

## DISTRICT 5 VITAL LANDS INITIATIVE COMMUNITY MEETING

March 17, 2018 | Community Church of Sebastopol | 10:00am-12:00pm

### General Comments Received:

- Would like to see Ag + Open Space partner with other organizations (e.g. Gold Ridge RCD) to restore Atascadero Creek and other sensitive habitat.
- Would like to see Ag + Open Space work in the Gualala River Watershed where clear cutting is occurring and in the Mill Creek Watershed.
- Support Ag + Open Space working to increase agricultural diversity (Gravensteins & others) in Sonoma County since the county is becoming more of an agriculture monoculture.
- Support including wildlife corridors throughout county in the Vital Lands Initiative - including corridors for pollinators to rest.
- Would like to see Ag + Open Space encourage/ allow grazing on natural lands as a fuel and land management practice. Scientific studies show that grazing is beneficial to vernal pool habitat. Would like to see grazing returned to Willow Creek property.
- Encourage Ag + Open Space and partners to purchase properties that were burned from landowners that do not want to rebuild. Opportunity to protect these lands in a new way as a fire safe area and wildlife corridor, including reduced parcelization through lot merge.
- Encourage Ag + Open Space to support diversity in agriculture including non-edible, fiber and medicinal products.
- Believe that there should be a moratorium on grape growing until a groundwater study is completed and until water analysis of vineyards in Sonoma County is completed.
- Want Ag + Open Space help to protect a specific property that vineyard neighbor is building a commercial facility on which violates 8 laws.
- Sonoma County has done so much over the past 40 years to protect open spaces (community separators, greenbelts, General Plan) - more than any other county in the Bay Area. Ag + Open Space is a tool that was created to protect our lands. This is a forum that is a really important venue for supervisors to hear from the community. A certain amount of trust needs to go with these meetings to acknowledge the work that we have done in Sonoma County.
- Ag + Open Space needs to continue to support ag landowners after an easement is purchased. We are one of the last dairy farmers in Sonoma County and have the Duggan easement on our property. We were one of the first families to work with Ag + Open Space in the '90s. The easement allowed my dad to retire without debt, but now we are struggling to keep that farmland since there are too many restrictions.
- Worked with Ag + Open Space in the 90s when there was only 10 staff - why does it need so much staff and administration these days?
- Hear people worried about grapes - if you want to grow grapes on your land, you should be able to as part of your private property rights.
- Would love to see trails on City of Santa Rosa Farms - they are such great properties with gorgeous oaks. Want to see more trails on public properties in general - public should have access to.
- Want to see Ag + Open Space work to connect trail easements and to put trails on trail easements
- Want to see a network of trails throughout county including bicycle and equestrian trails. Recommend looking at the North Pacific Railroad easement through Occidental.
- Support city centered development.

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- Want to protect land near Sebastopol as a neighborhood association - all neighbors to protect all of their individual properties as largest wooded area in West County.
- Want to compliment Ag + Open Space with their good management and that it is a well-run agency.
- Property taxes should be based on the number of parcels.
- Ag + Open Space needs to have long term view for people as we purchase these easements. Have heard that ag landowners need long term support. Need to have a plan to keep the lands value at its current value, not the value that the easement was purchased at 20 years ago.
- In England they have walking paths along private fields - wonder if Ag + Open Space looks for ways to connect trails. In England, the trails are not maintained by farmers, or by the government, they are maintained by people that use those trails. Can we emulate this model?
- Need a different model of intentional farming communities - creating housing that works with farming. Want ag housing discussed in the Vital Lands Initiative.
- Rather than purchasing the property outright - suggest treating easements as a rental that is cost adjusted each year and renewable.
- We elected folks that ignore their oath - they compromise and work with their highest bidder. Consider being more forceful in enforcing open space laws.
- Concerned about dairies being constrained by easements that are causing farmers to lose their land.

#### Questions and Discussion Items:

- Can a landowner that cancels negotiations with Ag + Open Space return to negotiations? (specific woman with land along the proposed Crane Creek Trail that has historic structures on property)
- Is there a long term planning group looking 50 years down the line at Sonoma County's future as the population grows? Concerned over transportation issues in the county.
  - Sup. Hopkins response - there are several long term regional, long-term planning boards including ABAG & MTC (both of which are led by Sonoma County officials), SCTA/RCPA, and Permit Sonoma.
- Do lands protected by Ag + Open Space continue to pay taxes? Why do public lands not have public access?
  - Sup. Hopkins response - Private landowners have reduced property taxes as a benefit to giving up development rights. When a public entity owns lands, they don't collect taxes on those lands since taxes would go to that entity. Suggest bring up access issue with City of Santa Rosa City Council.

#### DISTRICT 1 VITAL LANDS INITIATIVE COMMUNITY MEETING

*March 19, 2018 | Sonoma Veterans Memorial Building | 6:00pm – 8:00pm*

#### Specific Comments Received:

- Page 107 – More detail needed around strength of renewal status of community separators. How many are threatened? When do they expire?
- Page 107 - Include community separators in the greenbelt section (language and map). Call out community separator in strategy. Ex. Clydesdale Property up for sale for \$7.8 million in Sonoma.
- Measuring targets- would like to see more targets similar to CLN (e.g., protect 90% of remaining habitat). Would like to see these areas plotted on a map. Use protected lands map to flush out performance indicators on the map.
- Ensure performance measures are thoughtful, meaningful and community centered. Have performance measures for each area/town/city instead of/ in addition to tying them to goals.

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- Need metrics to qualitatively report progress toward achieving goals.
- Hard to read black on blue and black on grey text in document

