

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program

Planning Grant Summary

Project Awarded FY 2019-20 Funding

SALC19_PG1_ALA

<p>Applicant Alameda County Local Area Formation Commission</p> <p>Project Location Alameda County</p> <p>Project Title Collaborative Stakeholder Planning in Alameda County to Ensure the Preservation of Agricultural/Working Lands, Coordinated Infill Development Inclusive of Urban Gardens and Urban-Growth Boundary Planning Modifications to Limit Likelihood of UGB Expansion While Concurrently Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions</p> <p>Total Funding \$274,988.32</p> <p>Funding Request \$249,988.32</p> <p>Match Funding \$25,000</p> <p>Priority Population Benefits No</p>	<p>Project Description The planning project proposed by the Alameda County Local Area Formation Commission, in partnership with the Alameda County Resource Conservation District will achieve three primary goals. First the stakeholder group will identify priority and critical areas for preservation by mapping high-priority parcels for conservation acquisitions in proximity to urban growth boundaries and through a comprehensive review of existing agricultural land conservation polices in the county. Second, they will identify infill development opportunities focused on healthy and resilient communities for disadvantaged and low-income populations through urban greening and urban gardens to provide greenspace and ecosystem services in the built environment. Finally, the plan seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by avoiding the conversion of agricultural land to housing and by bringing agriculture to urban areas.</p> <p>This planning effort will support implementation of Plan Bay Area 2040 Sustainable Communities Strategy and the upcoming revision (Plan Bay Area 2050) and related efforts to promote a sustainable, resilient, healthy, and equitable communities. The plan will also implement the County's existing Community Climate Action Plan.</p> <p>Land Use Conversion Threats Alameda County sits on the eastern shore of the San Francisco Bay, with topography and microclimates shaped by tectonic activity and ocean-influenced wind patterns. Alameda County is exceptionally biodiverse, racially diverse, and economically productive. It faces continued pressures of increasing human population growth, including the conversion of existing open space and agricultural lands to urban uses. Approximately 53% of the counties 471,971 acres are identified as agricultural lands by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. Agricultural uses include grazing, nursery and vegetable crop production, and viticulture. Agricultural production has been decreasing at a rate of 0.58 percent during each two-year period since 1984. These conversion risks are expected to continue to be a challenge for agriculture land, as climate change and urbanization in Alameda County intensify.</p> <p>Strategic Value or Special Features The project is designed to provide multiple benefits. First, by mapping and prioritizing areas for conservation, the stakeholders will support land conservation efforts and increase participation in SALC and other CCI-funded conservation programs. Avoiding GHGs and particulate matter emissions supports the physical and mental health of communities in close-proximity to greenspace, including improving access to greenspace in urban areas. Securing urban growth boundaries tempers wildfire risks and keeps development from the Wildland-Urban Interface, where destruction of property and loss of human life due to wildfires are greater. Preserving the urban growth boundary helps avoid land fragmentation, increase biodiversity and supports wildlife corridors.</p>
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Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program

