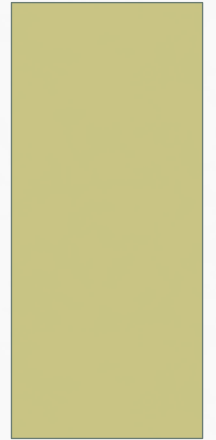


AGRICULTURAL
CONSERVATION EASEMENTS
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



AG CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

- Common tool used to mitigate the loss of farm or grazing land
- Voluntary, legally binding agreement
- Limits uses or prevents development
- Tailored to meet conservation objectives
- Runs with the land in perpetuity
- Protects farmland so it can remain in agricultural use

AG CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

GRANTOR

- The Property Owner
- Grants easement to another party
- Gives up development rights

GRANTEE

- A Qualified Conservation Organization or
- A Public Agency
- Gains rights to enforce & monitor the easement

AG CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

- Landowner can sell or donate the development rights
- Prices are based on fair market value of the easement established by an appraiser with expertise to segregate the value
- Once sold, the landowner retains all of the rights of ownership that are not specifically restricted by the easement

MONITORING & ENFORCEMENT OF THE EASEMENT

Conducted by the Land Trust or Public Agency

- Commit staff & resources to monitor and ensure easement terms are followed now and into the future
- Prepares a baseline report that documents the condition of the property at time of signing
- Prepares a management plan based on the purpose and goals for the lands
- Purchases insurance to legally defend an easement if challenged in the future

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Keeping families on their farms by easing the intergenerational transfer of property,
- Keeping land in farming or ranching uses
- Increased access to capital for agricultural uses by property owners
- Undeveloped grazing lands cost less in public services
- Can contribute to watershed or oak woodland protections

SUGGESTED PROGRAM PRIORITIES & CRITERIA

- Land Quality
- Parcel Size
- Surrounding Land Use
- Existing Pressure from Development
- Commitment of Land Owners to Remain in Agriculture
- Economic Viability

GENERAL PLAN

Multiple General Plan policies address Agricultural Conservation and Production:

- 8.1.2.1 Grazing
- 8.1.3.4 Protection of Agricultural Lands
- 8.2.4.1 Agricultural Production Programs

GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

- Measure AF-I

Develop a program to enhance long-term fiscal stability of agricultural operations, including use of the following:

- Conservation easements;
- Williamson Act contracts;
- Formation of land trusts; and
- Transfer of development rights



GRAZING LANDS



PRIME FARM LAND