### General Comments Received:

- Regarding the diversity of ag in the county, what percent of land is allocated for vineyard vs. food? Only 3% of food grown in Sonoma County is eaten in the county. Recommendation - draft easements to encourage diverse agricultural crops. More stringent easements. Potential for affirmative easements to prohibit or mandate certain crops. Should add a strategy re: ratio of food to vineyard crops and the potential climate effects (vehicle miles traveled of vineyards)
- Recommend preserving heritage crops in the county. For example, heritage apples.
- Consider putting limitations on types of ag easements to protect remaining non-grape ag fields. For example, limiting or prohibiting vineyard development under easements.
- Recommend working with small community groups to solicit and disseminate info about Ag + Open Space. Could have a person or small group of people in each community that Ag + Open Space serves who can further disseminate Ag + Open Space goals and get the message out.
- Explicitly call out pollution/ trash in greenbelts and waterways as a threat.
- Consider better communicating what the greatest threat is- development. Needs to be spelled out more clearly for the community to understand. For example, what it is, what could have been? Or opportunities and constraints. Highlighting specific threats. Before and after photos. Simplify the message to engage more folks. Highlight specific threats and describe by region.
- Need more public outreach, including sharing agenda items. More communication with the community about what Ag + Open Space is doing and what is current – need to communicate where the places are that we are protecting – give them a location and a name to connect with community.
- Recommend encourage a multitude of rec and public access uses on protected land to engage more user groups in rec opportunities.
- Recommend reiterating that Ag + Open Space work is funded by sales taxes dollars in an effort to gain greater community engagement process.
- Consider providing more public access for protected lands. Consider increased fee purchase for public rec land and making land more accessible to the tax payers for trail access. Ex. Montini
- Did Ag + Open Space include in draft plan ways to possibly acquire properties for public sale in especially sensitive areas? For example, flood prone properties in floodplains. These properties have significant ecological benefits and make them less suitable for housing. Prioritize/ be ready to purchase properties that are valuable for resource protection when they are available for public sale. Consider right of first refusal.
  - Going off of the previous question about purchase land in floodplains, did the fires change how accessible land is to purchase for protection?
- Recommend restricting intensification of land use/ building size on properties. Consider removing additional development rights on easement property and/or property without easements. Ex, two bed house from 50's but the possibilities of remodeling and expanding are enormous. Ag + Open Space could eliminate this additional development potential. Keep building envelopes close to roads and out of wildlands. Ag – preventing vineyard development in a place currently used as an orchard.
- Add strategy to restrict ancillary uses on ag lands (e.g., visitor centers, event centers)
- Did Ag + Open Space consider increasing funding through additional revenue sources? For example, working with PRMD to generate taxes. And exploring grant funding. Add objective to explore additional funding mechanisms.

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- Does Ag + Open Space emphasize or request trail easements when purchasing land from a landowner? Does Ag + Open Space request trail easements on each property or public access on easements? Suggest strategy of always asking landowners about possibility of public access during CE negotiations.

### Questions and Discussion Items:

- What metrics are used to justify Vital Lands Initiative goals? For example, how will Ag + Open Space qualitatively measure Goal A vs. Goal B and communicate this with the community. How will Ag + Open Space present the data to invigorate the community about this work? Emphasis on thoughtful performance measures that are easily accessible and digestible.
- How do easements work in relation to ancillary uses for vineyard? Recommend restricting ancillary uses on easement land, especially for vineyard properties. How much of this is restricted on current easements?
- How is Ag + Open Space interacting with the group involved in groundwater management and recharge to make sure these plans are coordinated? How does Ag + Open Space work with SGMA?
- Are landowners aware of how much money they will receive for an easement? Is this information available to the public?
- Does Ag + Open Space get involved in regulations or legislation? For example, ground water regulation and the need for more regulation.
- What is Ag + Open Space's smallest easement?
- How does Ag + Open Space determine the value of development rights?
- Why does Ag + Open Space restrict use on fee land? Is it about legality or insurance? For example, signs were put up at Calabazas when it was purchased saying no public access on property. Would like to see more public access.
- In the past few decades, Ag + Open Space has had several different guiding plans. Is the Vital Lands Initiative the last plan until 2031?

**DISTRICT 5 VITAL LANDS INITIATIVE COMMUNITY MEETING**  
*March 20, 2018 | Bodega Bay Grange | 6:00-8:00pm*

### Specific Comments Received:

- Recommend adding captions to all photos. Could help people identify with the land more.
- Pg. 110 - prioritizing protection of streams - identify streams important by salmonid experts - Suggest being more explicit to all of the benefits of riparian areas, not just salmonid protection (e.g. biodiversity, groundwater).

### General Comments Received:

- The plan is very vague with no specific details. For instance, when you talk about connecting trails, where are you talking about (Estero Ranch)? Suggest making it more specific where possible. It's daunting to know that this plan gives you flexibility to implement, but the public does not know where you are planning on implementing.
- Overall, I like it a lot. Not easy to have a document that intersects process and place. Needs more examples - nice to highlight certain areas and why they are important. Land conservation organizations in Sonoma County think everyone knows about Ag + Open Space and I don't think that is true. Think that the document and the

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process is a great opportunity to educate community. The Cooley Ranch is a great example, would be great to see more like that.

- Ag + Open Space needs to do more education around the county since most folks don't understand how Ag + Open Space affects them - needs to work with small community groups. Town hall meeting with Supervisor Hopkins would be good opportunity.
- The Vital Lands Initiative needs more stories such as Jenner Headlands and Grove of the Old Trees. This is such a great opportunity to get a larger buy in. Some of it needs to be in Spanish. Polling on coastal conservation in Spanish speaking community shows that 80% want to conserve land.
- Ag + Open Space needs more community education - no one knows who you are. Get more articles in the Press Democrat, in magazines like Sunset and attend more community group meetings. Need more on social media.
- Recommend be more explicit about the opening dates of future properties - i.e. Estero and Jenner Headlands – and be transparent with those dates on the website.
- The fires are only mentioned four times in the document - almost as an afterthought. Suggest highlighting/featuring more prominently in the Vital Lands Initiative, what Ag + Open Space plans to do in the future to avoid fire damage to this extent, and how Ag + Open Space will be mitigating the damage of this fire.
- The more people that know about Ag + Open Space, the better off it will be if you come up for re-election.
- Suggest have a whole chapter about the coast that highlights the tourism serving resources. Utilize the folks that are benefiting financially from tourism to help protect land (e.g. Tourism Board, VRBO groups). VRBO folks are helping protect coasts from oil - would imagine they would want to help preserve scenic view sheds. More active collaboration with more of the tourist groups
- Last March, many folks advocated for public access, see it as a potential conflict of interest, especially with carrying capacity of infrastructure on coast (e.g. highway system, housing, emergency responders).
- Because acquisition of property is not a project under CEQA, no environmental review takes place until Ag + Open Space transfers to a recreation entity. Primary purpose of General Plan when it first started was preventing urban sprawl, now there is sprawling commercial use. Don't see tourism increase as a benefit at all. First constituency should be residents. What is the end game for recreation? What are we trying to accomplish? What is the benefit to place? Even if all road problems were fixed, there is still a two lane road. In future could see diversion of resources from land conservation to road maintenance. Effects emergency response as well. In context of emergency planning, Bay Hill Rd improvements would be in order. Ag + Open Space should be mindful when it is doing projects with recreation entities that the cumulative impacts could have negative impacts on lands they are trying to protect.
- When all residents live in the 101 corridor, they don't understand the impact of recreation on residents that live in rural areas with recreation.
- The way recreation acquisition has gone so far is that Ag + Open Space has followed opportunity, not planned where recreation is needed. Number of jobs in tourism is significant - all low wage jobs. Recreation conservation is decreasing the housing stock potential and increasing low income jobs. Also losing housing stock to short term rentals. Suggest add a strategy to work with recreation partners to consider the impacts of recreation and develop an end plan. Acquisitions needs to be driven by a larger vision for recreation in the county and not just opportunistic.
- Tax base in west county cannot support the infrastructure needs of tourism - need support from rest of county.
- If you increase the number of parking spaces for recreation, that will increase the number of tourists. What is the impact of infrastructure development on exacerbating a problem? The number of people and their associated impacts is a concern.

