



Santa Clara Valley Water District

File No.: 17-0700

Agenda Date: 11/28/2017

Item No.: 2.6.

BOARD AGENDA MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT:

Presentation and Discussion of the Santa Clara Valley Agricultural Preservation Plan by County of Santa Clara.

RECOMMENDATION:

Discuss the Santa Clara Valley Agricultural Preservation Plan, formerly the Climate and Agricultural Preservation Program, and provide direction, as appropriate.

SUMMARY:

Per a request from Chair Varela, this item will provide the Board an overview and update on the Santa Clara Valley Agricultural Preservation Plan (SCVAPP), with a companion presentation by County of Santa Clara. This subject was initially shared with the Board as part of the Joint meeting with Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority (Authority) on January 17, 2017. The plan is the result of a regional effort led by the County of Santa Clara (County) and the Authority to protect southern Santa Clara County's important farmland and reduce future effects of climate change.

Background

The Santa Clara Valley Agricultural Preservation Plan, formerly identified as Santa Clara Valley Climate and Agriculture Preservation Program, is a regional effort led by the County and the Authority to protect Southern Santa Clara County's farmland from development. If approved, this 18-month effort will culminate in the implementation of an action plan to sustain agricultural lands and grow the County's farming industry. The SCVAPP is funded in part by a statewide program called the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALCP) which provides cap and trade funding to protect agricultural lands as a strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to meet California's aggressive climate change goals.

The SCVAPP has a leadership team with representatives from the County and the Authority as well as technical panels that advise the process and include members from the farming community and representatives from local stakeholder agencies, including Gilroy, Morgan Hill, San Jose and the District. An additional group of advisors has provided expert advice to the process focused on agricultural conservation easements, farmland and economic vitality and land use planning and policy. The SCVAPP will build upon the studies, plans and policies that have been produced by the County, cities and private organizations to date to address the future of agriculture and farmland

preservation in the County.

The SCVAPP Action Plan has four elements-1) land use ordinances and policies; 2) a regional agricultural conservation easement program and voluntary financial incentives; 3) an agricultural economic development strategy; and 4) a regional branding, education, and awareness strategy. The greatest nexus with the District mission are conservation easements and voluntary financial incentives, as these could potentially be used to protect creeks and associated habitats, manage flood risks, and improve water supply.

The SCVAPP Action Plan was presented to the SCVAPP Technical Advisors (which includes District staff) in October 2017. The SCVAPP is scheduled to be heard by the County Board of Supervisors by December 2017 for adoption. If adopted by the Board of Supervisors, implementation, including the adoption of specific policies and programs, will begin in 2018.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact associated with this item.

CEQA:

The recommended action does not constitute a project under CEQA because it does not have a potential for resulting in direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: PowerPoint

UNCLASSIFIED MANAGER:

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