



San Diego County
Local Agency Formation Commission
 Regional Service Planning | Subdivision of the State of California

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AGENDA REPORT
 Business | Information

June 6, 2022

TO: Commissioners

FROM: Priscilla Allen, Analyst I

SUBJECT: Grant Update | Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Planning Grant

SUMMARY

The San Diego County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) will receive an update on its first-year activities as awardee and grant manager of a Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) grant to track agricultural trends in San Diego County. This includes summarizing initial grant implementation with respect to the associated workplan and budget approved by the Department of Conservation. The update is being presented for information and provides an opportunity for the Commission to ask questions or provide related feedback as grant work extends into a second year.

BACKGROUND

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program

The Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC) was created in 2014 as a component of the California Strategic Growth Council and administered by the Department of Conservation. The SALC program is primarily funded through the California Climate Investments, which is a statewide program that provides cap-and-trade funds through agricultural conservation acquisition and planning grants for programs intended to reduce

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greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). The principal goals of SALC are stated as:

- Protect at-risk agricultural lands from sprawl development to promote growth within existing jurisdictions, ensure open space remains available, and support a healthy agricultural economy.
- Further the purposes of Assembly Bill 32 by avoiding increases in the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the conversion of agricultural land to more greenhouse gas-intensive nonagricultural uses.

Grant Application and Approval | San Diego LAFCO and Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County

In August 2020, San Diego LAFCO and Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County (Greater San Diego) collaborated in submitting a planning grant application under SALC to identify and track agricultural uses and market trends in San Diego County. The Commission – notably – authorized the grant proposal as lead applicant. LAFCO was subsequently awarded a two-year grant in the full amount of \$250,000 in April 2021 with work commencing in June 2021.¹

DISCUSSION

This item provides San Diego LAFCO with an update on work performed in the first year of the two-year SALC grant to track agricultural trends in San Diego County. This includes summarizing grant partnerships, workplan and deliverables, and budget. The item is being presented to the Commission for information and feedback only. Discussion follows.

Partnerships

San Diego LAFCO has formally partnered with four local organizations in collaboration with Greater San Diego on the SALC grant relative to its five main tasks and deliverables: (1) grant management; (2) mapping and greenhouse gas analysis; (3) leverage of programs, projects, and policies; (4) collaborative outreach; and (5) final strategic vision plan. Details on each agency and its agreed responsibilities follow.

- Mission Resource Conservation District (RCD) is collaborating on the completion of Tasks 2 through 5 involving map verification, policy review, constituent outreach, conducting of producer needs assessment, listening session facilitation, meeting participation, meeting facilitation, and report review.

¹ San Diego LAFCO also entered into a memorandum of understanding with Greater San Diego in April 2021 and designated them as project manager and responsible for performing all related field and analysis work in consultation with the Commission. The Commission retains fiduciary duties as grant recipient with responsibilities including the review, approval, and submittal of all invoices as well as quarterly and final reports to the State through June 2023.

- San Diego State University (SDSU) is collaborating on the completion of Tasks 2 and 3 involving map compilation, data analysis, data visualization, policy analysis, strategic plan assembly, meeting participation, and report review.
- Foodshed is collaborating on the completion of Task 4 involving constituent outreach, conducting of producer assessment, listening session facilitation, meeting participation, and report review.
- Community Health Improvement Partners (CHIP) is collaborating on the completion of Task 4 involving constituent outreach, conducting of producer assessment, listening session facilitation, meeting participation, and report review.

Grant Workplan and Deliverables

The approved grant workplan is divided into the following five tasks that culminates with a written report with findings and related recommendations. A summary of the five tasks and related statuses follows. A copy of the grant workplan is provided as Attachment One.

