

Agricultural Conservation Mitigation Program (REF220044)



**Salinas Valley City Managers and Mayors,
February 6, 2023**

Purpose for Today

- ▶ Receive an update on the preparation of countywide Agricultural Land Mitigation Ordinance (*final name tbd*)
- ▶ Identify areas of consensus and topics that need further discussion

Policy Framework

Agricultural Conservation Mitigation Program (AG-1.12)

- Mitigate loss of farmland to development
- Consult with cities on program for areas to be annexed
- Mitigation methods based on graduated value
- Until program established, County-Cities cooperation



County-Cities Cooperation

- ▶ 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 Valley-wide Ag Mitigation/Buffer Program with interim approach until then
 - ▶ Minimize urban-ag conflicts and establish Ag Buffer Program

Program Status - Outreach

▶ General Public & Agricultural Landowners:

- ▶ Countywide (Bilingual)
- ▶ North County (w/ Sup. Phillips)
- ▶ South County (Bilingual) (w/ Sup. Lopez)

▶ Organizations:

- ▶ Ag Land Trust
- ▶ Big Sur Land Trust
- ▶ Building Industry Association
- ▶ Center for Community Advocacy
- ▶ Communities Organizing for Relational Power in Action
- ▶ Elkhorn Slough Foundation
- ▶ Grower-Shipper Association
- ▶ Land Trust of Santa Cruz
- ▶ Monterey County Farm Bureau
- ▶ Monterey County Farm Bureau Land Use Subcommittee
- ▶ Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency

▶ Jurisdictions and Agencies:

- ▶ City of Greenfield
- ▶ City of Gonzales
- ▶ City of Salinas
- ▶ City of Soledad
- ▶ Department of Conservation
- ▶ Department of Food and Agriculture
- ▶ King City
- ▶ Local Agency Formation Commission of Monterey County
- ▶ National Resources Conservation Service
- ▶ Resource Conservation District of Monterey
- ▶ United States Department of Agriculture

▶ Committees and Commissions:

- ▶ 5/26, 7/28, 8/25 - AAC
- ▶ 10/26 – Planning Commission Workshop
- ▶ 1/26/23 – AAC
- ▶ 2/13/23 – AAC Subcommittee *Planned*

Program Status – Timeline

- ▶ Agricultural Land Mitigation Ordinance
 - ▶ Subcommittee, Policy Drafting, Cities/LAFCO Coordination – Winter 2023
 - ▶ Draft Ordinance – Early Spring 2023
 - ▶ Final Ordinance – Late Spring 2023
- ▶ Agricultural Buffer Ordinance – Pending Ag Mitigation Ordinance

Ordinance Purpose & Goals

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.

Encourage growth in or near developed or developing areas and away from valuable agricultural land.



Roundtable Discussion

- ▶ Policy Options
 - ▶ Mitigation Methods & Ratios
 - ▶ Receiving Sites and Urban-Ag Edges
- ▶ Annexation
 - ▶ Timing of Compliance
 - ▶ Applicability
- ▶ Exemptions
- ▶ Implementation Considerations
- ▶ Community and Stakeholder Engagement
- ▶ Process and Timing of Consideration for Adoption



Policy Options – Mitigation Methods

General Direction

- ▶ 20 acres or greater – Easement with Good Faith Effort (In-Lieu Fee *ok if easement not successful*)
- ▶ Less than 20 acres – Easement or In-Lieu Fee
- ▶ Alternative/Complimentary Mitigation Methods – Ok, but consider limiting use of these measures to a maximum % of total mitigation?

For City-Annexation?

Policy Options - Mitigation Ratios

General Direction

Farmland Category	Ratio*
Prime Farmland	2 : 1
Farmland of Statewide/Local Importance & Unique	1.5 : 1
Grazing/Rangeland	1 : 1

**Note: Like-for-like or higher
& not less than 1:1..*

For City-Annexation?