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- Not enough people to manage the recreation lands - not just protecting the land, but protecting habitat. Want to have access to trails, but torn with wanting to protect lands.
- Carrying capacity - opportunities to protect land came first and then folks clamored for access. That requires sensitivities for benign access. Everyone will have different response on what is the carrying capacity. Maybe need chapter or subchapter on carrying capacity of land and carrying capacity of infrastructure. Self-fulfilling prophecy of acquiring land -> public demand -> public access. Build carrying capacity language into easements.

#### Questions and Discussion Items:

- Are the maps on the wall the same as the ones in the document?
- Understand that 2031 is current deadline, do you plan on renewing?
- Could you talk about public access? Do you put trails on lands? Do you work with land trusts?

### DISTRICT 2 VITAL LANDS INITIATIVE COMMUNITY MEETING

*March 21, 2018 | Petaluma Veterans Memorial Building | 6:00pm-8:00pm*

#### Specific Comments Received:

- P. 118 - Would like to see a longer time limit for IPA/O&M funding - extend 3 year limit. Concerned that Regional Parks cannot afford to take on more land.
- P. 112 - first bullet - controlled burning - this specific bullet discusses using data and science to use fire on the land - this statement precludes all of the local knowledge that exists - landowners should be recognized as having specific knowledge of the land that we can learn from.
- P. 115 - not seeing the Esteros specifically called out. I think it is a shame that there is no public access on either Estero San Antonio or Estero Americano - the waters are legally navigable - need to formalize access.
- P. 90, principle 3 - let's get a clear negotiating position and policy on public access and make a little more hardline. Seems like we are asking for public access, then landowner asks for more money - seems like we should have a stronger position.

#### General Comments Received:

- Do you have any kind of goal that these open space properties will be near cities? In my mind, there is not that many near Petaluma - Can you focus on areas around Petaluma? With a focus on public access. As opposed to isolated islands - more contiguous that is within reach of city folks.
- Would like to see more of a geographical focus on recreational lands - specifically around Petaluma and on Sonoma Mountain facing Petaluma.
- Would like to see public access as a default of conservation easements and for there to be specific rationale for why access is precluded
- Would like to see fire more represented within the Vital Lands Initiative as a whole – not just as a threat, but as a tool. Draw from the *Living in a Fire Adapted Landscape* report.
- Specific properties that would like to see Ag + Open Space protect for public access - Davidon, south of outlet mall oak savanna along Petaluma River, West Petaluma Hills/ La Cresta properties as wildlife corridors.
- With regards to public access as default - if zoned for cattle, can't have public access - working ag lands need to be able to work

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- Have an easement on some of our property - rotational grazing demonstration - public was invited - public can be involved on lands. Ag + Open Space could work to get willing landowners to showcase properties as agricultural demonstration projects.
- Read an article about bike path between Sebastopol and Petaluma - does that fit in with Ag + Open Space? Or is that a separate project? Would like to see A+OS involved in that project.
- In general, there are so many regional parks throughout the county, eventually it would be nice to have connected trails to connect them. Potentially using trail easements - discounts in land tax to private landowners.
- Want to support urban trails as important component to city centered growth. How can we coordinate (SCTA, land trusts, etc.) to get ahead of housing boom as it does come? Provide alternate means of transportation.
- Think that there was a lot of community support for railroad easements - they should be emphasized. There is a lot of misinformation from railroad NIMBY groups in acquiring the railroad easements - allow for others to partner.
- There is a deficit in protected open space and recreation lands north of Healdsburg. As population grows, it will be increasingly important to look at opportunities for protection up there.
- Cloverdale will explode once train is up there and it is cheaper land right now. Would agree it is an important area to protect.
- See need for medium income housing that is somewhat condensed (townhomes) with open space that is near them. Can you build relationships with developers to encourage open space protection and development?
- Would like to see more money spent on education and outreach.
- I own ag lands that a public road crosses through. Public does not understand hazards and impacts - they dump trash and appliances, have had fence cut twice so cattle could get on train tracks.
- The Davidon property is crucial - Helen Putnam is so important - would be travesty to see that open space converted to a development.
- Want to see more partnerships with planning department - it would be great to have more compact, European development with parks and recreation spaces. Encourage collaborations to make developers follow rules to fund this type of vision.
- Would like to see more bike trail development in greenbelts like Davis.
- Davidon property - developers have planned executive type homes on hill tops. Public would prefer no development. Compromise could be made to have high density housing on lower elevations with public access on hillsides.
- There is a requirement for certain amount of low income housing in any new development, most developers choose to pay "in lieu" fee instead. Consider revising this policy.
- Regarding the density of housing - don't want high density housing. Want houses to have space and don't want it to feel like SF. Retain the rural Petaluma identity with space for kids to play in the backyard.
- Think it is great that you are protecting riparian spaces and protecting watersheds - need more education about why that matters. Cooley Ranch was such a powerful example. Would be great to get more public aware of what you do and the importance of that. Short YouTube videos would be great. A lot of folks get their news in that short attention frame.
- Use artist to connect to land - plein air painting - publicize and watch people paint on protected lands and explain protected status. Murals or billboards - have the small signs, but it would be great to have big messages
- Use more of the examples like Cooley in your presentations at community meetings and put them online to show benefits of Ag + Open Space work. Short YouTube videos and dramatic effects. Great to tailor them to each community that you are in.

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- Difference between looking at your phone and being outside - do a creek walk for folks that live along creeks - highly local education targeting. Lot of things that make impact when you are outside.
- Engagement with the land is important - folks can connect with land through trail development, environmental camping. Camping is highly popular right now - support Ag + Open Space and support land
- One way to save money on outreach would be to connect with high school students to make YouTube videos - cheap labor and get next voting base involved at an earlier point.