Planning Grant Summary

Project Awarded FY 2019-20 Funding

SALC19_PG2_MNT

<p>Applicant Community Development Department, City of Salinas</p> <p>Project Location City of Salinas</p> <p>Project Title Salinas General Plan Update</p> <p>Total Funding \$362,195</p> <p>Funding Request \$250,000</p> <p>Match Funding \$112,195</p> <p>Priority Population Benefits No</p>	<p>Project Description The project is focused on the development of an Agricultural Framework to integrate agriculture as a core theme throughout the City of Salinas' General Plan. It will include policies on land use, conservation, economic development, and housing based upon relevant technical studies and best practices. The City will use the funding to convene an Agriculture Working Group, provide direct outreach to farmworkers, study key agricultural economic factors, and analyze recommendations in the context of land use to mitigate conversion and support the agricultural industry in the City of Salinas.</p> <p>As part of the development of the Framework and General Plan, the City intends to develop key metrics that will be monitored annually after adoption to measure the impact of the General Plan over its lifetime.</p> <p>Land Use Conversion Threats Throughout the County there is pressure to develop agricultural lands, particularly for agriculture-related warehousing and trucking. Through an in-depth economic and land use analysis, the project will focus on infill and redevelopment within the City that supports the agriculture industry and ensures that future growth minimizes conversion of agricultural land in the Salinas Valley.</p> <p>Strategic Value or Special Features The General Plan's Agricultural Framework will also address the need for affordable housing for permanent, year-round farmworkers and their families. The proposal includes the establishment of an Ag Tech Innovation District focused on equity by transitioning field workers to better paying technology jobs in the agricultural industry.</p> <p>An additional goal of the project is to work with landowners, labor contractors and Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) on a more formalized system of transit between Salinas and agricultural job sites. This would reduce VMT by providing practical alternatives to the use of low-occupancy and high-emission vehicles.</p>
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Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program

Planning Grant Summary

Project Awarded FY 2019-20 Funding

SALC19_PG3_CON

<p>Applicant Contra Costa County – Department of Conservation and Development</p> <p>Project Location Contra Costa County</p> <p>Project Title Healthy Lands, Healthy People: A Carbon Sequestration Feasibility Study</p> <p>Total Funding \$280,916</p> <p>Funding Request \$249,966</p> <p>Match Funding \$30,950</p> <p>Priority Population Benefits No</p>	<p>Project Description Contra Costa County has proposed the Healthy Lands, Healthy People: A Carbon Sequestration Feasibility Study Plan. The plan will identify strategies to sequester carbon on agricultural lands and urban gardens, and to evaluate the feasibility of implementing carbon projects on these lands throughout the County. It will provide a framework to guide stakeholder education, strategy development and the feasibility of project types for different land uses. The study will quantify operational cost savings and potential revenue streams from on-farm carbon sequestration to aid farmers and ranchers sustain an economically viable agricultural operation. Contra Costa County will work with Contra Costa Resource Conservation District and the University of California Cooperative Extension, among other stakeholders, to create the study.</p> <p>Land Use Conversion Threats The applicant states that farms and ranches in Contra Costa County are under extreme financial pressure to convert to alternative uses. A 2017 report by the Greenbelt Alliance identified Contra Costa County as having the most acreage of open space in the San Francisco Bay Area at risk of urban development in the next decade. Since 2012, the amount of land at risk in the county has increased by almost one third. Much of the new development is expected to occur in East County, near areas historically used for agriculture. The feasibility study will address the conversion threat through the quantification of carbon sequestration potential and identify practices that could be applied. The study will also evaluate how those practices could provide operational costs savings that keep land in agricultural production and result in economic resiliency.</p> <p>Strategic Value or Special Features The plan would include carbon sequestration practices that increase water holding capacity, reduce erosion, and create healthier soil.</p> <p>The feasibility study has the potential to promote local food systems in Contra Costa County through a resilient economic agricultural land base and aims to reduce food deserts in disadvantaged communities through increased access to local healthy foods via sustainable community gardens.</p>
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Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program
Planning Grant Summary
Project Awarded FY 2019-20 Funding
SALC19_PG4_MNT

