



NOTICE AND AGENDA FOR REGULAR MEETING

DATE/TIME: Wednesday, July 8, 2015, 12:00 PM

PLACE: **Contra Costa County Department of Conservation & Development
30 Muir Road, Martinez, CA 94553
(Please note change in meeting location and time)**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Commission will hear and consider oral or written testimony presented by any affected agency or any interested person who wishes to appear. Proponents and opponents, or their representatives, are expected to attend the hearings. From time to time, the Chair may announce time limits and direct the focus of public comment for any given proposal.

Any disclosable public records related to an open session item on a regular meeting agenda and distributed by LAFCO to a majority of the members of the Commission less than 72 hours prior to that meeting will be available for public inspection in the office at 651 Pine Street, Six Floor, Martinez, CA, during normal business hours as well as at the LAFCO meeting.

All matters listed under CONSENT ITEMS are considered by the Commission to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless requested by a member of the Commission or a member of the public prior to the time the Commission votes on the motion to adopt.

For agenda items not requiring a formal public hearing, the Chair will ask for public comments. For formal public hearings the Chair will announce the opening and closing of the public hearing.

If you wish to speak, please complete a speaker's card and approach the podium; speak clearly into the microphone, start by stating your name and address for the record.

Campaign Contribution Disclosure

If you are an applicant or an agent of an applicant on a matter to be heard by the Commission, and if you have made campaign contributions totaling \$250 or more to any Commissioner in the past 12 months, Government Code Section 84308 requires that you disclose the fact, either orally or in writing, for the official record of the proceedings.

Notice of Intent to Waive Protest Proceedings

In the case of a change of organization consisting of an annexation or detachment, or a reorganization consisting solely of annexations or detachments, or both, or the formation of a county service area, it is the intent of the Commission to waive subsequent protest and election proceedings provided that appropriate mailed notice has been given to landowners and registered voters within the affected territory pursuant to Gov. Code sections 56157 and 56663, and no written opposition from affected landowner or voters to the proposal is received before the conclusion of the commission proceedings on the proposal.

American Disabilities Act Compliance

LAFCO will provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities planning to attend meetings who contact the LAFCO office at least 24 hours before the meeting, at 925-335-1094. An assistive listening device is available upon advance request.

As a courtesy, please silence your cell phones during the meeting.

July 8, 2015 CONTRA COSTA LAFCO AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Public Comment Period (please observe a three-minute time limit):
Members of the public are invited to address the Commission regarding any item that is not scheduled for discussion as part of this Agenda. No action will be taken by the Commission at this meeting as a result of items presented at this time.
5. Approval of Minutes for the June 10, 2015 regular LAFCO meeting

BUSINESS ITEMS

6. *2nd Round EMS/Fire Municipal Service Review (MSR)/Sphere of Influence (SOI) Updates* –authorize staff to release a Request for Proposals for consulting services to assist with the 2nd round EMS/Fire MSR and SOI updates.

WORKSHOP – 1:00 pm

7. *Agricultural & Open Space Preservation Workshop* - LAFCO will host a workshop to engage stakeholders in the development of a local agricultural and open space preservation policy to be used by LAFCO to help guide its decisions when considering a proposal that would impact agricultural and/or open space lands.

ADJOURNMENT

Next regular LAFCO meeting – August 12, 2015 at 1:30 p.m.

LAFCO STAFF REPORTS AVAILABLE AT http://www.contracostalafco.org/meeting_archive.htm

CONTRA COSTA LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING

June 10, 2015

Board of Supervisors Chambers
Martinez, CA

July 8, 2015
Agenda Item 5

1. Chair Rob Schroder called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.
2. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. Roll was called. A quorum was present of the following Commissioners:

City Members Rob Schroder and Don Tatzin.

County Members Mary Piepho and Alternate Candace Andersen.

Special District Member Igor Skaredoff.

Public Members Don Blubaugh and Alternate Sharon Burke.

Present were Executive Officer Lou Ann Texeira, Legal Counsel Sharon Anderson, and Clerk Kate Sibley.

4. Approval of the Agenda

Chair Schroder asked Commissioners to consider adding an urgency item to the agenda, regarding Trailer Bill 825 allowing the forced consolidation of water districts, as explained by the Executive Officer.

Upon motion of Tatzin, second by Piepho, Commissioners, by a vote of 6-0, added the item to the Business section of the agenda to discuss and take action on Trailer Bill 825, finding it to be an urgent necessity due to the nature and timing of the item.

AYES: Andersen (A), Blubaugh, Piepho, Schroder, Skaredoff, Tatzin

NOES: none

ABSENT: Glover (M), McGill (M)

ABSTAIN: none

Upon motion of Blubaugh, second by Piepho, Commissioners, by a vote of 6-0, approved the agenda as amended.

AYES: Andersen (A), Blubaugh, Piepho, Schroder, Skaredoff, Tatzin

NOES: none

ABSENT: Glover (M), McGill (M)

ABSTAIN: none

5. Public Comments

Juan Pablo Galván, with Save Mount Diablo (SMD), introduced himself to the Commissioners and provided his professional background prior to joining SMD. He indicated that SMD is making an effort to reach out to various organizations and agencies with updates on their progress, including adding about 59,000 acres into the Mt. Diablo region in the past year. The organization is currently involved in more than a dozen land use projects.

6. Approval of May 13, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Upon motion of Andersen, second by Tatzin, the minutes were approved by a vote of 6-0.

AYES: Andersen (A), Blubaugh, Piepho, Schroder, Skaredoff, Tatzin

NOES: none

ABSENT: Glover (M), McGill (M)

ABSTAIN: none

DRAFT

7. Informational Presentation – East Bay Municipal Utility District Drought Management Efforts

Richard W. Harris, Manager of Water Conservation for East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD), was introduced by the Executive Officer. Mr. Harris has been with EBMUD for nearly 25 years, and has more than 28 years of experience in water and energy resource management, civil engineering and environmental systems planning. Richard currently serves as a Board member of the California Urban Water Conservation Council and the Alliance for Water Efficiency, based in Chicago, Illinois, two nonprofit organizations dedicated to advancing water-use efficiency.

Mr. Harris began his presentation by providing a historic look at California's April 1 water supply for the past 65 years; 2015 shows the lowest level in that period; these are the driest four years in California's recorded history. We are now in what they call a Stage 4 drought, and EBMUD has been given a 20% community-wide reduction goal based on calendar year 2013, but use is not based on individual water allocations. Their three top priorities in achieving this goal are to: • Emphasize reductions in non-essential water use; • Avoid/limit impacts to the economy and environment; and • Safeguard water supplies for public health needs.

The target goal for indoor use is 35 gallons per person per day. Mr. Harris presented charts that demonstrated landscape overwatering was the biggest violation area. EBMUD will use a number of tools that can engage customers and help them to save water. It has also begun a program of providing recycled water to customers, with one location for this in North Richmond.

Commissioners provided comments and thanked him for his presentation. (EBMUD presentation available on the LAFCO website)

8. LAFCO 13-08 – Northeast Antioch Reorganization (Area 2A): Annexations to the City of Antioch and Delta Diablo Sanitation District and Detachment from County Service Area P-6

The Executive Officer noted that this item was continued from the June 11, 2014 LAFCO meeting due to a number of unresolved issues with this proposal primarily related to City zoning, a potentially faulty drain pipe, and public outreach, and to allow the City and County to work to resolve the issues.

Staff noted that the City submitted a letter stating that they are in the process of a comprehensive update of the Land Use Element of their General Plan and Zoning Update, and they expect to complete the GP update by mid-2016. Regarding the drainage pipeline, a portion of the pipeline was inspected and found to have a number of deficiencies. The City indicates that it will not accept the pipeline and structures until the pipeline within the proposed annexation area is repaired and/or replaced by the County. County staff indicates that the pipeline was originally installed in conjunction with the Antioch Kmart project in the early 1990s. In 2005, the County replaced over half of the pipeline and continues to do spot repair as needed. County staff indicates they are willing to work with the City on remediation.

The public hearing was reopened.

Rick Barton, Commodore of Sportsmen's Yacht Club, noted that this organization is still against the annexation; they see no reason to change their relationship with the County and the City. In response to a question from Commissioner Piepho, Mr. Barton stated that a recent inspection of the club's septic system indicated that it was in very good shape.

Commissioner Tatzin asked why the Mr. Barton is opposed to the annexation, and Mr. Barton responded that he is concerned about costs.

Commissioner Blubaugh expressed concern with the delay over the past 12 month, and suggested that progress reports be provided going forward.

Legal Counsel Anderson advised Commissioners that if they wished to continue the public hearing, they should continue to a date certain. Commissioner Tatzin suggested that the Commission ask for reports from time to time to ensure that progress is being made.

Upon motion of Piepho, second by Tatzin, Commissioners, by a 6-0 vote, kept the public hearing open and continued it to the June 8, 2016 regular LAFCO meeting; requested the City of Antioch to provide an

update every four months on the status of the pipeline, discussions between the City and the County, the General Plan update, the City's plan to manage the Antioch Dunes wildlife area, and an update on how costs for the affected properties would change for landowners in Area 2A as a result of this annexation.

AYES: Andersen (A), Blubaugh, Piepho, Schroder, Skaredoff, Tatzin
NOES: none
ABSENT: Glover (M), McGill (M)
ABSTAIN: none

9. EMS/Fire Service and LAFCO

The Executive Officer provided an update on two issues regarding fire and emergency medical services in Contra Costa County. The first issue was raised by Vince Wells, President, United Professional Firefighters Contra Costa – Local 1230 regarding automatic and mutual aid agreements and LAFCO's role. The second issue pertains to LAFCO's upcoming 2nd round EMS/Fire MSR. For context, the report also provided a brief chronology of LAFCO's past efforts relating to EMS/Fire service issues, highlighting the 2009 MSR, fire committee meetings, fire workshops and periodic updates from fire service agencies.

Staff noted that a Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued in 2014 for a 2nd round EMS/Fire MSR, but there were no bids; some consultants suggested that LAFCO focus the 2nd round MSR on one or two outstanding issues, or to specific agencies or sub-regions. The Contra Costa County Executive Fire Chiefs provided a letter to LAFCO suggesting that the 2nd round MSR focus on the East Contra Costa (ECCFPD) and Rodeo Hercules (RHFD) fire protection districts.

Commissioners discussed how LAFCO could look at the automatic and mutual aid agreements, as LAFCOs have no authority in this area. They also indicated that they would want the data in the 2009 MSR updated, and then would suggest a focus on two distressed districts, ECCFPD and RHFD.

Commissioners asked staff to prepare an RFP for approval at the July 8 meeting, so that LAFCO can begin work on the MSR as soon as possible after the EMS ambulance contract is approved.

Vincent Wells, President, United Professional Firefighters Contra Costa – Local 1230 urged Commissioners to take a close look at all aid agreements; he disagrees with LAFCO staff and legal counsel and feels that LAFCO does have the authority to approve these as they are established.

William Ross, Counsel for San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District (SRVFPD), agreed with LAFCO staff that LAFCO does not have authority to approve aid agreements.

Pat Frost, Contra Costa Emergency Medical Services Director, feels this focus will be very important to the community, given the 20% reduction in fire stations and substantial changes in the entire fiscal system. Additionally, while the number of emergency responses is lower, there is an extreme threat to the County's population due to the heavy industry base here.

Commissioners asked staff if a draft RFP could be ready for review and potential approval at the July 8 meeting, and indicated their willingness to start the meeting early (prior to the workshop scheduled for this day) to address this one item. Approval of the item could allow them to approve a contract at the September 9, 2015 meeting, thereby enabling the consultant(s) to begin work immediately after that.

Upon motion of Tatzin, second by Blubaugh, Commissioners unanimously, by a vote of 6-0, called an early meeting time of 12:00 noon for the July 8 regular LAFCO meeting; directed staff to provide a draft 2nd Round Fire/EMS MSR RFP at the July 8 meeting in anticipation of approving a contract in September; directed staff to provide an overview of data in the current MSR to be updated in the 2nd Round MSR; established a scope of work that will focus on ECCFPD and RHFD and their interface with Contra Costa County Fire Protection District; and directed staff to include in the 2nd Round MSR a review of all auto and mutual aid agreements among Contra Costa County fire agencies.

AYES: Andersen (A), Blubaugh, Piepho, Schroder, Skaredoff, Tatzin
NOES: none
ABSENT: Glover (M), McGill (M)
ABSTAIN: none

10. URGENCY ITEM: Budget Trailer Bill 825

The Executive Officer reported that on May 19 the State Water Board and the State Office of Planning and Research released a budget trailer bill (825) proposing that the State Water Board assume authority to mandate the consolidation of water systems – public and private – in response to the drought, bypassing the LAFCO process. The bill has now gone to the budget committee and follows an approval process that is quite different from the usual legislative process. The CALAFCO Executive Director, CALAFCO Board Chair and several LAFCO EOs (including this Commission’s EO) have participated in numerous conference calls and meetings in the past three weeks with the State and other stakeholders, to little avail. CALAFCO has asked that LAFCOs send letters of opposition, urging that a more workable solution be applied in order to resolve this over the long term.

Upon motion of Piepho, second by Andersen, Commissioners unanimously, by a 6-0 vote, directed staff to prepare letters for signature by the LAFCO Chair to be sent to the appropriate legislators immediately.

AYES: Andersen (A), Blubaugh, Piepho, Schroder, Skaredoff, Tatzin
NOES: none
ABSENT: Glover (M), McGill (M)
ABSTAIN: none

11. Agriculture & Open Space Preservation Policy and Workshop

Commissioners Tatzin and Burke provided a final update on the workshop that will be held as part of the regular July LAFCO meeting. They listed the Commissioners they have suggested for moderators of the different sessions, all of whom agreed to their designations. Commissioner Tatzin proposed that the July 8 workshop will provide some direction for preservation policy decisions that the Commission wishes to make.

12. LAFCO Fee Schedule Update

The Executive Officer reported that the last time this Commission reviewed and updated its fees was in 2007, and before that in 2001 when the LAFCO law changed substantially. Staff noted that it is reviewing actual costs associated with processing applications, along with the fees of other urban and Bay Area LAFCOs, noting considerable variation in fees, including flat fees, time and materials, and various hybrid formulas as described in the staff report, and that in some areas, Contra Costa LAFCO fees are significantly below the market average.

In response to Commissioner questions regarding cost recovery, staff reported that currently fees are approximately 1.5% of revenue. Commissioners urged staff to analyze how rates are charged, who actually would be paying the fees, and if establishing a base fee with increased increments might be feasible. Commissioner Burke stated that she would not want the fee structure to get in the way of LAFCO’s work, so there is a need to waive fees if necessary.

Following further discussion, upon motion of Piepho, , second by Blubaugh, Commissioners, by a 6-0 vote, directed staff to examine the rates in terms of making the user bear the costs, rather than the agencies, where possible.

AYES: Andersen (A), Blubaugh, Piepho, Schroder, Skaredoff, Tatzin
NOES: none
ABSENT: Glover (M), McGill (M)
ABSTAIN: none

Commissioner Andersen departed at 3:00 p.m.

13. Contract Extension – Lamphier-Gregory

The Executive Officer provided brief background on the contract that LAFCO has had with Lamphier-Gregory since 2008 for planning services, as needed. Under the contract, Nat Taylor serves as Senior Planner & Project Manager, and provides environmental planning and related staff support as detailed in the staff report.

This one-year contract extension with Lamphier-Gregory would extend the term of the contract from June 30, 2015 to June 30, 2016. The amendment includes no increase to hourly rates and no increase to the contract amount. Adequate funds are included in the existing contract and in the FY 2015-16 LAFCO budget.

Upon motion of Tatzin, second by Blubaugh, Commissioners, by a 5-0 vote, authorized staff to amend the contract with Lamphier-Gregory for one year to June 30, 2016.

AYES: Blubaugh, Piepho, Schroder, Skaredoff, Tatzin
NOES: none
ABSENT: Glover (M), McGill (M)
ABSTAIN: none

14. CALAFCO 2015 Conference Material and Call for Board of Director Candidates and Achievement Award Nominations

The Executive Officer drew Commissioners' attention to the CALAFCO 2015 Annual Conference (September 2-4, 2015 in Sacramento) materials. Nominations for Board of Director seats are due August 3, 2015; nominations for Achievement Awards are due July 20, 2015; and designation of LAFCOs' voting delegates and alternates must be made by August 3, 2015.

There were no nominations for either the Board of Directors or the Achievement Awards.

Upon motion of Blubaugh, second by Piepho, Commissioners, by a 5-0 vote, appointed LAFCO Chair Rob Schroder the voting delegate.

AYES: Blubaugh, Piepho, Schroder, Skaredoff, Tatzin
NOES: none
ABSENT: Glover (M), McGill (M)
ABSTAIN: none

Upon motion of Piepho, second by Tatzin, Commissioners, by a 5-0 vote, appointed Commissioner Don Blubaugh as the voting alternate.

AYES: Blubaugh, Piepho, Schroder, Skaredoff, Tatzin
NOES: none
ABSENT: Glover (M), McGill (M)
ABSTAIN: none

15. Special District Risk Management Authority (SDRMA) Board Election

The Executive Officer stated that LAFCO, as a member of the SDRMA joint powers public agency, participates in elections to that agency's Board of Directors. LAFCO has received the 2015 election packet with information regarding the election process and the four candidates. The SDRMA requests action by LAFCO to select up to three candidates for the SDRMA Board of Directors. Ballots must be cast by August 25, 2015. In conjunction with the last SDRMA election in 2013, the Commissioners appointed an ad hoc committee (Commissioners Burke and Schroder) who reviewed the candidates and reported back to the Commission with recommendations.

Upon motion of Piepho, second by Blubaugh, Commissioners, by a 5-0 vote, appointed Commissioners Skaredoff and Schroder to serve on an ad hoc committee, review the candidates, and report back to the Commission at the August 12 regular meeting with recommendations.

AYES: Blubaugh, Piepho, Schroder, Skaredoff, Tatzin
NOES: none
ABSENT: Glover (M), McGill (M)
ABSTAIN: none

16. Financial Audit, Fiscal Year 2013-14

The Executive Officer presented the FY 2013-14 financial audit, reviewed by R.J. Ricciardi, Inc., whose auditor found no material weaknesses. The auditor identified no deficiencies in internal control that they would consider to be material weaknesses, and no current year observations. The FY 2013-14 audit reflects one notable addition: In accordance with GASB Statement No. 45, the audit now reflects LAFCO's other post-employment benefit (OPEB) liability.

Upon motion of Tatzin, second by Skaredoff, Commissioners, by a 5-0 vote, received and filed the audit report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014.

AYES: Blubaugh, Piepho, Schroder, Skaredoff, Tatzin
NOES: none
ABSENT: Glover (M), McGill (M)
ABSTAIN: none

17. Correspondence from CCCERA

There were no comments on this item.

18. Commissioner Comments and Announcements

There were no Commissioner comments.

19. Staff Announcements and Pending Projects

The Executive Officer provided an update on various legislation important to LAFCOs (specifically, AB 3, AB 402, and SB 239).

Staff reported that the Special District election to fill the vacancy created by the passing of Commissioner Schmidt will be held on July 20, 2015 in conjunction with the quarterly CCSDA meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:18 p.m.

Final Minutes Approved by the Commission July 8, 2015.

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

By _____
Executive Officer



Lou Ann Teixeira
Executive Officer

MEMBERS

Donald A. Blubaugh <i>Public Member</i>	Mary N. Piepho <i>County Member</i>
Federal Glover <i>County Member</i>	Rob Schroder <i>City Member</i>
Michael R. McGill <i>Special District Member</i>	Igor Skaredoff <i>Special District Member</i>
Don Tatzin <i>City Member</i>	

ALTERNATE MEMBERS

Candace Andersen
County Member
 Sharon Burke
Public Member
 Tom Butt
City Member
 George H. Schmidt
Special District Member

July 8, 2015
 Agenda Item 6

July 8, 2015 (Agenda)

Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission
 651 Pine Street, Sixth Floor
 Martinez, CA 94553

**Requests for Proposals – 2nd Round Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
 Municipal Service Review (MSR) and Sphere of Influence (SOI) Updates**

Dear Commissioners:

BACKGROUND

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (CKH Act) requires that every five years, as necessary, LAFCO review and update the sphere of influence (SOI) of each local agency. As part of the SOI update, LAFCO must prepare a corresponding MSR to evaluate projected growth/population; financial ability of the agencies to provide services; status of, and opportunities for, shared services; present and planned capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services, infrastructure needs and deficiencies; characteristics and service needs of disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs); and any other issues related to the effective and/or efficient delivery of municipal services as determined by the Commission.

In April 2013, Contra Costa LAFCO completed its inaugural MSR cycle and the comprehensive review of all 19 cities and 75 special districts and corresponding SOI updates for most agencies.

In accordance with the CKH Act, LAFCO initiated its 2nd round MSRs/SOI updates. The 2nd round MSRs were previously discussed with the Commission as part of the annual budget and work plan, and at the Commission’s last strategic planning session in April 2013. The 2nd round MSRs began with a countywide review of water/wastewater services; this MSR and corresponding SOI updates were completed in June 2014. The 2nd round MSR covering reclamation (levee) services is currently underway and should be complete by December 2015.

DISCUSSION

2nd Round EMS/Fire MSR – In 2014, the Commission expressed interest in initiating a 2nd round review of EMS/Fire service, following the County’s completion of two separate studies –

one focusing on the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (CCCFPD) and a separate study on EMS.

In June 2014, LAFCO released a Request for Proposals (RFP) to prepare its 2nd round EMS/Fire MSR. LAFCO sent the RFP notice to approximately 30 consulting firms, and received **no** proposals. LAFCO staff followed up with some of the consultants to ask *why* they didn't bid, and *what LAFCO could do to make the project more appealing to bidders*. Some of the responses are summarized below:

- **Timing** - Several of the firms indicated that they had a full workload at the time and were understaffed (due to recession), and unable to take on additional work at the time. Several firms indicated they would be able to take on other projects in early 2015. A couple of firms suggested that LAFCO wait until the County awarded the ambulance contract before embarking on the 2nd round EMS/Fire MSR.
- **Scope of Work** – Some firms expressed concern with the work/cost involved in updating the 1st round EMS/Fire MSR, as it was extensive. A number of firms suggested narrowing the scope or approach or “phasing” the second round MSR (e.g., operational/fiscal, “problem” or “issue” oriented, subregional approach, separate MSRs for city and district service providers, etc.).

Based on the lack of bids, and the timing of the County's ambulance contract award, the Commission decided to defer the 2nd round EMS/Fire MSR until after the County awards its ambulance contract, which is tentatively scheduled for late July 2015.

At the June 2015 LAFCO meeting, the Commission received an update on two issues relating to EMS/fire services: mutual and automatic aid agreements in Contra Costa County, as raised by Vince Wells, President, United Professional Firefighters Contra Costa – Local 1230; and the 2nd round EMS/Fire MSR. The Commission was asked to comment on the request by Local 1230 to review mutual and automatic aid agreements, and to provide direction to LAFCO staff regarding the scope/focus of the 2nd round EMS/Fire MSR.

Revised RFP/Scope of Work - As discussed with the Commission last month, in order to move forward with the 2nd round MSR, it is necessary to narrow the scope of work in the RFP (e.g., critical issues, subregional, agency-specific, governance alternatives, fiscal sustainability, etc.).

LAFCO staff reached out to the fire chiefs, EMS Director and labor for input as to the most critical EMS/Fire service issues, and focus of LAFCO's 2nd round EMS/Fire MSR. In terms of priority issues, we heard from the Contra Costa County Executive Chiefs that LAFCO should look at service capacity, and specifically, East Contra Costa Fire Protection District (ECCFPD) and Rodeo Hercules Fire District (RHFD). We also heard from the President of Local 1230 that a review of automatic and mutual aid agreements is also a priority.

The Commission directed LAFCO staff to revise the RFP and narrow the scope of services to include the following: 1) data updates for all fire service agencies, 2) review of auto and mutual aid agreements, and 3) focus on ECCFPD and RHFD and interface with CCCFPD. The revised RFP (attached) includes a scope of work focusing on these three areas. As proposed, the data to be updated will include the following:

- Population/growth/density
- Budget (expenses/revenues/liabilities)
- Service calls/incidents (number, type, priority)
- Staffing (number, type)
- Fire stations (number, condition)
- Response times
- ISO rating

Proposed Selection Process - In accordance with our previous MSR's, LAFCO staff proposes to establish a selection committee to help review and screen the written proposals, conduct the interviews, and make a recommendation. The selection committee will be composed of LAFCO and/or other municipal service professionals.

The review of proposals will include an assessment of written proposals, followed by interviews with the most qualified firms. Written proposals will be evaluated based on various criteria including, but not limited to, experience and qualifications of the firm, understanding of the required tasks, approach to conducting MSR's/SOI updates, experience and familiarity with LAFCO, qualifications of personnel who would be assigned to work with the Contra Costa LAFCO, and cost.