#### Questions and Discussion Items:

- Is Shollenberger Park something that Ag + Open Space protected?
- How does cannabis growing fit with agriculture on Ag + Open Space Lands?
- Are Regional Parks and Ag + Open Space both part of the county?
- See on the existing map - Willow Creek property - does that include Pomo Canyon campground?
- In areas out in the county - you do not have anything to do with changing the zoning?

### JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE & FISCAL OVERSIGHT COMMISSION MEETING

#### VITAL LANDS INITIATIVE COMMUNITY MEETING

March 22, 2018 | Finley Community Center | 6:00-8:00pm

#### Specific Comments Received:

- P. 115 - Wetlands and streams map - does not include headwaters of Laguna southeast of Cotati. Currently, the map shows that wetlands end at Copeland Creek.
- Would recommend revisiting some of the greenbelt areas - know certain properties (west Petaluma) that are not urban, but are showing up on the map as urban - would prefer that show up as greenbelts.
- P. 124 - Would like to see specific performance indicators that track groundwater recharge areas, carbon sequestration advancements, and wildlife movement.
- P. 124 - Love it when a list comes out with clear attainable goals, but some strategies don't have strong enough performance indicators. Need a performance indicator that emphasizes diversity of agriculture. Interesting to track the diversity of ag - how is it changing over the years? Are farms actually diverse and productive? Are they locally owned? Are farms increasingly becoming large blocks? Are they owned by outside companies? We might be trending toward homogenous, commercially owned entities. Recommend tracking farm size and ownership.
- P. 124 - Would also like to see performance indicators regarding groundwater standards from the Groundwater Sustainability Plan, herbicide application rates - how many times applied?
- P. 96 - Section 2a - protected lands remain in ag > succession experts - Succession planning is a huge challenge that I hear from the farmers that I work with. Haven't seen the budgeting, but that is a very important tool for long term preservation and is great to see in here.
- Supporting getting beginning farmers onto land was mentioned a lot in previous meetings and seems to be lost from this draft. Recommend lease land to new farmers.
- P. 112 - Number 5 - stream habitat restoration. Often see that where property boundary ends, then restoration work ends; it would be great to see Ag + Open Space work with neighbors to extend restoration work up- and down-stream of protected properties.
- Type is hard to read. White on color is bad and font is too thin. Hard to read online as well.
- If we keep locking down open spaces, then where will folks live? How can we get ahead of that question in the Vital Lands Initiative? It is important to show the benefits of land and how it could complement housing and

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development. Recommend stronger language on how our work complements/ works with affordable housing. Open space is not just a luxurious thing that is only created by one demographic.

- Stream map should include stream setbacks.
- Photos are wonderful.

### General Comments Received:

- Ask that there be a focus on groundwater recharge areas. Multiple groups are involved/ interested in groundwater recharge issues, but no one with the power to purchase lands or to make things happen (in same way as Ag + Open Space). Groundwater will be critically important in coming years
- P. 110 - Specifically on the 1400 Burbank Ave & 1027 McMinn Ave. properties, the City of Santa Rosa wants to mitigate for disturbing oak woodlands and upland California tiger salamander habitat. Would hope that Ag + Open Space would want to save those species in place and not mitigate. Recommend protecting existing habitat for special status species and stringent oversight of easement language and enforcement of policies where natural resources are protected.
- P. 112 - protect land most important for habitat movement - the maps in the Vital Lands Initiative frequently have urban areas greyed out. Animals and plants don't understand that. In urban communities, hope that you will enforce stringent oversight of riparian corridors.
- This process started before the fires - have you added anything/ changed anything to address firehedges or fire prone areas? It is important for long term future that houses don't get rebuilt in areas that have burned 3-4 times in recorded history.
- Explore purchasing easements in areas that were burned - lots of land up for sale right now.
- P. 118 - Community open space map - I have always advocated for access, but access doesn't need to be a cement path. Hope Ag + Open Space doesn't buy land that will get paved over. Hope that you can avoid cement at Roseland Creek Park - Andy's Unity Park and Bayer Farm have so much cement. Advocate for natural materials and designs in parks and public access trails.
- Greenbelts - recommend looking at from community health perspective. As a physician, having green spaces that you can see makes individuals more happy - even passively looking at green space is important for psyche. Studies show that being near green spaces improves health on number of factors -> if individuals are healthier, then the community is healthier
  - AC Member: Recommend look at the Healthy Parks, Healthy People Initiative by the National Park Service.
- Is there some way to place prioritizations around land that is well managed? Could rely on existing regulations regarding pesticide use/ water use or Ag + Open Space could lead the way. For example, prioritize property if certified organic or part of LandSmart program. If a landowner is actively managing land in a conservation minded way - then prioritize work with them over other landowners.
- Know that riparian areas are extremely important - what feeds those areas are hills and mountains. Headwaters should be as large a priority as riparian areas – protect the entire watershed.
- How about we put down less hard surfaces so that groundwater can recharge? Cities know where recharge areas are, but they let development occur there - partner with Sonoma County Water Agency to keep impervious surfaces out of groundwater recharge zones.
- Santa Rosa is working on the South East Greenway. Ask them to have housing included in that plan when they apply for funding from Ag + Open Space.

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- AC Member: Urban areas on maps are not clear - is that the city boundary or UGB? Look at every city's potential growth and then look at potential areas for development. There are a lot more areas available for development than we think - 70,000 potential units in City of Santa Rosa, including 240 potential units in Southeast Greenway.
- Michael Southworth, College of Environmental Design at UC Berkeley, found that could put thousands of new units near the Greenway. Recommend Ag + Open Space leverage the Matching Grant Program so that there is a carrot and a stick - don't get money without high density housing/ transit oriented development.
- Mapping and data are so important. Is there a way to represent that Santa Rosa and other cities rely on all of the things that occur in natural areas (carbon sequestration, air quality, etc.) Is there way to visually demonstrate that open space can only support X amount of population? Take it a step beyond p.53. Demonstrate values of land conservation and services provided to incorporated communities by open space. Address carrying capacity and open space lands needed to support population.
- Housing density is in the hands of the community through the city councils. One of the things that I have found is that education is needed. The general public don't know how we should develop. Ag + Open Space knows a lot about these topics - recommend expanding education program (including smart growth topics). Folks are hungry for that information - then higher density makes sense. Spend more effort and time educating the community.
- Money can be astutely dispersed. The Matching Grant Program is voluntary and quite desirable/ competitive and is an opportunity for Ag + Open Space to incentivize grants. Need to have tradeoffs if receiving money. Think Ag + Open Space staff have sometimes allowed too much land to be paved over - more stringent language in easements is needed.
- AC Member: P.53 is phenomenal - makes a very strong case and is at appropriate level for Ag + Open Space. What we see in grant applications, is that they are setting baselines before you even apply. Would like to see auctions for future rounds of the Matching Grant Program. Set baselines that projects need to meet. Lot of leveraging that could be done - could be incentivizing good behavior - great demand for these funds.
- AC Member: Need to think on a little different orientation. Can we identify key properties - wildlife corridors, rivers, etc. - where there are gaps and can we fill them? Proactive approach.
- FOC Member: Agree entirely. Have advocated that for quite a while. Identify values that you want to protect - where all of those overlay - and then knock on doors to protect those lands.
- Urban riparian corridors need setbacks. When funding is made available, make sure land managers adhere to all state/ fed regulations (riparian corridors).

