

Note: These notes do not reflect the District's priorities or any implicit or implied plan of action. These are only the transcriptions of input provided at public meetings.

Thematic Workshop – Greenbelts & Scenic Open Space May 16, 2017

Session 1

1) Within 1 mile of UGB or its equivalent – municipal utility district used as an equivalent to UGB

- Within district, likely to get developed
- Outside district, at risk for development

Access is important, both for humans (10%) and wildlife (90%)

Fencing is an issue.

Oak woodlands along Hwy 12 are important to protect.

Few structures; small (important characteristic) and blend in.

Barns and old buildings are OK, but business parks with cars are not.

Tin buildings in vineyards – CE should prohibit construction.

2) Property size

Small properties important for projects like RR corridors

- Depends on parcel's relative size to its surroundings.
- Wildlife, travel, connectors (community hiking, biking, equestrian)

E.g., small parcel development at gas station cancels the value of viewshed for surrounding area.

Edges of communities, where there are families; kids having access to green space.

District should consider both large and small parcels.

Consider cost of parcels but also the benefits to property owners and nearby open space.

Size and shape of parcel should be considered:

- Large & compact vs. linear or complex parcel
- How much access? Small neighborhood park

Session 2

Expansion of UGB – affected by policy changes. Maintain priorities for these areas countywide and direct funds.

Climate change:

- Drought, fire, flooding
- Degree of natural resources on scenic lands
- Wildfires, sea level rise

Fences blocking wildlife movement

Water extraction

Drainage of wetlands, floodplains

Threat to Oak: Douglas fir encroachment due to change in management. Combination of climate change and management techniques.

Strategies:

- Affirmative language regarding management
- Strategic grazing and burning of native grasses
- Restoration practices to enhance habitat

Encroachment – e.g., Right-of-ways, public roads, and ditches

Light at night

Non-native (dogs & cats)

Invasive species, e.g., broom

Erosion

Noise

Tourism considerations: How much and where?

Maintain funding source for the District

Need to market protected areas and benefits – potential threat to the District’s mission if not

In order to protect greenbelts and scenic open spaces these lands need to be a priority of the District

Strategies:

- Campaign about the important distinction between cities and country
- Articulate contrast between dense urban and rural
- We need an edge
- Promote European model
- Public outreach
- City council presentation about importance of greenbelts & scenic lands and how threatened they are

Urban open spaces needed to promote urban living

Strong land-use decisions supported by BOD

Threats:

- Creeping urban ranchettes
- Community needs to embrace this way of thinking – needs to be part of the Sonoma identity
- Lack of coordination between county, cities, special districts, land trust, nonprofits, city planning
- South county gateways – raceway, Hwy 37, big development north of 37, potential for creation of “Welcome to wine country Disneyland”
- Threats to biodiversity
- Sea level rise a problem

Session 3

Consider emotional health benefits of open space

Close to urban areas and with access

- Can walk there
- Open to public
- When/where appropriate

Strategies:

- District needs to engage community
- Community presentations about specific benefits greenbelts provide
- More outreach about what the District does
- Engage students through presentations and field days
- More District engagement with other organizations

Tools:

- CNPS and looking at native plant/habitat
- SCWA and groundwater recharge
- Citizen science (iNaturalist.org) to inform acquisition of land and community engagement
 - Set up projects for District properties
 - Birds, changes in wildlife, flora, fauna
 - Threatened and endangered species

Multiple benefits:

- Maintain vistas
- Small-scale farms near cities
- Flood mitigation
- Wildlife habitat preservation and connectivity
 - E.g., grasslands, oak woodlands & vernal pools in Santa Rosa plain
- Recreation access where possible and appropriate
 - Trails OK
 - Maintain community identity
 - Area can be used for education about natural resources and other
- Groundwater recharge
- Opportunities for restoration
- Increase carbon sequestration
- Reduction of pollution, CO2 emissions

Model for other counties to follow

Strategy: Source of scientific education of rangeland and ag management, including sustainable ag

Community engagement:

- Donation opportunities
- Presentation
- Participatory days

###

Session 1

Define

- See Expenditure Plan
- Along all Hwy 101, 116, 121, 37, 12
- Commuting corridors
- Contain communities
- Access – non-motorized connections through county
- Darkness along transportation corridors
- Consideration of wildlife

Places

- Meham Hill (hill between Cotati & Petaluma on Hwy 101)
- South of Petaluma on Hwy 101
- Hilltops & highly visible areas (Fitch, Sonoma Mountain) – views of and from
- Separation between cities & communities to maintain unique character

Size & Proximity

- Supporting Urban Growth Boundary
- Adjacency and proximity are important
- Buffering around wildlife corridors (also add to definition) – reinforcing
- Identifying entry to cities and communities (gateway) – archways, signage
- Is this work the District is doing/wants to do?
- Awareness of nature via identification of creeks, watersheds, etc.

What the District can do

- Influence Board to consider appropriate development
- Consider both small and large parcels (there is a perception that District is interested only in very large parcels)
- Support small ag (food) for local food and diversity

Session 2

Vineyards – soil erosion, water usage, conversion of lands, event centers (as a step of development). “Agriculture” may be a misnomer for vineyards.

Cannabis – Grow houses are impacting scenic qualities

County approval of projects that are inappropriate and ignore cumulative impacts; examples include:

- Number of tasting rooms on Willowside Road
- Impacts to neighborhood, traffic

Mitigation – destruction of habitats, mitigate elsewhere. Is it effective? It is still loss of land.

Top Threats

- Big events – e.g., Iron Man, Battlefrog Mud Run at Lake Sonoma – held in inappropriate location, environmental impact

- Wineries/event centers – proliferation, losing diversity of agriculture, threat to existence of GB.
- Loss of small family farms and replacement with wineries/event centers (existence).
- Urban sprawl – threat to both existence and quality
 - Need to plan our cities to include open spaces and walkable communities
 - Address housing crisis
- Impervious surfaces – even within greenbelts impervious surfaces can cause erosion, flooding
 - Encouragement of LID and pervious surfaces
- Threats when ag land is paved over (especially for event centers) – loss of land and its use.
- Climate change – vineyards and event centers on the coast (need cooler temperatures).
- Invasive species impacting scenic qualities and habitat

Session 3

- UOS – Atascadero Creek wetlands – salmon-bearing creek
- Pollinators at butterfly garden – Graton
- Hemmed in by vineyards, floods regularly
- Easement for hiking/biking Bay Area Ridge Trail from Petaluma to Cotati
- Opportunity: Continue implementation of existing plan (e.g., local coastal plan) working in conjunction with priorities
- Tool: Protecting people and land on hazard-prone land. County Hazard Plan (e.g., landslide, fire, earthquake)
- Unique features of scenic lands = opportunity for passive experience
- Outreach to landowners of success and definitions of greenbelts
- Opportunities to protect wildlife corridors and watershed while providing scenic landscapes
- Filling in gaps between protected areas (Tool: contiguous)
- Lands used for low-impact camping for farm workers and homeless – limiting impacts elsewhere
- UOS – Views from urban areas (Petaluma Hill Road, Taylor Mountain)

###

Session 1

Definition & Specific Places

- Separates cities from growing together
- Reduces sprawl
- Ag farms
- Wildlife habitat and prevent genetic pooling
- Cities should be islands with open space more prevalent
- Passive vs. active open space – visible vs. visual relief
 - Allow some public access but low development
 - Provides a break between hardscape ag or open space
- Agricultural use important for G.B.
- District should work closely with private property owners
- Confusion over community separators vs. greenbelts – need a better definition and land-use designation

Specific Places

- West Petaluma Hills
 - Near Helen Putnam (west)

- Adjacent to development
- Oak woodlands
- Vistas and wildlife corridors
- Freestone Valley
 - Scenic area
 - Maintaining existing land uses
 - Mendo Highlands meets Merced Hills
- Pengrove and surrounding areas
 - Alluvial fan
 - Threatened by development
- Historic Headwater and Laguna de Santa Rosa
 - Cotati UGB
 - Rohnert Park
 - Separate these two areas
 - Active community garden
 - Traditional ag
 - Next to #3 above
- Bayfront marshes

Size of greenbelts – large vs. small

- Large good from cost benefit
- Small valuable because of pinch points and critical for wildlife linkage
- Drainage and recharge characteristics
 - Geology of site
 - Hydrology
- Small can be more valuable than large
- Contiguous parcels – putting puzzle together
- Depends on multiple factors
 - Multi-benefits
- Transitional places that help define edge

Session 2

Threats

- Over-industrialization of ag areas
 - Chemicals
 - Abuse of land
 - Infrastructure
 - Impervious surface
- Homeless encampments
 - Human waste
 - Garbage
 - Farm workers
 - Refugees
- Trail erosion in areas open to public
- Tourism
 - Scale of population visiting sites

- Traffic on rural roads
- Trespassing
- Wineries/rural roads – drunk driving issues
- Needs better coordination (shuttles, sites)
- Climate change
 - Wildfires – open lands become a threat to local residents
- Fences can prevent flow of wildlife
- Respecting easement language
 - Enforcement
- Geologic stability of sites like Fountaingrove
- Instead of Bay Area development, protect natural hillsides
- Protection of UGBs and working with cities
- Overpopulation and housing demand
- Enforcement of current and proposed rules

