



Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) Program Update

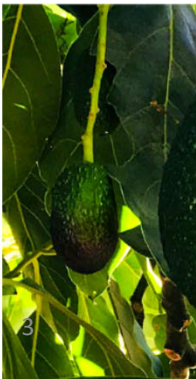
Winter 2020
by the County of San Diego Land Use and Environment Group

Meeting Overview

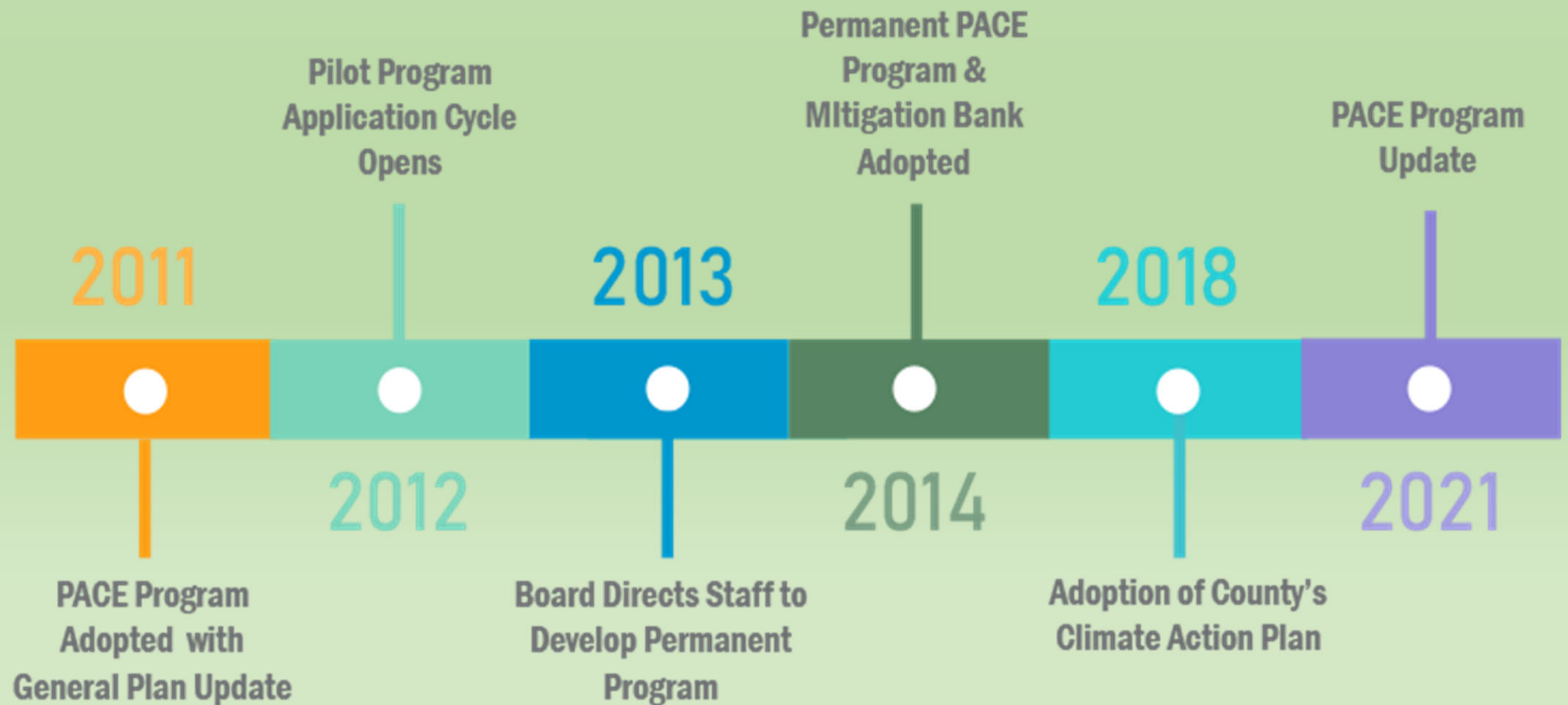
- **Program Overview**
- **Program Update**
 - **Eligibility Criteria & Discussion**
 - **Ranking Criteria & Discussion**
 - **Ranking Criteria Alternatives & Discussion**
 - **Monitoring**
- **Questions/Discussion**