#### Questions and Discussion Items:

- P. 107 - on the greenbelts map, what is the green area showing? Is it different from the community separators?
  - Response: the area includes General Plan community separators and other properties that are within a 1/2 mile buffer of urban area.
- P. 103 - what is meant by the urban service area buffer?
- AC Member: Looking at all these conservation values that we want to protect, in order to maintain all of those systems, then we need to focus on city centered growth. Get used to taller buildings. Grow up not out.
- Sonoma is not a bubble - save time and money by talking to SF and Berkeley to get them to resolve their housing crisis which will, in turn, help address our housing crisis.
- FOC Member: This is the 40th anniversary of the county General Plan. Policies that we have in place all embrace concept of 50s sprawl - been pretty successful - gone from 200,000 people to 500k almost all in 101 corridor. Ag + Open Space is a tool to implement the General Plan - to more permanently protect land to avoid conversion. The focus has to be more and more in city council chambers on high density housing. Folks generally don't

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understand that connection - if you like this landscape, then you better be on board with high density housing. It's the way it is in rural areas because lots of proposals were said no to.

- AC Member: A 2012 National Realtors Association study found that the value (per square foot) was highest for dense urban units. Millennials want to be in city center. Santa Rosa keeps avoiding going there.
- AC Member: High density housing is a paradigm shift for the Board of Supervisors and city councilmembers. This may not be right document to go into depth into housing issues - covers it in an indirect way. Real sensitivity to housing issues in this area.
- AC Member: Different jurisdictions in the county have different goals and spheres of influence. Housing goes more to the city councils. Would hate to see Ag + Open Space mission tainted - need a clear message when ask for reauthorization. Be very careful in how address housing in this document and in future be careful in transactions.
- FOC Member: Only thing that is appropriate in document is to explain the nexus between Ag + Open Space and the general plan/ city councils. 85% of public comment that has been received is not directly applicable to Ag + Open Space work. Community would benefit from another segment in the document.
- AC Member: Think that a lot of the comments that occurred today are relevant and am heartened by this democracy in action.

#### DISTRICT 5 VITAL LANDS INITIATIVE COMMUNITY MEETING

*March 26, 2018 | Del Mar Center, Sea Ranch | 6:00pm-8:00pm*

#### **Specific Comments Received:**

- Performance indicators - be careful what you put there. Limit indicators to things that are really impactful and tie directly to your goals. Some of the current indicators seem to be a measure of processes/ "are you working hard", make sure you are measuring progress toward a goal.
- Little bit surprised that I didn't see any grand objectives in document. For instance, contiguous conservation easements from Petaluma to Bodega. Objectives are operational, not visionary and I would like to see a grand vision for the future. Have been stopping development for past 30 years (thumbs in the dike), now would like to have plan to work toward (rebuild the dike).
- When you have limited funds, you have to make choices of what types of projects and where those projects should be. Would help to have a vision of where we want to end up in 15 years.
- Really important to be proactive as opposed to reactive with regards to your objectives. Would look very different if say all you want to do is protect what is available now versus what is the vision for the future.

#### **General Comments Received:**

- Think that you need to put more emphasis into public access since you will need as much community engagement as possible when you go up for reauthorization. The impossible can happen in an election (2016) and you need to build that support for years before you are reauthorized. Important for folks to have connection to land. Many folks look to Marin County which has so much public access and are disappointed in the lack of access in Sonoma County.
- With conservation easements - have you ever thought of building toward the UK system of trails across private lands? Would support a system like that locally.
- Are there priorities for recreation project throughout county with emphasis on areas with limited public access? Would like to see a balance across the county when selecting recreation projects. In the Gualala River

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Watershed there are very few legal access points to river and you can't love something if you can't interact with it.

- Would like to see a push for more coastal access and trails. The scenic value of this area is indisputable and it will only become more so as time goes by. Understand that it is hard when there are all these piecemeal properties and see that it is hard that you can acquire land, but need to partner with another agency to do the long term maintenance. We just gained access to the Point Arena-Stornetta National Monument lands and those are lovely, important lands.
- As far as type of public access desired, it depends on each property. Some properties will have nonnative plants and a gorgeous view and then you can have much more infrastructure - others have sensitive habitats and need minimal impact
- Sonoma County has long history of private property opinions that Marin doesn't have which makes public access difficult on private property.
- When you look at the maps, it looks very fragmented - is there a plan to connect easements and create contiguous protected lands?
- It is very important to protect wildlife corridors and natural resources without public access – especially corridors in the Sonoma Valley and Petaluma areas.
- Have been watching the experiment of the Conservation Fund on Buckeye Forest from a distance. The requirement to make it work financially for them is very steep, but the carbon credit ability can keep them going.
- In our watershed there are large private logging landowners with poor timber management. It's impossible to manage for the benefit of the wildlife. Very complicated issue. Personally would like to see less timber harvest, unless managed very well, then can be very destructive.
- As you can see on the room map there are clear cuts above Sea Ranch and that's a practice that needs to be thrown away. The only 100+ year old trees that are left are almost gone and we are likely trying to preserve with Ag + Open Space help.
- Need to be looking north - all of the people are down south, but all of the resources are north. Sonoma County is the fringe from urban to rural - wish that Mendocino County was included in the Conservation Lands Network.
- How much help does ag need? What types of ag/ ag lands are actually vulnerable? Would support less emphasis on ag that may be doing fine without our support.
- If rangelands are considered agriculture, then the impact from rangelands with a well-managed plan is minimal compared to a vineyard which has substantial impacts. Would like you to set priorities and limit protection of vineyards.
- Would like to see open natural spaces protected. Before they had cows, our rangeland was open spaces. Oak woodlands have less protections under CalFire rules than conifer forests since not merchantable. They are threatened by conversion and water overdraft. This is the frontier - you can hear development coming.
- Ag + Open Space has done a great job in Healdsburg area – all the rangeland that is a protected wildlife corridor. It is a balancing act.
- Illegal marijuana cultivation - issue with any public access property. Don't see it in any strategies.
- Do you ever see having open space rangers like Marin County? It might be duplicative to have two agencies with rangers, but could see as a potential opportunity in the future when money is better. Getting out in the field is good for staff. Some rangers are leaving parks to work at Permit Sonoma as part of marijuana permitting. Can imagine that you would have Regional Parks rangers/ employees hopping to do one day projects for you - loaner rangers. Could trade ranger work for housing on your lands where there are habitable structures.
- From a park perspective, hear grumbings of why does it take so long to transfer properties? Seems like there could be more working together, but Regional Parks is short staffed.
- Protect the historical/ heritage ag - Luther Burbank projects, Gravenstein, etc.
- Would like to see Ag + Open Space incentivize heritage crops through tax/ increased purchase price where crops are possible.

