



County of San Diego, Planning & Development Services
Purchase of Agricultural Conservation
Easement (PACE) Program
ADVANCE PLANNING DIVISION

The County of San Diego has an agricultural conservation program known as the Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) Program. The PACE Program promotes the long-term preservation of agriculture in the County of San Diego.

Under the PACE Program, willing agricultural property owners are compensated for placing a perpetual easement on their property that limits future uses to agriculture. As a result, the agricultural land is preserved and the property owner receives one-time compensation making the land's continued use for agriculture more viable.

Fact Sheet

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for participation in the PACE Program, properties must satisfy all of the eligibility requirements listed below:

1. The property must have been actively farmed and/or ranched for a minimum of two years prior to participating in the PACE Program
2. The property must be zoned A70 – Limited Agriculture, A72 – General Agriculture, RR – Rural Residential, S90 – Holding Area, or S92 – General Rural

Additionally, properties must not have any land use violations and have the appropriate agricultural clearing permits to be eligible for participation in the PACE Program.

Eligibility Check

A property specific assessment to determine final eligibility will be conducted upon receipt of a PACE Program application. To determine Zoning and program eligibility, please generate a Property Summary Report for the property using the Self-Service portal at the link below:

<https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/pds/reports.html>

Program Framework

All eligible applications will be evaluated by a number of criteria and ranked on a weighted scale relative to:

1. Agricultural importance of a property pursuant to the County's Local Agricultural Resources Assessment (LARA) Model.
2. Contribution as a wildlife buffer between Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) priority acquisition areas and/or existing preserved lands and development areas.
3. Contribution to achieving the County's GHG emissions reduction goals.
4. Compatibility with land use and development patterns using Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) efficiency data to support housing initiatives.
5. Contribution to the preservation of wildlife habitat and connectivity through voluntary best-management practices.

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Easement acquisition offers are extended in ranked order. If a property owner chooses not to participate in the PACE Program, the next highest ranking property owner is notified and the process is repeated as necessary.

Easement Valuation & Provisions

Properties participating in the PACE Program are appraised by an independent third party appraiser to determine the agricultural easement value.

A copy of the appraisal report and draft agricultural conservation easement contract are provided to the property owner(s) prior to moving forward with formal easement acquisition proceedings. Property owners are given a 14-day “due diligence” period to review and accept or decline the easement purchase price and terms of the agricultural conservation easement contract.

Appraisal Method

The PACE Program uses an appraisal process to determine agricultural conservation easement values by:

1. Estimating the fair market value of the unencumbered property and
2. Subtracting an estimate of restricted value with the conservation easement

For example:

\$500,000	Estimated fair market value of the unencumbered property
<u>- \$375,000</u>	<u>Estimated restricted value with the conservation easement</u>
= \$125,000	Estimated market value of the proposed conservation easement

Easement Provisions

Agricultural conservation easement contracts contain provisions that limits future uses to agriculture. A draft easement template can be found as Appendix B to the PACE Guidelines.

Additional Information

For additional information regarding the PACE Program and affiliate programs, please refer to:

<http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/pds/advance/PACE.html>

<https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/pds/mscp/>