

# Agricultural Conservation Mitigation Program (REF220044)



City of Salinas Meeting  
September 29, 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 City of Salinas

- Agricultural Land Preservation Program (Resolution No. 19422)
- Economic Development Element EIR Mitigation Measures
- Updating City General Plan currently

# 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.