- ▶ Opportunity to reduce to less than 2:1? See next slide

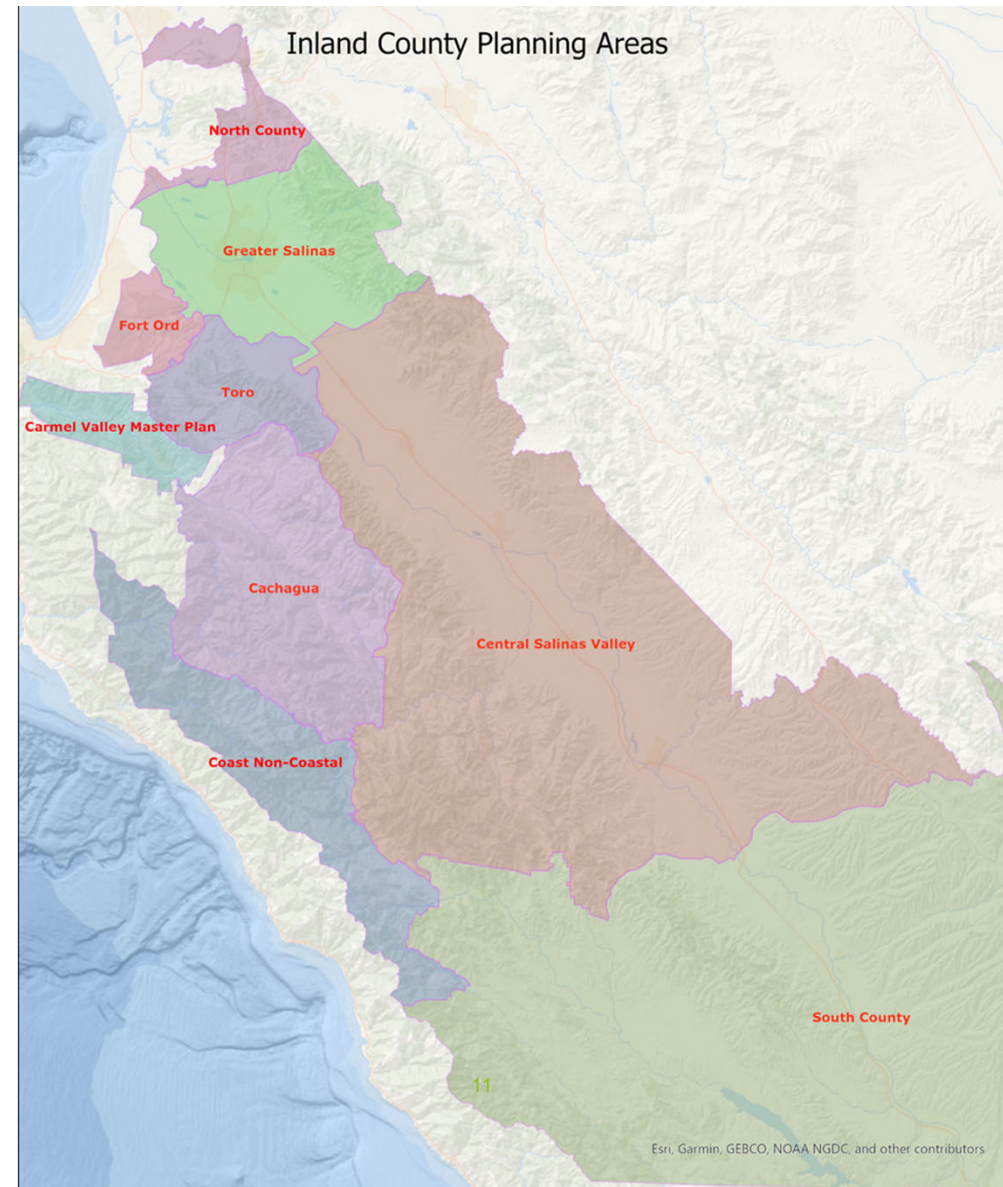
Policy Options – Receiving Site for Mitigation

General Direction

- ▶ Prioritize mitigation within a planning area but include criteria and options to allow flexibility.
 - ▶ Good Faith Effort
 - ▶ Projects at edge of 2 areas

For City-Annexation?

- ▶ Prioritize defining ag-city/urban edge or having high strategic value?
- ▶ Establish Permanent Ag-Urban edge with higher mitigation ratio if moves in future?



