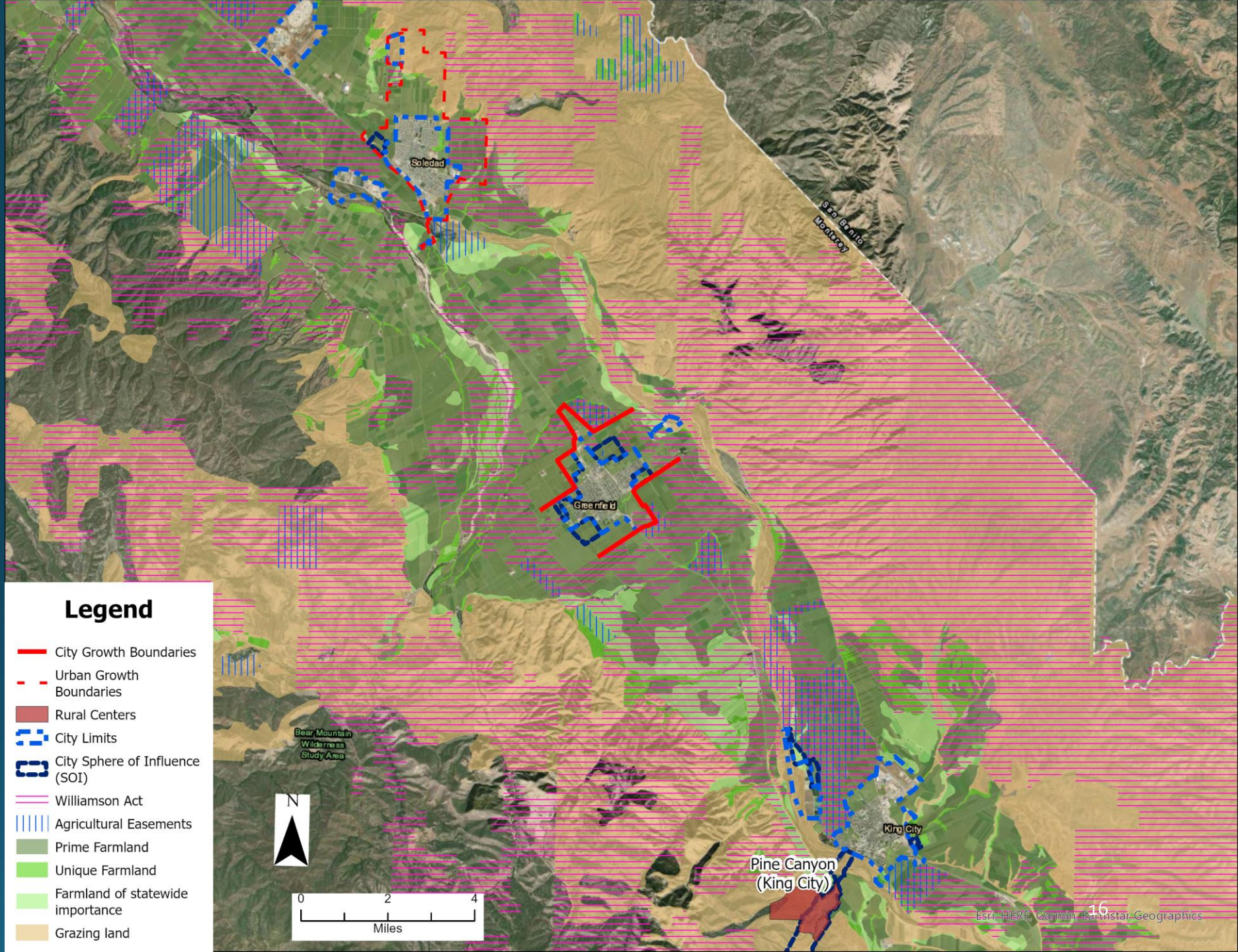


Legend

- City Growth Boundaries
- Urban Growth Boundaries
- City Limits
- City Sphere of Influence (SOI)
- Williamson Act
- Agricultural Easements
- Prime Farmland
- Unique Farmland
- Farmland of statewide importance
- Grazing land

