

Agricultural Conservation Mitigation Program (REF220044)



Salinas Valley Cities Meeting
September 19, 2022 - Zoom

Agricultural Mitigation Program

- Agricultural Land Mitigation Ordinance
 - Research & Outreach – Underway to be complete September 2022
 - Policy Workshops & Policy Drafting – October to December 2022
 - Final Ordinance – Early 2023
- Agricultural Buffer Ordinance – Pending Ag Mitigation Ordinance drafting

County-Cities Coordination

- Salinas MOU 2010; Addendum 2019
- Greenfield MOA 2013
- Gonzalez MOA 2014
- Soledad MOA 2016; Addendum 2017
- Common Themes
 - Cooperatively plan
 - Provide greater certainty regarding development
 - Long-term protection of ag land and viability
 - Affordable housing
 - Establish an urban-agricultural boundary
 - Mitigate via easement in certain priority areas
 - Establish Ag Mitigation Program with interim approach until then
 - Minimize urban-ag conflicts and establish Ag Buffer Program

Status of Ag. Mitigation in Other Jurisdictions

- King City – None planned
- Greenfield – Unknown
- Soledad – Unknown
- Gonzales – Under development

Policy Update and Discussion

- Key Definitions to be Developed
 - Prime Farmland
 - Development and Conversion
- Meaningful measure or “Value” of Loss of Agricultural Land
- Eligibility Criteria of Mitigation Receiving Site
- Exceptions or Other Considerations



Policy Update and Discussion

- Meaningful Measure or “Value” of Loss of Agricultural Land
 - Fair Market Value (Easement diminution value, farm-ability value)
 - Gradient of Farmland
 - Prime Farmland
 - Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland and Locally Important
 - Grazing/Rangeland
 - Gradient of Mitigation Ratios
 - Like for Like Classification (or better)
 - Location
 - Mitigate within Planning Area

Farmland Category	Ratio
Prime	2 : 1
State/Unique/Local	1.5 : 1
Grazing/Rangeland	1 : 1

Policy Update & Discussion

- Exceptions and Other Considerations
 - Exemptions – Required by AG-1.12
 - Acreage within project/annexation used for inclusionary housing
 - Community Plan or Rural Center Plan that includes a mitigation program
 - Exemptions – Other
 - Agricultural Support Services/Facilities
 - Agricultural Worker and Families Housing
 - Do not exempt solar/renewable energy projects (except supporting ag operation)
 - Exemptions – For Consideration
 - Exempt acreage in required agricultural buffer?
 - Exempt public benefit portions of development, such as regional roads, parks, or open space?
 - Exempt acreage with water conservation/improvement projects that benefits ag?

Policy Update & Discussion

- Exceptions and Other Considerations Continued
 - Thresholds for Easement (“good faith”) versus In-Lieu Fees versus Other
 - Easement Required (“good faith offer(s)”) – 5 acres or 20 acres minimum? For projects unable to acquire an easement (within the planning area or at all), should mitigation ratios or thresholds be increased?
- Other Complimentary Options to Help Meet Mitigation Requirements
 - High-density developments can reduce mitigation requirements by some amount?
 - Topsoil to improve or create new prime farmland at another site?
 - Water conservation/improvement project that benefits ag – off-site?

Next Steps

- Staff is tentatively scheduled to hold a Planning Commission Workshop in October.
- Upon receiving direction from the Planning Commission, staff would then look to meet individually with each jurisdiction.