Following an assessment of the written proposals, the most qualified candidates will be invited to participate in an interview. Following the interviews, a summary of proposals and a recommendation will be presented to the Commission in accordance with the proposed timeline as shown in the RFP.

Staff has compiled a list of potential bidders. A notice regarding the RFP will be sent to these firms. In addition, the RFP will be posted on the Contra Costa LAFCO, CALAFCO and California Special Districts Association (CSDA) websites.

FINANCING:

Adequate funding is included in the FY 2015-16 budget to cover the anticipated costs associated with the MSR/SOI updates.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Authorize the circulation of the RFP for the 2nd round EMS/Fire MSR and SOI updates; and
2. Direct staff to return to the Commission with a recommended contract award in accordance with the proposed timeline.

Sincerely,

LOU ANN TEXEIRA
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Attachments

1. Draft RFP – 2nd Round Fire/EMS MSR/SOI Updates
2. Draft Scope of Services – 2nd Round Fire/EMS MSR/SOI Updates

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
2nd ROUND FIRE & EMERGENCY
MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS)
MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW
SPHERE OF INFLUENCE UPDATES**

The Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) is soliciting proposals from qualified consultants to prepare a 2nd round municipal service review and sphere of influence updates of municipal EMS and fire service providers in Contra Costa County.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

2nd Round EMS/Fire Services

Municipal Service Review/Sphere of Influence Updates

I. Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence Guidelines

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (“CKH Act” - Government Code §56000 et seq.) requires that every five years, as necessary, LAFCO review and update the sphere of influence (SOI) of each local agency. As part of the SOI update, LAFCO must prepare a corresponding Municipal Service Review (MSR) to evaluate the following:

1. Growth and population projections for the area.
2. The location and characteristics of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs) within or contiguous to the SOI.
3. Capacity of public facilities, adequacy of public services and infrastructure needs or deficiencies.
4. Financial ability of agencies to provide services.
5. Status of, and opportunities for, shared facilities/services.
6. Accountability for community service needs, including governmental structure and operational efficiencies.
7. Any other matter related to effective or efficient service delivery.

In determining the SOI of each local agency, the SOI update must include a written statement of determinations with respect to each of the following:

1. The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open-space lands.
2. The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area.
3. The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides or is authorized to provide.
4. The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the commission determines that they are relevant to the agency.
5. The present and probable need for those public facilities and services of any DUCs within the existing SOI.
6. The nature, location, and extent of any functions or classes of services provided (special districts only).

The MSR is a tool to help LAFCO, local agencies and the public better understand the municipal service structure; to facilitate dialog among the various service providers with the objective of coordinating, collaborating and enhancing services and efficiencies; and to provide information to support LAFCO actions, including SOI updates and potential boundary and/or governance changes. While LAFCO is not required to initiate these changes based on MSRs, local agencies, LAFCO or others may use the MSR, together with additional analysis where necessary, to pursue boundary and/or governance changes.

II. Background

In 1963, the State Legislature created LAFCOs to help direct and coordinate California’s growth in a logical, efficient and orderly manner. Each of the 58 counties in California has a LAFCO. LAFCOs are charged with discouraging urban sprawl, encouraging orderly boundaries and formation of local agencies, preserving agricultural lands and open space, and regulating the extension of services outside jurisdictional boundaries.

In 2001, pursuant to the enactment of the CKH Act, LAFCO acquired responsibility for preparing MSRs. On or before January 1, 2008, and every five years thereafter, LAFCO shall, as

necessary, review and update the SOI for each local agency. In conjunction with the SOI updates, LAFCO shall prepare corresponding MSRs.

Contra Costa LAFCO is responsible for reviewing and updating SOIs for 94 local agencies in Contra Costa County (19 cities and 75 special districts). In 2013, Contra Costa LAFCO completed its inaugural MSR cycle, and embarked on its 2nd round reviews. In June 2014, LAFCO completed a second round MSR/SOI updates covering water/wastewater services. The 2nd round MSR covering reclamation (levee) services is currently underway and is expected to be complete by December 2015. The EMS/fire MSR will be the third MSR in the round two cycle.

In 2009, Contra Costa LAFCO completed a comprehensive, countywide MSR covering EMS and fire services in Contra Costa County (available online at www.contracostalafco.org). Contra Costa LAFCO is not interested in replicating the 2009 MSR; however, some of the information contained in the 2009 report will be useful in preparing the 2nd round MSR.

Also, in 2014, Contra Costa County completed two separate studies – one covering EMS and a second covering the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District. Each study had a separate focus and scope of work supported by two separate consultant teams (Fitch & Associates). Both studies are available on the LAFCO website at <http://www.contracostalafco.org/>. These studies provide important information and potential changes to EMS and fire services in Contra Costa County.

Finally, the County is expected to award a new ambulance contract in 2015. Information about this process is available online at <http://cchealth.org/ems/rfp.php>.

III. Scope of Services

The 2nd round review is focused and will concentrate on the following: 1) data updates for the 11 fire service providers (three cities and eight special districts), 2) review of automatic and mutual aid agreements, and 3) focus on East Contra Costa Fire Protection District and Rodeo Hercules Fire District and the interface with Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (see attached Scope of Services). The successful consultant will develop a proposal that is aligned with the project scope. A final scope of services will be negotiated with the firm selected to conduct the MSR and will be included as part of the professional services agreement.

IV. Budget

Proposals which demonstrate that the final product will meet the requirements of the CKH Act and provide useful information in a concise format at the lowest cost will be looked upon most favorably. A final budget amount for this project will be negotiated with the firm selected for the work prior to an agreement.

V. Schedule

The timeline for completing the MSR/SOI updates will be negotiated with the selected firm, and will be included with the professional services agreement to be approved by LAFCO.

VI. Proposal Requirements

Responses to this RFP must include all of the following:

1. A statement about the firm that describes history, as well as the competencies and resumes of the principal and all professionals who will be involved in the work. This statement should address the following:

General Expertise

- Familiarity with the CKH Act, the role and functions of LAFCO, and the MSR process
- Understanding of how municipal services are financed and delivered
- Experience in governmental organization analysis, including performance measurement and evaluation
- Ability to analyze and present information in an organized format
- Ability to interpret varied budget and planning documents
- Ability to facilitate and synthesize input from stakeholders
- Familiarity with public input processes and experience presenting and disseminating public information for review and comment in a public setting
- Experience in fostering multi-agency partnerships and cooperative problem-solving
- Ability to provide flexible and creative alternatives where necessary to resolve service and policy issues
- Ability to work cooperatively with divergent interests

EMS and Fire Service Expertise

- Solid understanding of how EMS and fire services are delivered and financed
 - Experience with operational aspects of EMS and fire services provision in California (city fire departments, fire districts, volunteer fire companies, state fire services)
 - Knowledge of emergency response standard operating procedures, training standards, response time criteria and performance, standards of coverage, fire code and plan check review, facilities and equipment, labor and related issues, and automatic and mutual aid agreements
 - Experience in the financial analysis of EMS and fire service delivery systems, including workers compensation, pension, financial constraints and liabilities, cost avoidance and other cost-saving opportunities
 - Knowledge of EMS and fire protection service organization analysis, including evaluating government structure options (e.g., consolidation, reorganization) and related advantages and disadvantages of these options
 - Experience in evaluating EMS and fire protection delivery systems, including performance measurements and benchmarking
2. Identification of the lead professional responsible for the project and identification of the professional(s) who will be performing the day-to-day work.
 3. Identification of any sub-consulting firms who will be involved. If sub-consultant firms are proposed, describe the work they will perform and include the same information for each sub-consultant as required for items 1 and 2 above.
 4. Description of similar or related experience accomplished in the last three years and references for each such project, including the contact name, address and telephone number. Examples of or reference to relevant work experience with local agencies in Contra Costa County demonstrating the consultant's familiarity with local issues, are desirable.
 5. Description of the anticipated approach for this project, explicitly discussing and identifying any suggested changes to the Scope of Services (attached).
 6. Disclosure of potential conflicts of interest with local agencies in Contra Costa County.

7. Identification of any information, materials and/ or work assistance required from the Contra Costa LAFCO and/or subject agencies to complete the project. LAFCO staff will complete some preliminary data collection and follow-ups/status reports on issues identified in the 2009 MSR. This information will be provided to the selected consulting firm for use in preparing the 2nd round MSR. The expectation is that the consultant will use this information and all available data sources (i.e., laws/statutes; local agency planning, financial and environmental documents, policies/procedures; LAFCO reports/ documents; regional/Census/demographic information; customer surveys, comments, etc.) to develop/update information for the second round MSR report in an effort to minimize the workload for the subject agencies.
8. Provide a preliminary project schedule showing start and ending times for each work task, and indicate strategies for adhering to the schedule.
9. Include information about the availability of all the professionals who will be involved in the work, including associate consultants.
10. Provide the anticipated project cost, including:
 - a. A not-to-exceed total budget amount.
 - b. The cost for each major sub-task identified in the draft scope of services.
 - c. The hourly rates for each person who will be involved in the work, including the rates for any associate consultants.
11. Include comments about the draft scope of services, ability of the firm to meet the insurance requirements, and other comments or questions.

VII. Non-Discrimination & Equal Opportunity

It is the desire of the Contra Costa LAFCO to provide Minority-/Women-Owned, Local Small and Emerging Business Enterprises, and all other business enterprises an equal opportunity to participate in the performance of all contracts, subcontracts, and other LAFCO business activities. The Contra Costa LAFCO is an equal opportunity employer.

VIII. Conflict of Interest

Proposers warrant and covenant that no official or employee of the Contra Costa LAFCO, nor any business entity in which an official of the Contra Costa LAFCO has an interest, has been employed or retained to solicit or aid in the procuring of the resulting contract, nor that any such person will be employed in the performance of such contract without immediate divulgence of such fact to the Contra Costa LAFCO. Proposers will notify LAFCO of any potential conflict of interest regarding other work or third party contracts.

IX. Insurance Requirements

The successful proposer shall be required to maintain throughout the term of the contract, and for a minimum of six months following completion by Consultant and acceptance by LAFCO of all services under the contract, the following insurance coverage:

- 1) *comprehensive general liability insurance*, with a minimum combined single limit coverage of \$1,000,000 per occurrence for all damages, including consequential damages, due to bodily injury, sickness or disease, or death to any person or damage to or destruction of property, including the loss of use thereof, arising from each occurrence;

- 2) *personal automobile liability insurance* for owned, non-owned and hired automobiles, with a minimum combined single limit coverage of \$500,000 per occurrence;
- 3) *employer's liability insurance*, with minimum coverage of \$100,000 per employee;
- 4) *professional liability insurance*, with minimum coverage of \$1,000,000 per claim and \$1,000,000 aggregate; and
- 5) *workers' compensation insurance* coverage for its employees at statutory limits.

Additional Insured Endorsement

The comprehensive general liability insurance policy will be endorsed to include LAFCO and its officers and employees as additional insureds as to all services performed by Consultant under the contract. Said policies will constitute primary insurance as to LAFCO and its officers and employees, so that other insurance policies held by LAFCO or its self-insurance program(s) will not be required to contribute to any loss covered under Consultant's insurance policy or policies unless otherwise noted in the contract.

Evidence of Insurance - Before commencing any operations under the contract, the successful proposer shall furnish the Contra Costa LAFCO with a Certificate of Insurance and copies of all applicable endorsements evidencing compliance with the above insurance requirements and that such insurance will not be canceled or materially changed without 30 days advance written notice.

Duration of Insurance Coverage - All required insurance coverages shall be maintained during the entire term of the contract. Insurance coverage written on a claims-made basis shall be maintained during the entire term of the contract and further until at least six month(s) following termination and acceptance of all work under the contract, with the retroactive date of said insurance concurrent with the commencement of activities pursuant to this contract.

All required insurance shall be placed with insurers with a current A.M. Best's rating of no less than A: VII or equivalent, and with deductible amounts acceptable to the Contra Costa LAFCO.

X. Proposal Submittal

- One reproducible, unbound copy and one electronic copy (disk) of the proposal shall be received no later than 4:00 p.m., on Friday, August 14, 2015, at the Contra Costa LAFCO office, located at 651 Pine Street, Sixth Floor, Martinez, CA 94553 Attn: Executive Officer. No faxed or e-mailed proposals will be accepted. Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered. If delivery is to be in person, please call the LAFCO office at (925) 335-1094 to arrange a delivery time.
- Each proposal shall be submitted in a sealed envelope and clearly marked with the title of the RFP.
- All proposals will become property of the Contra Costa LAFCO.
- Cost of preparation of proposals shall be borne by the proposers.
- Proposals shall be signed by an authorized employee or officer in order to receive consideration.
- Contra Costa LAFCO is not responsible for proposals delivered to a person/location other than that specified herein.

XI. Selection Process

Based on relevant work experience, completeness of the responses, budget and the overall project approach identified in the written proposals received, the most qualified firms will be

invited, at their expense, for an interview with a selection committee. Interviews are tentatively scheduled the week of August 24, 2015.

Final selection of the consultant will be based on evaluation of both the written and oral responses. Following interviews, the most qualified firm will be selected and a recommended agreement including budget, timeline and a final service agreement will be negotiated. The successful firm will enter into a contract to be awarded by LAFCO. Action by LAFCO on a recommended agreement is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, September 9, 2015.

The selection committee will use the criteria listed below to evaluate the proposals. At the discretion of the selection committee, additional information may be requested to clarify and explain proposals.

- *Applicability of overall experience and qualifications relating to required services.* Consultant shall have experience preparing LAFCO MSR and SOI updates, and the general and technical expertise as described in Section VI above.
- *Evaluation of the scope of services, examining in particular any special techniques, approaches, ideas, and insights to be used in performing the services, along with additional consideration of how previous experiences may contribute to the proposer's ability to carry out the services.* Consultant shall possess the ability to initiate, develop and carry out effective strategies in preparing the MSR/SOI updates in accordance with State law and LAFCO requirements.
- *Evaluation of quality and comparability of previous service contracts/employment agreements on which the proposer was the sole or lead consultant.* Successful MSR experience with LAFCOs of similar size and scope to Contra Costa LAFCO within the last five (5) years. Successful experience is defined as that which was completed to the satisfaction of the client, on time and within budget.
- *Evaluation of background, general experience, knowledge, and special capabilities or qualities brought to the project by the consultant.* Consultant shall possess all permits, licenses and professional credentials necessary to perform the required services.
- *Cost.* LAFCO has limited resources to devote to the many MSR to be conducted over the next few years. Proposals that demonstrate that the final product will meet the requirements of the CKH Act and provide useful information in a concise format at the lowest cost will be looked upon favorably. A final budget will be negotiated with the selected firm.

Other Provisions: Contra Costa LAFCO reserves the right to award a contract to the firm(s) or individual(s) that presents the proposal which, in the sole judgment of Contra Costa LAFCO, best accomplishes the desired results. Contra Costa LAFCO reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive minor irregularities in said proposals, or to negotiate deviations with the successful firm. After the award of the contract, the Contra Costa LAFCO may revise the work program to meet budget constraints.

XII. Tentative Timeline

The tentative timeline associated with the circulation of the RFP and submission of proposal is as follows:

DATE	TASK
July 8, 2015	Commission to Review/Approve RFP and Selection Process
July 10, 2015	Issue RFP
August 14, 2015	Proposals Due

August 17-21, 2015	Review of Written Proposals by Selection Committee
August 24-28, 2015	Interviews of Selected Proposers
September 9, 2015	Committee Recommendation to LAFCO; award of contract by LAFCO
October 1, 2015	Consultant Begins Work

XIII. LAFCO Contact

Lou Ann Texeira, Executive Officer
Contra Costa LAFCO
651 Pine Street, Sixth Floor
Martinez, CA 94553

Voice: (925) 335-1094
Fax: (925) 335-1031
Email: LouAnn.Teixeira@lafco.cccounty.us

XIV. Attachments

Scope of Services

XV. Reference Information

For general information about LAFCOs, visit the CALAFCO website: www.calafco.org

For information about Contra Costa LAFCO along with previously completed MSRs, please visit our website: www.contracostalafco.org

Attachment 2

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

SCOPE OF SERVICES

2nd Second Round

Fire and Emergency Medical Services Municipal Service Review

Contra Costa LAFCO will conduct a 2nd round municipal service review (MSR) of fire protection and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in Contra Costa County. Contra Costa LAFCO completed its inaugural review of these services in 2009. The 2009 MSR report is available online at www.contracostalafco.org/municipal_service_reviews.htm.

The 2nd round MSR and sphere of influence (SOI) updates will be prepared in accordance with the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 ("CKH Act" - Government Code §56000 et seq.) as described in the Request for Proposals (RFP).

Countywide EMS/Fire Protection Service Providers

The geographic area for this MSR is Contra Costa County. Municipal service providers (i.e., cities, special districts) are the primary focus of the MSR. This MSR will include SOI determinations/updates for some of the special districts covered in the review. Following the 2009 MSR, a number of districts did not receive SOI updates pending potential reorganization efforts; no reorganization efforts were pursued. City SOIs will not be updated in conjunction with this MSR.

The following cities and special districts provide EMS and/or fire protection services in Contra Costa County:

CITIES:

1. City of El Cerrito
2. City of Pinole
3. City of Richmond

SPECIAL DISTRICTS:

1. County Service Area (CSA) EM-1
2. Contra Costa County Fire Protection District
3. Crockett Carquinez Fire Protection District
4. East Contra Costa Fire Protection District
5. Kensington Fire Protection District
6. Moraga-Orinda Fire Protection District
7. Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District
8. San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District

OTHER AGENCIES

Other public and private agencies may also be included in the MSR to the extent necessary to establish relationships, quantify services and provide a comprehensive overview of services

countywide. In addition to reviewing other public agencies, including Alameda County Fire Department, CALFIRE, County Sheriff's Marine Unit, East Bay Regional Park District, and the U.S. Coast Guard, the scope of work may involve reviewing private service providers including fire brigades at the various refineries in Contra Costa County.

Fire/EMS Focused Service Issues and Topics

In 2014, Contra Costa LAFCO issued an RFP for its 2nd round EMS/Fire MSR aimed at updating the 1st round review. Due to lack of bids and other pending matters as discussed below, LAFCO postponed its 2nd round MSR until 2015.

The Scope of Service for the 2nd round MSR has been narrowed and will focus on the following: 1) data updates for 11 EMS/fire service providers (three cities and eight special districts), 2) review of auto and mutual aid agreements, and 3) focus on East Contra Costa Fire Protection District and Rodeo Hercules Fire District and the interface with Contra Costa County Fire Protection District. The data to be updated for all agencies includes the following:

- Population/growth/density
- Budget (expenses/revenues/liabilities)
- Service calls/incidents (number, type, priority)
- Staffing (number, type)
- Fire stations (number, condition)
- Response times
- ISO rating

Note: LAFCO staff has initiated the initial data collection efforts.

Also in the past year, the County has completed two separate studies – one covering the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (CCCFPD), and a second study covering EMS. Each study had a separate focus and scope of work supported by two separate consultant teams (Fitch & Associates).

The CCCFPD study focused on optimal EMS first response and fire response with the fiscal limitations of the District. This study was completed in February 2014, and includes information relating to CCCFPD's current operations, a fiscal analysis, and three short-term options that may sustain the District for the next 3-4 years.

The EMS study evaluated how best to modernize and deliver coordinated EMS utilizing current operational capabilities and fiscal resources. The EMS Study was completed in June 2014, and includes recommendations dealing with healthcare reform, financial issues, and community health and clinical care, aimed at enhancing accountability and integration and ensuring value. Potential system savings identified in the report exceed \$3 million.

These studies provide valuable information relating to fire and emergency medical services in Contra Costa County. Both studies are available on the LAFCO website at <http://www.conracostalafco.org/>.

Consultants are encouraged to review the 2009 LAFCO MSR and the 2014 County studies.

Also, the County is in the process of selecting a contractor for ambulance services. The new contract is expected to be awarded in late July 2015. Information regarding this project is available online at <http://cchealth.org/ems/rfp.php>.

Service Review Task Overview

The countywide EMS/fire protection MSR will be conducted in accordance with the California Government Code and local LAFCO policies. Preparation of the MSR will include the following steps, although other activities may be necessary:

1. Data Collection and Review

- Review Contra Costa LAFCO's first round MSR and recent data as collected by Contra Costa LAFCO staff
- Work with LAFCO staff to prepare and distribute any supplemental agency request for information, as needed
- Collect and compile data (e.g., survey, research, interview, meetings, etc.)
- Verify compiled information with agencies

Timing and work products: On or before (insert deadline), Consultant shall deliver to LAFCO staff complete information for each agency

2. Data Analysis and Preliminary Findings

- Analyze and prepare preliminary findings based on standards, where appropriate; comparative analysis (e.g., among local agencies, with state and federal standards, etc.) is desirable
- Present to and discuss preliminary findings with LAFCO staff
- Present to and discuss preliminary findings with agency staff

Timing and work products: On or before (insert deadline), Consultant shall deliver to LAFCO preliminary analysis and findings to LAFCO staff

3. Develop and Deliver "Working Draft" MSR/SOI Report

- Prepare and deliver administrative working draft MSR/SOI report to LAFCO staff
- The draft MSR/SOI report shall include a table of contents, executive summary, comparative tables, agency profiles for selected agencies, and agency maps (mapping will be provided by LAFCO), along with recommended determinations per 56425 and 56430, governance/boundary options, discussion of focus issues, and recommended SOI updates (selected districts only)

4. Develop and Deliver Public Review Draft MSR/SOI Report

- Prepare a Public Review Draft MSR report
- Present draft MSR report to LAFCO at a public hearing

Timing and work products: On or before (insert deadline), Consultant shall deliver to LAFCO an MS Word formatted and PDF formatted version of the Draft MSR report

5. Prepare Final MSR/SOI Report

- Prepare Final Draft MSR/SOI report, including responses to comments (comment log)
- Present Final Draft MSR report to LAFCO at a public hearing for adoption
- Incorporate any final comments received at public hearing and deliver Final report

Timing and work products: On or before (insert deadline), Consultant shall deliver to LAFCO an MS Word formatted and PDF formatted version of the Final MSR report

In accordance with the work plan, Consultant is expected to:

- Conduct the service review process in a collaborative fashion with opportunities for input and review by each of the agencies being reviewed.
- Encourage public participation in the service review process.
- Conduct the required analysis in the most cost-effective manner possible.
- Utilize information that is currently available, such as the 2009 MSR, the recent County studies covering EMS and CCCFPD, LAFCO's initial Request for Information, maps, etc., rather than initiate new tools and processes.
- Create a product that will be useful to the Commission in reviewing and updating SOIs and proposals for future changes of organization, beneficial to agencies as a planning tool, and readily accessible to, and easily understandable by, the general public.



Lou Ann Teixeira
 Executive Officer

MEMBERS

Donald A. Blubaugh <i>Public Member</i>	Mary N. Piepho <i>County Member</i>
Federal Glover <i>County Member</i>	Rob Schroder <i>City Member</i>
Michael R. McGill <i>Special District Member</i>	Igor Skaredoff <i>Special District Member</i>
Don Tatzin <i>City Member</i>	

ALTERNATE MEMBERS

Candace Andersen
County Member
 Sharon Burke
Public Member
 Tom Butt
City Member
 George H. Schmidt
Special District Member

July 8, 2015
 Agenda Item 7

July 8, 2015 (Agenda)

Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission
 651 Pine Street, Sixth Floor
 Martinez, CA 94553

Agriculture & Open Space Preservation Workshop

Dear Members of the Commission:

The July 8, 2015 LAFCO meeting is primarily dedicated to a discussion of agricultural and open space preservation.

How the conversation began: The idea of the agricultural & open space preservation workshop emerged from ongoing discussions and efforts over the years to update LAFCO’s policies and procedures. Included on the list of policies and procedures to be developed are California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines, spheres of influence, and agricultural and open space preservation.

Earlier this year, the Policies & Procedures Committee (“Committee”) embarked on a review of the LAFCO law, and what other LAFCOs have done in terms of agricultural/open space preservation. The Committee collected and reviewed other LAFCO agricultural & open space preservation policies and procedures (representing 18 LAFCOs). The Committee also looked at various formats for LAFCO agricultural and related workshops.

The Committee recommended to the Commission that Contra Costa LAFCO host a workshop to engage the various stakeholders in a conversation regarding agricultural and open space preservation, the potential for developing a local LAFCO policy, and what such a policy might include.

Since March 2015, the Committee has provided monthly reports to the Commission regarding these efforts.

Here we are today: LAFCO is pleased to host a workshop featuring 15 outstanding guest speakers who represent a range of interests including agriculture (e.g., preservation, as a business, etc.) at the State and local levels, farming, ranching, open space preservation, land use, economic development, sustainable communities and smart growth (see attached program).