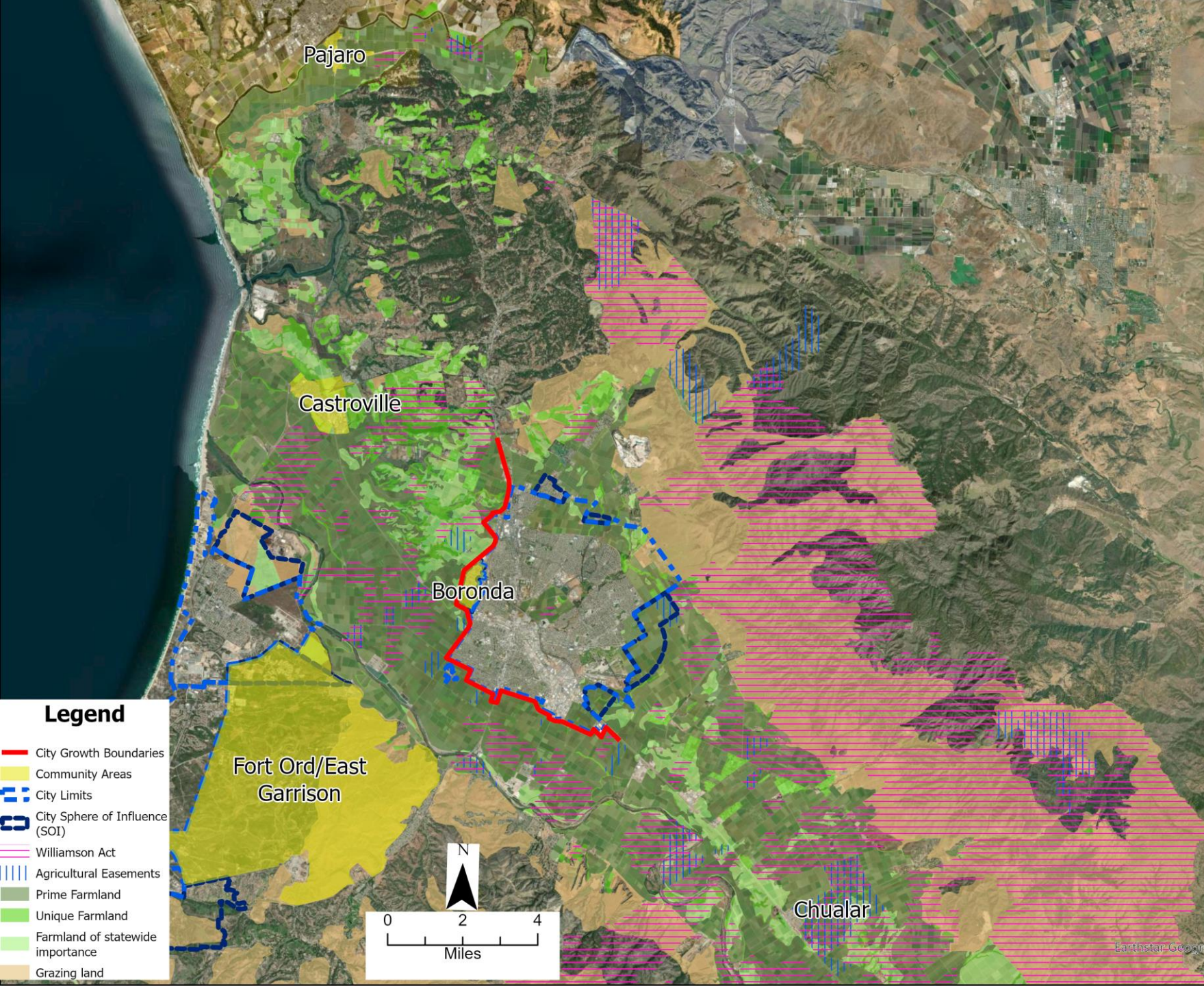


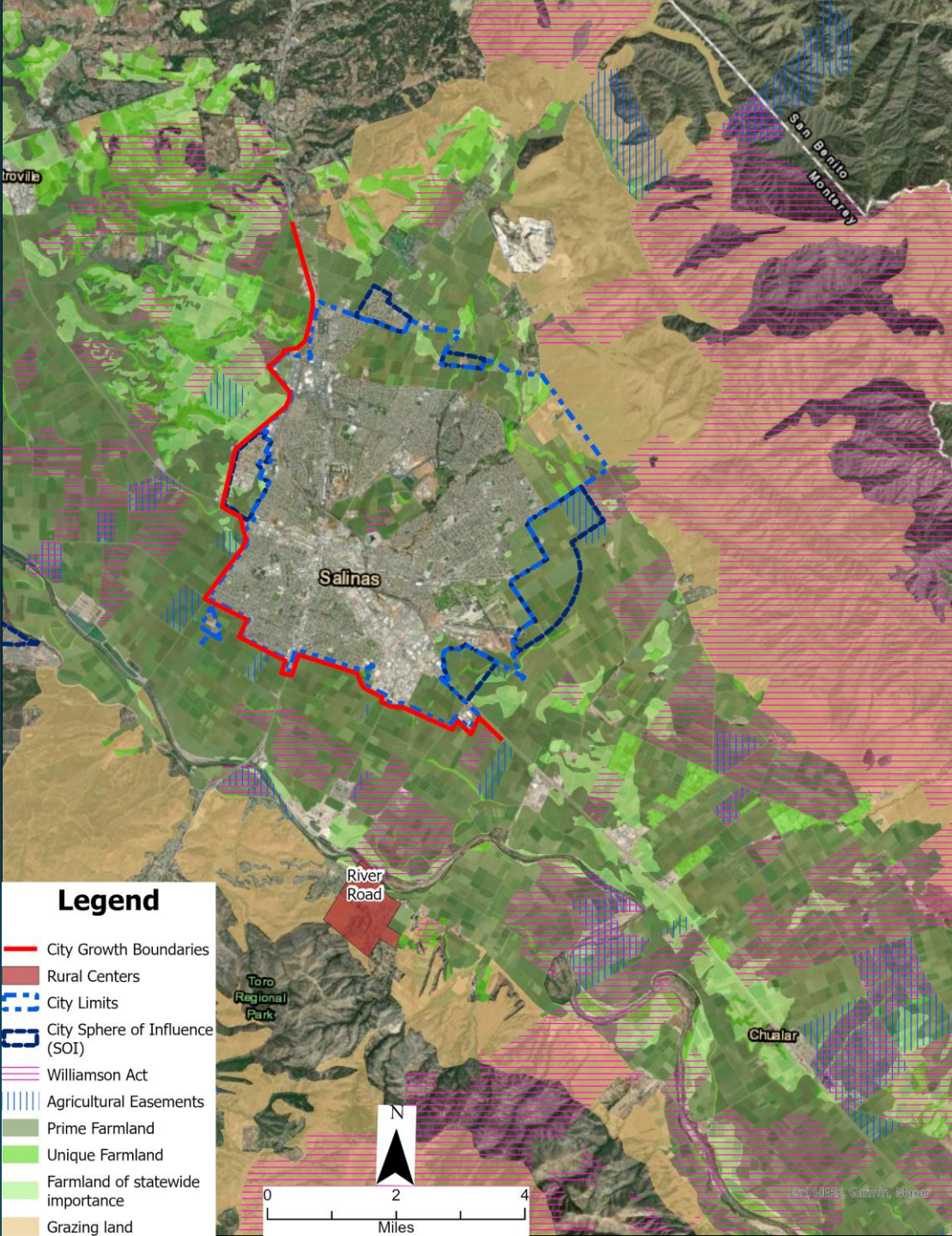
Protected Agricultural Lands – Salinas Valley (Soledad to King City)



County-wide Community Areas

- The County shall emphasize Community Areas as the preferred location and the priority for additional development in the County.
- New development in the unincorporated area shall be actively supported as the County's primary planning priority.