Session 3 – Multiple Benefits

3.1

- Groundwater recharge
 - Reduce erosion
 - Wildlife corridors
 - Historical watersheds and streams
- Oak trees and riparian forest absorb CO₂
- Connectivity between greenbelts
 - Trails
- Look for synergy between right-of-way and open space
- Reduces impervious surface and temperature
 - Cooling effect – hardscape
- Rails to Trails effort?
- Increases property value of neighboring properties and perceived quality of life
- Well-managed grazing – proactive easement language
 - CO₂ absorption
 - Wildlife flow
 - Fuel loads
 - Control invasive plants
 - Erosion
 - Water infiltration
 - Food for community

3.2

- Proactive ag easement language to promote good grazing practices
- Liaison for funding and restoration practices
- Incentivize landowners to responsible practices
- Create connection from District to other agencies to programs (Federal & State grants) for well-managed grazing and other practices

3.3 Urban Open Space

- Support S.E. Greenway
- Imwalle Gardens
- Support acquisition along SMART bike path
- Coast is vulnerable to winery industry
- Vernal pools and forests are important to protect
- Urban fringe acres and opportunity for ag close (?)

###

Session 1

Define Greenbelt | Places

- Size: No minimum – e.g., Hallberg Butterfly Garden, small, adjacent to a town.
- Size if only GB, then:
 - Laguna Meadowlark as small examples, remnant vernal pools.
 - District should create “edge” or “end” of urban transition. Sometimes a small parcel does this.
- Refine definition of greenbelts
- Greenbelt = range/animal habitats – not vines. Vineyard would be a lower-quality greenbelt.
- Greenbelts should have staple crops (food especially) vs. rec crops (cannabis, wine, cider)
- Greenbelts have requirements on fencing – keep it open.
- Greenbelts should support native plants and wildlife.
- Greenbelts should support natural landscapes.
- Greenbelts should have farming that does not degrade habitat.
- Greenbelt easements should specify certain agricultural practices rather than certain types of ag.
- Encourage easements that are food-focused.
- Encourage diverse agriculture.
- Enforce easement terms.
- Criteria: allow agriculture while ensuring easement structure protects natural resources.
- Protect the coast – no event centers. Ag is OK, but no big tourism events or tasting rooms.
- Educate and encourage enforcement
- Develop a large event center along Hwy 101 to take pressure off rural areas.
- Hwy 12 corridor is a priority.
- Coast
- Hwy 12, edge of Springs
- All community separators
- Urban open space – add definition.

Threats

- Monoculture is a threat – vineyards.
 - Degradation
 - Greenhouse gases
 - Air pollution
 - Urbanization of ag land
 - Waste
 - Noise
 - Lights
- Luxury resorts and hotels on ag land

- Large organized events, bike races
- Tourism: creeping expansion of use (e.g., testing dinners at wineries, attaching amenities, helicopters, etc. Greenbelt is transformed incrementally to an urbanized state.
- Sea level rise along San Pablo Baylands
- Wildlife habitat and corridors can become isolated, not able to adapt under climate change, creating hardscape – “creeping hardscapes”
- Ag practices that are not wildlife friendly – refine and require practices to be wildlife friendly.
- Greenbelts are key for wildlife connectivity, adaptation for wildlife and plants
- Evaluate best potential areas (greenbelts and scenic open space) for carbon sequestration
- Integrate multiple agencies: Sonoma County Water Agency, SCTA, Sonoma Land Trust & District
- Use mitigation as a strategy
- RCIS
- Infill: Urban open space opportunities
- Partner with infill developers to enhance open space
- Develop infill/open space strategy with key partners
- Cities should be islands, NOT open spaces
- 7-foot fences not conducive
- Housing on hills degrades the visual respite
- Sonoma County should have a ridgeline ordinance
- Large ag buildings are a threat – warehouses should not be larger than ¼ acre.
- Lighting is a threat to visual respite (event centers, residential shows up at night). Lighting is an urban phenomenon.
- No amplified music or lighting on an easement.
- Greenbelts should be prioritized based on their water recharge potential – impervious surface.
- Helps with water quantity/quality.
- No or limited hardscape in greenbelts.
- Farm worker housing should not be allowed to be transformed into hotels or B&Bs.
- Place farm worker housing in urban communities and provide transportation.
- Health standards for farm worker housing needs to be kept high
- Acquire greenbelt lands/easements proactively.

Strategies:

- Donations as a tax write-off
- Trust/endowment funds – management entities
- Set up a community separator fund/endowment within the District allowing donations/fundraising
- Dedicate a percentage to each thematic area, e.g., community separators
- Partner more with community on achieving separator goals
- Identify geographically and thematically explicit opportunities to leverage District funds, i.e., IMBY!
- Access park bond ?
- Map opportunity sites within UGBs
- Water storage as a multiple benefit – stormwater, groundwater, streams. Capture and store.
- Opportunities for wetlands, trails, etc.
- Updated flood capacity (100 years flood has changed!)
- Floodplain wetlands – habitat and groundwater
- Community gardens, other things that make urban areas more resilient to climate change, heat islands, refuge for people and wildlife

- Carbon sequestration – adaptive and mitigative
- Urban carbon analysis
- Partner with SCWA on urban centers (?)

Multiple Benefits

- Public access in greenbelts/scenic open spaces: non-motorized access in greenbelts – connections to urban where appropriate.
- Bike connections between communities along roads
- Define rec as passive within greenbelts and scenic open spaces
- Bike riding only along roads (active)
- Clarify which greenbelts are appropriate for access by type
- Lake Sonoma mountain bike event is problematic (damage)
- Create functional riparian corridors which have additional benefits of access along them.
- Integrate passive, low-impact trails with riparian in greenbelts
- Groundwater recharge, flood reduction
- Riparian corridors in San Pablo Bay
- Model areas where best groundwater recharge
- Carbon sequestration – in soils, plants
- Southeast Greenway – example of a shaded greenway making communities more resilient to climate change, heat island, refuge for people and wildlife.

Thematic Workshop – Agriculture

May 17, 2017

Session 1

Specific areas

- Where they are most at risk of conversion of any kind
- Smaller food producing areas around urban boundaries
- Areas defined by soil type
- Flatlands and development may not be best use. Fertile soil in flatlands.
- Best use of land by soil type
- Matrix scoring criteria to rank/weigh
- Encourage infill development
- Better data/anecdotal info needed for soil type and best use of land
- Proximity of ranch lands is important (partnering with other farmers when doing large projects)

Diversity and role of District

- Should not specify type of agriculture
- Performance based on objectives – e.g., maintaining and improving soil health
- Design for diverse uses that can change over time
- Concern about vineyard monoculture.
- Under certain circumstances District can say cover crops are OK.
- Proximity of agriculture to urban areas
- Cannabis concern

- Climate change
- Plan should anticipate new drivers of land use (e.g., cannabis, climate change, and groundwater management)

Important:

- Proximity to other ag properties
- Not a District-defined threshold (depends on use proposed and historical use)
- District establishes targets for particular use. Diversity targets, scale targets, and succession targets.
- Top soil preservation and monitoring, and water use management (District plan should...)
- Performance-based, not practice-based (District plan should....)
- Collaboration between landowners and District is important to develop specific uses on property.
- How does agriculture affect the waterways
- Dynamic adaptive planning for each property

Session 2

Thoughts on affirmative easement:

- Enforceability
- Payment formula? Annual or lump sum?
- Succession scheme
- Term vs. perpetuity
- Possibility of hardship clause
- Incentive for continuing ag use
- Flexible model to adapt to market and climate changes
- Incentives for farming in perpetuity

Approach:

- Step 1: Conservation easement
- Step 2: Leaser to change over time

Threats:

- Subdivision
- Generational transition of same owner and new beginning farmers
- Environmental threats (drought, etc.)
- Regulatory challenges
- Increasing regulation
- Role for District in guiding practical regulations – District advocacy role.
- Availability of property
- Cannabis
- Lack of farm worker housing

What the District can do:

- Collaborate with PRMD and other agencies to experiment (beta test) and encourage farm labor housing. Leverage District's role to do more innovative projects.
- Equipment lending program
- Facilitate distribution of information regarding farming (best practices) – e.g., UCCE

Session 3

- Offer financial incentive to farmers to enhance natural resources on property.
- Collaboration/partnering/match-making farmers with resource-expert agencies.
- Provide financial support for resource experts. Matching grant?
- Education component is important. Good to showcase properties with multiple conservation values.
- Incentivize property owners to conduct conservation-specialist education (financial incentive and a commitment from the operator to represent the District appropriately). E.g., education in public parks or on properties.
- Encourage agri-tourism sites
- Prioritize education on properties located in convenient locations or adjacent to urban areas for public access.
- Good example: Falletti Ranch in Cotati.
- District should support community gardens.
- Management of community gardens should have oversight/be managed by community gardeners.
- Better! Well-managed small commercial farm with education component near urban areas
- Criteria for Matching Grant Program should be revisited. Cities don't always have funds for MGP match. Open up match fulfillment to other entities (e.g., in-kind nonprofits, etc.).
- Assessment of ecosystem services on District properties (fee & easement).
- Incorporate ecosystem series in baseline studies.
- Financial incentives for improving ecosystems
- Metrics: 1) organic matter; 2) overall biodiversity; 3) bird counts; 4) productivity/health of natural species; 5) carbon sequestration; 6) water quality.
- Monitoring: check water quality by analysis of water in creeks, etc.
- Native vegetation

###

Session 1

Where?