The purpose of the workshop is to engage stakeholders in the development of a local agricultural and open space preservation policy to be used by Contra Costa LAFCO to help guide its decisions when considering a proposal that would impact agricultural and/or open space lands.

The July 8th workshop will be taped by Contra Costa TV and aired on the local government channel.

Next steps: In August 2015, the Commission will receive a report summarizing the workshop. The Commission will be asked to provide direction as to whether or not LAFCO should have a local policy aimed at preserving agricultural and open space, and if so, to provide some policy direction to the Committee.

Should the Commission express interest in developing a local LAFCO policy, the Committee will initiate work on policy development and will return to the Commission within the next few months with a draft policy.

The draft policy will be presented at a LAFCO meeting (or meetings), and all stakeholders, workshop participants, and the numerous agencies and interested parties who regularly receive the LAFCO meeting agendas, will be notified of the LAFCO meeting (or meetings). Public input is a critical component of the Commission's policy efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS - Receive the report.

Sincerely,

LOU ANN TEXEIRA
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Attachment – Workshop Program

Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) - Agricultural & Open Space Preservation Workshop

Wednesday, July 8, 2015 (1:00 – 5:00 pm)

Contra Costa County Department of Conservation & Development Hearing Room - 30 Muir Road, Martinez

Purpose of Workshop: To engage a range of stakeholders in the development of a local agricultural and open space preservation policy to be used by LAFCO to help guide its decisions when considering a proposal that would impact agricultural and/or open space lands.

Time Allotment	Topic	Moderator(s)	Presenter(s)
1:00 – 1:10	Welcome/Introductions		LAFCO Chair Schroder
1:10 – 1:30	<i>What is LAFCO</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal framework/statutory mandate/definitions • LAFCO’s conditioning authority • Case studies – other LAFCO Policies 	LAFCO Executive Officer	Commissioners Burke & Tatzin
1:30 – 2:10	<i>Why should we care about ag and open space land</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State, regional, local efforts to preserve ag & open space land • Which areas in the County (incorporated and unincorporated) are identified as important ag and open space land and Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs) 	Commissioner Blubaugh	-Serena Unger, American Farmland Trust -Kathryn Lyddan, BALT -Bob Doyle, EBRPD -John Kopchik, Director, DCD
2:10 – 2:50	<i>Agriculture in Contra Costa County</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How ag land has evolved in the County • What are ag uses in the County (including urban ag) and how much (e.g., crop types, grazing, etc.) • Biggest challenges facing the agricultural community 	Commissioner Piepho	-Chad Godoy, Contra Costa County Ag Commissioner -Al Courchesne, Farmer -Nancy Schaefer, California Rangeland Trust -Barbara Cecchini, Farm Bureau
2:50 – 3:00	<i>BREAK</i>		
3:00 – 3:30	<i>Open Space in Contra Costa County</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of open space in Contra Costa County • Biggest challenges to preserving open space 	Commissioner Skaredoff	-Joel Devalcourt, Greenbelt Alliance -Seth Adams, Save Mt. Diablo -Dick Schneider, Sierra Club
3:30 – 4:00	<i>Collaboration and Smart Growth</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Communities Strategy • Economic and development challenges 	Commissioner McGill	-Kristin Connelly, East Bay Leadership Council/Contra Costa Economic Partnership -Heather Schiffman, Contra Costa Association of Realtors -Lisa Vorderbrueggen, BIA
4:00 – 4:45	ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most significant challenges to ag & open space preservation in Contra Costa County • How can LAFCO help? 	Commissioner Burke	-All
4:45 – 4:55	NEXT STEPS		Commissioner Tatzin
4:55 – 5:00	THANK YOU/CLOSING COMMENTS		Chair Schroder

Agriculture & Open Space Preservation Policy Workshop

All Participants

Name	Agency	email
LAFCO		
Andersen, Candace	LAFCO Commissioner	Candace.Andersen@bos.cccounty.us
Anderson, Sharon	LAFCO Counsel	Sharon.Anderson@cc.cccounty.us
Blubaugh, Don	LAFCO Commissioner	blubaugh@usa.net
Burke, Sharon	LAFCO Commissioner	sburke96@hotmail.com
Butt, Tom	LAFCO Commissioner	tom.butt@intres.com
McGill, Mike	LAFCO Commissioner	mcgill@mms-inc.net
Piepho, Mary	LAFCO Commissioner	Mary.Piepho@bos.cccounty.us
Schroder, Rob	LAFCO Commissioner	rschroder@cityofmartinez.org
Sibley, Kate	LAFCO Assistant	Kate.Sibley@lafco.cccounty.us
Skaredoff, Igor	LAFCO Commissioner	ioslafco@gmail.com
Tatzin, Don	LAFCO Commissioner	dontatzin@gmail.com
Texeira, Lou Ann	LAFCO Executive Officer	LouAnn.Teixeira@lafco.cccounty.us
Presenters		
Adams, Seth	Save Mt. Diablo	sadams@savemountdiablo.org
Cecchini, Barbara	County Farm Bureau	bcecchini@aol.com
Connelly, Kristin	East Bay Leadership Council/CC Economic Partnership	kconnelly@eblcmail.org
Devalcourt, Joel	Greenbelt Alliance	jdevalcourt@greenbelt.org
Doyle, Robert	East Bay Regional Park District	rdoyle@ebparks.org
Godoy, Chad	CoCo County Dept. of Agriculture/Weights & Measures	Chad.Godoy@ag.cccounty.us
Kopchik, John	CoCo County Dept. of Conservation & Development	John.Kopchik@dcd.cccounty.us
Lyddan, Kathryn	Brentwood Ag Land Trust	brentwoodagtrust@sbcglobal.net
Schaefer, Nancy	California Rangeland Trust	nschaefer@rangelandtrust.org
Schiffman, Heather	Contra Costa Assn of Realtors	Heather@ccartoday.com
Schneider, Dick	Sierra Club	richs59354@aol.com
Unger, Serena	American Farmland Trust	sunger@farmland.org
Vorderbrueggen, Lisa	Building Industry Association	lvorderbrueggen@biabayarea.org
Attendees		
Arata, George S	Arata, Swingle, Sodhi & Van Egmond	kkaur@arata-law.com
Bowlby, David	The Bowlby Group, Inc.	david@thebowlbygroup.com
Brown, Ron	Save Mt. Diablo	rbrown@savemountdiablo.org
Caldwell, Stan	Mt. View Sanitary District	stan_caldwell@comcast.net
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Cohen, Sheara	Consultant	shearacohen@gmail.com
Costa, Nadia	Miller Starr Regalia	susan.elwell@msrlegal.com
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Fain, Sara	Greenbelt Alliance	sfain@greenbelt.org
Figueroa, Eric	City of San Ramon	efigueroa@sanramon.ca.gov
Greer, Phil	WRA, Inc.	agraz@wra-ca.com
Gwerder, Jim	Souza Realty & Development	jgwerder@souzard.com
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Agriculture & Open Space Preservation Policy Workshop

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Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) Agricultural & Open Space Preservation Workshop

July 8, 2015

Speaker Bios

Seth Adams, Land Conservation Director, Save Mount Diablo

Seth was hired by Save Mount Diablo in 1988. His responsibilities include land acquisition, land use planning, land stewardship, grassroots activism and legislative and public policy. He lives in Martinez and is an avid hiker, runner, cyclist and weight-lifter.

Barbara Cecchini, Contra Costa County Farm Bureau

Barbara graduated in 1973 with a BS degree from Fresno State University in Agricultural Plant Science. Following graduation, she worked in the canning industry until 1980, conducting variety research on tomatoes and other canning vegetables and cold storage research on peaches, apricots and pears. From 1981 to 1988, she sold vegetable and field seeds and continued with cannery tomato variety research.

Since 1987 Barbara has helped her husband Robert Cecchini with their family farm business. Most recently, in the summer of 2013, she and Robert, along with their daughter Allison and a business partner, Christian Olesen, established a nonprofit community farm, First Generation Farmers.

Kristin Connelly, President and CEO, East Bay Leadership Council

In addition to her role with the EBLC, an employer-led public policy advocacy organization focused on economic vitality and quality of life in the East Bay, Kristin Braun Connelly is also the Executive Director of the Contra Costa Economic Partnership.

Prior to taking the lead of both the EBLC and CCEP, Kristin served as chief of staff to Contra Costa County Supervisor Karen Mitchoff. Kristin is also the former Executive Director of the California Forward Action Fund, a non-profit governance reform organization that sponsored a statewide ballot measure and advocated for legislative and budget reform. In addition, she practiced employment law at the firm Sidley Austin LLP in New York City. Kristin has extensive experience as a policy advisor and advocate for a variety of non-profit organizations that provided services to families affected by HIV/AIDS and has served as a development officer for the nation's second largest food bank.

A native of Contra Costa County, Kristin earned a law degree from Fordham University, a master's in public policy from Georgetown University and a bachelor's from UCLA. She serves on the Advisory Board of the Northern California Small Business Development Centers and the Board of Trustees of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation. Kristin lives in Lafayette with her husband T.J. and their two children.

Joel Devalcourt, East Bay Regional Representative, Greenbelt Alliance

Joel grew up in Santa Cruz and has worked passionately for environmental conservation and social equity much of his life. He earned a bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies and Film from Hampshire College, focusing on land use patterns at the urban edge. Joel received his Master of Urban and Regional Planning degree from the University of New Orleans, while also working on the statewide recovery after Hurricane Katrina. He is now the Regional Representative for the East Bay with Greenbelt Alliance, leading open space and smart growth campaigns in Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

Robert Doyle, General Manager, East Bay Regional Park District

Robert Doyle is a veteran of the parks and open space field with a career spanning 40 plus years. As General Manager of the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) in the San Francisco Bay area, he heads up the largest local park district in the United States, with 1,000 employees serving a diverse population of users in an urban interface setting, 22 million visitors per year to its 65 parks, and 1,250 miles of trails on 119,000 acres of open space in Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

In 2013 Mr. Doyle began service as a Trustee for the National Association for Olmsted Parks, an organization with the mission to advance Olmsted principles and the legacy of irreplaceable parks and landscapes that revitalize communities and enrich people's lives; he was also inducted into the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, an organization of distinguished practitioners and scholars committed to the advancement of the park and recreation field. He is a founding Board member of the East Bay Conservation Corps. In the 1980's he was a founding board member of Save Mount Diablo, a nonprofit land trust and conservation organization that serves to protect, restore, and add acreage to the Mount Diablo State Park, one of the Ecological Treasures of the San Francisco Bay Area. As Board president, he led the growth of the organization from 1,000 to 5,000 members. He has also served as a board member of the Bay Area Open Space Council, as a founding board member of the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, and was appointed to the first Board of Directors of the Agricultural-Natural Resources Trust of Contra Costa County.

Mr. Doyle began his career as a park ranger, serving at diverse parks within EBRPD and moving to the administrative side first working in Planning & Design Department, then on trails in the Land Department. He later became a Chief and then Assistant General Manager for Land in 1990, where he served for 21 years - leading the greatest expansion of parks and trails in the Park District's 80 year history. He was appointed General Manager by the Board of Directors in 2010.

Mr. Doyle's achievements at the Park District include co-authoring expenditure plans for both the \$500 million Bond Measure WW Extension approved by voters in 2008, and the earlier Measure AA approved in 1988. Under his management the District acquired 50,000 acres of parklands, expanding over 25%. His role negotiating a partnership with East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy resulted in thousands of acres of preserved open space in eastern Contra Costa County, a nationally recognized program model that continues to grow. He developed the master plan for the Park District's nationally recognized multi-use urban trail system, which received a \$10.2 million U.S. Department of Transportation Grant in 2010, thus establishing a regional trails system that has grown to over 150 miles in a network of paved commuter trails throughout the

region with connections leading beyond the two county borders. Mr. Doyle shepherded the District through its greatest time of employee turnover in its history at the same time as he lead the agency through the recent “Great Recession” with no layoffs or reduction of service, including the development of fair and fiscally responsible Union agreements, and consistently balanced award winning budgets. He also spearheaded the successful completion of the Park District’s award winning 2009 Master Plan. EBRPD is a major provider of summer jobs for young people. Mr. Doyle has made it a priority of his administration to continue to expand job opportunities for young people.

He has received industry recognition including a Mountain Star Award from Save Mount Diablo (2002) and a Lifetime Achievement Award from California Trails and Greenways (2010).

He attended Diablo Valley College and graduated from Saint Mary’s College with a BA in Management. Doyle is a resident of Walnut Creek and was born and raised in Contra Costa County.

Chad Godoy, Agricultural Commissioner, Contra Costa County Dept. of Agriculture

Chad Godoy graduated from Cal Poly Pomona with a Bachelor’s of Science in 2001. In the Fall of 2001 Chad began his career as an Agricultural Biologist in Riverside County, assigned to the Indio District Office where he worked in the Pesticide Use Enforcement Program. Seeking an opportunity to move closer to home, Chad accepted a position as an Agricultural Biologist in Napa County where he continued to work for 11 years and was eventually promoted to Deputy Agricultural Commissioner, managing the Pesticide Use Enforcement Program in Napa County.

John Kopchik, Director, Contra Costa County Dept. of Conservation & Development

John Kopchik has worked at the Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development for 20 years and has recently been appointed Director. The Department performs a wide variety of planning and building inspection functions for the County. Earlier in his career, John was the lead local agency staff for a Joint Powers Authority of cities, the County, and special districts that prepared a Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan for Eastern Contra Costa County. Following Plan approval, his duties for the County included serving as the Executive Director of the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy, the Joint Powers Authority that is implementing the Plan.

Kathryn Lyddan, Director, Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust

Kathryn Lyddan works with farmers and the community to build a sustainable local food system for the San Francisco Bay Area. Since 2003, Kathryn has worked with the Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust to permanently protect Contra Costa farmland and to create an economically vibrant future for local farmers.

A graduate of Hastings School of the Law, Kathryn practiced municipal finance law for ten years, including eight years at Cox, Castle & Nicholson. Kathryn is a Planning Commissioner for the City of Lafayette and serves on the Bay Area Open Space Council Advisory Council and the Harvest Time Board of Directors.

Nancy Schaefer, Bay Area Program Manager, California Rangeland Trust

Nancy Schaefer has 27 years of conservation transaction, planning, and project management experience working with nonprofit conservation organizations and public agencies in the Bay Area and throughout California. Nancy is a founding member of the Muir Heritage Land Trust (now John Muir Land Trust) and served as an officer from 1988 to 2004. After leading the Bay Area Open Space Council's biodiversity conservation planning effort, she became aware of the importance of rangelands and the vital role of ranchers in managing this important resource. This led her to join the California Rangeland Trust in August of 2012 to serve as the Bay Area Program Manager overseeing outreach, fundraising and conservation easement transactions.

Heather Schiffman, Government Affairs Director, Contra Costa Association of Realtors

Heather Schiffman has been working as the Government Affairs Director with CCAR for over four years. She has numerous years of experience working in advocacy and event planning. Prior to joining CCAR, Heather worked as a District Representative for then State Senator Mark DeSaulnier. Heather holds a Bachelor of Arts in Broadcasting Radio & Television from San Francisco State University.

As the Government Affairs Director, Heather serves as the legislative liaison with key CCAR stakeholders including, partner agencies, local governments, elected officials and the business community.

Dick Schneider, Sierra Club San Francisco Bay Chapter

Dick Schneider is a volunteer with the Sierra Club San Francisco Bay Chapter. He has worked on numerous East Bay open space campaigns including Alameda County's Save Agriculture and Open Space Lands Initiative in 2000, Protect the Fremont Hills Initiative of 2002, North Livermore's Urban Growth Boundary Initiative of 2003, the Protect Franklin Canyon Area Initiative in Hercules in 2004, and the Dublin Open Space Initiative of 2014.

He serves as a Sierra Club representative on the Altamont Landfill Open Space Committee which awards millions of dollars in landfill mitigation fees to preserve lands in eastern Alameda County for the protection of native biological diversity, scenic views, and non-motorized recreation.

In 2012, Dick received the Tri-Valley Conservancy's Excellence in Preservation Award, and in 2014, he received the Bay Chapter's Acre by Acre Award for Land Conservation. He holds an M.S. in Energy and Resources from U.C. Berkeley, and is co-author of *Toxics A to Z: A Guide to Everyday Pollution Hazards* (Univ. of Calif. Press).

Serena Unger, Policy Consultant, American Farmland Trust, California

Serena Unger is a policy consultant with American Farmland Trust (AFT) in California and is a city and regional planner by training. While food system planning is her area of expertise, she has also consulted on various projects including market studies and housing needs assessments; economic development and sector strategies; sector-based regional workforce development

strategies, assessments on public health impacts of the built environment and on access to food retail in low-income neighborhoods; and innovative agricultural conservation easements.

Serena has worked with AFT for four years. She is currently engaged in a project to investigate the need for a regional economic development strategy and financing entity for the Bay Area agricultural and food sectors. She also focuses on the San Joaquin Valley where she advocates for the development of local and regional smart growth policies, conservation practices, and economic development for agriculture.

Serena is co-author of three seminal reports on the state of the state's farming and food system, including *Sustaining Our Agriculture Bounty: An Assessment of the Current State of Farming and Ranching in the San Francisco Bay Area*, and *Saving Farmland, Growing Cities: A Framework for Implementing Effective Farmland Conservation Policies in the San Joaquin Valley*, both produced for AFT; and the *Oakland Food System Assessment: Toward a Sustainable Food Plan*, which she produced under the leadership of former Mayor Jerry Brown's office. Serena earned a Masters in City and Regional Planning from UC Berkeley and a Bachelor of Arts in Russian area studies and political theory from Wheaton College in Massachusetts.

Lisa Vorderbrueggen, East Bay Executive Director for Governmental Affairs, Building Industry Association | Bay Area

Lisa Vorderbrueggen joined the nonprofit BIA | Bay Area in 2014 after working at the Bay Area News Group (Contra Costa Times and affiliated newspapers) for 18 years. As a reporter, editor and political columnist, she covered everything from local government to transportation to land-use, and was instrumental in the production of televised candidate round-tables.

A fifth-generation Oregonian, Vorderbrueggen earned her journalism degree at the University of Nevada-Reno and began her career at the *Nevada Appeal* in Carson City, Nev. She also worked as a national correspondent in Washington, D.C., for the *Las Vegas Journal* and was the Carson City Bureau Chief for the *Reno Gazette-Journal*. Her work has been recognized by the Nevada and California press associations and she appeared in two Emmy-award winning documentaries about the construction of the new eastern span of the Bay Bridge.

Vorderbrueggen lives in Martinez with her husband, Joe, who recently retired from Shell Oil after 39 years. They are avid sailors but thanks to their 12 grandchildren, they no longer plan to spend their retirement years on a sailboat anchored off a South Pacific island beach. Well, maybe they'll spend a few months there ...

LAFCO Is Charged With Discouraging Urban Sprawl And Preserving Open Space And Prime Agricultural Land

LAFCO DOES

- Approve or reject annexations and SOI changes
- Approve or reject new incorporations and district formations and dissolution of same
- Comment on the effectiveness of cities and districts and identify opportunities and threats
- Establish local policies within the latitudes of the enabling legislation

LAFCO DOES NOT

- Designate prime ag land
- Establish general plans and zoning
- Determine how tax revenue is allocated among jurisdictions for incorporations and annexations
- Have a direct role in city and district management

LAFCO's influence Comes From Acting On And Conditioning Applications

- 56375. The commission shall have all of the following powers and duties...
 - To review and approve with or without amendment, wholly, partially, or conditionally, or disapprove proposals for changes of organization or reorganization...
 - ...consistent with written policies, procedures, and guidelines adopted by the commission.

Contra Costa LAFCO is determining whether to adopt an agricultural land and open space policy.

LAFCO's AUTHORITY

- Balance competing interests of development with preserving open space and prime agricultural lands (56001)
- Guide development away from prime agricultural and open space lands (56377(a) and 56668 (d))
- No island annexation if prime agricultural land (56375.3 (b)(5))
- Consider effect of a proposal on maintaining the physical and economic integrity of agricultural lands (56668 (e))
- May require pre-zoning, but may not specify the zoning (56375)

Other LAFCOs Use A Range Of Ag Land Policies

Examples

Develop non-Prime Ag Land First

Offset Annexation with Preservation

Applications Require Assessments and Mitigations

Consider Detaching Ag Land

Enact "Right-to-Farm" Conditions

Annexations Can Require Ag Land-Owner Consent

Discourage Annexations of Ag Land

Establish Buffers Around Agriculture

Restate
CKH Law

Strengthen
Processing
Procedures

Require
Mitigation and
Protection

Policy Example 1: Restate CKH

- **Madera LAFCO**
- **Key features**
 - Retain prime ag land while facilitating logical and orderly urban expansion
 - Guide development away from prime ag land except when that undermines land use plans
 - Obtain landowner consent for annexations of prime ag land
- **Example:** Annexation of 1,509 acres (including some ag land) to City of Chowchilla for economic development purposes (race track); project fell through (2012)
- **Current issue:** City of Madera is looking to expand its SOI to include prime farmland; will require a LAFCO Municipal Service Review

Policy Example 2: Enhance Application Requirements

- **Monterey LAFCO**
- **Key requirements for proposals**
 - **Discuss how balance preservation of ag land and open space with requirements for orderly development**
 - **Discuss impact on physical and economic integrity of open space and ag lands**
 - **Discuss potential cumulative effects of proposal on additional conversion of ag land and open space**
- **Example: 2014 City of Gonzales SOI expansion (2,038 acres) MOU between City and County – features**
 - **Compact development**
 - **Permanent urban edge**
 - **Rezone land to “ag” previously zoned for development**
 - **Work with other agencies on Valley-wide ag land mitigation program**

POLICY EXAMPLE 3: PRESERVATION

- **Yolo LAFCO**
- **Key features**
 - **Discourages annexation of prime agricultural land and encourages detachment of such land**
 - **Except in limited circumstances requires 1:1 preservation of prime ag land for areas annexed**
 - **Prefers third parties to hold protected ag land or preservation easements**
 - **Encourages compliance with policy prior to submitting application to LAFCO**
- **Example: 2004 annexation of 44 acres to City of Woodland (senior/community center) conditioned on working with Yolo Land Trust to provide 40 acres of conservation easements.**
- **Current issues: City of Davis increased its ag mitigation to up to 2:1 ratio; County is considering the same – decision is expected in June 2015**

POLICY EXAMPLE 4: CONTROVERSY

- **Stanislaus LAFCO**
- **Key features**
 - **Recognizes that ag is vital to the County's economy and environment**
 - **Encourages local agencies to adopt their own ag policy**
 - **Proposals that include ag land must include a Plan for Ag Preservation as described in the LAFCO Ag policy**
 - **Contains strategies (e.g., removing ag land from SOIs, at least 1:1 mitigation, in-lieu fees, conservation easements, option to exempt annexation of industrial/commercial land from mitigation, etc.)**
 - **Provides criteria for LAFCO's evaluation of a Plan for Ag Preservation**

POLICY EXAMPLE 4: CONTROVERSY

- **Examples:**
 - **Annexation of 80 acres to City of Modesto (residential development); 78 acres of prime ag; mitigation - 1:1 preservation**
 - **Annexation of 1,000 acres to City of Patterson (industrial/commercial); Commission waived 1:1 mitigation per policy**

POLICY EXAMPLE 4: CONTROVERSY

- **Current issues:**
 - Stanislaus LAFCO amended the ag mitigation in lieu fee to fully fund loss of ag land
 - Several cities are protesting the amendment
 - City member of LAFCO facing possible recall by Mayors' Conference



What's Happening to California Farmland?