Program Overview

- Willing agricultural property owners are financially compensated for placing a perpetual easement on their property
- Supports the agriculture community by preserving agricultural resources and reducing land available for development
- Supports the implementation of the Climate Action Plan (CAP) goals and sustainability efforts



Program History



PACE Selection Process

Application
submitted

Reviewed
using
eligibility
criteria

Evaluated
using ranking
criteria

Selection to
participate

PACE Acquisitions 2013-2020

Program Cycle	Total Acreage of Easements	Number of Easements	Approximate Cost of Easements
2013-14	782	6	\$1.8 Million
2014-15	413	8	\$1.3 Million
2014-15	189	4	\$500,000
2016-17	376	6	\$1.4 Million
2018-19	273	4	\$267,500
2019-20	365	5	\$1.2 Million
TOTAL	2,400	33	\$6.4 Million

*No easements were acquired in fiscal year 2017-18



Program Update

Update PACE Program Guidelines to:

- **Reduce unnecessary information**
- **Clarify current implementation practices**
- **Expand the PACE eligibility criteria**
- **Adjust the application selection ranking criteria**
- **Implement a monitoring component to ensure compliance with conservation easements**

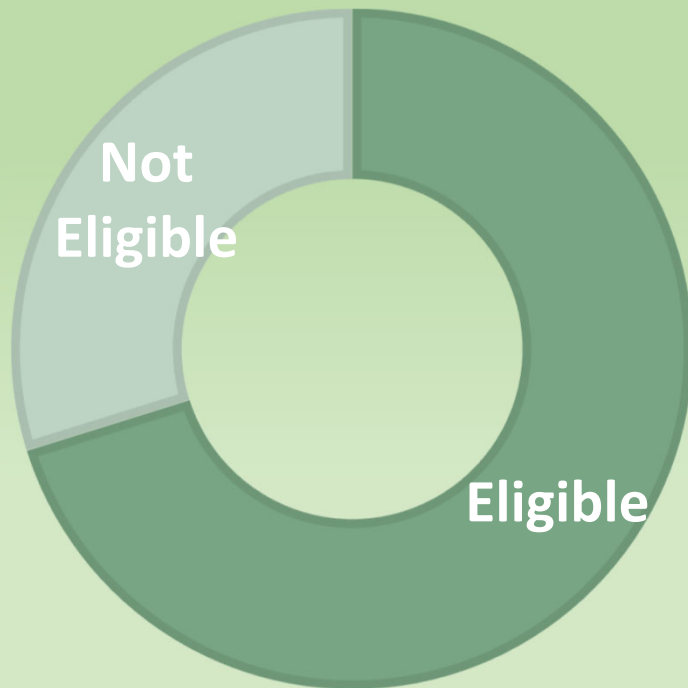
Current Eligibility Criteria

- The property must have been actively farmed and /or ranched for a minimum of two years prior to applying for the Program
- The property must have realized a density reduction as a result of the General Plan Update adopted by the Board of Supervisors on August 3, 2011
- The property must have had the ability to subdivide under the previous General Plan (in effect prior to August 3, 2011)