- Where there is threat of development (e.g., urbanization in Santa Clara)
- Where there are other lands under contract
- Where there may be opportunity for multiple benefits (groundwater)
- Where there are unique cultural and/or community attributes (e.g., Two Rock)
- Profitable? Marginal types of ag – since goal is to preserve
- Mappable – soil, water, etc. regarding suitable to allow for ag to be productive (micro-attributes)
- Tracking conversion: forestry staying forestry, grazing remaining grazing
- Areas of significance (MAP)

Specify?

- Pay attention to conversion especially regarding water availability
- Is there a way to prioritize growing staples (food) vs. wine grapes?
 - Matrix vs. monocrop
 - Local vs. export
- Desire for diverse ag
- Support organic? Incentives vs. requirement

- Can't tie economic hands of producers – flexibility, however, public funds
- Re conversion – e.g., apples with no fence, vineyard with fence = limiting wildlife corridors and creating fragmentation
- Prioritize uses that build multiple benefits (e.g., ag operations that violate water quality regulations)
 - Building health – helping landowners comply
- Instead of being proscriptive – performance
- Other community benefits
 - Cotati highlands – community open space now benefit
 - Falletti Ranch – could provide opportunities for small-scale ag

Factors

- Proximity – important both near and far from cities (different types of ag)
- Demand related to urban expansion
- Access to fresh, local food
- Expansion also in ex-urban – e.g., “trophy ranchettes” or larger – gated, etc. and no longer in ag

Diverse

- Viability of monetizing ecosystem service
- Carbon farming and water availability and quality
- Diversifying portfolio
- Opportunities for non-ag projects – e.g., groundwater recharge
- Flexibility – don't tie to certain uses, practices or regulations (e.g., organic) that may change over time (e.g., Occidental Arts and Ecology Center organic standards, locked in)

Session 2

Threats

- Loss of agriculture infrastructure: processing plants, slaughterhouses, mills
- Event centers – land value, impacts to environment
- Balance between food and wine/vines
- Disconnection of ag land
 - Proximity to neighbors for help, equipment sharing
 - Lack of understanding by neighbors
- Housing and laborer availability
- Availability of water, impacts of climate change
- Increasing regulation
- Cumulative effect of regulations – e.g., NRCS funds for water, yet permitting pond takes time/money, etc.
- Generational change
 - District may help keep family in ag
 - Multiple-generation planning
- Lack of education for producers for ecology/economy – ahead of the curve, adaptive
- Grapes are pricing out diversity and economic viability of ag
- Cannabis – Competition, land value

District's role

- Protecting staple ag like food and fiber

- Alternative to conservation easement tied to natural resources
 - Ecosystem services (possibly via pilot or partnerships)
- Forum to discuss and find solutions to threats bringing in ? ag community
 - Outreach program regarding practices and adaptability
- Trainings for new conservation easement landowners
- Thinking about prioritizing lands is tricky – changes over time

Affirmative easements

- Yes, great tool – if land is protected for ag, it would ensure keeping it in ag (Threat: landowner change)
- May contain sprawl in community separator by keeping ag
- Food security
- Balance of restricting
- Incentive for affirmative – carrot vs. stick
- Essential but needs regular review (updated/adapted)

Session 3

Opportunities

- Grazing in natural resource areas like riparian (oak woodland forests) may provide benefits (e.g., rotational grazing)
 - Win-win: local food providing ecosystem services
 - Savings because landowners is providing ecosystem services
- Conservation easement on riparian corridors
 - Carbon sequestration
 - Habitat connectivity
 - Many others
- GP: Designation of areas where ag isn't appropriate or other (tool: payment for)
- Urban: storm-water management and experience with ag that connects communities to ag in urban lands
 - Tool: Working with cities and public works for storm water
- Food security – District encouraging

Tools/Strategies

- Affirmative easements
 - Farming and ranching
 - Ecosystem services
- Compensation for ecosystem services
 - Working with PRMD on land-use variances, e.g., compensate for labor, allowing houses for working
- More specific conservation goals that are required to achieve
- Riparian protection/easements, and also headwaters
- Ability to lease lands for remaining in production by property owner
- Provide funds to landowner for water storage (groundwater recharge)

Urban Open Space

- School gardens – connection to food, soil, land – EVERY school

- Low cost, benefit
- Technical support
- Family/neighbor support during summer
- Matching Grant Program – cities to support community gardens
- Public works lands – make available for public use (e.g., leases to farmers)

###

Session 1

1.1

- Beyond Urban Growth Boundaries
 - Higher risk for development
 - Lower cost away from UGB
 - Access to markets
- Contiguous to conservation easements
 - Viable economic units – connecting lands together
 - But cattle – minimum of 1,000 acres
- Generating revenue for District
 - Water storage
 - Cell towers
 - Fish hatcheries
- Groundwater catchment basin and ag component
- Downstream from urban areas
- Sites where there's existing ag infrastructure

1.2

- Distinguish between staple crops (food and fiber) vs. recreational crops (wine and cannabis)
 - District should focus on crops and dairy
 - District should set a quota for food production
- Number of operating ag systems vs. acres in production
 - Encourage incubator models but also smaller and diverse types of operation
 - Entry-level opportunities
- Can the District establish a quota for type of ag and crops across the county
- Ag easements should address BMPs that address cover crops, climate change and e-services, and are reviewed periodically

1.2 Specifications

- Practices – District can work with BMPs for easements
- Types – District should stay away from this area due to economic feasibility and other limitations

1.3

- Proximity to cities
- Diversity of crop types
- Promotes current ag to remain in ag – small and large
- District should be invested in ag easement language that includes management practices and environmental protection

- Easements vs fee acquisitions

1.4

Diversity – Could District incentivize (as an option) subleases on large agricultural easements

Session 2

Types and Important Threats

- Wages and labor (labor shortages)
 - Key to economic stability of ag
 - Affordability
- Cost of land for farm land and a place to live
- Succession of land to future generations
- Affordability not only in context of ‘new’ farm options
- Creeping commercial zoning that the District could address with ag easements
- Climate change – temperature changes that will alter vineyard production, shifting to the west and to coastal areas
- Flooding – more extreme storms (water scarcity is less of an issue)

Role of the District

- Floodplains – Russian River, Laguna de Santa Rosa
- Groundwater catchment basins, groundwater recharge and health (?)
- Headwaters! Susceptible to vineyard
 - Clustered to Santa Rosa – development
 - Mark West Springs
 - Adobe
 - Laguna de Santa Rosa
- Prioritize acquisitions that can help diversify ag
- Research, marketing, ag challenges, and climate change
- Provide ongoing technical reviews and supporting resources to District

Affirmative easements

- Maintain soil health
- Facilitate funding (grants and tech support)
- District serves as liaison to NRCS, RCDs, and UCCE
- Can District fund tech support – grants, monitoring soil health
- Encourage landowners to engage in research activities
- Can Matching Grant Program support these activities

Session 3

Multiple Benefits & Strategies

- Increase CO₂ into soil to increase production
- Assist in dissemination of scientifically supported technology and practices
- Ensure stewardship practices are supported by science, not fads
- Include economic feasibility of proposed ag easement language
- Win-win -- needs to include economic viability

- Encourage diversity of ag production
- Win-win will enhance the success of the District to promote ag easements
- Recreation that may be appropriate on ag easements (Russian River). Liability issues/fire/safety of livestock.