Photo by Clint Musgrove

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY LAFCO
AGRICULTURAL & OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION WORKSHOP
JULY 8, 2015



California Farmland 1984 - 2014

- 1.4 million acres have been removed from farming uses
- 79 % of farmland conversions were to urban
- 47% of conversion were from PRIME Farmland

Bay Area Agriculture Today



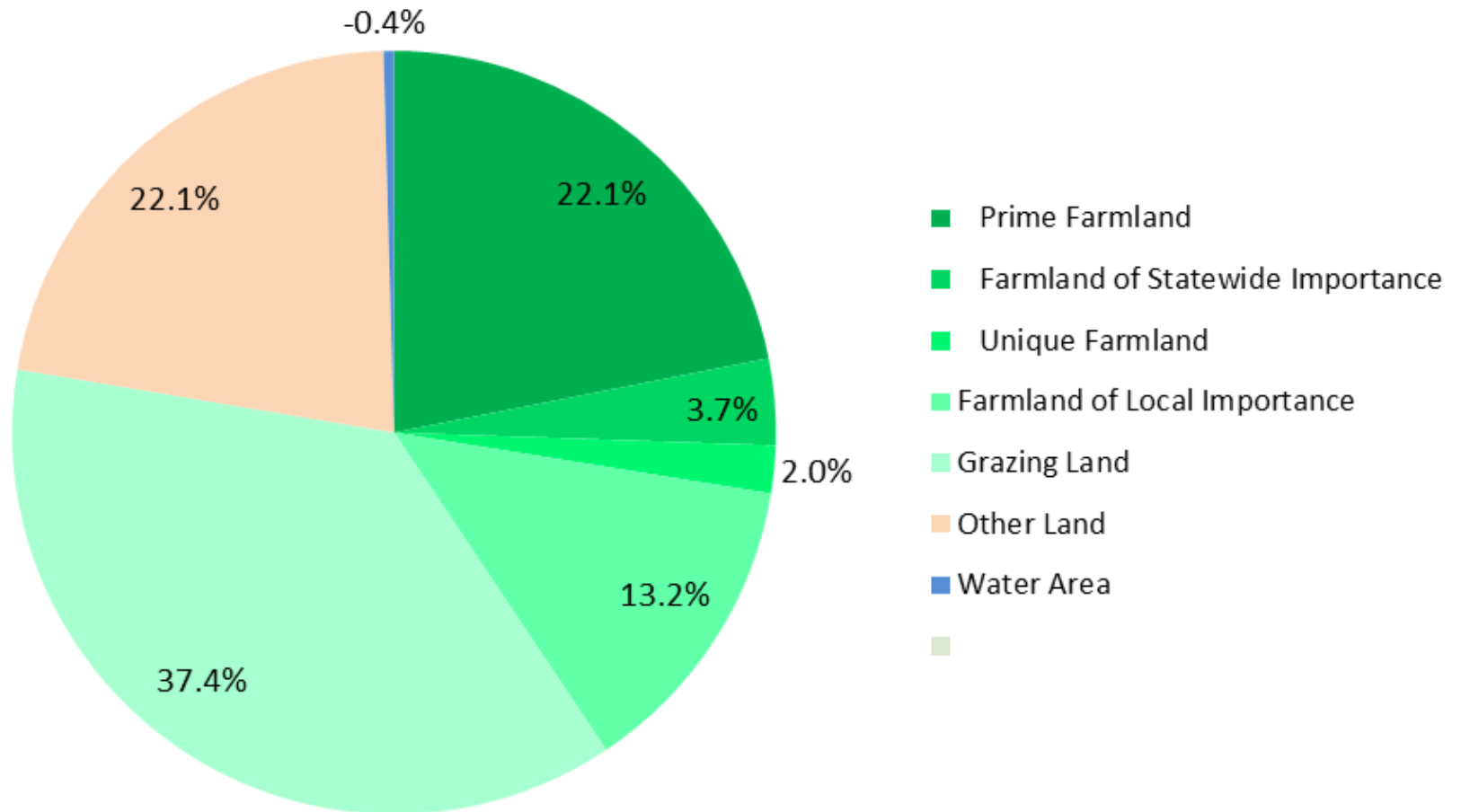
Photo by by walkersplanet

Table 1.1 Bay Area Regional Agriculture Trends

	Agricultural Value		Change in Cropland Acres		Direct Sales	Population Growth	
	2008	2000-2008 % Change	All Cropland 1990-2008	Prime Cropland 1990-2008	As % of Total 2007	% Increase by 2035	Share of Growth by 2035
Alameda	\$41,185,000	10%	-35%	-53%	1%	23%	23%
→ Contra Costa	\$71,962,340	-22%	-19%	-37%	4%	22%	15%
Marin	\$63,311,293	6%	-4%	-96%	3%	10%	2%
Napa	\$409,122,900	-4%	5%	12%	0.3%	12%	1%
San Francisco	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	18%	9%
San Mateo	\$160,925,000	-33%	-40%	-7%	6%	16%	7%
Santa Clara	\$247,950,400	-18%	-39%	-47%	2%	27%	32%
Solano	\$292,840,200	28%	-14%	-11%	1%	29%	8%
Sonoma	\$593,407,000	-18%	-6%	-9%	1%	12%	4%
Bay Area Region	\$1,880,704,133	-11%	-12%	-18%	1%	22%	100%

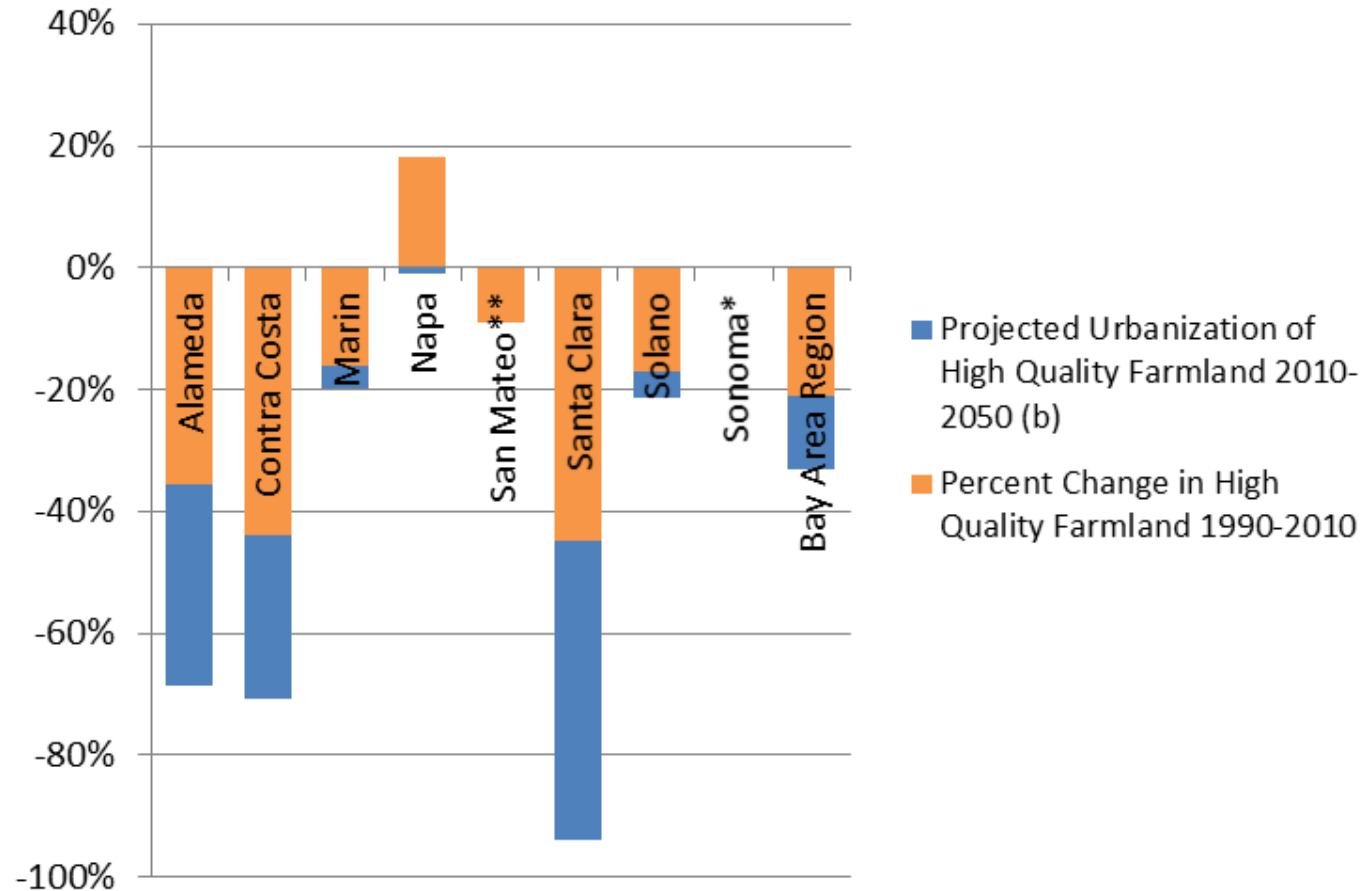
Sources: County Agricultural Commissioners' Crop Reports, 2008; California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, 2008; USDA Census of Agriculture, 2007; Association of Bay Area Governments, 2008.

Acres Converted to Urban, Bay Area Land 1990-2010



Source: CA Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), 2012.

Urbanization of High Quality Farmland (a), Bay Area 1990-2010 & 2010-2050



Notes:

(a) HQF = High Quality Farmland (Prime, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique)

(b) As percentage of existing High Quality Farmland (2010).

Sources: US Census, 1990, 2000, 2010; CA Department of Finance, Projections 2011; CA Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) 2012.

* At the time of the publishing of this data, the FMMP had not completed data on Sonoma County and so it is excluded.

** In San Mateo, loss of farmland occurs but its not as much due to urbanization as it is to fallowing (estate properties taking irrigated land and not farming it).

Photo by Clint Musgrove

Are LAFCO's Doing Their Job?

In areas where farmland surrounds cities, how can LAFCOs fulfill their mandate to conserve farmland without considering the amount of land needed for growth based on types of land use and densities?

“Despite the policies and procedures of the Cortese-Knox Act, the loss of prime agricultural and open space lands continues to occur at an alarming pace.”

- ***Growth Within Bounds***

Report of the the Commission on
Local Governance for the 21st Century

“The Commission recommends that policies to protect agricultural and open space lands and other resources be strengthened.

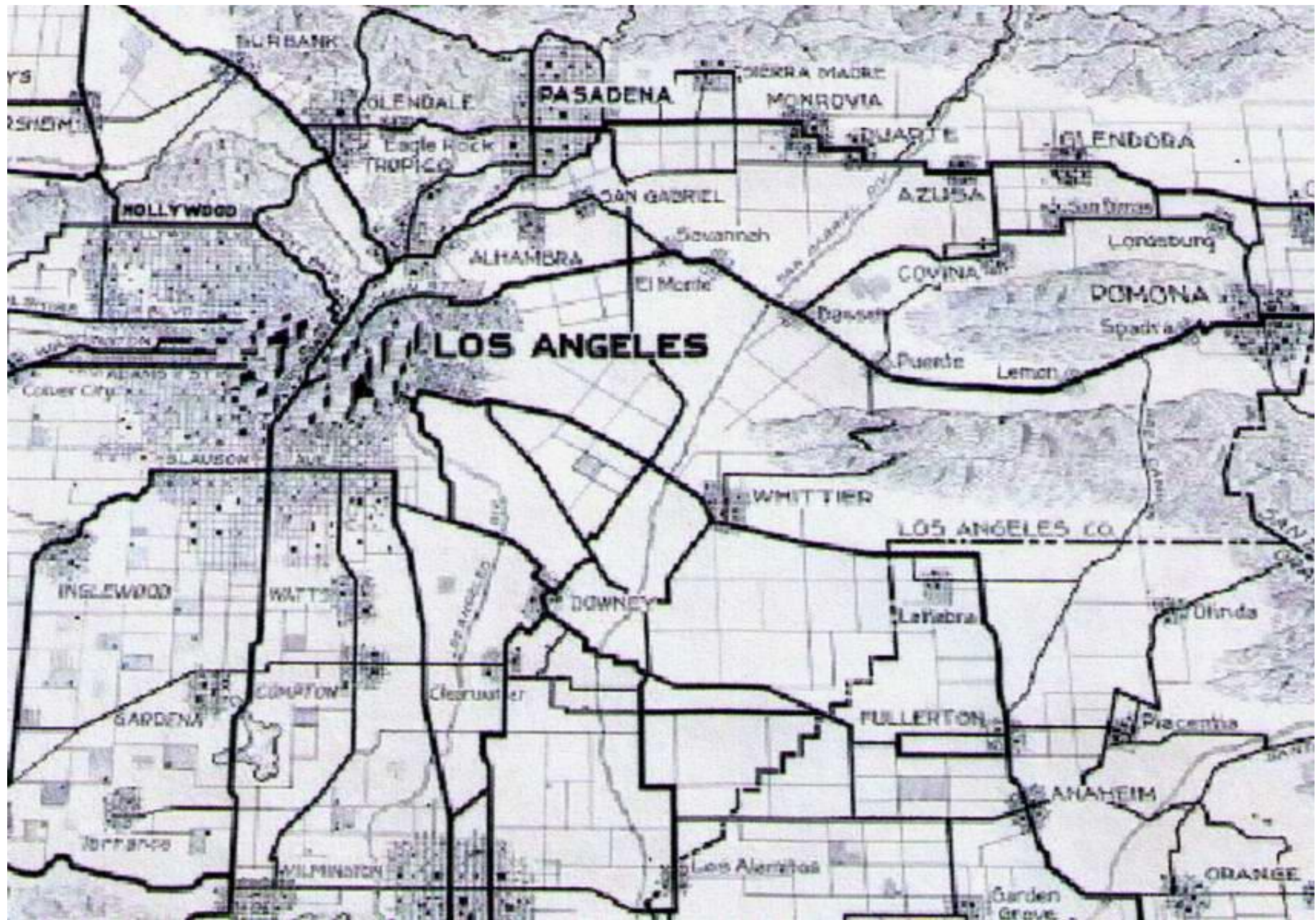
When making a decision, LAFCO must consider urban limit lines, densities, in-fill opportunities, and regional growth goals and policies.”

LAFCO Leadership

- Mitigation
- Buffers
- Reducing size of spheres
- Consideration of needs & densities

What are the consequences?

- Uncertainty
- Land speculation & price inflation
- Disinvestment in agriculture
- Decline in Williamson participation
- Decreased regional resiliency to climate change
- Decrease in ecosystem services
- Missed opportunities to invest in our great cities and towns



Feel free to contact me @

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**No Farms
No Food**



Sustaining Our Agricultural Bounty

An Assessment of the Current State of Farming and Ranching in the San Francisco Bay Area



Courtesy of Harley Goat Farm

**A White Paper by
American Farmland Trust
Greenbelt Alliance
Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE)**

March 2011

Acknowledgments

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This report was authored primarily by Serena Unger, a project consultant to American Farmland Trust, and Kathryn Lyddan, project consultant to Greenbelt Alliance. Serena authored the chapters on Alameda, Marin, Napa, San Mateo, Solano, and Sonoma Counties. Kathryn, with the project team input, authored the chapter “Bay Area Agriculture Today.” She also authored chapters on Contra Costa and Santa Clara Counties. Sibella Kraus made contributions to all the county chapters. The project team would like to thank the following people for helping to inform this report:

Alameda County: Scott Paulsen, Alameda County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office; Lucrecia Farfan-Ramirez, Alameda County UC Cooperative Extension; Doug Perry, Perry Farms; Terry Huff, Alameda County Resource Conservation District; Alethea Marie Harper, Oakland Food Policy Council; Sharon Burnham, Tri-Valley Conservancy.

Contra Costa County: Tom Bloomfield, Contra Costa farmer and vintner; Janet Caprile, UC Cooperative Extension Farm Advisor; Vince Guise, Contra Costa County Agricultural Commissioner; Kathryn Lyddan, Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust; Tom Powers, Contra Costa farmer and vintner.

Marin County: David Lewis, Marin County UC Cooperative Extension; Ellie Rilla, Marin County UC Cooperative Extension; Stacy Carlsen, Marin County Agricultural Commissioner; Ralph Grossi, Marin rancher; Sally Gale; Chileno Valley Ranch.

Napa County: Dave Whitmer, Napa County Agricultural Commissioner; Monica Cooper, Napa County UC Cooperative Extension; Sandra Ellis, Napa County Farm Bureau; Karen Schuppert, Cook4Seasons; Ted Hall, Long Meadow Ranch.

San Mateo County: Jack Olsen, San Mateo Farm Bureau; Tim Frahm, San Mateo Farm Bureau; Gail Raabe, former San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner; Larry Jacobs, Jacobs Farm; Matt Seubert, San Mateo County Planning Department; Melissa Ross, San Mateo County Planning Department; ; Paul Ringgold, Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST); Scott Morrow, San Mateo County Department of Public Health; Jen Gross, San Mateo County Department of Public Health; Jared Lawson, Pie Ranch; Ned Conwell, Blue House Farm; David Lea, Cabrillo Farms; Lennie Roberts, Committee for Green Foothills.

Santa Clara County: Bojana Anglin, UC Berkeley; Michele Beasley, Greenbelt Alliance; Eric Carruthers, Santa Clara Open Space Authority; Patrick Congdon, Santa Clara Open Space Authority; Julie Hutchinson, Thrive Moraga Hill; Alex Kennett, Santa Clara Open Space Authority, realtor; Sibella Kraus, SAGE; Kevin O’Day, Santa Clara County Agricultural Commissioner; Rachel Kulik Poplack, Health Trust; Aimee Reedy, Health Trust; Laura Stec, author and chef; Jennifer Williams, Santa Clara Farm Bureau.

Solano County: Jim Allan, Solano County Agricultural Commissioner; Carole Paterson, Solano County UC Cooperative Extension; Al Sokolow, UC Davis; Russ Lester, Dixon Ridge Farms; Al Medvitz, McCormack Ranch; Moira Burke, Agricola.

Sustaining Our Agricultural Bounty – A White Paper

Sonoma County: Cathy Neville, Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner; Stephanie Larson, Sonoma County UC Cooperative Extension; Misti Arias, Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (SCAPOSD); Ed Grossi, Sweet Land Nursery; Leonard Diggs, Shone Farm/Santa Rosa Junior College; Torrey Olsen, Gabriel Farm; Joe Pozzi, Pozzi Ranch.

Others: Dave Runsten, Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF); Andrea MacKenzie, Land Conservation Consultant.

Table of Contents

Bay Area Agricultural Sustainability Project - Introduction	7
Bay Area Agriculture Today	9
Alameda County	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Contra Costa County.....	14
Marin County	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Napa County.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
San Mateo County	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Santa Clara County	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Solano County	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Sonoma County	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Toward a Bay Area Agricultural Sustainability Strategy	20
Bibliography	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Bay Area Agricultural Sustainability Project - Introduction

What would the Bay Area be like without farms and ranches? Imagine our region without the range and farm lands that bring us a bounty of local produce, fresh meats and dairy products, and the inspiring landscapes and ecosystems that define the Bay Area. Sooner than we realize we may lose this – unless the region’s agriculture can be sustained as a successful economic sector and valued for the productive land and ecosystems that supply us with a multitude of beneficial resources.

Since 1984, more than 200,000 acres of agricultural land in the nine-county Bay Area have been lost to development. Much of the region’s urban footprint was carved from irrigated cropland, the most productive and versatile land for food production. It is this high quality land that still remains the most vulnerable to development. Today, only 367,000 acres of this critical resource are still in production and much of it is up for grabs. With almost two million more people expected to live in the region by 2035, it is imperative that strong local land-use policies and conservation investments assure that the best remaining farm and ranch lands are preserved and that development consumes as little of it as possible.

But preserving the land is not enough. The one thing that distinguishes agricultural land from all other kinds of open space is that, by definition, it provides for a basic human need. Neither the food produced on agricultural land, nor its other public benefits – its scenic beauty, its environmental value as undeveloped watersheds and wildlife habitat, its historic character and cultural significance, its very presence as a bulwark against urban sprawl – can be guaranteed unless agriculture itself succeeds financially.

This recognition was behind a key recommendation of the Bay Area Open Space Council, Greenbelt Alliance, and Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) in a 2009 report entitled *Golden Lands, Golden Opportunity: Preserving Vital Bay Area Lands for All Californians: [Help keep the region’s farmers and ranchers in business.](#)*

Close to urban areas, Bay Area farmers and ranchers are under more pressure than their counterparts in more rural areas of the state. The cost of land and other inputs is higher and the potential for conflict with urban uses is greater. To stay in business, agriculture in this region must overcome these competitive disadvantages. And to do that, it needs the understanding and active support of the public, not only as consumers who can exert influence through their buying power, but also as constituents who can influence public policies that impact agriculture.

The Bay Area Agricultural Sustainability Project was inaugurated to keep the region’s agriculture competitive and economically viable. It is intended to help farmers and ranchers overcome the challenges they face, and to maximize their opportunity to capitalize on the advantage they enjoy due to their proximity to seven million customers. In so doing, this project seeks to maximize all of the contributions that agriculture makes to the livability and sustainability of the region as a whole.

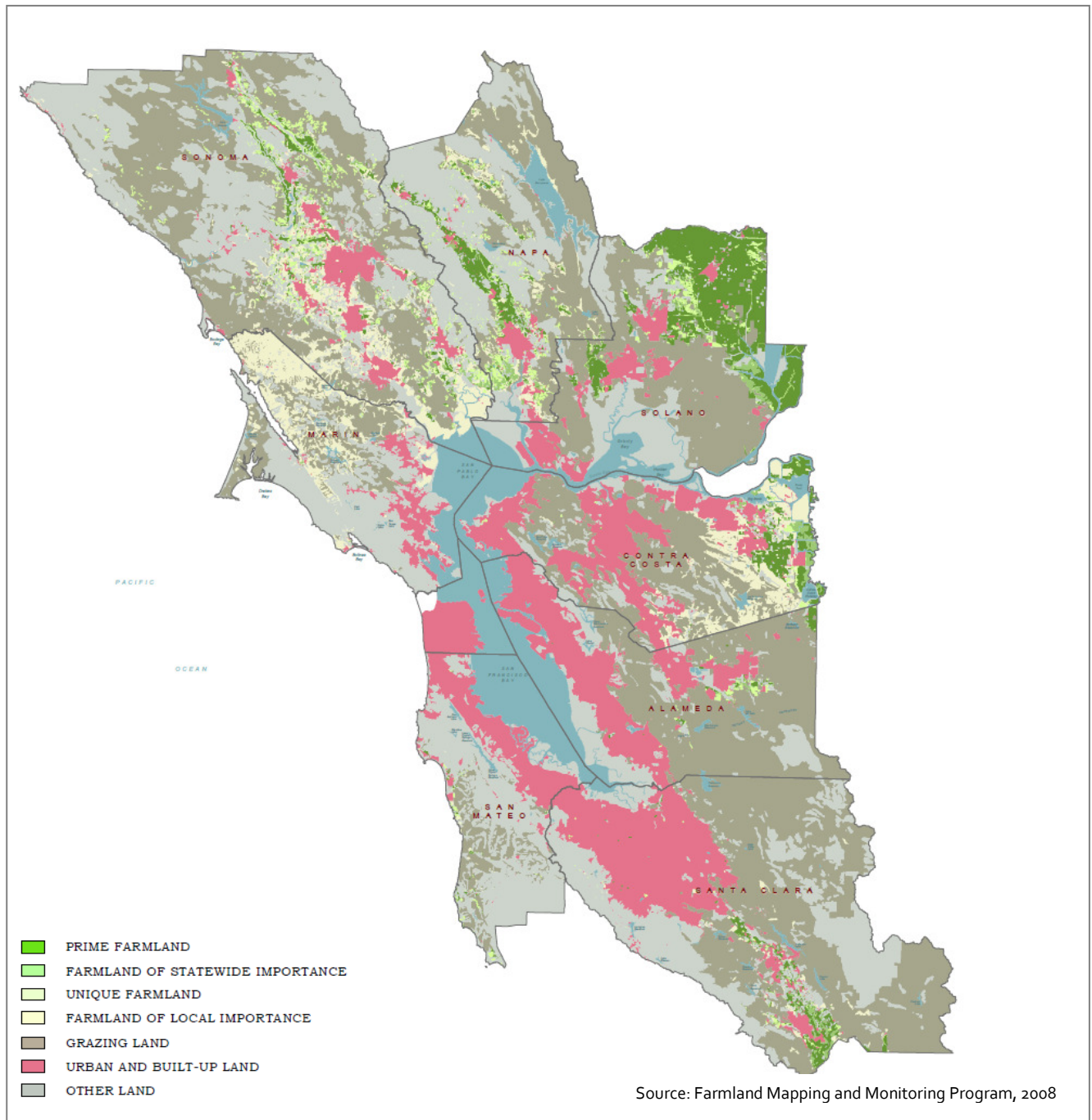
The Bay Area’s agricultural land is not a placeholder for future development, nor simply preserved open space that will help prevent urban sprawl and all of its undesirable consequences – though that is surely one of its important functions. The Bay Area Agricultural Sustainability Project envisions a working landscape that continues to enrich the region for many generations to come as an irreplaceable environmental, cultural, and historic resource that supplies healthy food to the region’s residents and visitors, while supporting farm and ranch families who are pillars of the metropolitan community.

The Bay Area Agricultural Sustainability Project consists of two components: 1) this white paper, the product of reconnaissance to document the defining characteristics of the region’s agriculture and to identify the challenges and opportunities encountered by the region’s farmers and ranchers; and 2) a

convening in early 2011 of a group of regional leaders from agriculture and other constituencies to consider the information in the white paper, along with their own experiences, and to begin designing a comprehensive strategy to assure a robust and sustainable future for Bay Area agriculture.