- **Task 1 | Grant Management**
LAFCO staff is responsible for grant management, and this includes providing quarterly invoices/progress reports to the Department of Conservation (DOC). All quarterly reports and related invoices have been approved to date.
- **Task 2 | Mapping and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Analysis**
Mapping activities represent a significant portion of the grant work and are being coordinated between Greater San Diego and SDSU. Three draft base digital maps have been created to date, and illustrate historic, current, and potential agricultural lands currently within San Diego County. Mapped layers include nurseries, perennial and annual cropland, grazing land, and agricultural businesses. The greatest effort to date has involved grazing lands, which are not currently mapped and often classified as open space. SDSU has drafted an online version of the map for interactive use by the public. Additional work on the maps continues. This includes addressing GHG analysis and delays to date due to the varied terrain and rapid urbanization in the county. Greater San Diego is collaborating with private firm Dudek to use the three maps, County land use data and the tabular results of the TerraCount project to estimate Countywide emissions resulting from the conversion of agricultural lands.²
- **Task 3 | Leverage of Programs, Projects, and Policies**
SDSU has recently transitioned its work to the policy GAP analysis by inventorying the policies affecting local agricultural producers. Greater San Diego has met with DOC Liaison Chandra Richards on a monthly basis to provide updates regarding this

² The Department of Conservation describes TerraCount as a planning tool which models the GHG and natural resource implications of different development patterns and management activities. TerraCount allows planners to evaluate the application of management activities including agricultural activities such as cover cropping, restoration activities such as riparian restoration, and avoided conversion such as avoided conversion of agricultural land to development.

task and has attended monthly Farm Bureau meetings to track priority policies within the established agricultural business community. Priority areas identified by agricultural producers at listening sessions and producer assessments have helped inform priority policies for the GAP Analysis. Additional public meetings will be scheduled and involve discussions on controversial topics and potential recommendations for policy makers. These meetings will be facilitated by a moderator to ensure productive discussions. Additional details footnoted.³

- **Task 4 | Collaborative Outreach**

This phase involves engaging agricultural producers to document and assess their needs and challenges. Needs assessments were offered by partner organizations over the phone or online and provided support to underrepresented producers. Greater San Diego translated the assessment and consent form into Spanish and offered assistance in Spanish to complete the form. Total assessments tallied 103 by the beginning of May 2021 and influenced the focus of discussions during partner facilitated listening sessions. Two mailers were sent out inviting producers to take the assessment and covered more than 2,000 agricultural producers throughout the County. Listening Sessions took place in person in February and May and involved 27 producers representing a variety of crop types, farm scales and demographics. Listening Sessions provided producers with an opportunity to communicate directly with one another and resulted in a more holistic understanding of how challenges on individual operations often result from underlying systemic issues. Producer responses varied with farm size, crop type, years in agriculture and demographics. Universally discussed topics included water availability, extreme weather conditions, streamlining government regulations and programs, land access for beginning farmers, market prices and labor availability. Greater San Diego is analyzing the results for submission of an Outreach report to SDLAFCO with the July quarterly report, including review from producers and will present preliminary results at the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR) Climate Symposium.

- **Task 5 | Final Strategic Vision Plan (Final Report)**

The drafting of the Final Strategic Vision Plan – or final report – will begin in October 2022. Ongoing activities and summary reports for Tasks 2, 3 and 4 contribute to this Task. In preparation, Greater San Diego has interviewed a graphic designer as a potential contractor to design the final report.

³ In April 2022, Greater San Diego coordinated a meeting with core policy partners including Mission RCD, the San Diego County Farm Bureau, UC Cooperative Extension, relevant departments from the County of San Diego and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Based on the results of Task 4, Greater San Diego advised on the following priority topics: water availability, streamlining government regulations and programs, and land access for beginning farmers. To initiate the GAP analysis, Greater San Diego supplied SDSU with relevant reports concerning regional agriculture; these will be supplemented via regulations and reports recommended by core policy partners regarding the three priority topics.

Grant Budget

The grant is budgeted at \$250,000. Through May 2022 total authorized expenses have totaled \$56,821.22 – or 22.7% – of the total. The highest recorded expense is attributed to outreach activities under Task #4 and totaled at \$32,148.10 – or 49.8% – of the allocated total for Task 4.