Strategies & Tools

- Carbon sequestration in ag – system – farmer supports rotational grazing, cover crops, and perennial grasses which meets climate change mitigation
- Riparian corridor easement – provides economic compensation to landowner who takes lands out of production. Helps economic viability.
- District opportunity to work on environmental services that currently are not monetized
 - Carbon farming
 - Groundwater recharge
 - Habitat restoration (range land)
 - MALT/Colorado/NY
- Grant programs that support carbon farming
- Win-win – District maintains good collaborative relations and communication with agricultural organizations

###

Session 1

Where

- Riparian areas
- Areas most at risk of conversion out of ag
- Areas most at risk of conversion to tourist/events and vacation homes
- Bodega Bay
- Marin County line
- Salmon Creek watershed
- Estero watershed
- Adjacent to other ag
- Buffers to cities and greenbelts
- Water recharge areas
- Soil types appropriate for ag
- Not wetlands, some forest
- Protection needed for ag infrastructure – new types of easement?
- Important cultural and historical ag lands or of significance anywhere in county

Diversity

Facilitate rotation between ag properties

Types of ag

- Ensure diversity including wood lots
- Within urban areas (connection to ag for urban)
- Affirmative agreement to do ag
- Not: non-food crops as priority (e.g., cannabis)

- Public support (e.g., District) on regionally appropriate crops (even if not currently economically viable), support during transition periods.
- Flexibility but encourage diversity through criteria
- Tier 1: Most productive, organic, sustainable
- Tier 2: Biggest, most value crop
- Tier 3: Less productive (e.g., grazing)
- Productive – Maybe not the best criteria because of multiple benefits
- Quality ag soils on ag lands at risk of conversion
- Adjacency

Threats

- Not: water availability – business decision
- Tourist industry, tasting rooms, event centers – but brings \$\$ to ag
- Second homes
- Affordability of land
- Affordability of housing
- Low profit margins

District efforts

- Prioritize food production
- Subsidizing isn't a long-term solution
- Put cultural value on other benefits – water, carbon sequestration, soil, corridors, etc.
- Prioritize projects with multiple benefits – OK to pay for ecosystem services

Affirmative

- Carbon farming to protect and manage riparian areas
- Benefits include ecosystem services
- Address landowner pushback

Ideas (Strategies?)

- Pay conservation easement value over time (like rent)
- Win-win
- Lots of opportunities – need cultural understanding of integration – e.g, recreation & ag, etc.
- For rec: address liabilities
- Humans to recognize ag and natural areas – overlap all
- Ag tourism at appropriate scale – use funds for management
- Provide technical assistance and master planning
- Farmstays are appropriate for CE lands
- Payments for protecting special habitats
- Prioritize multi-benefit projects – not just ag or just resources
- Have diversity of projects – some just ag or just resources

Urban Open Space

- Yes – overlap with ag
 - Large enough ≥ 2 acres

- Incubation program – affirmative for incubation
- Viability: Infrastructure, access to water, soil, slope
 - City, community support, walkability
- City GIS analysis
- Incubator program in urban areas
 - 2- to 5-acre parcels, ±5 years
 - Mentors
 - Public access

###

Session 1

Important Areas

- Food production should be emphasized
- Sensitive ecological areas: streams, wetlands, agriculturally productive soils
- Focus on multiple benefits for ag and sensitive areas
- Grazing land = scenic, food, fire suppression
- Timber is ag, all food production, livestock
- High-quality ag soils tend to be around urban areas; prioritize foodbelts around urban. They are threatened by development.
- No prescription regarding type of ag.
- Incentives for food production – mini, Williamson Act, reduced fees, regulatory relief.
- Keep landowner use flexible, develop stewardship criteria for best practices to ensure sensitive resources are protected.
- Limit the amount of bureaucratic layers that affect farmers' flexibility.
- There should be an ag specialist at the District to support landowners.
- Use affirmative easements – ag and natural resources a **palette (?)**
- Support landowner – do not create obstacles. Can District provide additional resources over easement funds?
- Incentives for working with RCDs, other natural resource entities
- Annual payment? Endowment over long term? Is it up to landowner (option) or prescriptive (no)?
- District should diversify its financial tools
- Temporally limited easements – 20 years. What are outcomes/benefits/concerns? Price would need to be low.
- Tierra as a model for priority (food production)
- Purchase water rights easements perhaps if linked to creating another source of water (temporally flexible)
- Do we pay for co-benefit values like carbon sequestration, etc. – support working farms.
- What percentage of Sonoma County population consumes local food
- Incentivizing water banking, soil health, flood mitigation
- Groundwater recharge projects/storage
- Incentivize catchments, off-stream storage
- Select priority watersheds, extinguish residential development, water for ag and fish
- Sub-division of parcels near urban areas, especially small parcels

- Change narrative around what is “bang for buck” – evaluate multi-benefits of small, urban-edge parcels
- How do ag stewards maintain support for ag over long term? Continuum from small to large as a “stepping stone” to maintain future ag potential/human capital. Long-term view/aging of ag human capital.
- Evaluate economies of scope and scale for different ag enterprises
- Affirmative easement continuum definition of affirmative needs flexibility performance-based affirmative which focuses on outcomes and objectives. E.g., organic or riparian.
- Government regulation – people do not understand ag – it costs \$\$
- Fractured ag community that is not in agreement
- Not enough emphasis on ag production – recreation is high profile
- Launch an educational campaign about the importance of ag
- Specifically with new people moving into ag acres
- Educate vocabulary re ag

Threats

- Economics – volatility of markets, climate, etc. Cyclical nature of profits.
- Global vs. local drivers, like cannabis, wine, and pushing ag towards highest-value crops
- Our tax dollars should support community benefit – e.g., food
- Cost of housing – labor, farmers, turnover
- Farm-worker housing on easements OK, no transition
- Easements need to accommodate very different farming approaches, labor
- Do not put farm-worker housing on prime ag land
- Coastal grazing lands are a priority to protect against coastal development
- Increase in tourism and traffic due to rangeland conversion to vineyards
- Ensuring ag diversity – PES may incentivize
- Look at sustaining the economic return for ag while also achieving other social and environment goals
- Farms and ranches with big mansions do not stay in ag
- Diversity – driven by topographic, geologic diversity – it sorts itself out
- Small and large are important – size supports diversity
- Economics should always come first in the case of ag. Sustainability – more prescriptive = less economically viable
- Affirmative easements with ongoing payments – e.g., riparian corridors and PES
- Timber lands should continue to be managed, economic benefits/logging allowed, carbon sequestration, fuel load suppression to avoid fire
- Careful consideration of flexible food-based incentives (e.g., affirmative, other)
- Local food production should be a priority for taxpayer dollars
- District should incentivize ways that food production can compete with other ag imports – **diversification**
(?)
- Allow high-value crops (inebriants) to subsidize food production (flexibility, \$\$, food)

Win-win

- Prioritize lands that have the potential to support multiple natural resource benefits: habitat corridors, riparian, wetlands, carbon sequestration, etc.
- Use affirmative easements to protect riparian corridors: helps community and landowners (regulatory relief)
- How to pay for it – adding/layering other funds than just District

- Prioritize easements on properties with good habitat. Context dependent based on science and geographic context.
- Urban open space – more Tierra Farms
- Focus Matching Grant Program on DAC.
- Cost of urban edge ag
- NIMBY
- Affordable, long-term leases (minimum of 5 years) for new farmers
- Ranches that are sustainable
- The way it was 60 years ago! (define this search image)

**Thematic Workshop – Natural Resources
May 23, 2017**

Session 1

- Streams & major tributaries – Sonoma Creek
- Forest lands that sequester the most carbon
- Sensitive lands threatened by vineyards
- Wetlands and floodplains
 - Target areas ripe for restoration
 - Unchannelize, natural meanders
- Identify sensitive watersheds
- Wildlife corridors – Sonoma Development Center, Hwy 12, Arnold Drive
- Critical linkages – Look beyond the models
- Hillsides under threat of erosion or development
- Bundling mechanism for acquisition -- many forest parcels are less than 50 or 100 acres
- Explore different fee for service other than easements?
- Mass mailers to target landowners, more community meetings with neighbors and partners
- Expansion of flood and transition zones above future water lines
- Coastal and Baylands
- Identifying prime land for ag development to ease pressure on sensitive areas
- Speak up for infill
- Target UGB parcels on the periphery
- Natural areas close to schools – recruit the future!
- Headwaters to mouths
- Monetary incentive to encourage restoration – easements pave the way for future restoration
- Large, forest land parcels are diminishing
- Inholdings inside public land
 - Sugarloaf & Hood Mountain connectivity
 - Taylor to Annadel
 - Trail easement
- Enterprise Road
- Recreation: Mayacama Trail, Sonoma to Sugarloaf
- Refugia for wetlands, redwoods
- Climate refugia through climate change models
- Soils: Incentivize creation/restoration of soils on easements

Session 2

- Subdivision
- Urban sprawl
- Hillside development
- Biodiversity loss due to invasives and conversion
- Vineyard conversion
 - Management practices
 - Erosion
 - Loss of habitat
- Water use due to development and ag
- Resource extraction and mining
- Habitat fragmentation – disruption to wildlife corridors
 - Fencing
 - Freeways
- Wineries and event centers
- Lack of active management
- Cannabis – limited funding
- Lack of coordinated regional planning
- Lack of understanding of land use – overlap of land uses and their effects
- Lack of public awareness
- Economy as part of ecology, not the reverse
- Regional planning that prioritizes growth
- Organizations and local bodies to coordinate planning, i.e., “One Tam”
- Iterative allocation of funds
- Science-based approach, prioritization of invasive species management
- Affirmative Stewardship included in easement language
- Open Forum (Digital, physical) for planning and education – District could take the lead
 - Share observations and best practices
 - Annual, semi-annual, quarterly
- More funding
- Further define the “Natural Resource” mission of the District
- Land base specific plan to address threat