<p>Applicant County of Monterey</p> <p>Project Location Monterey County</p> <p>Project Title Addressing the Future of Agricultural Land Use and Needs through Community Climate Action and Adaptation Planning</p> <p>Total Funding \$192,500</p> <p>Funding Request \$175,000</p> <p>Match Funding \$17,500</p> <p>Priority Population Benefits No</p>	<p>Project Description The County of Monterey is proposing to develop a Community Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CCAAP) that will set strategies for reducing County-wide emissions by 40% by 2030. SALC funding will address the importance of agricultural lands to the local economy and to achieving environmental goals. The CCAAP will focus on infill and transit-oriented development strategies that will help to protect prime agricultural lands and open space and reduce VMT. In developing the plan, the County will form a transportation working group with members from local transportation agencies that contribute to the SCS to implement sustainable development and transit-oriented development in rural communities.</p> <p>One proposed strategy of the CCAAP will be to utilize agricultural lands that can sequester carbon. The county has already identified 1) ecosystem protection and restoration and 2) shifting agricultural practices as priorities.</p> <p>Land Use Conversion Threats The Monterey County region has the most fertile and productive farmland in the country. According to the most recent Farmland Mapping and Monitoring data for Monterey County, 10,000 acres of important farmland were lost to non-agricultural uses between 2010 and 2012. The pressure to convert fertile farmland is increasing with population growth, the statewide housing shortage, and land-use patterns. There are current proposals to annex more than 1,840 acres of prime farmland into cities in the southern portion of the county. The County recognizes the need for growth in these communities to provide for housing and other resources, but desires to do so in a way that does not jeopardize prime agricultural lands.</p> <p>Strategic Value or Special Features The conservation of agricultural lands will provide several environmental and economic benefits. First, the plan will encourage improved water quality and decreased pesticide use through implementation of sustainable farming practices like composting and nutrient management strategies, improving conditions for pollinators. Additionally, the plan seeks to improve local food networks and reduce food waste in support of SB1383 and create pathways to alleviate hunger and feed farming families through partnerships with farmers markets, grocery stores and food banks. Finally, the plan will improve air quality, health and reduce utility burden by reducing MT through strategies that aim to create walkable communities and transit-oriented development that avoids ag land conversion.</p> <p>Protecting agricultural lands will help support the economic base of Monterey County where agriculture contributes over \$11.6 billion to the economy.</p> <p>Other considerations Monterey County was the recipient of a Round 2 SALC planning grant, but has not yet commenced that planning project. Staff are concerned about the capacity of Monterey County to execute this grant if awarded.</p>
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Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program
Planning Grant Summary
Project Awarded FY 2019-20 Funding
 SALC19_PG5_SAC

<p>Applicant Sacramento Area Council of Governments</p> <p>Project Location El Dorado County, Sacramento County, Sutter County, Placer County, Yolo County, Yuba County</p> <p>Project Title Coordinated Rural Opportunity Plan (CROP)</p> <p>Total Funding \$277,800</p> <p>Funding Request \$250,000</p> <p>Match Funding \$27,800</p> <p>Priority Population Benefits No</p>	<p>Project Description The proposed planning project is intended to create a regional strategy for investing in the agricultural economy through the development of a Coordinated Rural Opportunities Plan (CROP) focused on two key goals: assuring agriculture's economic vibrancy and resiliency; and conserving the natural resources of the Sacramento region. The Plan's primary focus areas include: an inventory of previous research related to agricultural strategies; identifying general themes and geographies where existing strategies are not working; and creating a framework for implementation that identifies and coordinates unique infrastructure investments that are needed to support the continued viability of agriculture in the region. The plan aims to complement local preservation efforts by highlighting economic incentives for agriculture.</p> <p>Current project partners include each of the six counties' planning departments, agricultural commissioners, farm bureaus, local land trusts, the Regional Prosperity Partnership and other relevant regional stakeholders. Additional partners and stakeholders will be identified during the planning process.</p> <p>Land Use Conversion Threats Agricultural land is being converted to other uses in the project area due to high regional population and employment growth. An economic development strategy for the agricultural economy will support the long-term economic viability of local agricultural businesses and the environmental sustainability of the region. Creating a regional strategy will address these conversion risks by highlighting system values.</p> <p>Strategic Value or Special Features Environmental co-benefits include protection of watershed health, potential for groundwater recharge, and source water protection. Economic co-benefits include retention of local jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities.</p>
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Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program
Planning Grant Summary
Project Awarded FY 2019-20 Funding
SALC19_PG6_SBD