The Project is a collaboration among three nonprofit organizations: Greenbelt Alliance, Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE), and American Farmland Trust. It was inspired by an Urban-Rural Roundtable convened in 2008 by former San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, which, among other things, recommended that a concerted effort be made to realize the full potential of the region's agricultural lands and producers to supply the region's growing demand for local food.

Figure 1. Bay Area Region, Important Farmland 2008



Bay Area Agriculture Today

While the Bay Area is home to over 7 million people and over 100 cities and towns, it continues to have productive working landscapes that provide a diversity of food for regional and worldwide markets. From the fertile southern Santa Clara Valley to the wine-grape growing regions of Sonoma and Napa, Bay Area farmers produce a cornucopia of fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy, and wines. Bay Area agriculture provides jobs, contributes to the local economy, and gives the Bay Area a sense of history, place, and unique character.

However, if agriculture is to continue to contribute to the quality of life in the Bay Area – indeed, if it is to capitalize on unique opportunities such as the public’s growing interest in locally grown food, ecosystem services, and agritourism – and to remain economically viable, it must meet some serious challenges.

Production, Producers, and Places

Bay Area farmers produce agricultural products valued at over \$1.8 billion dollars a year. Though this represents an 11 percent decline in production value over an 18-year period, in many ways agriculture continues to thrive and the potential of our region’s agricultural lands remains strong. With a wide diversity of nursery crops, livestock, fruits, and vegetables as well as a thriving wine industry, Bay Area farmers continue to supply the region and beyond with a bounty of food. Sonoma and Napa counties realize the highest agricultural values based on wine grape production. Solano, Santa Clara, and San Mateo counties follow in agricultural values, based on a wide diversity of agricultural products.

Grazing and farmland continue to cover a significant percentage of the Bay Area. Most Bay Area counties have more than 40 percent of their acreage in some form of agricultural production, and Napa and Solano counties continue to have more than half of their land base in agriculture. Grazing is by far the largest agricultural land use, accounting for almost 75 percent of agricultural lands in the region. Livestock is a leading agricultural product in seven Bay Area counties. However, most counties also produce a wide array of other food crops. In seven Bay Area counties fruits and vegetables are primary crops, with significant acreage devoted to orchards and row crops. Nursery crops, horticulture, and floriculture continue to play an important part in Bay Area agriculture. In several counties, most notably Napa and Sonoma, wine grapes are a driving factor in the agricultural economy.

While some Bay Area counties have adopted strong land-use protections, the region continues to lose valuable agricultural land every year. In Bay Area counties, cropland, orchards, and row crops are disappearing most rapidly. While the Bay Area had 674,364 acres of cropland in 1990, that acreage had

Table 1.1 Bay Area Regional Agriculture Trends

	Agricultural Value		Change in Cropland Acres		Direct Sales	Population Growth	
	2008	2000-2008 % Change	All Cropland 1990-2008	Prime Cropland 1990-2008	As % of Total 2007	% Increase by 2035	Share of Growth by 2035
Alameda	\$41,185,000	10%	-35%	-53%	1%	23%	23%
Contra Costa	\$71,962,340	-22%	-19%	-37%	4%	22%	15%
Marin	\$63,311,293	6%	-4%	-96%	3%	10%	2%
Napa	\$409,122,900	-4%	5%	12%	0.3%	12%	1%
San Francisco	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	18%	9%
San Mateo	\$160,925,000	-33%	-40%	-7%	6%	16%	7%
Santa Clara	\$247,950,400	-18%	-39%	-47%	2%	27%	32%
Solano	\$292,840,200	28%	-14%	-11%	1%	29%	8%
Sonoma	\$593,407,000	-18%	-6%	-9%	1%	12%	4%
Bay Area Region	\$1,880,704,133	-11%	-12%	-18%	1%	22%	100%

Sources: County Agricultural Commissioners’ Crop Reports, 2008; California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, 2008; USDA Census of Agriculture, 2007; Association of Bay Area Governments, 2008.

dropped to 591,167 by 2008, a 12% decline over 18 years. Even more alarming, as suburban growth has spread out over fertile regions in counties like Alameda, Contra Costa, and Santa Clara, these regions are losing a disproportionate amount of “prime cropland” – the land designated as the most valuable for agricultural production by the California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. Over the last decade, the Bay Area lost at least 18 percent of its prime cropland.

Markets and Value-Added Activities

Bay Area farming operations are diverse in their acreage, scale of operations, and markets. Most operations are small farms selling niche products locally through farmers’ markets, community-supported agriculture (CSAs), and local grocers. Relatively few represent large operations growing thousands of acres of agricultural products that are marketed through wholesalers and distributed worldwide. Bay Area farmers continue to adapt to market demands. A decade ago, many Bay Area counties realized significant agricultural revenues from nursery crops. In several counties including Contra Costa, Santa Clara, and Sonoma counties, dramatic declines in the nursery industry have accounted for significant drops in agricultural values. Napa, Sonoma, and Alameda counties have developed vibrant, profitable viticulture industries that are the foundation of their agricultural economies.

As is the case around the rest of California and the nation, organic production, direct marketing, and agricultural tourism currently play a small economic role in Bay Area agriculture. However, these activities are on the rise with marked increases in each county over the past ten years.

While the Bay Area region boasts some of the best wineries in the world, other value-added and processing facilities are limited. Farmers around the region note that lack of processing facilities limits their ability to develop local alternatives to traditional commodities markets.

Policy Influences on Farmland and Agriculture

Napa and Marin counties acknowledged the value of their agricultural resources decades ago by enacting strong land-use protections that prevent the development for agricultural land. The success of these early, innovative land-use policies in protecting farmland is dramatic. Marin has lost less than five percent of agricultural lands in the 18-year period between 1990 and 2008, and Napa has increased acreage of cultivated farmland. Other counties have been less effective with agricultural land protections and have experienced a significant loss of farmland over the past two decades. For instance Santa Clara County lost 41 percent of its cropland from 1990 to 2008, with San Mateo and Contra Costa counties also experiencing dramatic loss of croplands.

Gradually, all Bay Area counties have come to acknowledge the importance of local agriculture. Today all Bay Area counties have some form of land-use regulation targeted at protecting agricultural land. Public agencies and nonprofit land trusts also work around the Bay Area to permanently protect agricultural lands. Marin, Napa, and Sonoma counties provide evidence that land conservation efforts are most successful when used in concert with strong land-use policies.

Over the past decade, some counties have begun to recognize that it will take more than farmland conservation to ensure that the Bay Area continues to have a local source of food. Local governments have begun to explore programs that preserve agricultural land, and some are starting to support limited agriculture economic development efforts. Some county governments in the region have established agricultural advisory task forces and food councils to address agricultural issues. Several counties, including Marin, Solano, and Contra Costa counties, have amended county zoning to allow expanded direct marketing and value-added facilities. Marin County has a staff person dedicated to assisting farmers with the permitting and regulatory process. Some county governments, including San Mateo, Contra Costa, and

San Francisco, are considering local food purchasing policies that require that county departments purchase food from local farmers. Still, many agricultural producers feel that much more can be done by county government to establish bolder economic development programs.

Challenges and Opportunities

Development pressures and land values. The cost of agricultural land on the urban edge of the Bay Area has skyrocketed as development pressures have reached traditional agricultural communities. Even when land-use policies protect against subdivision development, the Bay Area's bucolic agricultural landscapes draws new residents seeking rural estate homes. While the current economic downturn has temporarily mitigated this trend, the general momentum of escalating land values and uncertainty about future land use have made agricultural property owners in some Bay Area counties hesitant to invest in their farming operations and develop new markets.

Water. In several Bay Area counties like Alameda and San Mateo, lack of irrigation water significantly limits agriculture. Innovative solutions like the San Mateo Pond Project seek to address water issues, but infrastructure costs, permitting, and regulatory restrictions continue to create barriers. The competition for water among agricultural, urban, and environmental restoration needs is intensifying. Several counties have begun to explore innovative approaches to balance these needs such as using reclaimed water from neighboring urban areas for agricultural irrigation water but costs and regulations have been barriers here as well.

Local distribution. Due to the consolidation of California agriculture, globalization of food production, and increased production costs, many Bay Area farmers are struggling to survive economically. With some exceptions, the region's farmers do not have the acreage and scale of operations to compete in global commodities markets, and yet the local distribution system that once brought their products directly to local markets is no longer in place. Rebuilding the region's agricultural infrastructure and recreating a local food distribution system could provide Bay Area farmers with profitable new markets, provide urban residents with fresh, healthy food, and keep food dollars in local communities. County governments and farmers are working together in several Bay Area counties like San Mateo and Napa to build local food distribution systems.

Value-added production and regulations. As agriculture has changed over the past several decades, small-scale farmers have had to adapt their marketing strategies. Innovative farmers have found ways to connect with their urban neighbors through farmers' markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture (CSAs), and farm visits. However, in some counties, the well-intended land-use protections enacted to protect agricultural soils have restricted farmers from developing value-added processing facilities or engaging in on-farm direct marketing activities. For example, until recently Contra Costa County zoning prohibited farmers from making or selling value-added products like wine, olive oil, jams, salsa, and baked goods. Often, even when zoning permits value-added processing, the cost of permitting and infrastructure development is prohibitively expensive for small producers. Livestock producers face even more complex challenges to local processing with a myriad of state and federal regulations on processing meat. As a result, the region is critically lacking a sufficient number of meat-processing facilities. With the Bay Area showing among the highest consumer demand in the nation for grass-fed, natural, and organic beef products, it is also seeing a growing demand from cattle producers who are interested in raising, slaughtering, and processing meats locally for regional markets.

Funding and Financial Barriers

Significant public and private investment will be needed to fund land conservation, agricultural infrastructure (including regional processing and distribution), and to rebuild a viable regional food system.

Due to the current economic climate, financing initiatives to support agriculture has become increasingly limited. Several of the region's counties have identified programs to support local agriculture but have been unable to find funding for implementation. For instance, the recently updated Solano County General Plan called for two new positions to provide regulatory assistance to farmers, but the County was unable to sustain funding for the new positions due to budget challenges. While the Tri-Valley Vision 2010 identified steps to enhance Alameda County agriculture, the recommendations have not been implemented, in part, due to lack of funding. Some land trusts and agricultural organizations have been unable to continue key programs, and conservation funding agencies have reduced budgets for conservation easements. On the other hand, several counties, including Sonoma and Santa Clara, have voter-approved, well-funded open space districts that have been able to continue to permanently protect significant open space and agricultural lands.

As the Bay Area residents increasingly recognize the importance of local agriculture to the Bay Area's economy, public health, and environment, they may be willing to support regional funding mechanisms to support agriculture and agricultural economic development.

Initiatives and Goals

Land conservation. Over the past several decades, all of the region's counties have adopted land-use policies that intend to protect the Bay Area's remaining agricultural lands. The strength and success of these policies in protecting farmland from development pressures has varied significantly from county to county.

Around the Bay Area, open space districts, land trusts, and state agencies that had traditionally focused on open space and habitat lands have begun to fund and implement permanent protections for agricultural lands. The Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT) was established over 30 years ago as the country's first agricultural land trust and has since permanently protected one-third of Marin County's agricultural lands. The importance of agricultural lands is beginning to receive more regional recognition as shown in the Association of Bay Area Governments' (ABAG) designation of several of the Bay Area's agricultural areas as Priority Conservation Areas.

Regional Marketing. Bay Area farmers are working collaboratively to brand their products through regional marketing campaigns. Sonoma Select, a forerunner in regional branding, created a logo and brand that allowed consumers to identify premium, local products from Sonoma producers. Other counties have followed with Buy Fresh Buy Local campaigns and unique regional brands such as San Mateo's "As Fresh as It Gets," Marin Organics, and Solano Grown. However, as demonstrated by Sonoma Select, it is often difficult for farmers to raise funds to sustain regional branding campaigns. Napa, Sonoma, and Alameda farmers benefit from strong established regional identities based on international reputation of their wines.

Studies and summits evaluating agricultural needs. As people in the Bay Area increasingly recognize the importance of protecting the future of the region's agriculture, many of the region's counties have embarked on studies and community forums to explore the challenges and opportunities for building a vibrant future for agriculture in their region. Marin, Sonoma, and San Mateo counties have convened regional agricultural summits. Alameda, Marin, and Solano counties have commissioned a variety of studies to identify land use and economic development strategies. Unfortunately, as government and foundation funding has become scarce, Bay Area counties have found it difficult to implement many of the recommendations resulting from the studies.

Linking local farmers with urban neighbors. While Bay Area farmers produce a remarkable volume and diversity of fruits and vegetables and animal products, some urban neighborhoods do not have access to

fresh, healthy food. Several Bay Area counties, including Alameda, Napa and Santa Clara, have active food systems projects that seek to increase food access for all residents. Increasingly, food access advocates are joining with farmers and agricultural organizations to build food connections between farmers and their urban neighbors. In Napa, the Agricultural Commissioner is working closely with the County government, farmers and advocates on the Local Food Initiative to increase local food production for the community. In Contra Costa, the County government, the Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust, and local farmers have developed a community-supported agriculture (CSA) that brings fresh fruits and vegetables directly from Brentwood farms to “food insecure” neighborhoods in Richmond.

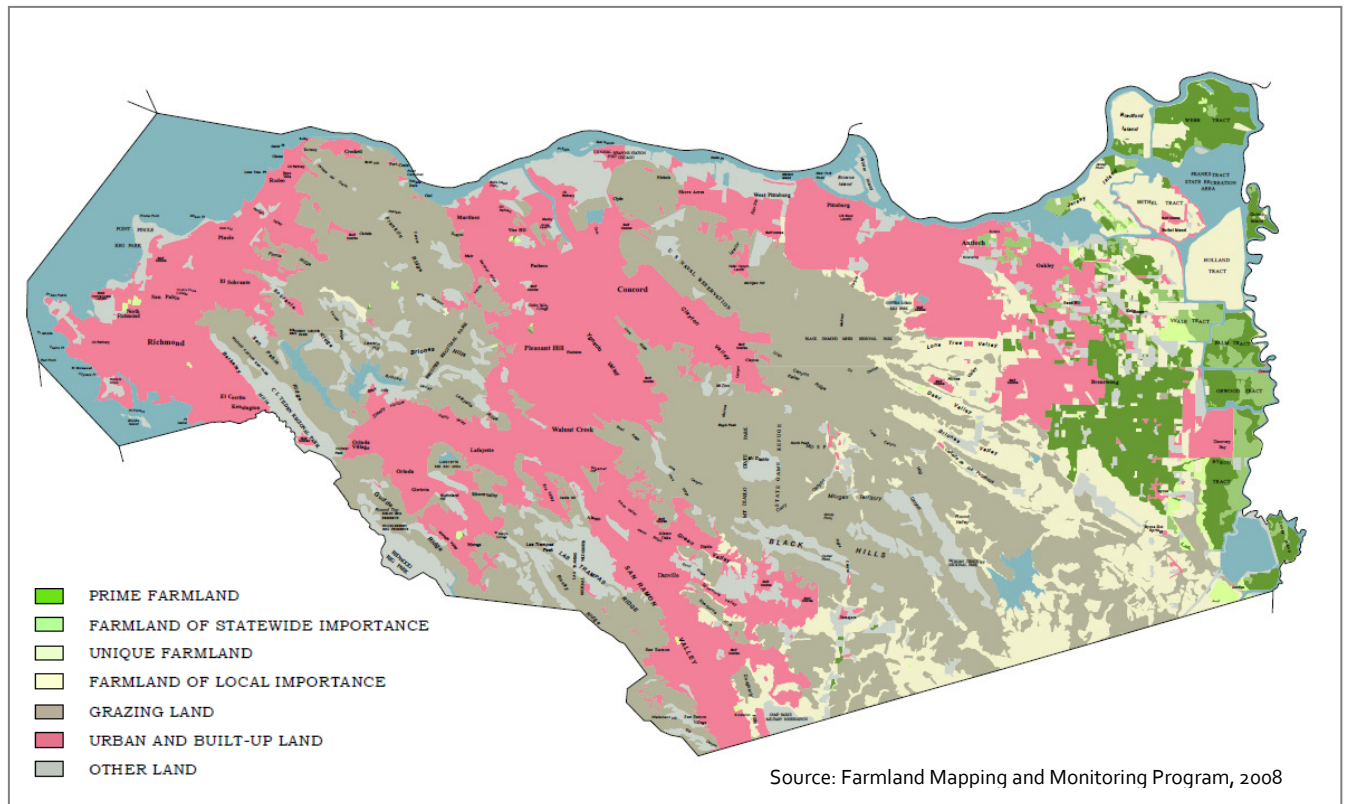


Contra Costa County

Contra Costa farmers have grown food for the Bay Area since the Gold Rush: from vast fields of winter wheat in the 1850s to the famous Brentwood sweet corn, peaches and cherries that we enjoy today. For generations, Bay Area families have traveled to Brentwood each summer to pick fruit at the U-pick farms, making Brentwood one of the Bay Area’s most beloved and iconic farming regions. At one time, Contra Costa farms stretched from the San Francisco Bay shoreline of Richmond to fertile delta lands east of Mt Diablo. Over the past fifty years, Contra Costa has urbanized. However, Contra Costa County continues to have over 23,000 acres of harvested farmland and over

160,000 acres of rangeland. The Brentwood farming region east of Mt. Diablo remains one of the Bay Area’s most productive agricultural regions, with more than 12,000 acres of contiguous, irrigated prime farmland less than 50 miles from Bay Area cities.

Figure 3.1. Contra Costa County, Important Farmland 2008



Contra Costa Agriculture Today

Table 3.1 Contra Costa County Agricultural Statistics

Acres of Agricultural Land	1990	2008	% Δ
Cropland	112,187	90,915	-19%
Grazing	178,875	168,905	-6%
Number of Farms	1997	2007	% Δ
Total	587	634	8%
Producing \$10,000 or Less Per Year	348	421	21%
Regionally Serving Agriculture	1997	2007	% Δ
Farm Products Sold Directly to Consumers (\$ Thousand)	\$1,277	\$1,776	39%
Annual Value of Production at Farm Gate (Inflation Adjusted)	2000	2008	% Δ
Total	\$114,471,085	\$71,962,340	-37%
Fruit & Vegetable Crops	\$43,362,178	\$39,518,900	-9%
Other Production	\$60,194,314	\$19,714,720	-67%
Livestock Products	\$10,914,594	\$12,728,720	17%
Leading Production, 2008	Value	Acres	
Vegetable & Seed Crops	\$23,153,900	5,552	
Fruit & Nut Crops	\$16,365,000	3,957	
Field Crops	\$15,507,000	15,507,000	
Livestock	\$12,728,720	n/a	

Sources: County Agricultural Commissioner's Crop Report, 2000 & 2008; California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, 2008; USDA Census of Agriculture, 1997, 2002, & 2007.

Production, Producers, and Places

Over the past 150 years, Contra Costa agriculture has adapted to changing markets and loss of farmland to urban development. Just a decade ago, the greenhouses of Richmond produced \$32 million in nursery crops, almost one-third of the county's agricultural values. East Contra Costa County dairies still produced milk valued over \$7 million. Today the nurseries of Richmond are almost gone, and there are no dairies remaining in the county. While the 2007 Agricultural Census shows that there are over 600 farms in Contra Costa County, most of the county's 275 irrigated farms are in East Contra Costa County.

The 12,000 acres of farmland south and east of the City of Brentwood continue to produce a remarkable diversity of crops – sweet corn, stone fruit, vegetables, olives and wine grapes. The California Department of Conservation classifies the rich delta land of the Brentwood region as "prime farmland" with high quality soils and growing conditions that maximize productivity. With water rights established in the early 20th century, Brentwood farmers have access to inexpensive water through two agricultural irrigation districts. The year-round growing season, with hot days and cool nights, creates an extraordinary Mediterranean climate for food production.

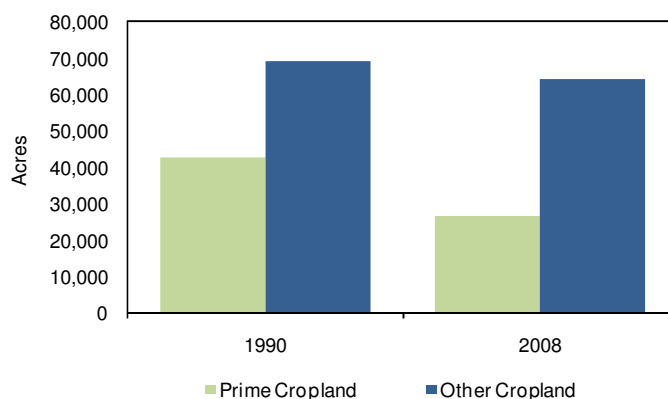
In 2008, Brentwood area farmers produced over \$55 million of fruit, nut, vegetable and field crops. For the past decade, Brentwood sweet corn has grown in acreage and value due to its exceptional quality and a successful branding campaign by local growers. With one-fourth of the Brentwood area's irrigated farmland currently planted in sweet corn, corn was the leading vegetable crop in 2008 with a \$13.5 million value. Brentwood is also an ideal climate for tomatoes (\$6,382,000), green beans (\$1,395,000), and stone fruit (cherries, \$2,003,000; apricots, \$1,800,000; and peaches, \$1,419,000). In recent years, Brentwood farmers

have revived Contra Costa wine grape growing (\$5,754,000). Brentwood farmers work collaboratively to annually rotate corn, tomato, bean, and alfalfa crops on their land.

Over the past 20 years, the Brentwood farming region has rapidly lost prime agriculture land to urban development. As Brentwood became an affordable bedroom community for Bay Area families, some of the qualities that make the region perfect for food production also made it attractive for suburban development. Brentwood is near Bay Area cities and jobs, the prime farmland is flat and easy to build on, and the weather is beautiful. Since 1990, the City of Brentwood grew from a small farming town of 7,500 to a suburb of over 53,000 people, sprawling out over the prime delta soils of the Brentwood region.

Between 1990 and 2008, Contra Costa County lost almost 16,000 acres of its most fertile farmland – a decline of almost 40 percent of the county’s prime cropland. During the housing boom, Contra Costa County lost 4,381 acres of cropland in the three-year period between 1997 and 2000, ranking fourth among counties in California in the loss of agricultural land to urban use. Today East Contra Costa County leads in foreclosure rates with home and land values dropping as much as fifty percent since 2008.

Figure 3.2 Contra Costa County Agricultural Land Trends



Source: California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, 2008.

Markets and Value-Added Activities.

Brentwood is remarkable for the diversity of its farming operations. Several large sweet corn producers grow over 3,000 acres of sweet corn, supplying Brentwood corn to the Western United States all summer through Safeway and other major retailers. Brentwood farmers also deliver a large volume of processing tomatoes to Northern California canneries each summer. Organic growers such as Frog Hollow Farms and Knoll Farms also thrive in Brentwood’s perfect soil and climate, selling to high-end restaurants and markets. However, in 2008 only 336 acres of Brentwood farmland was in organic production indicating that Brentwood farmers may have an opportunity to expand organic production to meet consumer demand.

Brentwood’s long tradition of U-picks and roadside stands make it one of the best known agricultural areas on the urban-edge of the Bay Area. With over 200 acres of U-pick cherries, hundreds of thousands of people continue to travel from around the Bay Area to Brentwood during cherry season, and many Bay Area residents have fond summer memories of childhood trips to Brentwood during the summer to pick fruit. Seventy-six farmers, some of whom have been farming in Brentwood for generations, sell to direct markets through roadside stands, U-pick operations and farmers’ markets.

Policy Influences on Farmland and Agriculture.

In the 1970s, the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors recognized the importance of East Contra Costa County’s prime farmland in the County General Plan by creating the County Agricultural Core to the east and the south of the City of Brentwood. In 1994, the Board of Supervisors established a countywide urban limit line and further limited subdivision in the 12,000-acre County Agricultural Core. Land in the County Agricultural Core cannot be subdivided smaller than forty acres. While one home is allowed on each parcel, the land can only be used for farming and agricultural processing. Because of the protections provided by

the County Agricultural Core and the countywide urban limit line, the Brentwood farming region continues to have a contiguous block of 12,000 acres of irrigated, prime farmland.

When the County created the County Agricultural Core, the primary goal was to protect prime farmland from development. While well intentioned, the zoning in the County Agricultural Core was so restrictive that farmers were unable to take full advantage of direct marketing and agricultural tourism opportunities. In 2004, the County revised the agricultural zoning to allow wineries, tasting rooms and olive oil processing facilities. Additional changes were needed to reduce the fees from the local transportation authority to accurately reflect the traffic created by seasonal agricultural processing, and to make these facilities economically feasible. In 2007, the zoning in the County Agricultural Core was further amended to allow farmer to make and sell “value added” products from their harvests. The amendment also allowed farmer to operate larger roadside stands. The County is considering additional zoning changes to expand agricultural tourism opportunities for Brentwood farmers.