Current Eligibility Criteria

INQUIRIES SINCE 2018

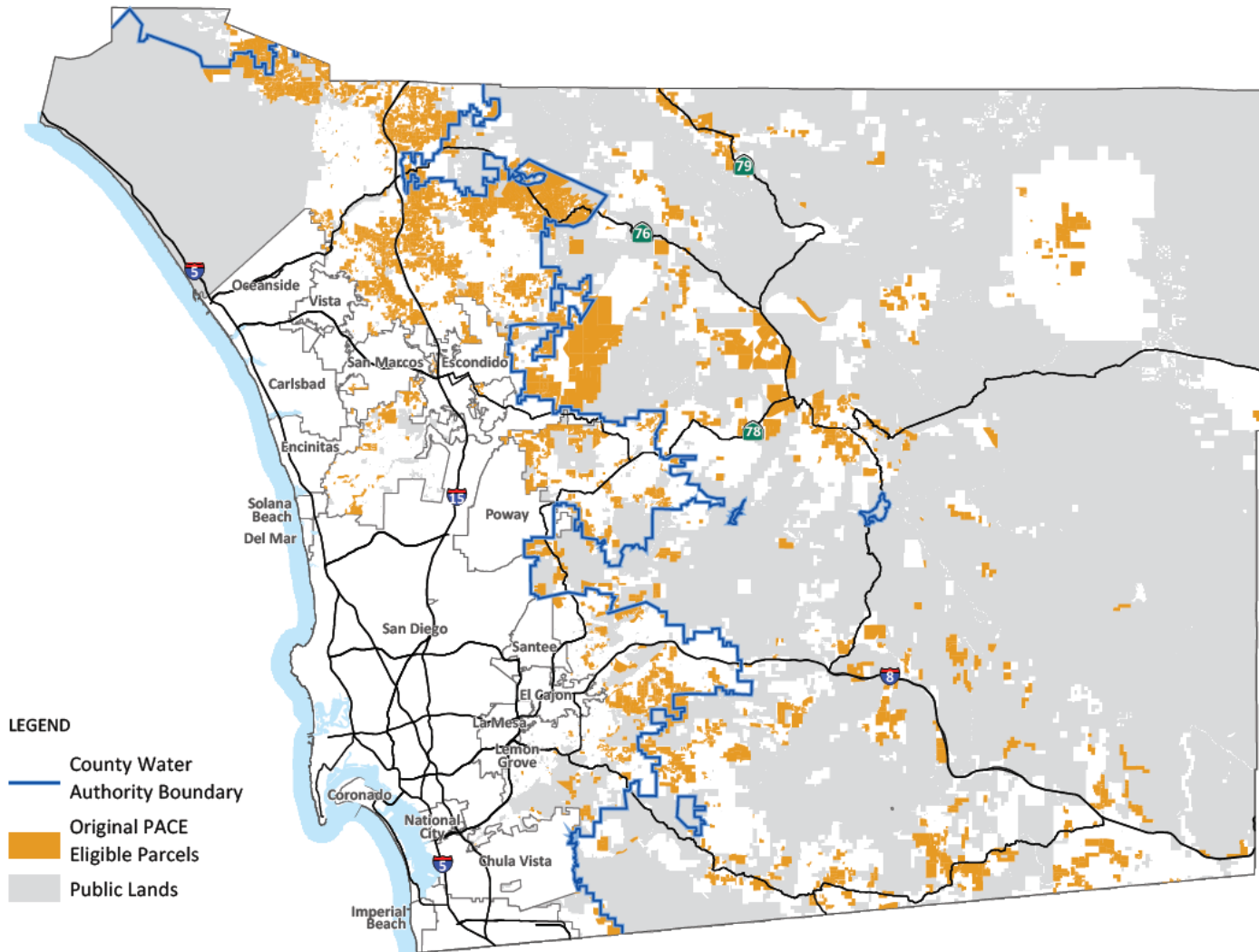




Proposed Eligibility Requirements

- Land use categories to include property zoned for:
 - A70 – Limited Agricultural
 - A72 – General Agricultural
 - RR – Rural Residential
 - S90 – Holding Area (Limitations)
 - S92 – General Rural
- The property must have active agriculture (farming and/or ranching) for a minimum of two years immediately prior to applying to the PACE Program