<p>Applicant Local Agency Formation Commission for San Bernardino County</p> <p>Project Location San Bernardino County – Valley Region</p> <p>Project Title San Bernardino County Valley Agricultural Planning and Preservation Program</p> <p>Total Funding \$242,875</p> <p>Funding Request \$220,475</p> <p>Match Funding \$22,400</p> <p>Priority Population Benefits No</p>	<p>Project Description The proposed planning project consists of an analysis of existing agricultural resources and agricultural policies to better inform future development decisions in the San Bernardino County Valley Region. Based on the analysis of existing agriculture and agricultural related policies, the applicant also proposes to identify and prioritize important farmland and local agricultural economy benefits. Local committed stakeholders for this proposed plan include: the LAFCo for San Bernardino County, Inland Empire Resource Conservation District, County of San Bernardino, Southern California Association of Governments, San Bernardino County Farm Bureau, local municipalities, and community groups.</p> <p>Land Use Conversion Threats The proposed project area encompasses approximately 80% of the County’s total population, which is located in the Valley region. The Valley accounts for only 2.4% of the total land area in the County but carries 84% of the agriculture industry. Because the remainder of the County is either mountainous or desert landscape with insufficient water resources, there is little potential for the agricultural industry to move from the valley region to other parts of the County. The applicant states that since 1984 more than 79% of important farmland in the Valley has been converted to other uses. The proposed project would include mapping and identifying priority mitigation lands to develop a strategically connected corridor of preserved agricultural lands within the Valley. Lands prioritized will include those with the best soil and water resources that are proximal to other protected lands.</p> <p>Strategic Value or Special Features Implementation of the proposed planning project will ensure a sustainable agricultural economy in the San Bernardino Valley region. The preservation of agricultural lands, as well as increased stakeholder collaboration in the region, will promote agricultural marketing opportunities and establish a strong local food system in the greater Los Angeles area.</p> <p>Farmland protected through conservation easements would improve access to affordable farmland for future generations of farmers.</p> <p>This planning grant application was a result of the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program Technical Assistance Grant awarded by the Strategic Growth Council. The goal of the Technical Assistance Grant was to provide education and programmatic information to local planning agencies in regions targeted for farmland conservation.</p>
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Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program
Planning Grant Summary
Project Awarded FY 2019-20 Funding
SALC19_PG7_SDC

<p>Applicant San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)</p> <p>Project Location San Diego County</p> <p>Project Title Promoting Agriculture in San Diego County: A Planning Vision</p> <p>Total Funding \$283,000</p> <p>Funding Request \$250,000</p> <p>Match Funding \$33,000</p> <p>Priority Population Benefits Yes</p>	<p>Project Description The proposed project will identify, monitor and assess the ownership of active agricultural lands within the San Diego region, identify the local causes of agricultural land conversion, and determine effective methods to preserve farmland, promote agriculture, and enhance agricultural production. The plan will also develop a suite of actions to assist producers in ensuring the preservation and enhancement of their lands.</p> <p>By strategically protecting San Diego County agricultural lands through integrated policies, planning, investment, and collaborative action, the project aims to support San Diego County's Climate Action Plan and its goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Key deliverables include: priority agricultural land maps, gap analysis, Terracount co-benefit maps, GHG analysis and a Strategic Vision Plan.</p> <p>The project area includes both incorporated and unincorporated areas of San Diego County, totaling approximately 4,260 square miles and a population of 3.22 million residents.</p> <p>Land Use Conversion Threats Between 2006 and 2018, agricultural land in the San Diego region decreased by 60,381 acres, which was a loss of 24%. According to the 2015 California Farmland Conversion Report, the San Diego region has consistently ranked in the top 10 counties in California with the largest net loss of irrigated farmland since 1994. The San Diego region also accounted for 20% of the State's total urban development, with 5,775 acres of new urban and built-up lands.</p> <p>Recent agricultural trends show a conversion from food crops to nursery and ornamental plants, which have increased to 71% of the total value of agricultural production. The value of nursery crops is expected to remain high, putting additional pressures on farmers to grow those products rather than producing food crops such as fruit, nut, vegetable and vine crops.</p> <p>Strategic Value or Special Features The plan will also include a process for recruiting young farmers, supporting the transition of land management to younger generations without prior family farm ownership, and expanding affordable access to agricultural land and its resources. It will explore new farmer training and farmland access programs, evaluate the policies, incentives, and programs supporting producer operations for food and agricultural production, and implement regenerative agriculture practices to build soil health.</p>
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Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program
Planning Grant Summary
Project Awarded FY 2019-20 Funding
SALC19_PG8_SCL