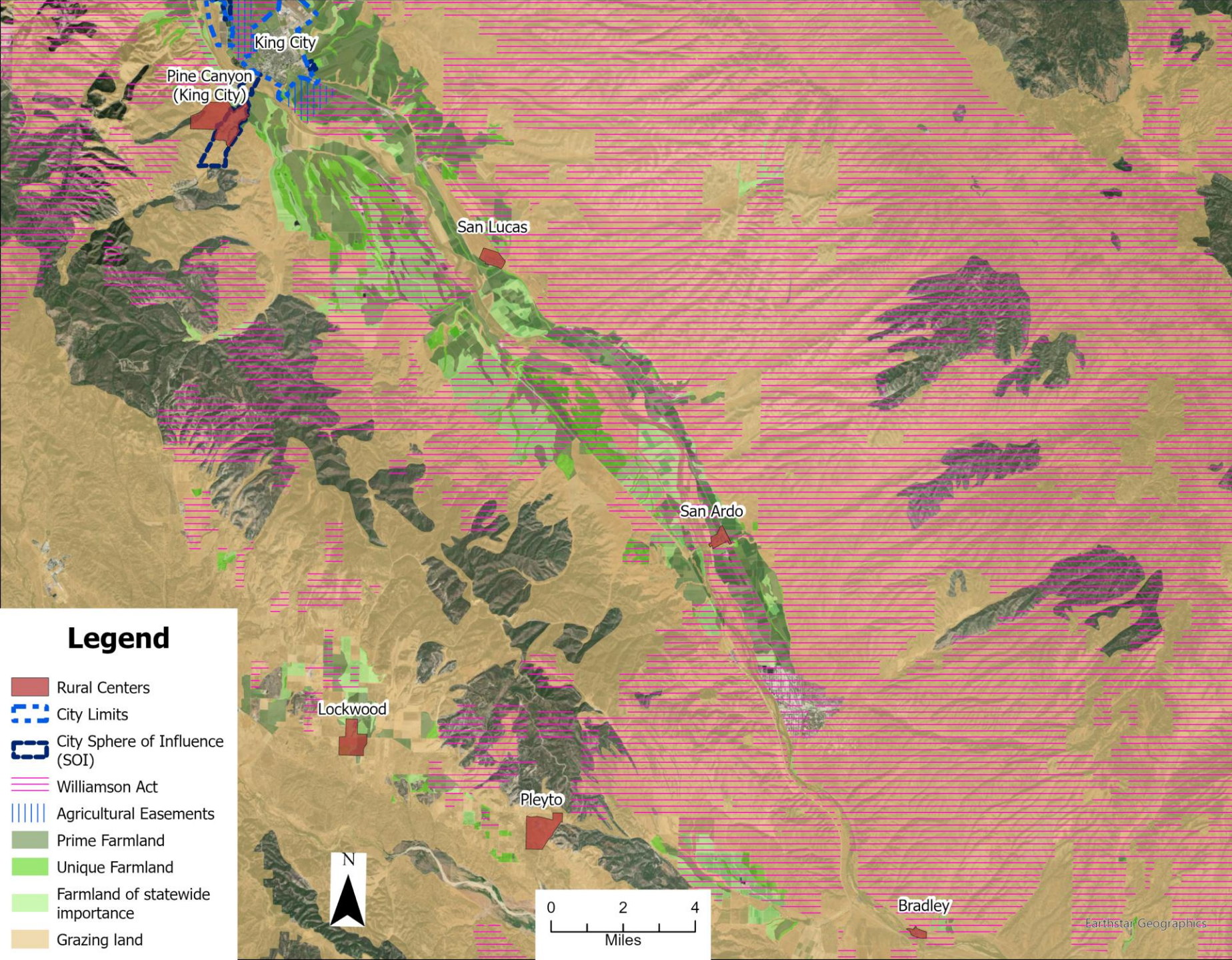


Rural Centers – Central County

- The Rural Center in Central County is River Road.
- Rural Centers are existing areas containing concentrations of development within the County.
- New development other than within Community Areas shall be encouraged to be located within Rural Centers.

Rural Centers – South County

- Rural Centers in South County are Pine Canyon, San Lucas, San Ardo, Lockwood, Pleyto, and Bradley.
- Rural Centers are a secondary planning priority for the County.



State of CA Department of Conservation

- Important Farmland Categories Definitions:
 - Prime Farmland: “Farmland with the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long term agricultural production. This land has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.”
 - Farmland of Statewide Importance: “Farmland similar to Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to store soil moisture. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.”

State of CA Department of Conservation

- Important Farmland Categories Definitions:
 - Unique Farmland: “Farmland of lesser quality soils used for the production of the state's leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated, but may include nonirrigated orchards or vineyards as found in some climatic zones in California. Land must have been cropped at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.”
 - Farmland of Local Importance: “Land of importance to the local agricultural economy as determined by each county's board of supervisors and a local advisory committee.”
 - Grazing Land: “Land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock. This category was developed in cooperation with the California Cattlemen's Association, University of California Cooperative Extension, and other groups interested in the extent of grazing activities.”