Session 3

- Sustainable grazing plans
- Work with partners to develop sustainable ag models and BMPs
- Incentivize sustainable development
- Incentivize multiple uses
 - More diverse project structure
 - Restoration
- Sonoma Valley Regional Park
- Crane Creek
- Riparian corridors, water quality, trails, fish & wildlife habitat
- Riparian easements
- Work with groups of landowners and neighbors, look beyond single-parcel boundaries

- Congregate smaller parcels around UGBs, community separators
- Increase easement monitoring
- More volunteers!
- Use partners to find new landowners for fee lands, public outreach
- Public access can introduce invasives
- Highlight protections (Federal, state) to serve our goals (salmon, endangered species)
- Restoring urban riparian areas
- Expand Matching Grant Program to encourage more multi-use other than recreation
- Expand Matching Grant Program to include unincorporated areas, i.e., Boyes Hot Springs – in-kind match
- Make Matching Grant Program available to communities with fewer resources
- Vernal pools
- Open up more projects to mitigation funding
- Carbon farming
 - Grazing practices: address invasives
 - Perennial grasses and natives
- Marin Carbon Project
- UCCE programs

###

Session 1

- Vernal pools – awareness of/focus on smaller properties (.25-30 acres)
 - Santa Rosa Plain
 - Sonoma Valley
- Riparian areas
 - Russian River
 - Sonoma Creek
- Super-rare vegetation communities – e.g. Baker’s Manzanita
- Oak woodlands
- Serpentine
- Medium to large redwood stands – intact corridors
- Wildlife corridors using Critical Linkages
 - Sonoma Valley and more
 - Sonoma Development Center
- Upland habitat for California tiger salamander
- Key salmonid streams – Green Valley, Sheephouse, Salmon Mill, Dutch Bill, Mark West
- Pay-off period for conservation easements – ongoing income, maybe not perpetuity; adjust CEs
- Be mindful of natural resources and ag
- Prioritize areas where strong symbiosis of natural resources/ag/+ exists
 - Prime farmland
 - Farmland of importance
- Define food – wine grapes?
- Grazing and natural resources are compatible
- Prioritize diversity of ag
- Maintain viewsheds, soft landscape
- Widen riparian corridors

- Address invasive species in conservation easement language, buy in fee and address – removal, etc.
- Prioritize lands for working forests
- Wetlands – specifically southern Sonoma County
 - Lakeville
 - San Pablo Bay
 - Bayfront marshes
 - Baylands
- Vitality of coastal streams – Estero; put together a Conservation Coastal Plan
- Work with other counties to protect larger tracts of land
- Prioritize areas surrounded by other uses at greater risk of conversion to maintain diversity
- As many headwaters of creeks as possible - Laguna de Santa Rosa (Cotati area)

Session 2

- Perceived conflict between open space and thriving economy (demonstrates need for Healthy Lands, Healthy Economies)
- Lack of information for decision-makers – share more information
 - Work more closely with other county & city departments (permits)
 - Develop (mini) habitat conservation plan(s)
 - Better explain benefits of natural resource protection to landowners
 - Convene and educate
- Cumulative impacts – piecemeal land use, permits
 - Inform General Plan with science
 - Create Conservation Lands Network for Sonoma County
- Create plan with countywide targets and priorities
- Non-sustainable resource extraction
- Recreation & public access
- Constraints of natural processes
 - Fire suppression
 - Hydro-modification
 - Legacy effects
- Invasive species
- Unrestricted grazing above care/capacity of land
- Development, suburban sprawl, lack of city-centered growth infill
- Uncertainty around UGB renewal
- Climate change impacts
 - Water – drought and excessive rainfall/flood, change in ag
 - Sea level rise – prioritize coastal properties and transition zones
- Restore riparian areas
- Create and implement grazing plans on District lands to benefit native plants
- Messaging: A way to protect natural heritage is to promote city-centered growth
 - What will be lost if cities grow/sprawl?
 - What is at risk?
- Identify key properties where super rare plant species exist
- Fund NPO work to implement restoration activities where critical areas exist – land management plans
- Consider “right of first refusal”
- Prescriptive burning where appropriate

Session 3

- Create desired goal/priority – ensure goal is being met
 - Create plan to achieve goal
 - Monitor property to ensure goal is achieved
- Develop conservation easement with specific designated areas that allow for multiple uses – natural resources, ag, rec (trail easements, etc.)
- Audit/evaluate existing multi-benefit properties and create BMPs/lessons learned for future acquisitions and stewardship
- Incentivize landowners to do multi-benefit conservation easements
- Create better balance regionally – prioritize local food over commercial ag
- Robust public engagement with all user groups related to recreation on a natural resource property or park – continued education and outreach
- Affirmative easements – access/education with guide
 - Partnerships with schools
 - Citizen science and monitoring APP
- Effective, continued monitoring
- Develop better messaging about community benefits and ecosystem services
- Interpretive materials on park lands and urban open space projects
 - Signage
 - Clear communication with public users
- What are good examples of multiple benefits coexisting?
 - Scott Ranch (Sonoma Mountain) – pseudo access, scenic, ag (cattle and vineyard)
 - Shollenberger Park (Petaluma) – wetlands, flood plain, recreation, scenic, migratory birds, interpretive signs
- Streamlined permitted-use process, conservation easement process

###

Session 1

- Serpentine and vernal wetland
 - West county near Sweetwater Springs Road
 - Cedars
- Riparian corridor
 - Especially in climate change
 - Wildlife movement
- Areas specific to wildlife movement
 - Sonoma Mountain
 - Sonoma Development Center connection to Mayacamas
- Salmon habitat – coastal areas and stream systems
 - Salmon Creek
 - Porter Creek near Sweetwater Springs Road
- Property near Sears Point – hunting club, uplands above Sears Point
- Cotati Creek
- Riparian corridors specifically ag lands without protective corridors
- Aquatic systems
 - Vernal pools vulnerable to development

- Mitigation not as functional
 - Keep existing vernal pools
 - Wetland water quality
 - Fresh vs. saltwater wetlands
 - Salmon Creek, Pacific Coast, tidal wetland
 - Fed./Vallejo Flood Control & Sanitation District
 - Hunting club (Wing & Barrel)
 - Petaluma River – most intact tidal wetlands in the Bay Area
 - What protection exists?
 - Headwaters need to be protected
 - Porter Creek (Sweetwater)
- Forests and oak woodlands
 - Sonoma Mountain
- Tributaries of Lake Sonoma
- Blue oak woodlands – Starr Road, Windsor
- Can the District balance forest types to be protected – redwood vs. oak woodlands
- Oak woodlands priority within ag lands
- Pitkin lily and rhododendron
- Vernal pool species
 - Sonoma Sunshine
 - Tiger salamander
- Serpentine
 - Manzanita - vulnerable to Douglas fir encroachment
 - Grasses - vulnerable to Douglas fir encroachment

Session 2

2.1 - Threats

- Water diversion
 - Wells
 - Outside of the groundwater control district
- Logging within and near riparian areas
- Board of Directors and Board of Supervisors the same
 - Threat – conflict of interest
 - Conservation easement protection vs. development
 - Need to have separate bodies
 - Interpretation of conservation easement language
- Permits (ministerial) granted to large projects – allow oak woodland removal/conversion
- Protection of any land adjacent to existing protected lands – needs to be prioritized, especially for vineyard conversion
- Intensification of use – subdivision
 - Ag lands (grazing to events/entertainment) being used for big events
- Cannabis
- Alternative energy development
 - Utility – solar and wind conversion on important habitat types (geysers, wind farms, solar farms)
 - Conversion of land use and intensification of land use
 - Infrastructural development

- Same as vineyards
 - Fragmentation
- Solid waste management
 - Leaching into groundwater
 - Removal of habitat

2.2 - Threats

- Lack of funding leads to poor management of resources on protected lands
- District to provide endowment for lands to actively manage land
- Support completion of Oak Woodland Plan to prioritize protection of oaks
- Mechanisms to support long-term conservation goals
- Communication
 - District to highlight additional values of a given conservation goal (no rec on natural-resource lands)
- District work with other agencies and NGOs to better define recreation
 - Passive
 - Active
 - No access – absolute protection
- Pre-established criteria to highlight what needs to be protected – e.g., dog policy to avoid creating conflict between different groups

3.1 – Multi-benefits

- Protection of forested areas – allowing for working forest easements
- Forest management could enhance the conservation values protected by easement. E.g., management of 2^o/3^o redwood stands
- Protection of water and air
- Fish habitat and restoration – e.g., dropping trees into streams to create stream habitat
- Agriculture protection
 - Permitting rec and educational opportunities
 - Enhance habitat features
 - Stream setbacks
 - Grassland management
 - Invasive species
 - Water recharge

3.2 – Scenic Lands

- Sonoma Mountain
 - Rec – trails
 - Wildlife corridors
 - Riparian protection
 - Grazing
 - Redwoods protection
- Place-based
 - Large-scale – Sonoma Mountain and Laguna de Santa Rosa
- Articulate values being protected AND then protect them.
 - E.g., Laguna de Santa Rosa – passive rec uses allowed but active rec discouraged