<p>Applicant County of Santa Clara</p> <p>Project Location Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano and Sonoma counties</p> <p>Project Title Framework for a Regional Agricultural Plan</p> <p>Total Funding \$283,050</p> <p>Funding Request \$225,000</p> <p>Match Funding \$57,550</p> <p>Priority Population Benefits Yes</p>	<p>Project Description The proposed project builds on the SALC-funded Santa Clara Valley Agricultural Plan and aims to develop a framework for a regional Bay Area Agricultural Plan. It will do this through two distinct, but related, tracks. One track will be focused on cross-jurisdictional coordination across five contiguous Bay Area counties (Contra Costa, Alameda, Santa Clara, San Mateo and San Francisco) to explore a mechanism, such as a JPA, for preservation of agricultural lands across the region. The second track will be focused on working with stakeholders in all Bay Area Counties to strengthen and operationalize the Plan Bay Area (PBA) 2050 implementation actions that relate to protection of working lands.</p> <p>Land Use Conversion Threats Over the last 30 years, the Bay Area has lost 217,000 acres of agricultural land to sprawl development. Today, 200,000 acres of Bay Area farm and rangeland are still at risk of development with 63,500 acres of that likely to be developed in the next ten years. A goal of the regional agricultural plan is to assess and protect all important farmland at risk of development, with a focus on prime soils and strategic parcels. This will be accomplished through strategies such as sharing of best practices, expansion of the Priority Conservation Areas (PCA) program and the potential development of a regional fund for farmland protection.</p> <p>Strategic Value or Special Features Through the Plan Bay Area (PBA) framework, the project will also integrate farmworker housing policies and programs at the regional level and identify affordable housing needs in rural areas for the agricultural workforce, such as small-scale temporary housing solutions to support seasonal laborers and beginning farms under development. The plan also proposes economic incentives for funding climate-smart agricultural practices and social investments such as assistance for immigrant farmers and succession planning.</p> <p>Economic co-benefits may include increases in direct farmgate revenues, reported annually through County Crop Reports and indirect and induced values, measured through IMPLAN analysis.</p>
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Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program
Planning Grant Summary
Project Awarded FY 2019-20 Funding
SALC19_PG9_VEN

