



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

**8c**

**AGENDA REPORT**  
 Business | Information

May 6, 2024

**TO:** Commissioners

**FROM:** Priscilla Mumpower, Assistant Executive Officer  
 Michaela Peters, Analyst I

**SUBJECT:** **Outreach and Education Plan Update | Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Planning Grant 2.0**

**SUMMARY**

The San Diego County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) will receive an update on its ongoing SALC planning grant – i.e., “SALC 2.0” – in partnership with the County of San Diego’s Planning and Development Services (PDS). This update has been prepared in response to a request made by public members and the Commission at the March meeting and specifically to outline past and current outreach strategies for SALC 2.0. The County of San Diego’s Planning and Development Services (PDS) is leading the outreach and education plan component of current grant work in conjunction with Rick Engineering – as an outside outreach consultant. The update is for information and provides an opportunity for the Commission to ask questions or provide related feedback.

**BACKGROUND**

**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, a statewide program that provides cap-and-trade funds through agricultural conservation acquisition and planning grants for programs intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The principal goals of SALC are stated as:

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- 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 purpose of Assembly Bill 32 by avoiding increases in greenhouse gas emissions associated with the conversion of agricultural land to more greenhouse gas-intensive nonagricultural uses.

## SALC 2.0 | San Diego LAFCO and County of San Diego PDS

In September 2022, San Diego LAFCO and PDS collaborated in submitting a planning grant application under SALC to perform a market analysis for existing and emerging crops – with a focus on small farms – while also identifying government opportunities to help bridge economic gaps. The Commission – notably – authorized the grant proposal as lead applicant. LAFCO was subsequently awarded a two-year grant in the full amount of \$500,000 with work commencing in June 2023 and through September 2025.<sup>1</sup>

San Diego LAFCO has since formally partnered with two consultants – Agricultural Impact Associates and Rick Engineering – in collaboration with PDS on the SALC grant and relative to its six main tasks and deliverables: (1) grant management; (2) market analysis; (3) GAP analysis; (4) outreach & education plan; (5) strategic vision plan; and (6) a final report – “Greening Agriculture”.

## DISCUSSION

San Diego LAFCO will receive an update on the ongoing outreach and education strategy being led and implemented by PDS – in collaboration with Rick Engineering – for SALC 2.0. The item is being presented in response to members of the public expressing concern with respect to community engagement opportunities. These comments prompted the Commission to request staff to return with a more focused discussion on outreach opportunities and to ensure more direct involvement from producers moving forward. This item is for information and feedback only.

## Outreach and Education Plan

Beginning in September 2023, San Diego County PDS has actively engaged producers, local farming organizations, and other stakeholders involved in the local agricultural community in helping to inform SALC 2.0 deliverables. The outreach strategy to date has included a combination of direct engagement activities with producers, leveraging several local partners such as the regional Resource Conservation Districts and University of California Cooperative Extension, coordination with the County’s Department of Agriculture, Weights

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<sup>1</sup> San Diego LAFCO and PDS signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in August 2023 following the Commission’s approval of a draft MOU at its August 7, 2023 meeting. The MOU formalized roles and responsibilities in proceeding with SALC 2.0 and highlighted by bisecting and designating specific tasks to San Diego LAFCO and PDS.

and Measures (AWM) and Office of Sustainability and Environmental Justice, as well as broad notification through the project website and social media accounts.

PDS staff has also participated in various local events to promote project awareness, including seven local agricultural events, meetings with the San Diego County Farm Bureau Board of Directors, and the 3rd Annual Gathering for San Diego County Food Vision 2030. PDS also held a virtual public workshop – on November 14, 2023 – focused on gathering feedback from producers on key crops for the market analysis.<sup>2</sup> Following the workshop, PDS and AWM staff directly engaged the Avocado Growers of California (AGC) to discuss project details and collaboration opportunities.

As part of the ongoing work focused on preparing the market analysis, Agricultural Impact Associates have developed a market data collection tool aimed at gathering relevant data on farming operations relative to the four focal crops: avocados, lemons, strawberries, and tomatoes. PDS staff has provided notice of data collection efforts to the San Diego County Farm Bureau Board of Directors and is also coordinating with local partners, farming organizations, and attending local agriculture events to provide details on how producers can participate. The data collection phase is expected to culminate in a written report with findings and related recommendations.

A list of engagement efforts to date follows.

Date	Outreach Event
September 14, 2023	San Diego County Farm Bureau Board of Directors Meeting
October 5, 2023	San Diego County Farm Bureau Board of Directors Meeting
October 19, 2023	3 <sup>rd</sup> Annual Gathering for San Diego County Food Vision 2030
October 26, 2023	San Diego County Farm Bureau Harvest Happy Hour
November 2, 2023	San Diego County Farm Bureau Farm & Nursery Expo
November 14, 2023	SALC 2.0 Public Workshop
December 14, 2023	Avocado Growers of California Meeting
April 2, 2024	Monthly Coordination Meeting w/San Diego County Farm Bureau
April 4, 2024	San Diego County Farm Bureau Board of Directors Meeting

### Future Engagement Opportunities

Additional public workshops are planned throughout the project and following the release of written reports for the market and gap analyses, strategic plan, and final report. To directly engage producers and gather feedback, PDS and Rick Engineering will host working group meetings during the strategic planning phase – compensating participating producers and in doing so recognizing the value they provide to the project and its success. These meetings will involve local producers and technical experts to identify pathways for overcoming economic barriers in local farming. The strategic plan will also incorporate insights from best practice reviews and interviews with local agencies and jurisdictions

<sup>2</sup> The public workshop served as an opportunity for producers to provide direct feedback on focal crops and ongoing grant work. The workshop presentation and Zoom meeting recording is available on the [project website](#).

implementing cost-saving techniques on farms. Ultimately, the final report will highlight key outcomes and offer recommendations for local agencies and jurisdictions to implement or expand programs and to promote economic sustainability in the local agricultural industry.

## **ANALYSIS**

San Diego LAFCO in collaboration with PDS continues to make steady progress on SALC 2.0 and this includes pursuing meaningful stakeholder outreach and education as part of Task No. 4. PDS has attended and actively participated in a series of meetings and local events to ensure we are engaging key stakeholders throughout the process. Feedback from producers is recognized as an essential component of SALC 2.0. Rick Engineering is currently working diligently on an outreach and education plan centered on engaging stakeholders including producers. The plan is scheduled for internal staff review and discussion on May 2, 2024. Along with these activities, LAFCO staff has begun gathering data for each of the four crops directly from producers and will culminate in a comprehensive report with findings and recommendations in Fall 2024.

## **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,



Michaela Peters  
Analyst I