- Trail easements
 - Recreation values
 - Reduce invasive plant migration
 - Enhance wildlife corridors
 - Balanced with ag needs

3.3 – Strategies

- Ag lands with riparian habitat – protection takes up some production, need to compensate landowner
- Scenic resources being given to community – needs compensation
- Wildlife restoration and migration – takes economic value from landowner, so need to compensate

3.4

- Incorporate educational programs to enhance the value of natural resources protected by District in Matching Grant Program
- Connect MGP with conservation values with rec values and through educational program
- District should be more expeditious in completing agriculture agreements when farm could be lost
- Can District support ag infrastructural development
 - Processing centers
 - Critical mass/production
 - Support economic viability

###

Session 1

1.1

- Headwaters of Laguna de Santa Rosa
 - Seasonal wetlands
 - California tiger salamander habitat
 - Headwaters to watershed
 - Community separator
 - Greenbelt
- Lowland habitat types that are rare – even if impacted
 - Vernal pools
 - Wetlands – emergent marsh
 - Floodplain storage
 - Habitat diversity
 - Groundwater recharge
- Functional connectivity – corridors
- Not just large properties
- Riparian corridors
- Instream habitat
- Upland springs feeding streams
- Fish barriers
- Riparian setback areas beyond current regulations – uplands
- Water quality – storm water infiltration, non-point source pollution
- Educational outreach

- Urban/suburban incentives to reduce/mitigate non-point source pollution
- Upland protection – soil stabilization
- Consider mechanisms to protect instream flow – water rights exchange
- Facilitator of cooperative water conservation efforts to preserve stream flow
- Oak woodlands and non-regenerative oak woodlands – lots of old oaks but few young oaks. Specifically, identify locations where oak woodlands have become less widespread or non-regenerative.
- Consideration of sustainability of resources
- Protection of the variability of microhabitats that exist and are projected to exist with climate change
- Maintain a balance of habitat types being protected
- Coastal protection from increasing coastal encroachment
- Grasslands – both non-native and more importantly native

Session 2

- General Plan updates could be a threat to our charge
- Catastrophic wildfire – maybe addressed through an affirmative easement
- Population growth
 - UGB/Greenbelt projects
 - Advocate for infill
- Rural residential development in resource-sensitive areas

2.1

- Agricultural conversion, cultivated or vineyard
- Overindustrialization of ag – tasting rooms, wineries, event centers

2.2

Collaborative planning on larger scale involving landowners and planning/conservation groups

Threats? (marked as 1.1)

- Lack of public understanding of working landscapes and their value to the community and county
- Events and tourism (however, it brings in \$\$)
- Successional landowners of easement-encumbered land
- District funding

3.1

- Flood protection and groundwater recharge (vineyard, flooding in Sonoma Valley)
- Carbon sequestration
- Soil conservation
- Hedgerows and buffers on agricultural lands to provide habitat and soil stabilization
- Recreational lands with livestock – e.g., Taylor Mountain
- Renegotiate natural resource protection on old ag easements. New ag easements should include natural resource protection.

3.3

- Natural resources should be top priority over ag on ag lands. However, subdivision threat is a priority, too.
- Buy and resell with good natural resource protection

Urban Open Space

- Expand Matching Grant Program
- Community gardens – help with food production, education
- Urban riparian corridors
 - Habitat
 - Recreation
 - Reduce reliance on car to get to natural resources
- Neighborhood access trails
- The above can be used to incentivize urban development
- SMART Trails where SMART has left it to local jurisdiction
- Water agency land next to Chops
- After-school youth program in Railroad Square
- Adjacent to SMART
- Public access to land, small Matching Grant Program projects mapped
- Acquire “right of first refusal” on small parcels.

###

Session 1

- Riparian areas: Where there are different plant species, alluvial, areas with heritage oaks and wildflowers, less than 80% closed canopy, nature cover, contiguous.
- Protect underlying biophysical potential
- Natural meander; grade, remove impoundments, fish barriers, dams
- Identify most critical areas for salmonid survival, especially spawning habitat and barriers to spawning habitat (assessments)
- Protect upland areas around riparian corridors.
- Establish riparian buffers/? values/setbacks based on habitat value/ecological value
- Preserve/restore ecological value of upland corridors (riparian areas constrained by agriculture, etc.)
- Evaluate riparian regionally
- Look at SWAMP/RWQCB parameters BMI indices.
- Riparian = total continuum – headwaters to aquatic system
- Protect/restore connections between tributaries
- Protect oak woodlands and annual grasslands
- Northern oak woodlands
- Large amount of contiguous habitat as possible
- Less fragmentation
- Groundwater recharge areas for human and ecosystems (Santa Rosa Plain – SGMA areas – avoid development)
- Niche habitats for threatened and endangered species property by property
- Vernal pools and California tiger salamander habitats – e.g., marsh margin habitats
- Individual sites for threatened and endangered species (remnants) may be good to protect, even if decentralized islands
- Focus on Santa Rosa Plain – multiple benefits
- Re-invigorate the Santa Rosa Plain plan for habitat integrity (detailed planning effort on SR Plain)
- Include education and interpretation
- Identify important remnants

- Laguna de Santa Rosa a focus area – targeted plan for multi-species adaptive management, including monitoring
- Valley oak savannah
- Include water with above
- Chaparral habitat
- Mid-elevation chaparral/serpentine chaparral/serpentine grasslands
- District considers re-introduction of fire as a habitat enhancement tool (wildfire management plans)
- Include cultural resource protection
- Fire management plans
- Affirmative easements as habitat protection and restoration tools (e.g., invasive species, cover, etc.)
- Areas that are likely refugia under climate change regimes (corridors)
- Proactively create refugia areas for anticipated movement
- Coastal prairies
- Protect all threatened and endangered species and their habitats, and dispersal and biodiversity. E.g., red-legged frog breeding habitat ± dispersal habitat quantitatively science-based plans for each species.
- Protect remnant native grassland
- Protect diverse, gradient of habitats
- Identify and protect ecotones
- Old-growth forest – any species
- Range perimeter of forests
- Protect and create wildlife corridors
- Urban riparian corridors to protect or enhance connectivity – wild lands
- Urban riparian by themselves
- Outreach, interpretation, and education related to natural resource protection

Threats

- Sea level rise, development
 - Habitats at coast and baylands – salt & tidal marsh
 - Urban core development/near transit can help to reduce greenhouse gases, land conservation
- Roads
- People – overpopulation
- Regulation
 - People can't farm, sell land for housing
 - Housing too expensive
- Loss of open range due to vandalism, poachers, and urban encroachment
- People need to understand the economics of balance between development and natural resources. District needs to educate about natural ? economics
- Loss of working forests, loss of working farm ? infrastructure. District: 1) easements; 2) education; 3) succession strategies for working farms ?.
- Changing demographics – properties changing hands, successors do not want to manage or may parcelize, or transition to more intensive uses (mansions, vineyards, etc.)
- Heavier use on rural infrastructure
- Fire/disease/illegal cannabis – effects on working farms
- Active management to avoid catastrophic fires.
- SODs – More use of prescribed fires

- Incentivize owners of natural resource lands to actively manage lands for conservation values – working farms and all lands.
- Incentivize to protect natural resource lands around ag
- Land abandonment, lack of management. “Protect and fence off” creates threats: invasives, habitat type conversion, annual grass encroachment. Need active management.
- Water quality threats – NPS urban (fertilizer) – sources
- Lack of wetlands to buffer pollutants
- More pollution in, less out
- Stormwater management
- Climate change will create bigger challenges for NPS stormwater management. District should incentivize “stormwater easement” – watershed protection, bio-swales, riparian buffers, wetlands
- Misinformation
 - Specifically about what ag is doing
 - About liability related to public access
- To address vandalism, make more legitimate use available – e.g., creek with homeless issue, build a trail to increase legitimate use.
- Landowners’ liability = threat
- Trash, illegal dumping – aquatic pollutant
- Solution-free ag at the dump
- Bottle & container deposits

Multiple Benefits

- Human and wildlife connectivity together – where can they be integrated to benefit both?
 - Example: Riparian easements, water trails, ridgetop trails, SCWA channels! Where it does not regard impacts mil bizotional (?)
- OK to have single-benefit protections
- Greenbelts inherently has multi-benefits near urban, groundwater recharge, biodiversity, small-scale ag, family farms = win:win. Compatible with natural resource conservation (if farming is designed to be compatible with California tiger salamander – e.g., grazing (not deep ripping /pesticides/organic). Laguna Foundation protocols for vernal pool.
- Grasslands, vernal pools – active grazing management, management to reduce thatch/RDM
- Use NGO/educational partners – graze VP
- Ensure planning is holistic enough to protect natural resource values in easement over time
- Opportunities to improve lands for maximizing conservation values. Offer incentives to reduce water-quality impacts, trails, etc.
- Look at each property opportunistically for all conservation values (past easements have missed opportunities – too simplistic). Focus more on multi-benefits.
- District information on General Plan – rec and multi-benefit
- Opportunities for education – bring in physical health
- Park next to every school – multi-beneficial
- PG&E lands – energy + public use (model)
- Groundwater recharge options over recreational and ag lands
- Create opportunities for multi-benefit areas
- Groundwater recharge zones can/should function as wildlife habitats, may be appropriate for low-impact rec uses (search images – Shollenberger)
- Flood mitigation southeast of Rohnert Park – Copeland Creek to Lihau