<p>Applicant County of Ventura, Planning Division</p> <p>Project Location County of Ventura</p> <p>Project Title: Ventura County Agricultural Conservation Planning</p> <p>Total Funding \$275,000</p> <p>Funding Request \$250,000</p> <p>Match Funding \$25,000</p> <p>Priority Population Benefits No</p>	<p>Project Description The proposed project would consist of the development of an agricultural conservation program for the County of Ventura to address the current threats of land conversion to urban use and to protect agricultural land. Primary deliverables would include: an economic analysis of Ventura County's agriculture, a risk assessment to quantify the land that is at risk of conversion and the factors that put it at risk (e.g., labor supply, water availability, lack of protective planning, etc.), criteria for identifying and prioritizing agricultural land and an incentive structure for agricultural landowners to rest, retire, restore or permanently protect their land, and an educational and awareness strategy.</p> <p>The project proponents convened a diverse, 21-member stakeholder planning group to participate in the development of the project proposal and grant application. If the grant is awarded, this group will be expanded and divided into subcommittees to guide its implementation. The membership was chosen to ensure representation from key community sectors, seeking a balance among the broad categories of the economy, the environment and social equity.</p> <p>Land Use Conversion Threats Ventura County agriculture faces several risk factors for conversion of farmland to urban use. First, the county's adjacency to the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area and its desirable coastal location results in enormous growth pressures. According to the biennial "Land Use Conversion Tables" published by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, 9,088 acres of Ventura County farmland were converted to urban use between 1992 and 2016, an average of 379 acres a year. Conversion pressures apply not only to the flat cropland on the coastal plain and interior valley floors, but also to grazing land on the hillsides, where 4,570 acres were developed between 1992 and 2016 (an average of 190 acres per year).</p> <p>Additional threats to agriculture in Ventura County include potential SGMA-related reductions on groundwater pumping, the Asian citrus psyllid, an invasive pest that impacts citrus crops, and a worsening decrease in the agricultural workforce.</p> <p>Strategic Value or Special Features The proposed plan will be informed by numerous local/regional plans and programs. The Connect SoCal plan, which will be implemented in the County of Ventura's 2040 General Plan, includes specific elements to encourage and facilitate carbon-farming projects and programs.</p> <p>This planning grant application was a result of the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program Technical Assistance Grant awarded by the Strategic Growth Council. The goal of the Technical Assistance Grant was to provide education and programmatic information to local planning agencies in regions targeted for farmland conservation.</p>
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Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program
Planning Grant Summary
Project Awarded FY 2019-20 Funding
SALC19_PG10_YOL

<p>Applicant Yolo County</p> <p>Project Location Yolo County</p> <p>Project Title Yolo County Agricultural Conservation Priority Plan</p> <p>Total Funding \$275,000</p> <p>Funding Request \$250,000</p> <p>Match Funding \$25,000</p> <p>Priority Population Benefits No</p>	<p>Project Description This proposed project would develop an Agricultural Conservation Priority Plan to address increased development pressures and farmland conversion in the unincorporated agricultural areas of Yolo County. The County will work with multiple stakeholder groups and the four incorporated cities. It will look at the feasibility of satisfying agricultural mitigation requirements in accordance with Section 8-2.404 of the Yolo County Zoning code; this analysis is intended to help ensure that urban development can occur where appropriate, and that urban development contributes to local agricultural conservation. Key deliverables include: a study of projected agricultural land conversion in the unincorporated agricultural areas of Yolo County, analysis of the effect of farmland conversion on greenhouse gas emissions, identification of parcels most at risk for conversion, and analysis of parcels best suited for permanent preservation. The proposed project will also provide a strategic plan to help guide the County and its partners implement a publicly administered mitigation bank.</p> <p>Land Use Conversion Threats Yolo County is facing increasing development pressures as the Sacramento metropolitan area population grows and as Bay Area and southern California residents relocate to the county in search of more affordable housing. The population of Yolo County increased by 10% (from 201,000 to 220,000) from 2010 to 2018. Also, increasing agricultural land values and decreasing fair market values for conservation easements have made it more and more difficult to incentivize landowners to voluntarily accept agricultural conservation easements.</p> <p>Additionally, a number of planned state and federal flood protection projects, such as the Sacramento Weir Expansion and the Lower Elkhorn Basin Levee Setback projects, will either remove large swaths of high-class soil and/or prime farmland from production or reduce the value of the agricultural products in those areas by placing agricultural lands into a floodway.</p> <p>This project proposes to address these threats through the development of a countywide program aimed at preserving agricultural lands for agricultural uses while also promoting compact urban development in appropriate locations.</p> <p>Strategic Value or Special Features The applicant will also work in coordination with the Yolo Habitat Conservancy to identify high-quality agricultural easement properties that could support threatened and endangered species.</p>
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