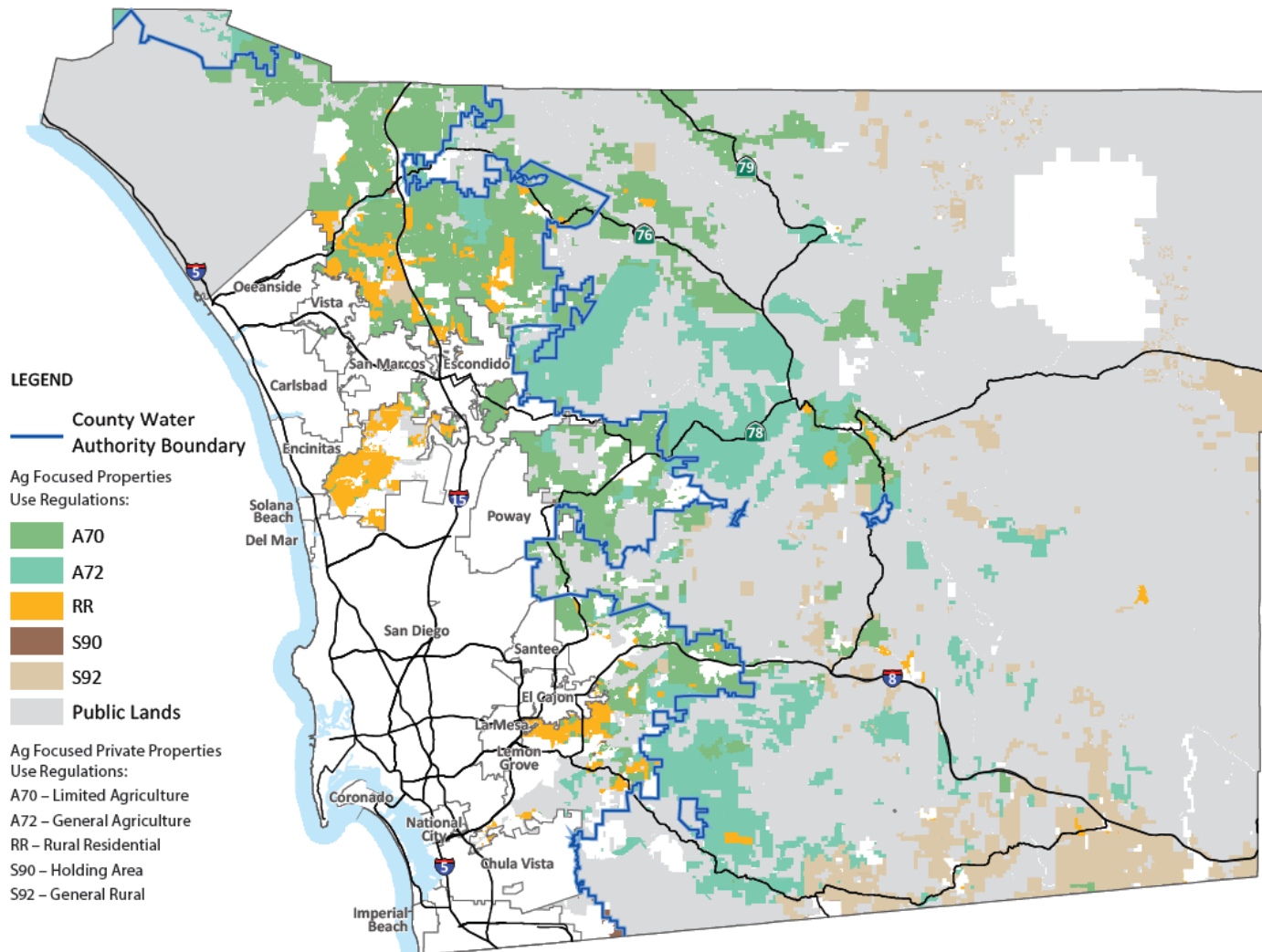
CURRENT PACE Program Eligible Parcels



Properties which were downzoned as a result of the 2011 General Plan Update are eligible to participate in the PACE Program.

101,000+
Eligible Acres

PROPOSED PACE Program Eligible Parcels



Properties which are located in zones most compatible with agricultural preservation are eligible to participate in the Updated PACE Program.

628,000+
Eligible Acres

PROPOSED PACE Program Eligible Parcels



Does the staff proposed eligibility criteria accurately represent the agricultural community?

Do you think anyone has been left out that should be included?

Properties which are located in zones compatible with agricultural preservation are eligible to participate in the Updated PACE Program.

**628,000 +
Eligible Acres**

Updates to Current Ranking Criteria

Current Ranking Criteria



**Agricultural
Importance**



**Contribution to
MSCP**



**General Plan Update
Density Reduction**

Current Ranking Factors



Agricultural Importance

- County's Guidelines for Determining Significance used to determine agricultural importance
- Properties which rank higher for this factor are considered to have higher value agricultural resources
- Staff recommends increasing this factor's influence

Current Ranking Factors



Contribution to MSCP

- MSCP designation used to determine contribution to the preserve
- Properties which rank higher for this factor have a higher likelihood of providing wildlife benefits
- Staff recommends adjusting this factor to evaluate a property's contribution as a wildlife buffer

Current Ranking Factors

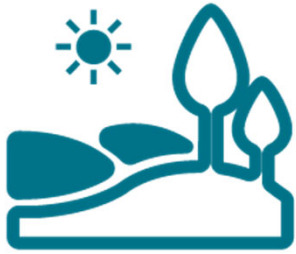


General Plan Update Density Reduction

- Extent of density reduction realized under 2011 General Plan Update is used for this factor
- Properties which rank higher for this factor received a greater density reduction under the 2011 General Plan Update
- Staff recommends reducing this factor's influence