In 2002, the City of Brentwood enacted an agricultural mitigation program. The City ordinance requires that developers who build on farmland must pay an agricultural mitigation fee to the City. The City holds the mitigation fees to fund agricultural conservation easements. The program also provides for a transfer of density from farmland to development within the City. The City has collected over \$12 million in agricultural mitigation fees since 2002.

In 2002, the City also formed the Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust (BALT), to implement the City’s agricultural mitigation program. The City funded BALT with mitigation fees until 2007 when the City decided to administer the agricultural conservation program with City staff. The City continues to contribute mitigation funds to the purchase price of the easements acquired by BALT and local land trusts. The City has recently amended the agricultural mitigation program to allow expenditure of the mitigation funds for regional marketing and other agricultural enterprise activities.

Challenges and Opportunities

Despite the countywide urban limit line and the County Agricultural Core zoning, development pressures continue to threaten the agricultural lands surrounding the City of Brentwood. A 2005 Brentwood ballot initiative to push the urban limit line into the County Agricultural Core was narrowly defeated by 148 votes. Although the county voters affirmed the urban limit line in 2008, another initiative to allow development of agricultural land was considered by Brentwood voters in June 2010. The 2010 initiative was soundly defeated by the voters.

Prior to the current limitation on subdivision within the County Agricultural Core, half of the land located in the County Agricultural Core had been subdivided into parcels of ten acres or less. Consequently, even with the county urban limit line and agricultural zoning, estate home development remains a threat to the region’s prime agricultural land.

At the same time that suburban and estate home development has threatened Brentwood farmland, the globalization of food production has made it increasingly difficult for Brentwood’s farmers to compete in their traditional commodities markets. For instance, in the past decade Brentwood farmers have found it impossible to compete with apples grown in China and Washington, and most Brentwood apple orchards have been pulled out and either been replaced with row crops or left fallow. While some Brentwood farmers may not have the acreage and scale of operations necessary to compete in the global markets, the proximity of Brentwood to the Bay Area presents exciting opportunities to directly access local markets.

At one time, Brentwood Boulevard was lined with packing sheds. Railroad lines ran through the agricultural region picking up produce for delivery to local canneries, Bay Area markets, and the East Bay ports. Local businesses provided farmers with farm equipment repair services, fertilizers, irrigation systems and agricultural inputs. As the Brentwood region has lost agricultural land to development and California agriculture has consolidated, the packing sheds and agricultural businesses have moved to larger agricultural areas. Today Brentwood lacks the agricultural infrastructure needed to support local farming, and many Brentwood farmers do not have the resources to deliver source-identified Brentwood produce directly to nearby Bay Area consumers seeking local food.

Initiatives and Goals

In 2008, the Association of Bay Area Governments designated the County Agricultural Core as a “Priority Conservation Area.” The Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust has acquired conservation easements on six Brentwood farms, and is working with agricultural property owners on several additional easements. While the easement transactions currently underway will expend the remainder of the City’s agricultural mitigation fund, state agencies that fund agricultural conservation have expressed an interest in funding easements on Brentwood farmland.

Over the past thirty years Brentwood farmers have worked to brand and promote Brentwood agriculture. Established in 1976, the Harvest Time growers publish an annual map of Brentwood U-pick farms and roadside stands. Brentwood corn growers have been very successful in branding Brentwood sweet corn through their retail markets. Over the past few years, Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust has worked with local growers to develop the Brentwood Buy Fresh Buy Local marketing campaign through advertising, billboards and events. BALT’s Buy Fresh Buy Local campaign has been funded with government and foundation grants. In 2008, the City of Brentwood also created a marketing campaign funded with agricultural mitigation fees. The City has certified “Brentwood Grown” and local farmers can apply to use the certification to market their products.

Contra Costa County is geographically divided between the productive Brentwood farming region in the east and dense urban populations in the west, and therefore has remarkable potential to build a local food system. Over the past decade, farmers and agricultural organizations have sought to engage urban supervisors in positive, politically viable projects that demonstrate the benefits of local farming to urban constituents, educate the Board of Supervisors about Brentwood agriculture, and build political support for farmland conservation and agricultural land-use reforms. For the past few years, the Board of Supervisors has celebrated local farming by declaring June “Buy Fresh Buy Local” month. The County is working with the Green Purchasing Institute to create a local food purchasing policy that will increase the local food purchased by county hospitals, clinics and correctional facilities. The county’s produce distributor has created a “Brentwood vegetable mix” for local hospitals and institutional purchasers. Since 2008, Richmond Supervisor Gioia and Brentwood Supervisor Piepho have worked closely to develop an innovative community-supported agriculture (CSA) program that brings Brentwood produce directly to Richmond families. In 2010, the County began developing a county agricultural mitigation program and additional zoning reforms to support local agriculture.

Insights and Analysis

Although the Brentwood region has experience intensive development pressure over the past 20 years, county zoning and an urban limit line have protected a remarkable, productive farming region that continues to produce premium fruits, vegetables and field crops. While the prime farmland of the Brentwood region remains at risk of suburban and estate home development, the reaffirmation of the urban limit line, the defeat of developer initiatives and the current decrease in development pressure provide opportunities to create a positive future for Brentwood farming. With greater land use certainty,

Brentwood farmers are beginning to permanently protect their land with conservation easements, invest in agricultural infrastructure and increase their efforts to brand Brentwood agriculture for local markets.

The Brentwood farming community is diverse – in scale of production, growing and marketing techniques, growers' alliances and politics. While the diversity of Brentwood agriculture has been its strength, allowing it to adapt to market changes and the pressures of urban growth, it has also made it difficult for Brentwood farmers to develop community consensus and support for a unified effort to conserve land and brand Brentwood farming.

Significant public and private investment will be needed to fund land conservation, agricultural infrastructure and build a local food system that links Brentwood farmers directly to Bay Area markets. While City mitigation funds and foundation grants have supported efforts over the past seven years, no sustainable funding source has been identified to support a countywide agricultural land trust, regional marketing campaign, or agricultural land-use reforms.



Source: Grown in Marin

Toward a Bay Area Agricultural Sustainability Strategy

What emerges from this reconnaissance of Bay Area agriculture is a landscape that enjoys significant protection from urban sprawl, with some notable and troubling exceptions. What also emerges is an initial understanding of a farm and ranch industry that is struggling to compete in the global marketplace at the same time that segments

of it are experiencing a renaissance by taking advantage of regional and local markets for food and agritourism. While some producers will continue to do well in global markets, it seems clear that for many of the region's farmers and ranchers – both established and nascent – the greater opportunity lies in capitalizing on the potential competitive advantage of their proximity to seven million Bay Area consumers, many of whom take pride in their region and its unique quality of life, who are sympathetic with the idea of preserving family farms, and many who have embraced the idea of eating locally.

To help agricultural producers meet the challenges they face, a regional strategy to sustain agriculture into the future is needed — a strategy that focuses on helping the industry in the Bay Area transform itself into one that can take better advantage of regional and local markets, while attempting to expand those markets themselves. Such a strategy might include the following objectives:

- Conserve the maximum amount of remaining agricultural land
- Maximize the amount of food being produced locally that is sold in regional and local markets
- Maximize farm income potential of local agricultural producers from regional and local markets (including agritourism)
- Increase access to affordable local food to all residents of the region
- Maximize the ability of regional agriculture to “produce” environmental quality and ecosystem services

To achieve these objectives, a regional agricultural sustainability strategy must address what appear to be the most significant challenges farmers and ranchers in the area:

- High cost of farmland and competition with rural estates
- The need to balance the water needs of urban and agricultural users, as well as water for wildlife
- Inadequate regional food distribution system infrastructure
- Inadequate processing facilities due to regulations that discourage them
- Inadequate financing for all of the above

In early 2011, the sponsors of the Bay Area Agricultural Sustainability Project plan to bring together leaders from agriculture, government, and other stakeholders groups to discuss these and other ideas. Our hope is that this gathering will be the beginning of a process to design a comprehensive strategy that will best serve Bay Area agriculture and everyone who benefits from it. Meanwhile, as the Association of Bay Area Governments begins to formulate its Sustainable Communities Strategy under SB 375, we invite others to join us in attempting to assure that it recognizes the importance of agricultural land – and the health of the enterprise that defines it – to the overall livability and sustainability of the region.

Range of Possibilities

Rangelands, Ranching and Conservation in the Bay Area

by Kelly Cash on March 31, 2015



Rancher Doniga Markegard and her husband, Erik, raise their grass-fed Belted Galloway cows on a 1,000-acre ranch on the San Mateo coast. Galloways are a heritage breed from the coast of Scotland that has a double coat of long hair to better shed the rain. (Photo by Federica Armstrong, federicaarmstrong.com)



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“The rangelands in the Bay Area are incredibly important for wildlife and native plants. They provide the landscape connectivity that species need to move from place to place, which is especially critical in a time of rapidly changing climate.” –Dr. Reed Noss, former president of the Society for Conservation Biology

At

the Yolo Land and Cattle Company, some 80 miles northeast of San Francisco, along the eastern base of the blue-green massif known as Blue Ridge, butterflies and cattle move across a blond sunbaked plain on a warm summer day. There are swallowtails, sulphurs, skippers, and a herd of ebony Angus cattle. A swallowtail flickers across an empty chair, wing dots dancing, right “where Hank used to sit, right there, where the breeze blows through every day like clockwork,” says Karen Stone, a petite brunette of Italian descent who owns and manages the 13,000-acre operation with her husband, Scott, along with Scott’s brother Casey and his wife Angela.

“Hank” is father-in-law Hank Stone, who passed away at 84 last year. His presence in California’s agricultural community was legendary, and there is a lingering sense of loss, the feeling that he was in his prime, happy to wake up every day with so much more to do. One of the projects he was most proud of is a conservation easement he worked out with the California Rangeland Trust to protect his beloved ranch forever by prohibiting future development.

Hank was an alliance builder, willing and able to work with all kinds of people. Karen and Scott continue that tradition. Nine years ago, Audubon California approached the Stones because the group’s biologists had identified a problem: Suitable habitat for overwintering waterfowl was being lost to development. The Stones’ work on restoring riparian areas had already helped neotropical migrant songbirds. Would they help out overwintering waterfowl by enhancing the habitat of one of their stock ponds? With funding from private and public partners, the Stones restored a large pond and added a hand-carpentered goose-nesting platform. Now they’re partnering with the nonprofit Point Blue Conservation Science to monitor and evaluate the results of their efforts in terms of both bird and plant diversity. They’ve also been part of scientific field trials involving rangeland carbon sequestration. And they use recycled rinse water from a nearby Campbell soup cannery to irrigate their pastures. So for people who are looking at the whole picture of Bay Area ecology, the Stones and other ranchers like them are not just stewards of their ranches; they’re also “value-added” stewards of a significant component of the Bay Area environment—rangelands—that makes up more than 40 percent of the open space in this metropolitan region.

BAD COW, GOOD COW

So if ranchers are such great conservation partners, why has ranching often been viewed as bad for the environment? Part of the answer lies in the history of ranching in the state. The Spanish colonists who first introduced ranching to California in the late 1700s also introduced nonnative annual grasses that outcompeted the native perennial grasses and led to a severe loss in biodiversity. And in the decades that followed, incidences of poor range management — overstocking and overgrazing — resulted in soil

compaction, erosion, and mismanagement of riparian and wetland areas that reduced habitat for bird species and aquatic life. So vivid were the results of such mismanagement that it became difficult for the environmental community to see the benefits of good management. Any grazing, well-managed or not, was viewed as the antithesis of good environmental stewardship.

The environmentalist perspective was that to get the benefits of clean water, wide-open vistas, and healthy wildlife, society needed to set aside open space as public parkland and remove nonnative ungulates (hooved grazing mammals) so the land could heal and return to its native state. But now, after more than a decade of research on the question, it's becoming clear that well-managed private ranchlands can provide these essential public benefits at little cost to the public, while at the same time ensuring that the land remains economically productive. Chronic underfunding means that public agencies generally lack the resources to properly manage all of this rangeland even if "we, the people" could afford to buy it all, which we can't.

Sasha Gennet is a senior scientist with the Nature Conservancy of California, which works to assemble and manage large protected landscapes for biodiversity and climate resilience. "Managed rangelands are so important for both natural and human communities," she says, "from the fresh water that flows off them into creeks and reservoirs to the weed-munching services provided by cattle, which helps keep the wildflowers blooming and the native frogs and salamanders breeding. And keeping ranchers in business means that the land doesn't end up getting paved over."

WORST OF TIMES; BEST OF TIMES

Of course, "keeping ranchers in business" in the 21st century is a challenge, particularly in the Bay Area. Real estate values and population growth favor land fragmentation; estate taxes fall hard on land-rich, cash-poor ranchers after the death of family members; cattle prices are subject to the vagaries of a global market; and purchases of former ranches by public agencies can put them off-limits for grazing. And then there's the current drought and the specter of climate change.

But there is a flip side to this tsunami of challenges. The land trust movement now views protecting ranchlands as essential to large-scale habitat protection, and many land trusts have "working lands" programs. The locavore food movement has spawned a market of consumers interested in eating foods grown close to home in a sustainable way, as well as a new appreciation for the people who are producing that food. And scientists working to address climate change have demonstrated that rangelands sequester greenhouse gas and have the potential to sequester even more when specific management practices are used. At a national level, "carbon offset markets" are in development, so that ranchers who take care of their land and avoid converting it to other uses could potentially receive financial benefits.

This spirit of innovation is spreading, and throughout the region many people involved in land conservation are seeing the upside of integrating privately owned and managed ranches into strategies for preserving biodiversity and open space.

CRITICAL LANDS

In 2011, a consortium of 125 nonprofits, scientists, academics, and public agencies working under the auspices of the Bay Area Open Space Council presented "a vision for the region and how we can work together to preserve biodiversity," according to council deputy director Annie Burke. The Conservation Lands Network report was, in essence, a blueprint for determining the lands that should be prioritized for protection. Over four million acres were studied, integrating over 1,000 variables, from red-legged frogs to redwood forests to migratory linkages to climate mitigation. When all the data was crunched, rangelands popped up again and again as priority areas for conservation, comprising more than 60 percent of the 1.1 million acres deemed "critical lands" in need of protection. "The report showed us that rangelands support a significant percentage of the biodiversity extant in the Bay Area," says Burke.

Going deeper, the nonprofit California Rangeland Trust found that approximately 585,000 acres of rangeland in the nine Bay Area counties and Santa Cruz are already protected from development through direct ownership by public agencies and nonprofit land trusts. Another 150,000 are protected under

conservation easement, meaning they are privately owned but prohibited from being developed. “The remaining 1.3 million acres are privately owned but provide numerous public benefits,” says Nita Vail, CEO of the trust.

MAMMOTHS AND COWS

Flying over at 30,000 feet, one can easily visualize the Bay Area rangelands’ ancient beginnings. Rangelands dominated the region throughout the Pleistocene, which ended only 10,000 years ago, the mere blink of a geologic eye. In 2005, E. Breck Parkman, a senior ecologist for California State Parks, wrote in a paper entitled “The California Serengeti” that “the African Serengeti [of today] pales in comparison to the [prehistoric] Bay Area in terms of the diversity and density of grazing species in one place.” It was “one of the greatest natural phenomena of all time,” he added. Even the Bay itself was not a bay, but a vast grassy plain with a river cutting through it, emptying into the Pacific Ocean at the continental shelf, near the Farallones. The entire region was so fecund with perennial grasses that it supported and attracted thousands of herbivores, including Columbian mammoths, whose remains continue to pop up in places like downtown San Francisco and suburban San Jose.

Most of the native species that grazed and shaped those Pleistocene rangelands have been gone for millennia, except for deer, tule elk, pronghorn, and the handful of bison in Golden Gate Park. But for the past 200 years, since the arrival of the European settlers, *Taurus bos*, an ungulate domesticated on the other side of the world 10,500 years ago from wild aurochs, has been the grazer of choice. But cows are a different kind of grazer with different habits than elk or bison. Herds of cattle left on their own can overgraze an area. And yet domestication means that their patterns of movement on a landscape can be guided. And the last 30 years of both conservation biology and range science have made it abundantly clear that while poorly managed cattle can significantly disrupt and harm rangelands, well-managed grazing is an important tool for managing these lands in the absence of the large wild ungulate herds of yesteryear.

NOT YOUR MOTHER’S RANCHERS

“We try to manage our cattle herd to simulate the large herds of elk and antelope that once roamed California’s grasslands,” says Doniga Markegard, one-half of the husband-and-wife team that runs family-owned Markegard Family Grass-Fed, on the coast side of the Santa Cruz Mountains. She had a background in nature-based education and permaculture, with experience as a wildlife tracker, when she met her husband, Erik Markegard. He is a sixth-generation rancher raised on a 2,000-acre ranch in San Mateo County owned by musician Neil Young, where he learned the ropes by helping his father manage the ranch. After Doniga and Erik got married, they moved on to a nearby ranch on the San Mateo coast where Erik had been raising his own cattle since 1987.

Both Doniga and Erik are keenly attuned to the value of healthy food and healthy landscapes. They guide the grazing of their cows and sheep using movable electric fences to avoid overgrazing and soil erosion, a practice known as holistic management (HM).

Doniga is an eloquent spokesperson for the culture she believes ranching embodies: “the values of family life, open space, and wildlife.” Their children — ages 12, 8, 6, and 4 — all help with ranch operations. Even the youngest can shout up the hill, loud and determined, in just the right way to call in their herd of Belted Galloway and Angus cows.

To an outsider it looks like an impossibly ideal life. But the challenges are formidable. First of all, there’s the challenge of assembling enough pasture to maintain a minimum viable operation. They graze their livestock on some 8,000 acres, but their home ranch (which they don’t own but lease from the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District) is only 1,000 acres. The other 7,000 acres are leased on various properties in San Mateo and Sonoma counties. Managing that kind of far-flung operation takes a lot of work: trucking cows around, applying for permits, writing lease agreements. According to Doniga, they’ve nearly doubled their grazing acreage in recent years but because of the drought, their production has stayed the same. Then there’s the challenge of processing the meat and, finally, getting it to market, which they do direct to consumers via their website, ongoing scheduled customer deliveries, and farmers’ markets.

And they do everything themselves, 24/7.

The Markegards and other Bay Area ranchers trying to hold on to the ranching way of life in the 21st century have an unprecedented opportunity to share ideas and challenges through a series of discussions being hosted down the road at the TomKat Ranch, where the conversation is as important as the beef. TomKat has become a learning lab, pushing new research out and bringing important information in. One recent study by ranch scientists shows grazing experiments that resulted in a marked increase of native perennial grasses. A related project, Point Blue's Rangeland Watershed Initiative, promotes range management methods that increase soil water retention while also increasing grass production and carbon sequestration. Data indicates that increasing water retention by 15 percent over a five-year period could save enough water to twice fill Hetch Hetchy. And then there's the Marin Carbon Project, whose three-ranch demonstration project in West Marin has shown how the timely application of organic compost to grasslands can dramatically increase both forage production and carbon sequestration. "It's exciting to be at the center of so much creative thinking," says Wendy Millet, director of the TomKat Ranch Educational Foundation.

THE ECOLOGY OF A PASTURE

The conversations at TomKat are part of the growing movement to find more ways for ecologically sustainable ranching to be more economically sustainable, and vice versa. Another player in the field is Panorama Organic Grass-Fed Meats, founded in 2000 by four Northern California ranchers, including Darrell Wood. He was already respected in environmental circles for his work protecting vernal pools on his property in Northern California, populated by endemic fairy shrimp and tiger salamanders. But respect didn't pay the bills, so he helped start Panorama to make sure grass-fed meat producers could find markets willing to pay the additional costs of going grass-fed and organic. Fifteen years later, Panorama sells to over 200 Whole Foods Markets and many smaller stores, giving ranchers in the grass-fed niche a marketing and distribution network that extends into nine states.

Panorama's market access and ability to support the switch to organic pasture was one of the factors that attracted Greg Schmid of Los Rios Farms. Schmid and his family live in a buttercream yellow house near Winters, set back from the county road and surrounded by pasture. On a hot fall day he invites a visitor into an old-fashioned parlor, almost from another century in its sense of comfort, quiet, and tranquility.

Though a more traditional rancher than the Markegards, Schmid is similarly fascinated with "the ecology of a pasture," he says, gazing out at one of his from a window seat. "That's the key, the organic matter; it reflects the type of grazing that you do. The greater the organic matter, the better conditions are for everyone. Cows, wildlife, dung beetles, the whole cycle of life. There are all kinds of stories going on out there."

Schmid's work is "more like being a farmer than a rancher," he says. He has ranched on native pasture and irrigated pasture, but prefers a mix of natives and nonnatives, what an ecologist would call "a novel ecosystem." He uses a mix of plants "that the cattle think are delicious — alfalfa, clovers, annuals, ryegrass — and that will put weight on them. I use rotational grazing and move them around. If you keep cattle on a piece of land for too long, they eat and trample the vegetation to the nub, and destroy the 'solar component' — the leaves that capture sunlight and rebuild."

How often he moves the cattle depends on soils, vegetation cover, and weather. "If you leave cattle on a wet pasture for too long their hooves can scar and pock the whole pasture, and when the soil dries out it gets too compacted to grow anything," he says. Schmid moves his cattle on foot or on ATV, or sometimes, "once they know the routine," he'll just open a gate and say, "Here cow!"

SALAMANDERS AND BUTTERFLIES

While the grass-fed niche in the Bay Area is small and growing — nationally grass-fed beef captures only 5 percent of the market — it is the traditional ranchers who also manage for sustainability that have the capacity to protect the largest and most intact swaths of the remaining rangelands. In the East Bay, Seth

Adams, land conservation director of Save Mount Diablo (SMD), works on stitching together a “national park-size conservation-managed area around Mount Diablo; not state park size — *national* park size,” he emphasizes, with public and private land all under some form of conservation management. Adams says that SMD owns 20 properties, and “we graze most of them.” He adds, “As long as neighbors stay in ranching, I can focus on protecting properties that are being sold for development.” Adams sees ranchers as added conservation value: “Many of the ranchers I know have been here for decades and they are the best naturalists I know; they know the area like the back of their hands.” These ranchers show that holistic management is not the only path to a sustainable landscape. Traditional ranchers who have been able to stay on their ranches are attuned to forage, livestock, and ecological interactions, and they move their cattle not with electric fences but with distributed water sources and salt blocks.

Like many conservation activists, Adams only came to appreciate the role of ranchers over time. “I started working for Save Mount Diablo in 1988 and worked hard to eliminate ranching from Mount Diablo State Park. There was a big huge fight about taking grazing off the park.” But during the decades after the battle was won and the cattle were removed, Adams saw firsthand “that some landscapes benefited and some suffered, and the new science coming out supported the idea that some landscapes needed grazing.” Adams also realized that “grazing is a cheap way to manage fire fuel” as he took on the challenge of managing fire-prone areas.

One of SMD’s lessees is Carissa (Cari) Koopmann Rivers, part of the well-established Koopmann ranching family that has been recognized for environmental stewardship at their home ranch near Sunol. She is also ranch manager of Audubon’s 6,700-acre Bobcat Ranch near Winters. There, she oversees enhancements in cattle grazing and wildlife habitat. Adams says Rivers “is managing grazing using ecological principles to bring properties back to better health and she’s interested in how the ranching community continues into the next generation.” She’s raising the bar, in both her management of springs and grasses and in her ability to connect with people—and her cattle are beautiful.”

But as a young rancher, Rivers encounters formidable barriers, such as the lack of affordable grazing land. “We can’t compete with the big operators,” she says, “or bid as high as them, so if we do find ground, it’s so far away or so small that it doesn’t make sense economically because we can’t run enough cows, or it needs so much work in terms of water development, fence repair, noxious weed control, etc.”

Like her brother Clayton who works as a rangeland ecologist at the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, Cari also works two jobs and drives long hours to tend cattle at multiple sites in order to make a living. “From my house to Mount Diablo, it’s 68 miles. I drove about 10,000 miles in 2014 just to check on cattle, develop water, fix fences, and meet with Save Mount Diablo staff.”

One of the sites she visits is the Koopmann family ranch, located between Highway 680, a golf course, and several ranchettes, one with a helipad. Because of the area’s high property values the family was hit with a substantial estate tax bill after Cari and Clayton’s grandparents passed away. But parents Tim and Melinda Koopmann were determined to keep the ranch intact, and working with the California Rangeland Trust, they found a way to do that by selling conservation easements on parts of their ranch to protect several listed species, including the California tiger salamander. “California tiger salamanders are the most lucrative livestock I’ve ever raised!” Tim says.

