

Santa Clara County  
Department of Planning & Development

# **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

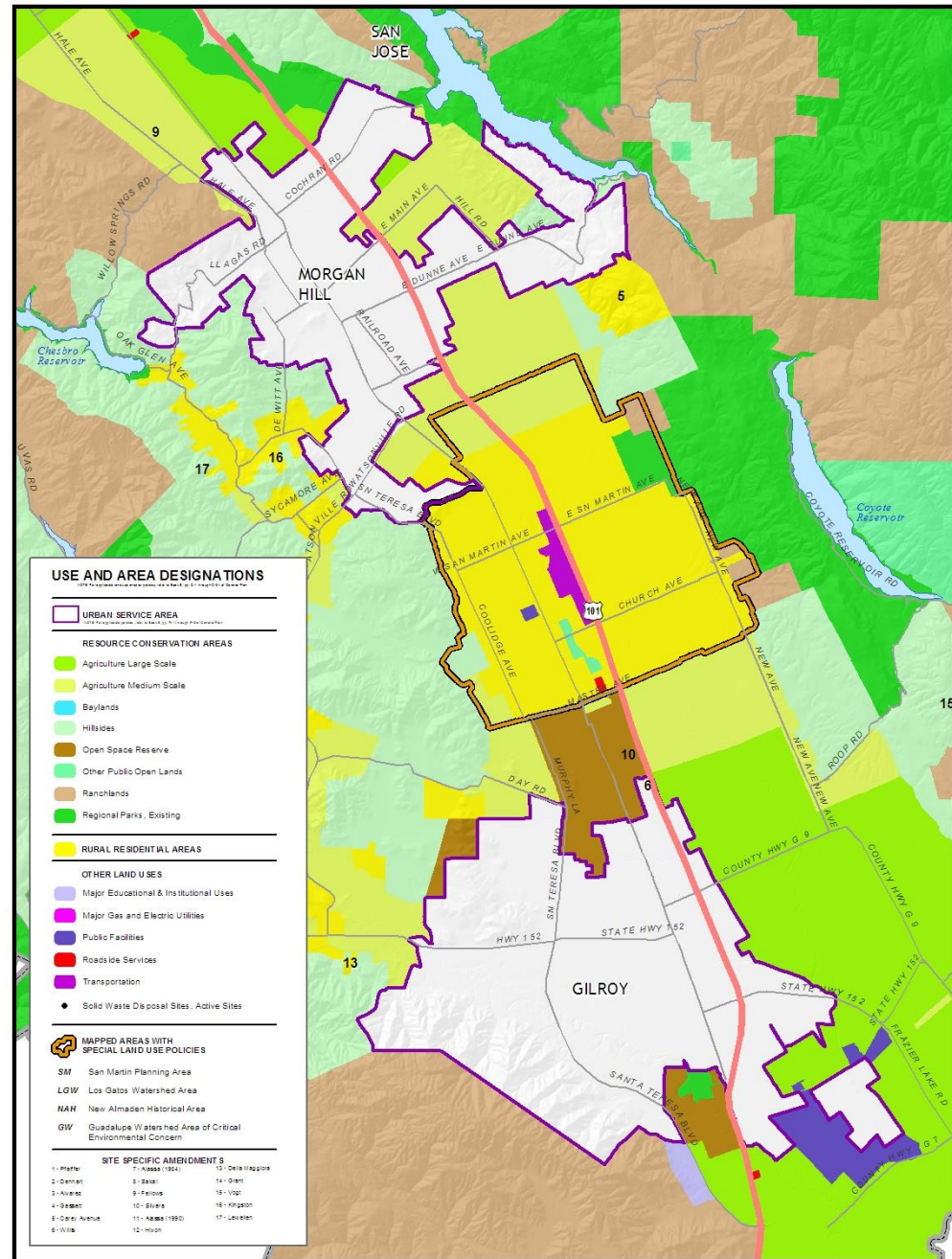
# Santa Clara County Agriculture

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