Proposed Ranking Factors

Proposed Ranking Criteria



**Voluntary Best
Management
Practices**



**GHG Reduction
Potential**



**Compatibility with
Land Use Patterns**

Proposed Ranking Factors



Voluntary Best Management Practices

- Voluntary best management practices (BMPs) to allow wildlife movement
- Applies only to properties within MSCP priority acquisitions areas, and only when the landowner has agreed to implement the BMPs

Proposed Ranking Factors



GHG Reduction Potential

- Reduced development potential associated with preservation of agricultural lands leads to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions
- Properties which rank higher for this factor would have a greater contribution to GHG emissions reductions

Proposed Ranking Factors



Compatibility with Land Use Patterns

- Compatibility of preservation with existing and future land use patterns balances the GHG reduction factor
- Properties which rank higher for this factor are within less VMT efficient areas where preservation of agricultural properties would be more compatible with existing land use patterns.



Agricultural
Importance



Contribution to
MSCP



General Plan
Update Density
Reduction

**Do the staff proposed ranking criteria achieve the
anticipated goals of the PACE Program?**



Voluntary Best
Management
Practices



GHG Reduction
Potential



Compatibility with
Land Use Patterns



PACE Program Co-benefits

Ranking factors can be emphasized to prioritize benefits of the PACE Program.

1. Equal Emphasis
2. Agricultural Importance
Emphasis
3. GHG Reduction Emphasis
4. Preserves Emphasis

Equal Emphasis

Implement a ranking criteria scoring system that puts equal emphasis on all ranking factors.



Agricultural Importance Emphasis

Implement a ranking criteria scoring system that puts an elevated emphasis on the agricultural importance of individual properties.



GHG Reduction Potential Emphasis

Implement a ranking criteria scoring system that puts an elevated emphasis on the GHG reduction potential of individual properties.



Preserves Emphasis

Implement a ranking criteria scoring system that puts an elevated emphasis on an individual property's contribution to wildlife conservation.





Is there an alternative that you most support? Why?



Monitoring Program Summary

- Ensures the agricultural uses and open space of each property are preserved
- Modeled after the federal Agricultural Conservation Easement Program and California Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) Program
- Easement properties are monitored on a 5-year cycle

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Appraisal/Onsite Inspection	Ownership Review	Offsite Inspection	Offsite Inspection	Offsite Inspection

ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT SUMMARY Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) Program

Landowner Information

Landowner(s) _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Mailing Address _____ City _____ State _____

Property Information

APN(s) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____

The purpose of monitoring is to ensure the uses and practices are consistent with the terms of easement deeds including but not limited to prohibited and unauthorized activities, determine corrective action or restoration repairs needed for such areas or features of the property that may be damaged by any inconsistent condition, activity or use. Staff with applicable expertise should collect the monitoring information. Partners with the appropriate technical expertise may be authorized to conduct monitoring reviews. The landowner or decision maker should be offered the opportunity to participate in monitoring reviews. Photographs from designated points are recommended when conducting onsite monitoring.

Methods of Monitoring

Ownership Review	Landowner contact; answer questions 1 & 2 of this worksheet. <i>Applicable in the year immediately following baseline conditions report or onsite monitoring that did not require corrective actions.</i>
Offsite Review	Landowner contact and review of the most recent aerial photography; answer questions 1 – 4 of this worksheet. <i>Applicable in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year following baseline conditions report.</i>
Onsite Review	At a minimum; landowner contact, a review of available aerial photography, and answer all questions on this worksheet. <i>Applicable every 5th year following baseline conditions report.</i>

LANDOWNER INFORMATION

- Landowner Contact Date _____ Contact Method _____
 - Was current land ownership verified? ☐ YES ☐ NO
Date of Verification _____ Verified by _____
 - If there is a new landowner, were they notified of the easement and have records been updated?
☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ N/A
New landowner name(s) (if applicable) _____

Next Steps

1

Outreach meetings with various stakeholder groups and public

2

County to summarize input and recommendations

3

Board of Supervisors hearing in 2021

**Thank you
for your
participation!**