- District should prioritize areas that attenuate downstream flooding – find priority areas that are allowed to flood, reduce conflicts.
- Remove development from floodplains/wetlands, flood basins
- Collaborate with FEMA
- District work with partners at scale to develop regional, multi-benefit zones
- Date: hydro/flood maps need updating
- Real-time calibration of LiDAR via overflights

Unnumbered page:

- Community education – we care when we understand. Rare plants/plant communities – Santa Rosa Plain, chaparral in Fountaingrove, city parks that showcase natural resource values, urban open space multi-benefit – education, access, protection.
- Role/goal of urban open space is to create a constituency for conservation
- Opportunities to create connectivity across/below roads for wildlife and humans. Use of fencing to guide wildlife to safe crossings (roadkill **abate (?)**). (Railroad crossings, low fencing)
- Multi-benefit bike paths and natural resources
- Demonstration garden that maximizes wildlife, groundwater infiltration, educates, recreation element and creek 5+ acres. Showcase all conservation values. (District, Sonoma Land Trust, NGOs, Resource Conservation Districts, etc.)
- Scientifically sound riparian corridor protections that achieve multiple goals – ag, natural resources, water, etc.
- Bring in partners for protection over and above District expenditure plan.
- Focus on conservation plus restoration – not just easement, layers of additional benefit via partners
- “Mosaic” ag easements that effectively protect conservation values

###

Thematic Workshop – Recreation May 25, 2017

Session 1

- AQC Plan 2006 – not always tied to General Plan
 - Try to marry Vital Lands Initiative with General Plan (push GP to do more)
 - Ex: Bay Area Ridge Trail
 - Include recommendations for next General Plan
- Manage impact at parks by monitoring use
 - Work with Sonoma County Regional Parks
- Connectivity – trails & transit
 - Creek trails, access to transit
- Add to existing parks and/or connect existing parks
- Connect socio-economically disadvantaged communities to parks & trails
- Laguna Vision update
 - More trail easements to connect to other trails
 - Trails to connect for commuting/recreation/wildlife viewing
 - Stay out of sensitive areas
- Consider right-of-way/trail easements to allow for more bike/pedestrian paths
 - Ex: Hwy 12 trail

- Education opportunity, other co-benefits
 - Bioswales
 - Greenhouse gas emissions
 - Agri-tourism?
 - Wildlife crossings
- Consider more expensive conservation easements/trail easements on smaller properties
- Extension of Grove of Old Trees to Willow Creek
- Create/expand “wilderness” areas
 - Ex: Hood Mountain/Sugarloaf – use CEs to designate certain uses
- Preserve larger areas for less dense trails
 - Hinterlands, backcountry
 - Monitoring!
 - Buy more land to allow for different uses at distinct parks
- Utilize Matching Grant Program for creek trails and education within cities
- Make public access requirements longer for properties further away; prioritize projects/properties that are closer to communities
 - Ex: Buckeye Forest

Session 2 – Matching Grant Program outreach to underserved communities

- Consider equity in programs/policies of District & MGP
 - Identify underserved areas, properties in those areas
 - Rework policy & funding mechanism to be equitable
- Look at land between city limits & UGB
 - How does District work within this area
 - Ex: Laguna headwaters area
- Consider property for appropriateness of uses
 - Case by case, city by city
- Provide education about where rec is appropriate & where it's not
 - Signage, guided outings
 - Boardwalks with interpretive signs
- Better communication when access is not available or appropriate
 - Ex: To protect creeks and provide access – limit access to one side of the creek
- Prioritize projects with multiple benefits, including education
- Places in need of Matching Grant projects: The Springs, Roseland, Laguna headwaters, Cloverdale, West Petaluma hills, Santa Rosa Plain vernal pool preserve (fragmented area; preserve with trails), La Cresta Ridge (Petaluma)

Session 3

- Look for more opportunities to do trail easements on private agricultural properties
- Consider protecting historical resources on properties, e.g., scenic qualities
- Railroad right-of-ways – Cazadero to Valley Ford
- Rails to Trails
- Rec & natural resources – citizen science, volunteer stewards, interpretive and educational bilingual signage
 - Emphasize importance of staying on trail
 - Develop trail plan to avoid/preserve natural resources

- Develop education program that targets tourists, partner with Sonoma County Tourism
- Collaborative multi-agency campaign around specific species & areas
 - Involve key stakeholders (youth, underrepresented groups)
- SMART to trails
- School programs – restoration & stewardship
 - Mentor Me – potential partner for education
 - International Student Embassy
- Community events with food trucks – find ways to draw people into nature
 - Naturalist talks & nature walks
- Conservation easements to limit logging, encourage restoration
- Pastoral trails over private ag lands
 - Hiking trails where appropriate
- Managed grazing on public rec lands – public education
 - Constant monitoring with grazer/landowner to ensure conservation values are protected
 - Ex: Urban Tilth, Groundwork Richmond
 - Urban agriculture
- “Cottage food easement” – support small-scale ag often leasing land
 - Require education and/or rec component
 - Limited activities, farm stand
- Conduct research on District-protected lands
- Draft drone policy, public art policy

###

Session 1

- Concern about equity
 - Unincorporated urban areas – e.g., Boyes Hot Springs – unable to partner in Matching Grant Program
 - Should be funded 100% through District funds
 - Inequitable as is – need to look at it through the lens of equity
 - Reconsider concept
 - Small urbanized areas cannot be served because they need funding from county for MGP
- Recreational equity – also need to consider access
 - Privatization of rec is an issue
 - Open access is needed
 - Ex: Jenner Headlands
 - No public access but roads/trails are available
 - How developed do these roads need to be for access?
- Public access
 - Educate public about how projects benefit carbon sequestration, water quality, etc.
 - If no access, then District needs to communicate why there’s no access and what are other public benefits
- Defining access
 - Doesn’t have to address all types because this limits opportunities
 - Not necessarily hike/bike/horse/etc.
 - Adjust to what’s appropriate for participating community
 - Consider impact to community, e.g, parking

- Make clear that access is for everybody, not just for that neighborhood
 - Signage, nice entry so park/trail can be found
 - Sometimes just need sign, other times need more (case by case)
- Education about climate change and need for preserving open spaces, especially if no public access
- Recreation
 - Need to define active rec (A) vs. passive rec (P) and build into conservation easement.
 - Some are organized events, oftentimes private. Need to determine where allowed and where not allowed.
 - What type(s) of events are allowed?
 - For private events, District could require that \$\$ goes back into land
 - Standards and guidelines needed around events
 - Event centers a concern
 - Types of rec
 - Hiking
 - Biking
 - Disc golf course (A)
 - Equestrian trails
 - Tennis (A)
 - Swimming & boating (A)
 - Picnic areas
 - Camping
 - Skatepark
- Strategy
 - Balance funds toward recreation
 - Make lands contiguous with easement where trail connects

Session 2

- Prioritize overlap opportunities between rec and open space
 - Consider community needs with equity as a criterion
 - Add community gardens
 - Combine with habitat gardens
 - Riparian areas – restoration projects with habitat enhancement near/adjacent to community garden
 - Also consider grasslands and oak woodland areas for community gardens (ex: La Cresta property)
 - At periphery of oak woodland
 - Educational opportunity or school project
 - In urban areas
- When evaluating urban acquisition
 - Weight by connectivity to urban area
 - Higher weight per expenditure plan
- Apply equity lens
 - What is the community asking for?
 - Urban open space projects in rural areas; these communities lack a voice and resources
- Important to have community participation in managing parks
- District to work with Parks and Rec; volunteer commission/committee to participate in evaluation process
 - Ex: City of Santa Rosa

- Park & Rec advisory committee (re-enact). (Parks Alliance made up of stakeholders for State Parks, Regional Parks, etc.)
- Use Portrait of Sonoma or other tool to consider opportunities for high-density and low-income communities
 - Apple Valley
 - Areas near fairgrounds
 - Connectivity with Taylor Mountain
- Areas where there is opportunity for link between recreation and education opportunities
 - Support and fund projects that provide multiple opportunities to connect and experience open space that also increase geographic connection between urban areas, and increase connection with land
 - Job opportunities
 - Kayaking experiences
 - Camping experiences
- Matching Grant Program to fund education
 - Ex: Education regarding farming at Tierra Vegetables urban ag
 - Bird observation area on West Ninth Street
 - Other places like this in the city?
 - Inwalle gardens
 - Public education about urban ag
- Ensure any and all trails & paths are multi-use
 - Hike, bike, equestrian
- Balance importance of human connection with nature with potential impacts – keep in mind importance to wildlife and plant life