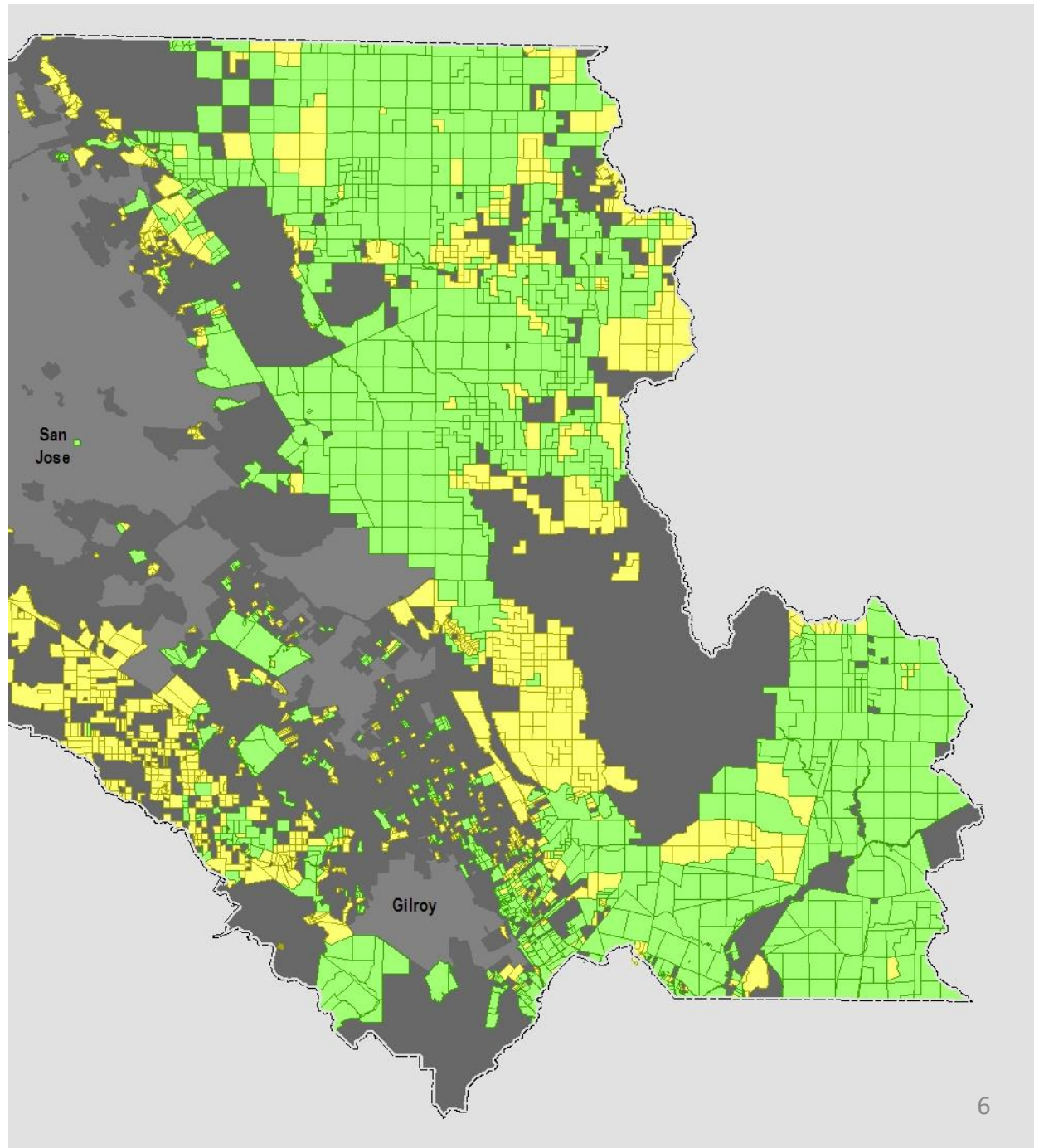
# Agricultural Preservation Programs

- 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<sup>st</sup> 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?