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- Often people turn to ag since they need to make money off their land. Have you investigated carbon credit markets for small landowners? Would love to see you pursue once it comes since it is maybe 5 years out. Would lend itself well to groups of contiguous small landowners in order to limit timber harvest or conversion of the land.
- If you do have an easement on a tract of land that is forested, it needs to have forest management. Can't assume that there won't be fires or that the beetles won't come. Recommend requiring forest management as part of conservation easements.
- Buckeye Ranch – there was a lot of talk of public access during the acquisition process, but haven't heard anything since. Understand that access is hard, but it would be great to start with just a tour or something similar to recognize the community that fought hard to preserve the property.
- Aim for, in every step of the process in forestry acquisition, recovery. A working forest is not just as good as any other forest. What does that recovery look like? Still working on that. Active management would be needed initially. But the experts should be recovery focused not harvest focused. Jackson State Forest is trying to do things similarly. Look at some of the parks as examples of proper management.
- Not sure if Annapolis is urban, but would like to see public access around there, potentially through the Matching Grant Program.
- Would like to see more prioritization for projects that work with native tribes – Kashia and others

#### Questions and Discussion Items:

- Of the \$16-20 million that you get a year, how much is peeled off for the long term stewardship fund?
- Do you also outright purchase development rights or do you just provide tax benefits? Who determines what the new appraised value is after acquisition for property tax purposes?
- How do you negotiate to maximize public access during acquisition process?
- Can you approach potential landowners or do folks have to approach you?
- How do you categorize timber lands? Are they part of natural resources or ag?
- When you are looking at a potential property with timber on it - are you looking for projects similar to Buckeye Forest (low impact timber harvest), or is there some other way to convert timberlands to a wildlife corridor?
- What is your interaction with partners?
- Kind of unusual that your Board of Directors is the Board of Supervisors? Doesn't it get political?
- Who are your forestry points of contact/ experts?
- Have you made use of the Bay Area Open Space Council's Conservation Lands Network? Great deal of technical work that went in to setting that up and Sonoma County was one of the counties involved in the development. How much are you making use of that data when prioritizing projects?
- P. 97 - What are the properties in the northwest corner of county? They are in private hands but have agreed not to do certain things? As a park person, always kind of waiting to see what gets open next.
- How does protecting heritage ag work with your strategies to protect a diversity of ag?
- 10% Initial Public Access, Operations & Maintenance funding - is that from your whole budget or per project?
- When you have an agreement with a landowner like Cooley - do you have an agreement with where the landowner can graze or manage land in certain ways?
- If ownership changes, how could you stop a vineyard from going into place?
- What is your relationship with the Sonoma Land Trust? Do they offer the same benefits that you do?
- Is there any concern over the loss of property tax funding from properties that are protected? Only concerned that it could become a hindrance to future acquisitions.
- Are there any on your Board of Directors that need more persuasion than others?
- How many other counties have an agency like you?

**Specific Comments Received:**

- Would like to see a specific performance indicator related to public access of rivers and creeks. Not that many access points and many times you have to be clandestine to gain access to the rivers. When there is access, the locations are generally trashed. Guided tours on the rivers would be an amazing opportunity, such as LandPaths teen river trek. People will appreciate the land when they get to experience it.
- Font is very small and hard to read.
- P. 118 - would be great to see more detail about what groups you want to outreach - esp. children and ethnic groups. Mimic after Regional Water Board stormwater permit education requirements. In many homes, kids are the English speakers and parents are the other language speakers.

**General Comments Received:**

- How can people learn where there are public access points? Is it printed in the newspaper? Would love to see more information publicized. Some newspapers print a hike a week and that would be a great way to highlight parks and preserves.
- Is there going to be more of a working interaction with Landpaths or other groups? Would love to see more cross pollination of LandPaths events on Ag + Open Space website.
- Am in favor of more spaces for off-leash dogs. Can have dogs off-leash in Marin, the East Bay, and Dillon Beach, but rarely in Sonoma County. Off leash dogs are not a threat to people or the environment - humans are much more damaging to environment than the dogs are. The laws need to catch up to what people need in their community. Recommend working with recreational partners to increase use types on recreational lands and, where appropriate, have dogs off leash.
- Would also like to see more spaces for dogs to be off-leash. It's the only reason that I came here today. Cannot believe how inaccessible recreation lands are in Sonoma County. Grew up in Marin and thought there would be much more access here, but it's not. There are no trash cans at access points. No longer have access where there used to be an Ag + Open Space sign near Healdsburg Ridge. Think that is why this meeting is not well attended - community doesn't feel like they have a voice. Dog access makes woman feel comfortable accessing remote properties – limiting dog access, limits access by women.
- I think that it shows ownership and responsibility to have a dog on leash. Having your dog off leash is irresponsible and detrimental to the environment.
- The Expenditure Plan limits spending on initial public access, operation and maintenance (IPAOM) to 10% of overall funding, but performance indicators show that you want to expand protected lands. This is concerning given the financial devastation on a national and state level to maintain parks in a sustainable way. Strikes me that if the Expenditure Plan is limiting you, but you are growing land at an aggressive rate, then you will incrementally decrease IPAOM funding and it seems like it could get to an unbalanced state. Fundamentally, there would need to be more of a scaling of the IPAOM money with the portfolio that you are holding.
- Want to note that in the founding of Ag + Open Space, one of the concerns, and one of the promises to the voters, was that this was not funding that would displace park budgets – Ag + Open Space would take it up a notch and do more. The recreational part of it is a big bonus and Regional Parks has gotten millions of dollars in land, and additional funding for IPAOM. Not meant to replace their budget, only to supplement it.
- Suggestion for future easements would be to add language regarding fuel reduction