Session 3

- Requires strong agreement and trust with landowner and consideration of operations on property (e.g., ag operations)
- Monitor rec use to ensure no negative impact or conflict with landowner
- Where there's recreation, want eyes on sensitive areas without impact to natural resources – public experience
- Consider access (e.g., through meadow vs. around meadow)
- Instead of parcel by parcel (reactive approach), protect contiguous natural resource areas and recreation areas (proactive approach)
 - Look at natural resources in an area, not from a parcel perspective
 - Coastal grassland, oak woodland
 - Forestry along creek
 - Riparian corridors
- Santa Rosa Plain vernal pools
 - Protect all with some public access and education, and grazing
 - Scattered throughout SR Plain
 - Multi-benefits: Ag + natural resources + access/trails & education
- Collaboration among non-profits, for-profits
 - Bicycle coalition, Sonoma County Health Action, CNPS, SRJC, Nature Conservancy
 - Patagonia, HP, North Face, REI
 - Organizations that support habitat preservation
- Outreach to Latino community

- Sonoma State – opportunities for outreach and engagement exist
- Rec and ag oftentimes separated or in conflict
 - Legacy of this perspective that needs to be addressed
- Ag & rec – where they exist
 - Pumpkin patch on 101
 - Tolay Lake
 - Taylor Mountain
 - Farm Trails
 - Community gardens
 - In schools and in areas that foster a sense of community, people feel engaged
 - Strategy
 - Set priorities by watershed (e.g., Salmon Creek)
 - Coastal Prairie, Upland Management Plan
- Recreation on Young-Armos and farmsters, Shone Farm, Laguna Farm
- CSA programs – protect land where CSA programs exist
- Strategy
 - Purchase land in fee for ag with view area/platform, exhibit
 - Not necessarily trail system
- Wineries – lands on edge of vineyard not a priority
- Priority areas: Floodplains where there is ag

###

Session 1

- Trail networks
- Trail easements considered on other project types
- Strategy: Buy fee, then resell with trail and conservation easement
- Passive rec (trails) with wildlife corridors
- Connect cities and county trail system
- Connect with other counties, state, and rec trails, i.e., coastal trail
- Talk with other players about trail connections
- JPA on trails with all groups
- Tracking properties – when they come on market, move
- More resources towards acquisitions and strategies for acquisition planning
- Look at old R.R. rows
- Funding beyond IPA/O+M
- Activate local groups with project
- Trails as educational opportunity – interpretive signage, historic
- Tourist use – connection to Bay Area, bike use
- Restoration – educational activity

Session 2

- Playground for adults (ex: Joe Rodota Pocket Park in Roseland)
- Use trail planning and construction for long-term, sustainable use
- Strategically placed benches for scenic vistas
- Non-profit funding for infrastructure dedications

- Standards for development/Green G Lines
- Evaluate potential activity in UGBs
- Transportation alternatives in cities – bikeways, trails
- More engagement by District with advisory/advocacy groups, county bike and pedestrian advisory/advocacy committees
- Access for electric vehicles
- Alternate transportation network – all classes
- More outreach to younger population through education on existing urban protected areas
- Urban natural areas – riparian, creeks, with trail
- Urban unincorporated – use conservation easements or other options than Matching Grants

Session 3

- Use studies to determine impact on wildlife
- Impacts on dogs
- Multi-use good – local food
- Management tool
- Education, interpretation
- Virtual experience for sensitive areas, use interpretive center, multi-sensory
- Travel app with District-protected properties
- Post on website
- Drones
- Disabled access through remote
- Involve citizens in bird counts
- Hiking contests with prizes
- Geo-caching
- Community gardens
- Multi-benefit gardens in separators, urban edge
- Animal husbandry (chickens, etc.)
- Ag education
 - Bikes & trails through ag
 - Docent-led long trail opportunities – public and private

###

Session 1

- Access: “Islands” of protected lands – lands are hard to get to
- Priority via transport
- Access to rec lands via public transit
- Public awareness of rec lands
 - Educational – schools
 - District web site
 - Library
- Access via non-car or via public land
- Swiss example of access to private lands
- Removing actual or perceived barriers to accessing lands
 - Ex: Latino community – large group areas

- Ex: Restrooms, signage, ADA/flush
- Strategies
 - Represent and engage diverse communities, communities of color, etc. (e.g., Latinos)
 - Urban areas that may connect folks close to home
 - District focus on diversity in staff (hire Diversity Coordinator)
 - Connecting with millennials – high adventure – e.g., river trails
 - San Francisco Bay – tapping into momentum re Bay/water trail
 - APPs
 - Show rec opportunities
 - Citizen science (iNature)
 - Education – links to plants & animals on site
 - Education – getting schools on lands
 - Access – ADA on trails, especially at City/County different jurisdictions. E.g., creek trails.
 - Ask for input on access
 - Strategies for “front country” (entry-level experience) and back country. Back country to connect to BARTC trails – hut to hut.
 - Provide opportunities for a variety of camping options
 - Allowed uses
 - Look for opportunities
 - Linking up with SMART Trails (map doesn’t include SMART)
 - Working with all transportation agencies
 - Marketing to teens regarding adventures in nature, experiencing nature, etc.
 - Working with partners to make and maintain trails
 - Connect with Sonoma County Bike Coalition
 - Connect with SRJC and SSU via classes, groups about access, our work, careers
 - Invite freshmen classes @ SRJC and SSU to lands
 - Access to water, especially for disability
- Priorities and Strategies
 - Matching Grant Program: Look at providing \$ to organizations that aren’t traditionally represented in awards
 - Social services (or partner with)
 - Ex: Sonoma County Health Action, Aging Together, teen parent
 - Jen connect with Bethany at Regional Parks on organizations
 - Connecting to next generation
 - Intergenerational connections utilizing outdoors (see Aging Together)
 - “Campership” for scholarships for youth camp opportunities, including transportation
 - Map of rec lands and gaps in services

Session 2

- Can’t separate rec, natural resources, scenic, etc.
- S.E. Greenway is a good example of the balance
- Connections - Farmers Lane to Santa Rosa Creek Trail
 - Ex: Sonoma Valley
 - Work with City of Santa Rosa
- Focus on where there are no parks
- Roseland Community Park – Keep oak woodland intact
- Fulton to creek underground, park adjacent

- Daylighting creek
 - Ives Park to Laguna
- Water trails paired with creek trails
 - River – Cloverdale – Guerneville – Petaluma – Sonoma Creek
- Education programs – open space
- Adopt-a-Trail
- Matching Grant Program apps – near schools
- More trails, fewer ballfields
- Less tech & turf
- Sister schools, e.g., Roseland, Salmon Creek – e.g., salmon in the classroom
- Teen Center in Sonoma – trade program, green job
- Career paths
- Co-benefits of nature experiences
- Landmarks – historical
- Next generation to support District

Intent of Matching Grant Program

- Interpretive signage
- Connections
- Education
- Stay with the people's needs
- Showing people about ecosystem services in an urban context, environmental health
- District being proactive in trail connections
- Measure M – District weigh in on what we'd like
- Move toward 25 year planning vs. 5 year
- More money in MGP to meet demand
- Rec projects to incorporate safe routes to schools
- Opportunities for small acreages privately held via MGP
 - In town, maybe creek setbacks
 - Open space garden
- Partnerships bring kids to open spaces

Session 3

Opportunities

- Collaboration with Farm Trails
- Europe example of rec on ag lands (Q2)
- Guided education & rec on farm land (Q2)
- Opportunity to facilitate dialog between land managers; organizations in silos; strategic decision-making; BMPs – sharing & cooperation.
- Making connections between communities via strategic decision-making
- Educate business and real estate organizations regarding District's work, value of open space

Question 2

- Ex: Taylor Mountain & Tolay – grazing and rec
- West county – vineyards and orchards

- Napa vine trail
- Bartholomew Park – privately held, open-to-public winery
- Brock Dolman – we all live in a watershed – great talk
- It works where is expected to work – requires mutual respect
- District supporting culture of mutual respect
- It works because of willing landowners (ex: Stewarts Point)
 - Adaptive management
 - Business/marketing
 - Education – e.g., liability
- Data on benefits to landowners (District has a role)
- Guided tour vs. open to the public
- Example of Italy – this could work – hike via grazing lands, later eat food grown there
- Re Ag
 - Looking at connecting lands and connecting rec opportunities
 - Ex: LandPaths – see May 17 *Bohemian*
- Reaching out to landowners in “gaps” in trails
- What’s in it for landowner

Question 3

- Riparian setbacks – opportunities for rec. E.g, vine removal – trail opportunity
- Marin-Sonoma Cheese Map & Farm Trails – ADD parks
- Tell story of farming history on park lands
- People-powered parks, volunteer patrols
- Partner with education groups to tell ag story
- Public health
- Define “recreation” – there are different intensities; look at what is most appropriate. In some locations too much intensity may meet resistance.
- Limited resources and orienting to public spaces
 - Urban density = value of open space
- New tool: District fee purchase and re-sale with conservation easement
- New tool: Hydro-easements (restoration?) – allowing flooding or groundwater recharge. Subset within riparian
- Trail easements with working forests. Multi-benefits = eyes on ground re illegal grows