Tiger salamanders aren’t the only federally listed species getting a helping hand from managed grazing. Biologist Stuart B. Weiss of Creekside Center for Earth Observation likes salamanders, but his true passion is the threatened bay checkerspot butterfly. To talk with him is to shape-shift in scale down to dirt level, a kind of “Honey, I Shrunk the Kids” vantage point that turns grasslands into a place of microfaunal jungle odysseys. For Weiss, everything about well-managed grazing programs — public or private, holistic or not — on the region’s unique serpentine soils is good news. Without cattle to crop the nonnative, annual grasses, the area would become a thatch of impenetrability, stifling for the native host plants of the checkerspot larva and impassable for salamanders and frogs. As an added bonus, the annual grasses on Coyote Ridge south of San Jose — the last major refuge for the checkerspot — absorb smog-forming gases

from nearby Highway 101 and Silicon Valley; grazing by the cows helps remove tons of nitrogen from the ecosystem every year. “My haiku is: Cows graze quietly / Grasses remove smog from air / Many butterflies,” says Weiss.

Weiss has worked closely for years with nearby rancher Justin Fields, who grazes his cows on Coyote Ridge, parts of which are managed by the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority. It’s not only critical habitat for the checkerspot, it’s also part of a key wildlife corridor between the central Diablo Range — a huge swath of privately and publicly owned wildlands where mountain lions prey on tule elk — and the forested Santa Cruz Mountains to the west. In between, however, are the Coyote Valley and Highway 101, and if you’re a four-legged creature looking to find a mate or prey, it’s basically the mother of all corridor challenges.

THE CORRIDOR CONNECTION

Assembling a viable corridor across the Coyote Valley is the dream of Andrea Mackenzie, general manager of the Open Space Authority. “One day,” she says, “there could be a protected corridor all the way from the Diablo Range and Coyote Ridge to the east, across our Coyote Valley Open Space Preserve to the Santa Cruz Mountains on the west.”

Key to that dream is the 2,700-acre Tilton Ranch, owned by the Baird family. Janet Baird Burback’s great grandparents bought the parcel in 1917, when the valley was still wide open. Burback is a traditional rancher who also raises some grass-fed beef on the side for family and friends. Her ranch is one of the last holdouts against a tide of development sweeping south from San Jose. Because of its strategic location, Tilton Ranch is part of the area dubbed “an essential corridor link” for wildlife by the Living Landscapes Campaign of five South Bay conservation nonprofits.

But ranching is a difficult business, and Burback and her family have had to sell portions of the ranch to generate additional revenue. In the late 1980s her grandmother sold a 350-acre parcel to developers. But the development plans never panned out, and in 2010 the Open Space Authority purchased the property, which will open to the public in the summer of 2015 as Coyote Valley Open Space Preserve.

Part of the preserve’s ongoing management plan calls for leasing it to local ranchers, including Burback and Fields, reflecting the authority’s mission to preserve open space for both public recreation and agriculture. “Partnerships with ranchers like Janet and Justin are essential,” Mackenzie says. “The health of our natural landscapes and ranching are inextricably linked.”

These new alliances make Lynn Huntsinger very happy. A professor at UC Berkeley’s Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management, she’s been studying the intersection of ecology and ranching since 1983. “Sustaining rangeland ecosystems is as much a social process as an ecological one,” she says, “and alliances are key to creating sustainable ranchland landscapes.” She believes that “cultural differences must be overcome, so that each side begins to understand the other’s point of view. Where you can get different landowners working together across property boundaries, where the public and private lines disappear, you can support learning about the ecosystem for the common good and get conservation management taking place on a landscape scale. That’s where the magic happens.”

Huntsinger is one of more than 100 scientists, public agencies, and nonprofits who have signed up to be part of the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition. Director Pelayo Alvarez, Ph.D., says the goal is to “keep ranchers ranching.” Alvarez spoke at a state-sponsored Climate Adaptation Forum, brimming with climate activists, in late 2014. “We need to make it easy for ranchers to do the right thing,” he said, and proceeded to tick off his priorities: facilitate the permitting process; increase the amount of leasable land on state parks; and establish common conservation goals with ranchers backed up by policy, financial incentives, and technical support. “We must reduce the barriers to implementing true rangeland conservation if we are to achieve real climate resilience in the Bay Area and all of California,” Alvarez told the crowd.

When you listen to evangelists like Huntsinger and Alvarez and ranchers like Doniga Markegard and Cari Koopmann Rivers, the range of possibilities seems endless. It's clear that a movement is growing that views well-managed rangelands as hidden assets, private lands yielding both ecologically measurable and intangible public benefits. But real hurdles remain, especially when environmental concerns and rancher needs conflict. And for the dwindling number of ranchers left in the Bay Area, there is concern about maintaining a local ranching economy large enough to support basic services like veterinarians, feed stores, truckers, and equipment vendors. Meanwhile, drought and climate change cast the longest shadows.

But ranchers in the Bay Area are a committed group, and the opportunities for innovation and collaboration are growing. With a new generation creating powerful alliances and connections with the food-conscious urban population, it makes one wonder if, like the spirit of Hank Stone, the answers to some of the Bay Area's toughest food and environmental challenges might just be hidden in plain sight, right where the cows are grazing.

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***Kelly Cash** is a Bay Area freelance environmental writer and nonprofit communications consultant who chooses not to hide her Texas roots. She has worked with many conservation organizations, including the Malpai Borderlands Group, the Nature Conservancy, and the Bay Area Open Space Council.*

***The California Rangeland Trust**, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, was founded in 1998 by a group of innovative cattlemen and women, to conserve the open space, fresh air, clean water, and wildlife habitat provided by working lands. Using conservation easements, the Rangeland Trust has protected 283,000 acres of privately owned rangeland throughout the state. For more information and to see videos of Rangeland Trust ranchers, visit rangelandtrust.org.*

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WHAT CAN LAFCO DO TO PRESERVE AGRICULTURE AND OPEN SPACE?

Jeff Wiedemann, Rancher

What is the difference between the two?

Open Space is a general term describing undeveloped land including parks, school yards, golf courses and agricultural land. It is largely used for recreation, environmental protection and for esthetic purposes.

Agricultural Land is land used for the production of food, fiber, medicinal plants, energy, etc. They are very similar in appearance but very different in purpose.

Why should we care?

Everybody talks about preserving agriculture but nobody does anything about it. The image of agriculture portrayed through popular culture and popular media tends to be either unsophisticated agrarian producers using ancient or harmful cultural techniques or massive corporate farms producing poisonous, un-nutritious and flavorless food at the expense of the planet and an unsuspecting consumer. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Still, It is comforting to lump Agriculture together with Open Space because the image is more palatable and attractive. Open Space does serve a very valuable purpose in our society and around the world. Preservation of habitat is an extremely important goal for everyone. Recreation and esthetics are critical to our physical and mental wellbeing. However, lumping the two together and thinking about them as a sort of larger Open Space ignores some very important issues.

Principal among them is feeding the world. By mid century, the world population is projected to grow by 35%. This could require a 100% increase in worldwide crop yields. Actual numbers are debatable but the trends are irrefutable:

- Developing countries (China, India,...) are demanding more and better food
- Underdeveloped countries continue to increase populations as medical advances save more lives
- Farmland is lost to non-agricultural uses such as recreational open space, habitat protection and development
- Desertification (largely a result of under grazing!)
- Climate change
- Water supplies
- Over-regulation of agricultural practices and on and on.

What can LAFCO do?

First would be to acknowledge the importance of privately owned, privately managed, economically sustainable units of agricultural farmland. Managing recreational land and protected habitat require tools that maintain the status quo. Agriculture demands a set of tools that address ever changing climates, changing markets, changing regulations and changing economics. Clearly and historically, the most productive way to feed the world is having farmers and ranchers who own their land and who can be innovative and address changes as they arise. Those growers are not going to ruin the productivity of their land for the sake of a quick profit. What works less well but is the trend today is to burden farmers and ranchers with dictates on how they should produce food.

Second is to look at existing approaches. Zoning laws could be reviewed to ensure the protection of ag economies, not just the land. Enforcement would help (junkification?). Down zoning must include fair

compensation to the ag land owner. Mitigation is fine in some cases but it often reduces or eliminates food production opportunities. Conservation Easements should include the protection of woodlands, riparian corridors and non-productive areas, not arable or grazing lands. Setting areas aside for the protection of agricultural land is fine but don't trap the producers in an uneconomic environment. Advocate the establishment of support industries. Lower property taxes on land that legitimately produces food.

The most successful model using tax dollars is the University Extension Service using research done in universities to answer questions posed by producers and researchers, then applied in a practical way. It is a symbiotic relationship. The opposite effect can be seen with the assertion by EPA (2% lifetime success rate with their ESA) of Clean Water Act provisions that adversely effect most farm and ranchland.

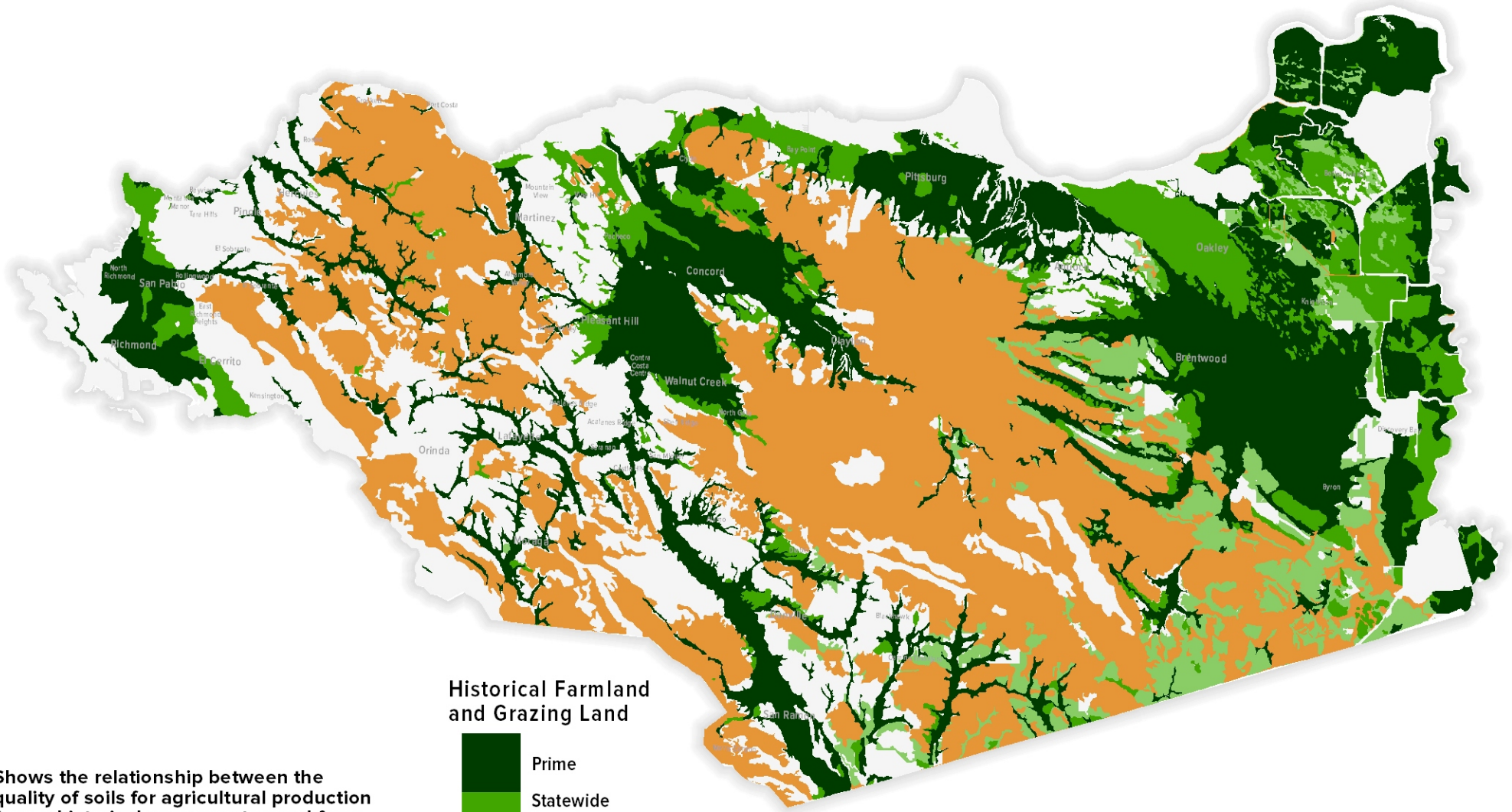
Third, help dispel the myths about agriculture. Cattle are widely blamed for methane production, wasting water resources, producing unhealthy food, and on and on. Do the research. Too much hype and too many agendas. Most of the world's land is not arable and the greatest portion of ag land is grazing land. This is where the highest quality protein is produced using rainfall and self propelled harvesters.

It's extremely important and valuable for pop culture to identify concerns with our human activities (establishing national parks, identifying the effects of DDT, identifying the loss of species, air quality,...). But base your decisions on verified science not on pop culture fantasies. You will be surprised.

--Jeff Wiedemann

Contra Costa County

Yesterday's Important Agricultural Lands



Historical Farmland and Grazing Land



Shows the relationship between the quality of soils for agricultural production from a historical survey on top and from 2010 farmland and grazing land below.

CA Dept of Conservation
- Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program 2010

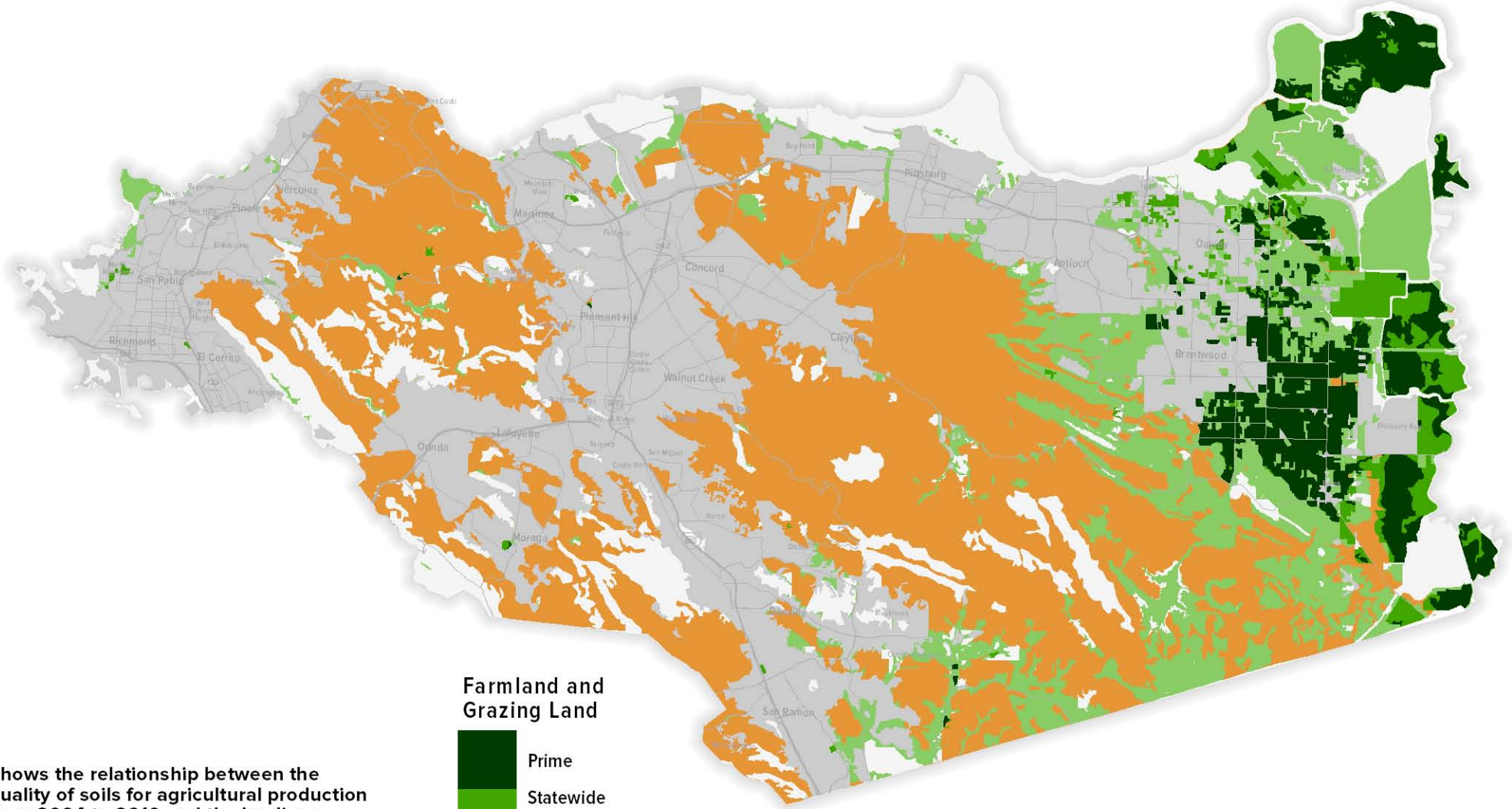
US Dept of Agriculture
- Soil Survey Geographic Database

CA Protected Area and National Easement Databases
- CA Parks and Easements 2013



Contra Costa County

Today's Important Agricultural Lands



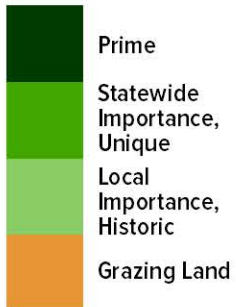
Shows the relationship between the quality of soils for agricultural production from 2004 to 2010 and the land's use for urban development.

CA Dept of Conservation
- Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program 2010

US Dept of Agriculture
- Soil Survey Geographic Database

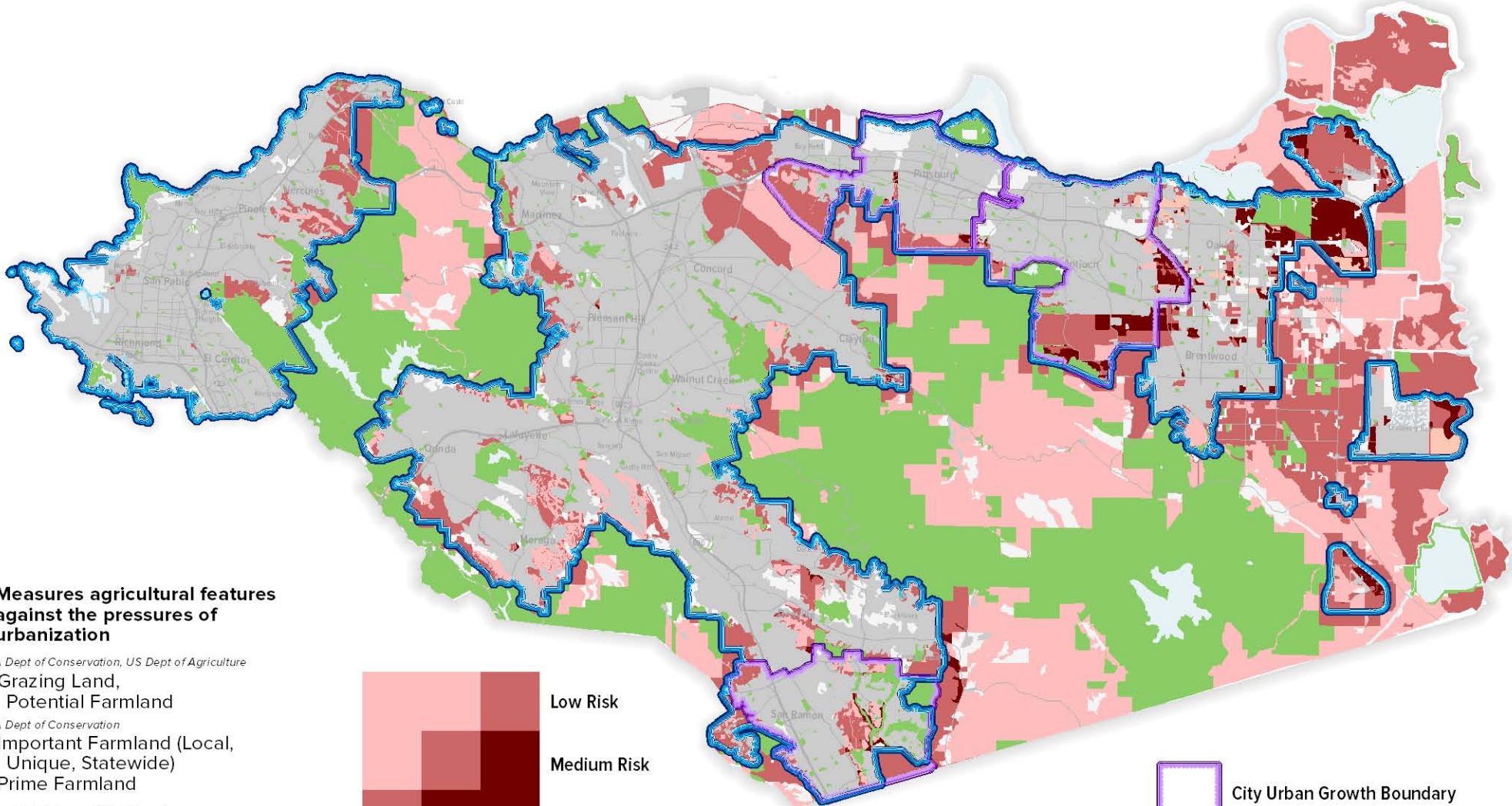
CA Protected Area and National Easement Databases
- CA Parks and Easements 2013

Farmland and Grazing Land



Contra Costa County

Agricultural Lands At Risk of Development in 2014



Measures agricultural features against the pressures of urbanization

CA Dept of Conservation, US Dept of Agriculture

- Grazing Land, Potential Farmland

CA Dept of Conservation

- Important Farmland (Local, Unique, Statewide)
- Prime Farmland

Greenbelt Alliance At Risk Report

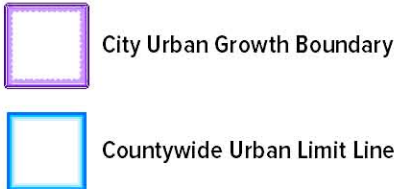
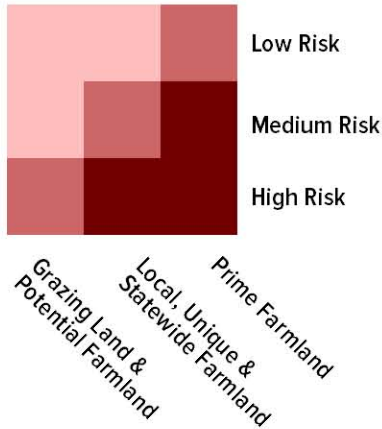
- At Risk tracks the pressures of urban development in 2013

Evaluates development proposals, zoning and growth boundaries to measure the likelihood of urbanization

Contra Costa County

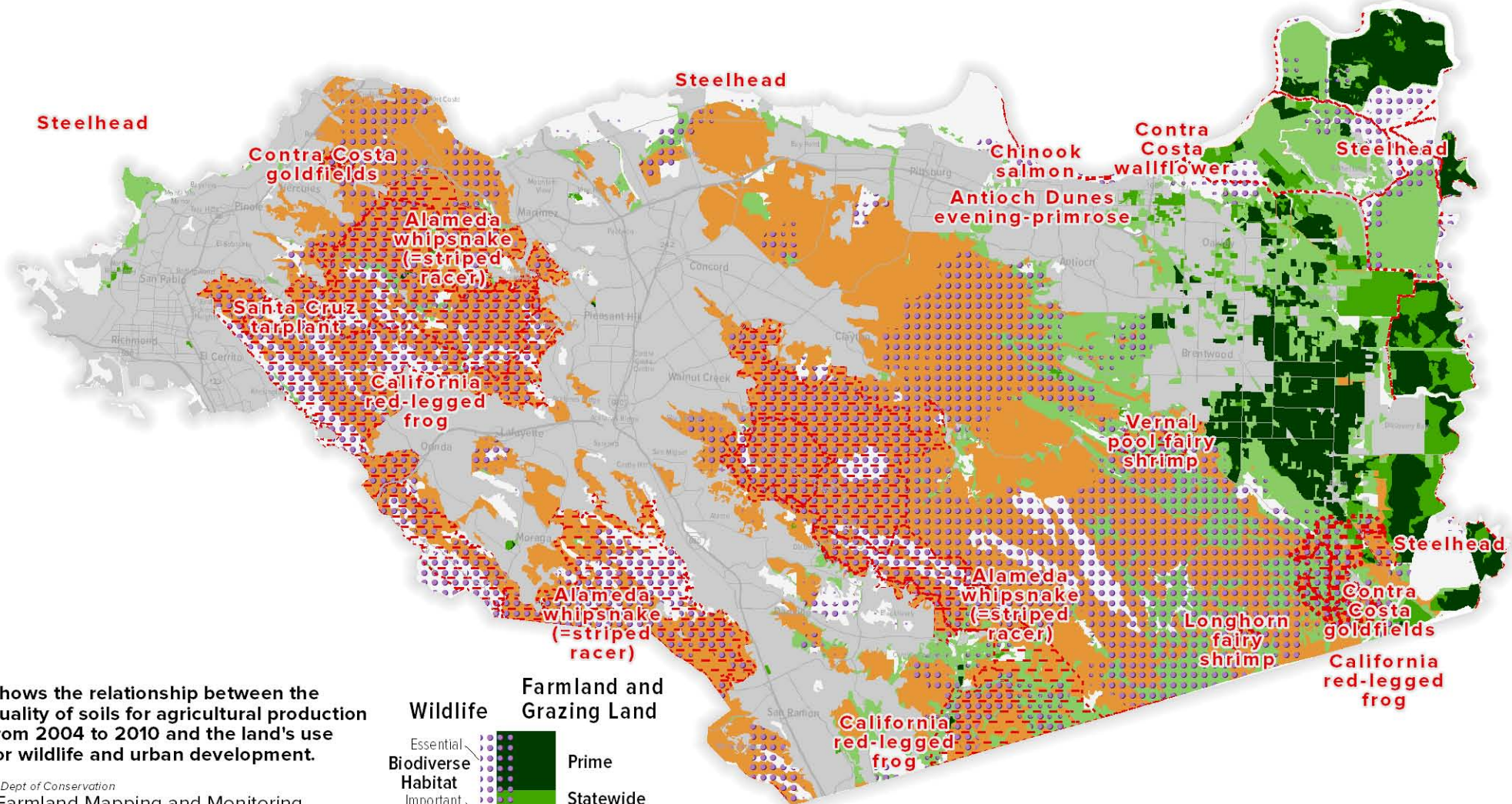
- Urban Growth Boundaries and Urban Limit Line

CA Protected Area and National Easement Databases
- CA Parks and Easements 2014



Contra Costa County

Important Agricultural Lands and Wildlife Habitat



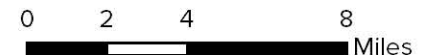
Shows the relationship between the quality of soils for agricultural production from 2004 to 2010 and the land's use for wildlife and urban development.