- Affirm need for trash cans at all access points - even illegal ones, such as each bridge crossing. Suggest working with non-profits, like Clean River Alliance, for litter clean up. Clean River Alliance is working the homeless to clean up encampments. When you float down the river, you can see where folks are gaining access due to the debris. There is a need for more official access points with amenities. The City of Healdsburg has a franchise agreement with Recology for waste management to pick up all the trash in downtown – mimic this system for access points.
- Use existing conservation easement landowners to guide potential easement sellers. Other organizations like LandPaths could advise landowners as well.
- Is there any plans to connect Healdsburg Ridge and Fitch Mountain? Would love to see that! Would also love to see Healdsburg Ridge expanded with more trails before development occurs around it.
- Think you guys are doing a great job
- Appreciate the warning at previous meeting regarding the need for high density housing in cities.
- Include archery, where appropriate, as a recreational use.
- Please encourage the Water Agency to open their beautiful parking lot at their education center to the public - open for fishing, but no other river uses can access.

#### Questions and Discussion Items:

- The Nature Conservancy has partnered with developers before by setting land aside for open space and allowing for development on some land. Have you thought of doing anything like that?
- Who negotiates the terms of the public access? Who determines what uses the lands will have?
- You are transferring land over to another entity? Given that, and your experience with this 10% limit, is that enough money to manage the lands?
- Understand that Sonoma Land Trust helps with some of your financing. Could groups like them and smaller groups like Fitch Mountain Fund could help with IPAOM funding?
- The Callahan property is a firestorm waiting to happen - who can manage that land? Can Ag + Open Space manage that land?
- Where can I read about the benefits to a possible property owner? What are the downsides to a landowner?
- What is the timeline for Wright Hill and Carrington Coast to be opened? Are you involved in trail from Monte Rio up to the ridge and out to coast?
- How will you deal with the cannabis industry? Are you having difficulty with cannabis grows on your property?

#### DISTRICT 3 VITAL LANDS INITIATIVE COMMUNITY MEETING

*March 29, 2018 | Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Building | 6:00pm-8:00pm*

#### Specific Comments Received:

- Page 106 – Greenbelt objective 2 – Why not add a bullet about land acquisition that helps to protect from fire?
- Would like to see more specific performance indicators – target X% or X acres of land
- Want more public access for hiking and other access to lands – add measurable and specific goals for public access.
- Page 79 – Main thing missing is management of fuel load in hills. Want to see more controlled burns and more frequent burns that are less intense. Page 46 talks about Native American management of land. Also mentioned that places where there are extreme fire or flood potential can be set aside to prevent natural disasters. Fires like we had last year could be reduced if we use controlled burns. Why wait until after fire if we could have been

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using preventative measures all along? Even sprinklers in vineyards could be co-beneficial with use for agricultural management, but also could mitigate against fire.

- The document looks like it was a PowerPoint that was turned into a document and it will be expensive to print. There are photos that are unrelated to the text. It should be produced in portrait mode instead of landscape mode.
- Didn't see diagrams that show how internal process work within document (e.g. acquisitions, etc.).
- You should add to the document an explanation of how much effort it took to create Ag + Open Space and the work that the founders did.
- Page 90 – Protect lands at most risk of development – as the population grows and all communities must assume fair share of affordable housing. Should clarify that development should benefit communities.
- Document guides Ag + Open Space to actively participate with traditional and non-traditional groups. Document should better define what “non-traditional” means in this case.
- Knowing what Ag + Open Space does, can see that there is a lot of energy placed on informing the populace of what we have created and all the open space we have protected. We should add a section to the document that we have engaged with all communities, not just Latino community, but also youth, etc.

### **General Comments Received:**

- Where in the plan is the total protected acres of grazing, cultivation, things that are ag related? Would like to see a number or percentage of how much of our budget has been spent on ag related projects. How much of the ag land is under a CE? Be more explicit in reporting this measurement
- Page 28 – Please clarify what the landowner benefits are to selling a conservation easement on your property (payment, taxes, etc.). Follow up question: After the fires, fire departments need to consolidate due to lack of tax money, the expensive water replacement in Fountaingrove, and the loss of property tax revenue due to loss of homes. Is it too soon to be rolling out the Vital Lands Initiative when we are looking at a lack of tax revenue due to the fires? More property taxes are being reduced and there is uncertainty so why are we pushing forward with this plan? When Ag + Open Space acquires a conservation easement that causes tax revenue to go down - how does that affect the County's tax revenue, especially after the fires? Would advocate for slowing down on this planning process and allowing time to assess other priorities.
- Fountaingrove could have a financing district where people who live in that area can fund projects related to their region, rather than all of Santa Rosa paying for improvements in Fountaingrove. Maybe some of this land could be set aside as a park
- Most of lands Ag + Open Space protects are through conservation easements and are not appropriate for public access. Not all of County should be open to public access with roads and parking lots.
- Would it be beneficial to have an affirmative statement in the document that Ag + Open Space won't be competing with other governmental support programs, such as fire recovery programs? There could be potential conflicts of interest.
- Include the money produced from other crops than the wine industry.
- Is there a section in the Initiative that discusses what challenges Ag + Open Space has had in the past and how Ag + Open Space has overcome them? Is there a section that discusses enforcement actions? Would like to see this. E.g. meeting the challenge of declining tax base during recession, or another entity trying to override/negate our conservation easement.
- Ag + Open Space is doing a great job, a quarter cent sales tax is not enough, would like to see more. Add to the document the importance of open space properties to the County's economy (the figure Shirlee Zane discussed).
- Also, we need to define which lands are vital. Is it the areas that are most impacted or at risk? E.g. protecting more streams for salmon, and habitat for sensitive species.

