Sustainable Agricultural Lands Policy Framework

Planning Commission
April 28, 2016
Proposed Program

• Prepare a new regional framework for sustaining agricultural lands and the farming industry in Southern Santa Clara County

• Inter-jurisdictional program

• Sustainability legacy

• Model for other regions
Santa Clara County Agriculture

- $830 million annual contribution to SCC Economy
- 8,100 workers
- Over 1,000 farms
- Ranked 4th nationally in pepper production
- Regional Food Security
- Self financing open space
- Groundwater recharge

April 28, 2016
Agricultural Preservation Programs

• County Agricultural Zoning
• Williamson Act Program
• Agricultural Mitigation Policies & Programs
  – LAFCO
  – Gilroy
  – Morgan Hill
Agricultural Zoning
Williamson Act
Ongoing Threats and Conversion

• 1984 – 2000: County Lost 45% of farmland
• 2008 – 2010: Over 1,000 acres of farmland converted to other uses
• 55% of remaining farmland at risk of conversion (Greenbelt Alliance)

• Smaller Lots & Farms, adjacent to Urban Areas
• Urbanization, Rural Ranchette
Proposed Framework

• New Approach at Regional Agricultural Preservation

  – **New Tools for Agricultural Preservation**
    • Agricultural Conservation Easements
    • Ag Conversion Mitigation Fees
    • Transfer of Development Rights
    • County Regulatory Reform –
      – Rural Ranchette
      – De-regulation of Agricultural Industries

  – **Inter-jurisdictional approach**
    • County, Gilroy, Morgan Hill, San Jose, OSA, LAFCO
    • Recent Model – Valley Habitat Plan
Funding

• **Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Grant**
  – Strategic Growth Council / Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reduction Fund
  – Department of Conservation
  – Reduce GHG - Preserve Agricultural lands
  – 2015 – 1\(^{st}\) Round Funding – Competitive Grant
  – County receives Award - $100,000 – Agricultural Strategy Grant
  – 2 year program
  – More funding available for agricultural easements
Program Phases

• **Start Up** – (to April 2016)
  – Consultant Selection
  – Early Public Outreach
  – Kickoff Event

• **Task 1** – (to August 2016)
  – Farmland Mapping, GHG Analysis, Economic Analysis, Policy Analysis

• **Task 2** (to February 2017)
  – Draft Framework

• **Task 3** (to September 2017)
  – Final Framework and Adoption
Thank You

Questions?