SALC Grant Budget Task 1 – Task 5						
Cost Category	Task #1	Task #2	Task #3	Task #4	Task #5	Total
Cumulative Total	\$3,316.57	\$12,032.93	\$9,323.62	\$32,148.10	\$0.00	\$56,821.22
Allocated Total	\$32,600	\$38,600	\$46,100	\$64,600	\$68,100	\$250,000
Percentage of Budget	10.17%	31.17%	20.22%	49.76%	0.00%	22.73%

ANALYSIS

Grant activities have been progressing smoothly and within budget with one notable exception involving extending activities for Tasks 2 and Tasks 4 through July 2022. Task 2 involves mapping and GHG analysis and has been extended to allow more time in defining rangelands and acquiring TerraCount modeling from private firm Dudek. Task 4 involves outreach and was extended to allow the public a greater timeline in returning producer needs assessments and to attend an additional listening session held May 2, 2022. Activities through the end of the year will focus on the policy phase as well as drafting the final report in preparation for a final public presentation of the results in the Spring.

RECOMMENDATION

Information only.

ALTERNATIVES FOR ACTION

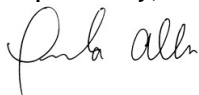
None.

PROCEDURES

This item has been placed on San Diego LAFCO’s agenda for information as part of the business calendar. The following procedures are suggested.

- 1) Receive verbal presentation from staff unless waived.
- 2) Discuss item and provide feedback as appropriate.

Respectfully,



Priscilla Allen
 Analyst I

Attachment:

- 1) Grant Workplan

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Tentative Work Plan
Revised May 19, 2021

Work Plan			
Task Number	Performance Measure (Deliverables)	Timeline	Total Requested Grant Funds
Task 1 Grant Management	Main Deliverables: Subcontractor grant agreements, progress reports, submission of deliverables and final report to DOC	06/2021-05/2023	\$32,600.00
Task 2 Mapping and Greenhouse Gas Analysis	Main Deliverables: Priority Agricultural Lands Maps, TerraCount Co-Benefit Maps, GHG Analysis	07/2021-12/2021	\$38,600.00
Subtask 2A: Identify Technical Team	Profile Report	07/2021-08/2021	
Subtask 2B: Compile Priority Agricultural Maps	Priority Agricultural Lands Maps, TerraCount Co-Benefit Maps	08/2021-11/2021	
Subtask 2C: Calculate GHG and Carbon Potentials	GHG Analysis and Carbon Sequestration Potential for Priority Agricultural Lands	10/2021-12/2021	
Task 3 Leverage of Programs, Projects, and Policies	Main Deliverables: Gap Analysis of Agricultural Preservation Programs, Agricultural Land Policy Leverage Plan	12/2021-07/2022	\$46,100.00

Subtask 3A: Create Technical Panel	Profile Report	12/2021-01/2022	
Subtask 3B: Conduct Gap Analysis	Gap Analysis of Agricultural Preservation Programs	01/2022-04/2022	
Subtask 3C: Outline Leverage Plan Framework	Agricultural Land Policy Leverage Plan Framework	04/2022-07/2022	
Task 4 Collaborative Outreach	Main Deliverables: Producer Meeting Reports, Stakeholder Meeting Reports	07/2021-02/2022	\$64,600.00
Subtask 4A: Create Outreach Team	Profile Report	07/2021-08/2021	
Subtask 4B: Conduct Producer Needs Assessment	Producer Needs Assessment	08/2021-10/2021	
Subtask 4C: Hold Series of Producer and Stakeholder Conversations	Evaluation of Producer and Stakeholder Input	10/2021-12/2021	
Subtask 4D: Compile Region Community Report	San Diego Region Community Report on Agricultural Lands Preservation	12/2021-02/2022	
Task 5 Final Strategic Vision Plan	Main Deliverables: Strategic Vision Plan (Technical Report and Visual Portfolio), Presentations at Regional and/or Statewide Conferences	07/2022-05/2023	\$68,100.00

Subtask 5A: Create Strategic Planning Team	Profile Report	07/2022-08/2022	
Subtask 5B: Draft Strategic Vision Plan	Draft Strategic Vision Plan	08/2022-11/2022	
Subtask 5C: Review and Finalize Strategic Vision Plan	Reviewed of Strategic Vision Plan by Producers and Stakeholders	11/2022-02/2023	
Subtask 5D: Disseminate Strategic Vision Plan across Local, Regional, and Statewide Levels	Final Strategic Vision Plan (Technical Report and Visual Portfolio), Presentations at Local, Regional and/or Statewide Meetings	02/2023-05/2023	

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