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- Where do grants come from? We should clarify that this is not a grant per say, it is coming from sales tax. Remember hearing City of Santa Rosa limiting access to Howarth Park during economic downturn – this is a concern. What would happen to an owner that is not maintaining their conservation easement – we need to explain this in the document. This is important for future landowners to understand.
- Are conservation easements irrevocable trusts that cannot be changed? Are people selling conservation easements to get a tax benefit, or just to get a payment? Perhaps we could advocate for irrevocable trusts so that people have to do the land maintenance for them, using the money that they received from Ag + Open Space for purchasing the easement.
- Page 100 - urban parks - taxpayers are doing good things here. We should have some sort of assurance that the cities with matching grant projects are playing by the rules, and are upholding the terms of the conservation easement. Make sure that the cities don't look to matching grant money as a crutch, and don't enforce the easement rules.
- Suggest that make clear in the Vital Lands Initiative that property value diminishes after an easement is placed on the land. Do people understand that the easement might constrain them too much so they can't actually use the land in the future? Knows people that are in this situation who didn't fully understand what they were getting into.
- Support prescribed fire, like page 112. This is important from a fire prevention standpoint, but also from a habitat standpoint. There is a lot of catching up we need to do in CA. Ag + Open Space is in a good position to help with encouraging prescribed burns on easement properties. If we can move away from one-off burns and move towards recurring burns in an interval of every several years that would be optimal.
- The Vital Lands Initiative is a highly impactful document and should go to a vote of the people. We already have zoning, urban growth boundaries, planning departments. This should be brought to the attention of the whole community. People should read a book called Behind the Green Mask UN Agenda 21 by Rosa Cory. If this plan sees its culmination, people who enjoy open space will see enjoyment reduced to old photographs.
- Page 118 – education programs on properties not open to public. This can mean driving kids far away from their homes, whereas places like Taylor Mountain are right in their back yard. Could have education programs on Ag + Open Space protected lands whether they are private or public.
- In terms of easements, would like to see scientific and up to date modern science related to stream setbacks and restoration so that when landowners sell a conservation easement and receive public money, they have to maintain public trust and even restore streams.
- Throughout document, when funds are discussed, would like to know what the Cities and the County did to have funds available prior to Ag + Open Space. How were parks like Sugarloaf and Howarth Park funded? Seems like the only funding available now is through grant funding or Ag + Open Space funds. Want to understand why the Vital Lands Initiative is needed today. Need to explain what existed prior to Ag + Open Space and what their role is now. How did BLM get out of protecting land and why was Ag + Open Space founded to work on that instead?
- Love open space in Sonoma County, but why is the Vital Lands Initiative being done now? Is this a working document? Why hasn't it already been done? Was there a different plan? The language is difficult to understand what the relationship is between the Vital Lands Initiative and Ag + Open Space
- This plan may double dip with the One Bay Area plan that already does exactly what the Vital Lands Initiative is doing. Why are we doing this if it is similar? We need to be explicit about how this plan differs or fits in with other plans.
- Want to see a distinction between what agencies existed before Ag + Open Space and how they interacted.
- We need to give land back to the wilderness. We have conserved 10% now but we should do more.
- Integrate fuel treatment studies (e.g. Pepperwood) to inform management on conservation easement lands – consider appropriate treatment based on fire regime.

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## Questions and Discussion Items:

- Is Ag + Open Space working on developing access to lands, like providing parking?
- There are different priorities in the county than open space protection (such as roads). Spoke about Land Use Tenants of UN Agenda 21.
- What type of landowner incentives are built into conservation easements for natural resource protection? If the purpose of the conservation easement is natural resources, is there an incentive for the landowner to steward the land's natural resources, beyond just protecting the land? Is that with the intent to transfer all fee properties to a different land management agency?
- Page 79 – 6 times/year public is allowed to visit property. What does this mean?
- 10% of total revenues allowed for development - how does Ag + Open Space measure that? What does this mean? What does Ag + Open Space do when revenues go down? Can Ag + Open Space change plans if revenues go down? If matching grant money is given to other organizations, can the other organization take property through eminent domain? Can they use our money toward eminent domain?
- Is there a scenario where someone could invalidate our conservation easement and how would Ag + Open Space prevent that?
- What if the owner decides to sell the land after putting an easement on the land? What happens then?
- Glad that Ag + Open Space was created in 1990, thinks we should pay more than ¼ cent for open space. One thing that bothers me is that Santa Rosa is a large city and what will it look like 300 years from now? In San Francisco, there are only tiny areas of nature, what did it look like previously? It is sad when an open lot in the city is sold and developed for housing. Lots inside city limits are in demand for development, but it would be great if we could preserve these small lots within the city and make sure they are available in the future.
- Plan Bay Area already provides that very few homes be built outside of priority development area.
- Impressed by this meeting.

## DISTRICT 4 VITAL LANDS INITIATIVE COMMUNITY MEETING

*March 31, 2018 | Cloverdale Veterans Memorial Building | 10:00am-12:00pm*

## Specific Comments Received:

- Don't think the document will speak to the public. It's got too much jargon and needs more direct language that will speak to individuals. Sonoma County Community Foundation report a good model. Need clear examples (bullets, etc.)
- Be explicit about your role in public access – acres opened by 2021

## General Comments Received:

- Unacceptable that county approved spending \$20 million on Cooley Ranch for purchase of the easement. Doesn't think that this conservation easement reflects Ag + Open Space goal of spending money on land that is most at risk for development. Especially unhappy that the public does not have any access to this property. Desire for (more) public access on this property.
- Interest in seeing more regenerative agriculture (including carbon sequestration)
- More river access wanted in general, especially in Geyserville (Syr properties)
- Suspicion that money may be getting spent on properties that does not necessarily represent public interest (e.g. politically/personally connected landowners being favored). Public access maybe not considered enough.

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- Can we quantify better the value of just extinguishing development rights, even though there may not be public access? Some people already value the inherent protection of land while others may not necessarily understand the value of protecting land that they can't use/see.
- Need advocacy and ambassadors for Ag + Open Space mission.
- Support partnerships with LandPaths and others.
- Desire for public access for working class – accessible to communities. There is a perception that Ag + Open Space money is spent on lands that the public can't access.
- Ag + Open Space did a great job of communication to the Press Democrat. Recommend continuing that engagement in similar ways. Share/ communicate values of land protection, especially if no access.

#### **Questions and Discussion Items:**

- Desire to understand the distinction between Ag + Open Space and Sonoma Land Trust (and other similar organizations).
- Are there guidelines that define clearly what is considered agriculture?
- Has there been an increase in landowners approaching Ag + Open Space due to properties being burned in the 2017 fires in Sonoma County?
- Are Operations & Maintenance funds used for Ag + Open Space staff costs?
- How does Ag + Open Space steward and deal with issues such as erosion control on land over which we have a conservation easement?
- Desire for a meeting in Geyserville prior to adopting/finalizing the Vital Lands Initiative
- What are the mechanisms for public access?