- CA Dept of Conservation
 - Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program 2010
- US Dept of Agriculture
 - Soil Survey Geographic Database
- Bay Area Open Space Council
 - Conservation Lands Network
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
 - Critical Habitat 2014
- CA Protected Area and National Easement Databases
 - CA Parks and Easements 2013

Wildlife	Farmland and Grazing Land
Essential Biodiverse Habitat Important	Prime
Endangered Critical Habitat Threatened	Statewide Importance, Unique
Fragmented Biodiverse Habitat	Local Importance, Historic
	Grazing Land

Top Most Layers

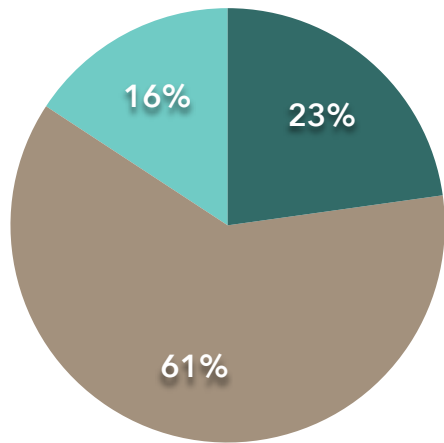
	Protected Lands
	Urban Lands



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY MARKET REPORT

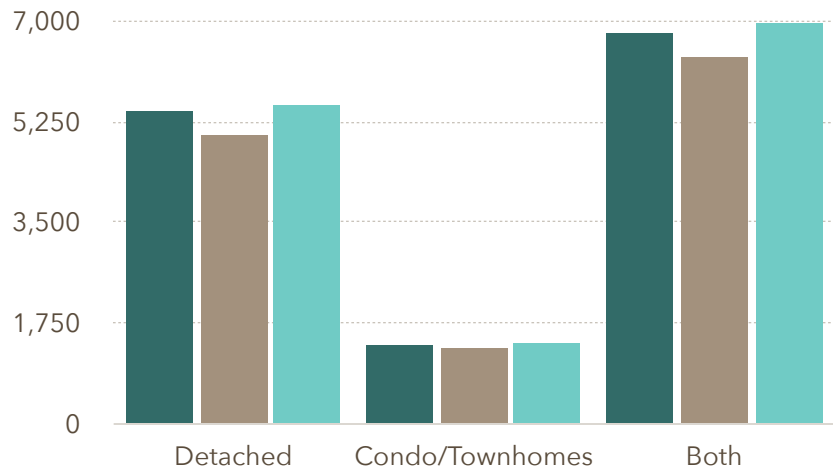
This is a custom report for the Contra Costa County Market area. Please remember that you can generate your own market reports using our Monthly Statistics & SmartStats applications.

FINANCE TYPE IN SUM



● Cash ● Conventional ● FHA

TRANSACTIONS YTD



■ 2013- YTD ■ 2014- YTD ■ 2015- YTD

TRANSACTIONS BY TYPE

Category	2013- YTD	2014- YTD	2015- YTD
Detached	5,439	5,031	5,553
Condo/Townhomes	1,373	1,331	1,401
Both Detached/Condos	6,812	6,362	6,954

All transactions charted Year to Date by year. Yearly values are tallied from the first of the year until the 6th of July.

TRANSACTIONS BY TYPE- 1

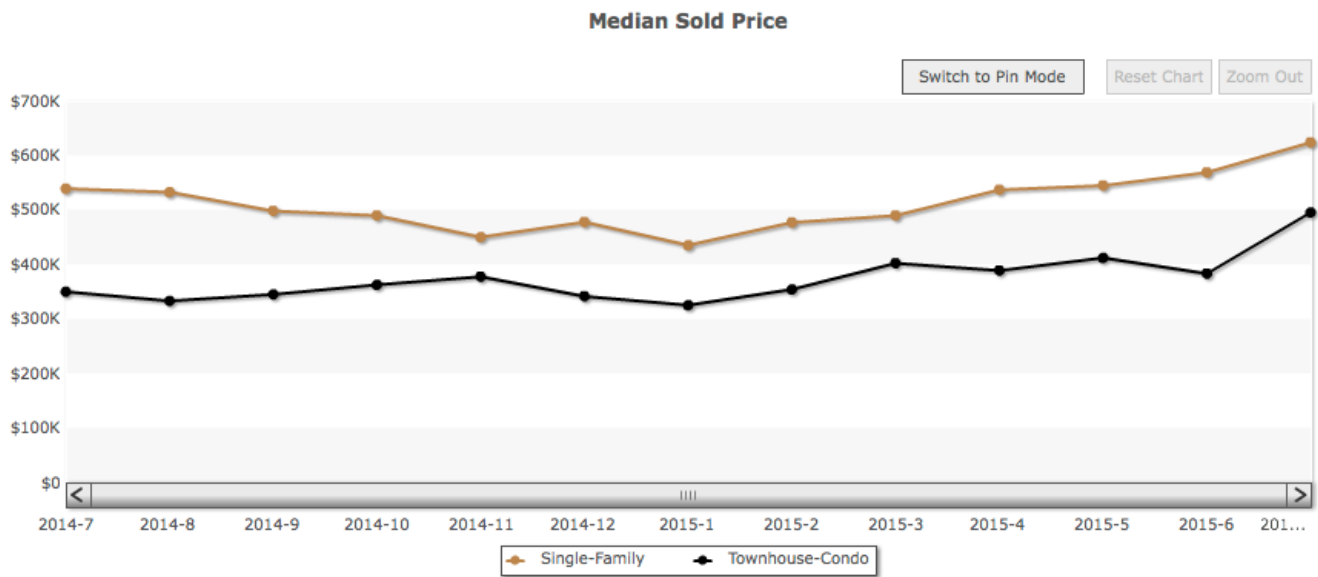
Category	2013- YTD	2014- YTD	2015- YTD
Cash	2,765	1,816	1,606
Conventional	3,912	4,263	4,330
FHA	768	778	1,111
Total	7,445	6,857	7,047

Major transaction financing types charted Year to Date by year. Yearly values are tallied from the first of the year until the 6th of July.

DETACHED MEDIAN SALES PRICE YTD

Category	2013- YTD	2014- YTD	2015- YTD
Detached	415,000	475,000	518,000
Condo/TH	269,000	357,000	385,207

Median sales price charted Year to Date by year. Yearly values are tallied from the first of the year until the 6th of July. Median is the middle point of any set, and is generally a more stable metric than average.



Median Sales Price by Month for the past six months.

It's worth your time, we promise.

[View this email in your browser](#)



July Newsletter

Letter from the President

It's time for an upgrade.

At least that is what **Standard and Poor's** said of California's economy. As the new fiscal year got underway, the state earned its highest rating in 14 years. This vote of confidence follows the passage of the **2015-2016 budget** and rewards the combination of surging revenues and continued fiscal restraint under Governor Brown.

While the state's AA- rating may seem like high praise, California still sits at third to last in the nation, beating out only Illinois and New Jersey.

If the state wants to continue our climb up the leaderboard, the vitality of East Bay employers will be key. As the **premier employer-led advocacy organization** in a region primed for continued economic growth, the East Bay Leadership Council is poised to activate our diverse membership on regional and statewide issues under the keen watch of our new Policy Director in Josh Huber, and host informational and inspirational events with the help of our talented new Office and Events Manager in Laura Case.

The East Bay's economy and the Council's staff may be gearing up, but it is going to be tough

Blog Updates



Make the East Bay What it Seems

Picture this. A freshly polished loafer sits in the window of a local boutique. One problem: the soles of the shoes are torn and full of holes.



A Debt of Gratitude

70 percent of students who graduate today will graduate with debt. Congressman Eric Swalwell is one of them.

for the Council to upgrade from the leadership of Keith Archuleta as Chair in the past year. Under Keith's leadership the Council hosted the most successful East Bay USA and Small Business Awards events in our history, built meaningful partnerships with like-minded organizations, and led the efforts to "garden" behind the scenes in ways that will help us organize and advocate better than ever before.

The Council's new Chair, Andrew Sabey began his term on July 1 and I am certain that his leadership will guide this organization through a year of effective advocacy and continued upgrades.

Warmest regards,



P.S. Speaking of upgrades, the Governor's Office of Business Development launched their new **California Business Portal**. The upgraded tool provides access to many resources aimed at helping both entrepreneurs and established business owners navigate the bureaucracy of business. The need for consolidating information in a user-friendly format has been discussed frequently in our Economic Development and Small Business Task Force and it's exciting to see this latest development from GO-Biz.

Upcoming Events

July 21

Water Task Force

July 22

Economic Development & Small Business Task Force

August 4

Transportation Task Force

August 5

Workforce Development and Education Task Force

August 6

Health Care Task Force

August 7

Environmental and Manufacturing Task Force



Advocacy Update

Before many of the task forces went quiet for the July 4th holiday, they wasted no time tackling key statewide and regional issues including:

- Ensuring **continued health care innovation and leadership** through the Medi-Cal 2020 waiver proposal
- Opposing **trailer bill nonsense** in critical water funding discussions
- Advocating for **continued collaboration**

Join the Council

between Bay Area water agencies for drought preparedness

- Enhancing **STEM learning opportunities** critical to skills development and job advancement
- Supporting **Tesoro's proposed seismic upgrades**

In the month to come the Council will focus squarely on the Special Legislative Session on transportation and Medi-Cal funding. And while the outcome of this session will likely not be known until the fall, you can expect updates from our Health Care and Transportation Task Forces as we make our voice heard throughout the process.

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HOUSING CRISIS: FAST FACTS

Highlights from “California’s High Housing Costs: Causes and Consequences”

Mac Taylor ∞ California Legislative Analyst’s Office ∞ March 17, 2015

California’s Home Prices and Rents Higher Than Just About Anywhere Else.

Between 1970 and 1980, California home prices went from 30 percent above U.S. levels to more than 80 percent higher. Today, an average California home costs \$440,000, about 2 ½ times the average national home price (\$180,000). Also, California’s average monthly rent is about \$1,240, 50 percent higher than the rest of the country (\$840 per month). The gap is wider in coastal communities where homes are now more than three times more expensive than the rest of the country.

Building Less Housing Than People Demand Drives High Housing Costs.

Not enough housing exists in the state’s major coastal communities to accommodate all of the households that want to live there. A shortage of housing along California’s coast means households wishing to live there compete for limited housing. This competition bids up home prices and rents. Some people who find California’s coast unaffordable turn instead to inland communities, causing prices there to rise as well.

High Housing Costs Problematic for Households and the State’s Economy.

Many households make serious trade-offs to afford living here. Households with low incomes, in particular, spend much more of their income on housing. High home prices here also push homeownership out of reach for many. Faced with expensive housing options, workers in California’s coastal communities commute 10 percent further each day than commuters elsewhere, largely because limited housing options exist near major job centers.

NIMBYs, CEQA, Local Government Finance Structure to Blame for Housing Shortage.

When residents are concerned about new housing, they can use the community’s land use authority to slow or stop housing from being built or require it to be built at lower densities. CEQA’s complicated procedural requirements give development opponents significant opportunities to continue challenging housing projects after local governments approve them. Local government finance structure typically gives cities and counties greater incentives to approve nonresidential development or lower density housing development.

Development Fees Levied On California Builders Substantially Higher Than Elsewhere.

A 2012 national survey found that the average development fee levied by California local governments (excluding water-related fees) was just over \$22,000 per single-family home compared with about \$6,000 per single-family home in the rest of the country.

California Needs to Build An Additional 100,000 Homes Per Year.

On top of the 100,000 to 140,000 housing units California is expected to build each year, the state probably would have to build as many as 100,000 additional units annually—almost exclusively in its coastal communities—to seriously mitigate its problems with housing affordability.

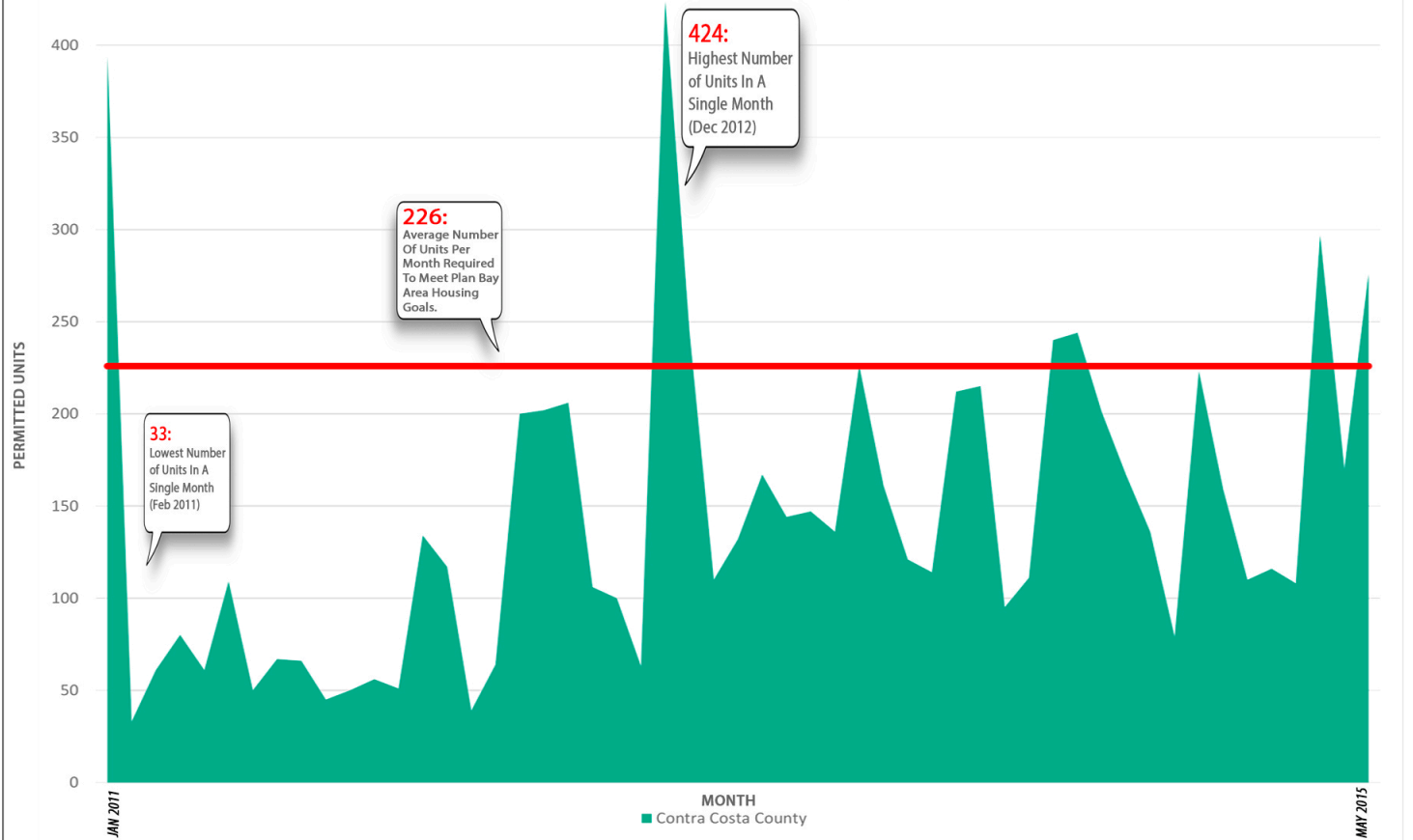
Download the full report at <http://www.lao.ca.gov/reports/2015/finance/housing-costs/housing-costs.pdf>

January 2011 through May 2015

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

BY THE NUMBERS: Contra Costa County and its 19 cities are falling further and further behind when it comes to providing an adequate housing supply for their new workers. While the county is exceeding by ninefold its Plan Bay Area projections for new jobs, it is failing to produce enough houses, condominiums and apartments.

Housing Permits By Month



HOUSING

New units needed:
11,975

Actual Units Permitted:
7,640

-56.7%
BEHIND
PROJECTIONS

JOBS

New jobs projected:
18,030

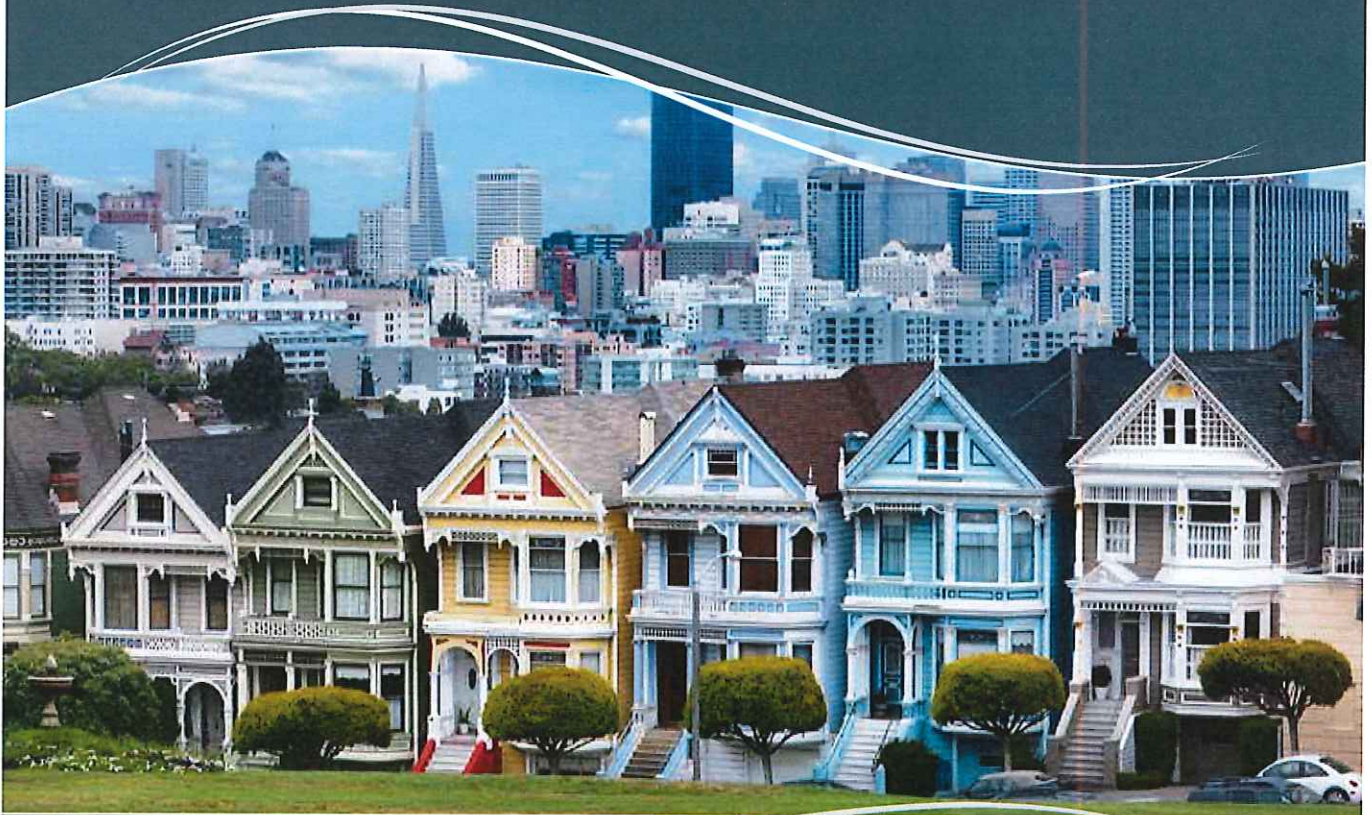
Actual New Jobs:
176,380

878%
BEYOND
PROJECTIONS

VS

California's High Housing Costs

Causes and Consequences



MAC TAYLOR • LEGISLATIVE ANALYST • MARCH 17, 2015

LAO 

AN LAO REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

California's Home Prices and Rents Higher Than Just About Anywhere Else. Housing in California has long been more expensive than most of the rest of the country. Beginning in about 1970, however, the gap between California's home prices and those in the rest country started to widen. Between 1970 and 1980, California home prices went from 30 percent above U.S. levels to more than 80 percent higher. This trend has continued. Today, an average California home costs \$440,000, about two-and-a-half times the average national home price (\$180,000). Also, California's average monthly rent is about \$1,240, 50 percent higher than the rest of the country (\$840 per month).

Building Less Housing Than People Demand Drives High Housing Costs. California is a desirable place to live. Yet not enough housing exists in the state's major coastal communities to accommodate all of the households that want to live there. In these areas, community resistance to housing, environmental policies, lack of fiscal incentives for local governments to approve housing, and limited land constrains new housing construction. A shortage of housing along California's coast means households wishing to live there compete for limited housing. This competition bids up home prices and rents. Some people who find California's coast unaffordable turn instead to California's inland communities, causing prices there to rise as well. In addition to a shortage of housing, high land and construction costs also play some role in high housing prices.

High Housing Costs Problematic for Households and the State's Economy. Amid high housing costs, many households make serious trade-offs to afford living here. Households with low incomes, in particular, spend much more of their income on housing. High home prices here also push homeownership out of reach for many. Faced with expensive housing options, workers in California's coastal communities commute 10 percent further each day than commuters elsewhere, largely because limited housing options exist near major job centers. Californians are also four times more likely to live in crowded housing. And, finally, the state's high housing costs make California a less attractive place to call home, making it more difficult for companies to hire and retain qualified employees, likely preventing the state's economy from meeting its full potential.

Recognize Targeted Role of Affordable Housing Programs. In recent decades, the state has approached the problem of housing affordability for low-income Californians and those with unmet housing needs primarily by subsidizing the construction of affordable housing through bond funds, tax credits, and other resources. Because these programs have historically accounted for only a small share of all new housing built each year, they alone could not meet the housing needs we identify in this report. For this reason, we advise the Legislature to consider how targeted programs that assist those with limited access to market rate housing could supplement broader changes that facilitate more private housing construction.

More Private Housing Construction in Coastal Urban Areas. We advise the Legislature to change policies to facilitate significantly more private home and apartment building in California's coastal urban areas. Though the exact number of new housing units California needs to build is

AN LAO REPORT

uncertain, the general magnitude is enormous. On top of the 100,000 to 140,000 housing units California is expected to build each year, the state probably would have to build as many as 100,000 additional units annually—almost exclusively in its coastal communities—to seriously mitigate its problems with housing affordability. Facilitating additional housing of this magnitude will be extremely difficult. It could place strains on the state’s infrastructure and natural resources and alter the prized character of California’s coastal communities. It also would require the state to make changes to a broad range of policies that affect housing supply directly or indirectly—including policies that have been fundamental tenets of California government for many years.

<http://www.lao.ca.gov/reports/2015/finance/housing-costs/housing-costs.pdf>