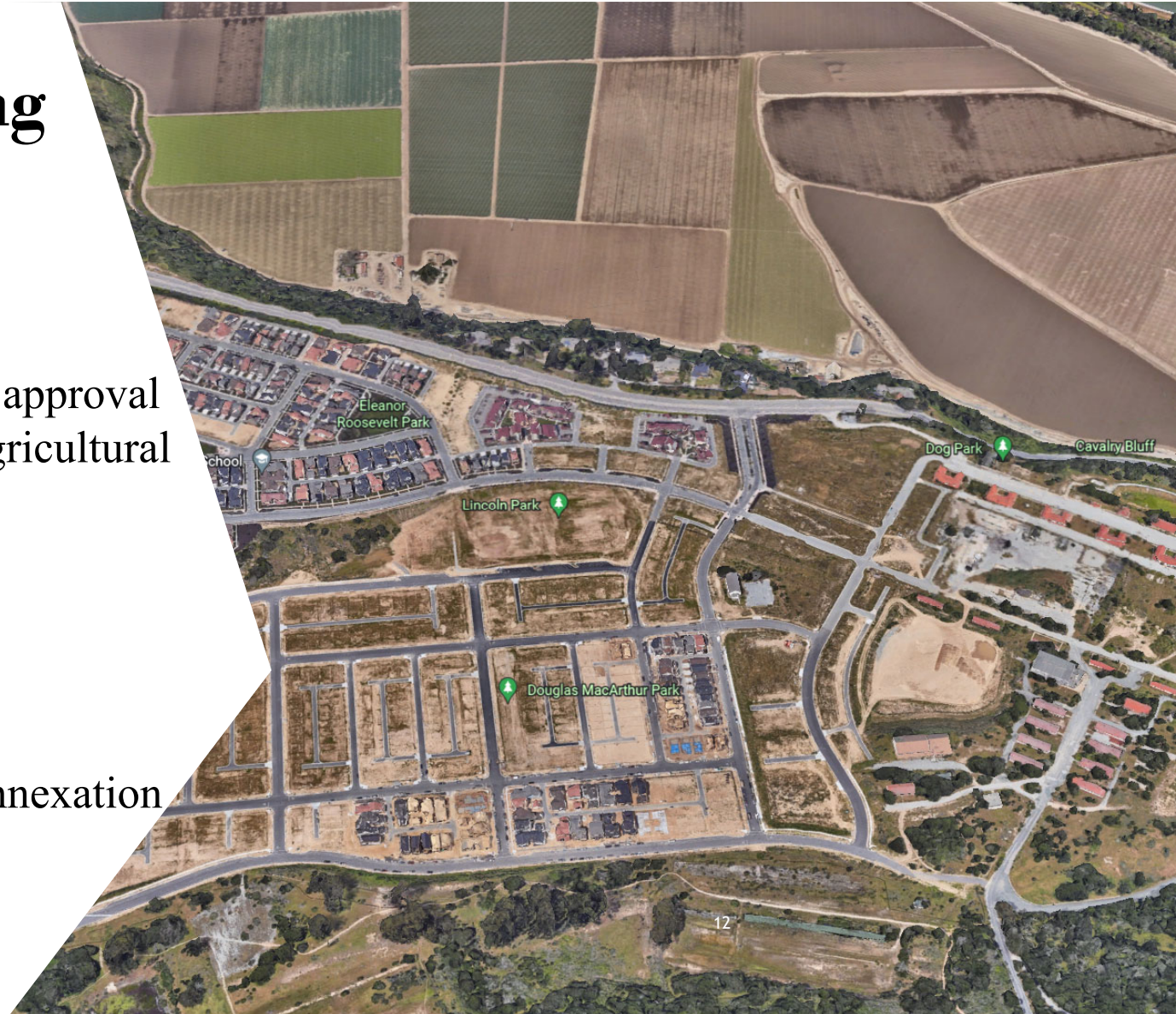
Annexation: Timing of Compliance

General Direction:

- ▶ By or before entitlement or approval that commits land to non-agricultural use.

For City-Annexation?

- ▶ Prior to or at the time the annexation is recorded.



Annexation: Applicability & Timing

- ▶ Applies to all annexation projects? (There was request to exclude Spheres of Influence)
- ▶ At what point in a project's approvals/annexation process would the Countywide policy apply?

Exemptions

General Direction

- ▶ Acreage used for inclusionary housing (AG-1.12)
- ▶ Community Plans or Rural Center Plans with ag mitigation program (AG-1.12)
- ▶ Agricultural support facilities and services
- ▶ Minor renewable energy projects that support agricultural use on site (utility-scale projects *not* exempt)
- ▶ Agricultural worker and family housing
- ▶ *Research exemptions for water conservation, improvement, land repurposing projects*

For City-Annexation?

- ▶ Exemptions not typically part of annexation approvals
- ▶ Inclusionary/Affordable Housing?
- ▶ Public Parks & Open Space?

Implementation Considerations

- ▶ Consistency with existing City-County Agreements
- ▶ Intended/Unintended Consequences

Community & Stakeholder Engagement

- ▶ What's missing in what County has done? ?
- ▶ Recommended approach?

Process & Timing for Adoption

- ▶ Next steps to advance these collective discussions?
- ▶ Can we commit to forward momentum?