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

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AGENDA REPORT
Business | Information

March 4, 2024

TO: Commissioners

FROM: Michaela Peters, Analyst I

SUBJECT: **Grant Update |**
Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Planning Grant 2.0

SUMMARY

The San Diego County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) will receive an update on its ongoing SALC planning grant – i.e., "SALC 2.0" -- in partnership with the County of San Diego's Planning and Development Services (PDS). SALC 2.0 entails conducting a comprehensive market analysis for both existing and emerging crops, alongside a gap analysis aimed at pinpointing areas where governmental intervention can help bridge economic gaps, thereby supporting small-scale farming operations throughout the County. Notably, recent progress includes the finalization of the MOU between San Diego LAFCO and PDS, delineating respective roles and responsibilities. Since August 2023, LAFCO has enlisted the expertise of Agricultural Impact Associates to undertake the market analysis, as well as engaged Rick Engineering as an outreach consultant, achieving significant headway in the first two quarters. The update is for information and provides an opportunity for the Commission to ask questions or provide related feedback as grant work extends into late 2025.

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BACKGROUND

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program

SALC was created in 2014 as a component of the California Strategic Growth Council and administered by the Department of Conservation. The SALC program is primarily funded through the California Climate Investments, a statewide program that provides cap-and-trade funds through agricultural conservation acquisition and planning grants for programs intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The principal goals of SALC are stated as:

- Protect at-risk agricultural lands from sprawl development to promote growth within existing jurisdictions, ensure open space remains available, and support a healthy agricultural economy.

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

DISCUSSION

San Diego LAFCO will receive an update on the ongoing work from the previous SALC 1.0 planning grant – specifically focusing on its recommendations – with assistance from partner (San Diego County PDS) and in collaboration with Agricultural Impact Associates and Rick Engineering to assess economic, social, and agricultural sustainability in San Diego County. The item is being presented to the Commission for information and feedback only.

Partnerships

San Diego LAFCO has formally partnered with two consultants in collaboration with PDS on the SALC grant and relative to its six main tasks and deliverables: (1) grant management; (2) market analysis; (3) GAP analysis; (4) outreach & education plan; (5) strategic vision plan; and (6) final report – "Greening Agriculture". Details on each agency and its agreed responsibilities follow and detailed in Attachment One.

- ***San Diego County PDS*** is collaborating with LAFCO on the completion of ***tasks 4 through 6*** involving producer & stakeholder outreach, education, meeting participation, meeting facilitation, and report review.

- ***Agricultural Impact Associates*** is collaborating with LAFCO on the completion of ***tasks 2 and 3*** involving market data collection and aggregation, gap analysis of marginal and sustainable small farm operations in San Diego County, preparation of a written report with findings, and participation in meetings.

- ***Rick Engineering*** is collaborating with LAFCO on the completion of ***tasks 4 through 6*** involving constituent outreach, meeting facilitation, meeting participation, community education, and report review.

Grant Budget

The grant is budgeted at $500,000. Through December 2023 total authorized expenses have totaled $52,968 – or 10.6% -- of the total. The highest recorded expense is attributed to data collection for the Market Analysis under Task 2 and totaled at $37,599 – or 41.8% -- of the allocated total for Task 2.

SALC Grant Budget
Task 1 – Task 6

Cost Category	Task #1	Task #2	Task #3	Task #4	Task #5	Task #6	Total
Cumulative Total	$7,425	$37,599	$0.00	$7,943	$0.00	$0.00	$52,968
Allocated Total	**$30,000**	**$90,000**	**$90,000**	**$80,000**	**$80,000**	**$80,000**	**$500,000**
Percentage of Budget	**24.8%**	**41.8%**	**0.00%**	**9.9%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	10.6%

ANALYSIS

San Diego LAFCO and consultants are making steady progress on SALC 2.0 – albeit slightly behind the anticipated schedule. With plenty of room left in the planning phase of the project, the delay in data collection to accommodate constituent outreach is justified. Tasks 1, 2, and 4 are concurrently underway with all four crops having been selected: avocados, lemons, strawberries, and tomatoes. Task 2 (market analysis) has been extended by approximately 60-90 days to allow for additional time in acquiring necessary data collected directly from producers through in-person outreach. Task 4 (outreach & education) is underway and highlighted by recently securing Rick Engineering as the tasked consultant. Activities throughout the remainder of the year will be focused on completing both the market and GAP analyses, and continuing outreach and education efforts. Leveraging the data collection phase is expected to culminate in a written report with findings and related recommendations. Grant activities are currently progressing within budget and on schedule.

RECOMMENDATION

Information only.

ALTERNATIVES FOR ACTION

None.

PROCEDURES

This item has been placed on San Diego LAFCO's agenda for information as part of the business calendar. The following procedures are suggested.

1) Receive verbal presentation from staff unless waived.
2) Discuss item and provide feedback as appropriate.

Respectfully,

Michaela Peters

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Analyst I

Attachment:

1) Final SALC 2.0 Work Plan

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Attachment 2: Work Plan

Task Number	Performance Measure (Deliverables)	Timeline *Q1 (Jan – Mar)* *Q2 (April – June)* *Q3 (July – Aug)* *Q4 (Sept – Dec)*	Total Requested Grant Funds
Task 1 - Grant Management	**Main Deliverables:** Subcontractor grant agreements, progress reports, submission of deliverables, and final report to DOC	06/2023-06/2025	**$30,000.00**
Task 2 - Market Analysis Subtask 2A: Identify and Retain an Ag-Economist Consultant Subtask 2B: Market Data Collection and Aggregation Subtask 2C: Prepare Market Analysis Report	**Main Deliverables:** Prepare Market Analysis Report with Market Information and Best Practice Data	06/2023-01/2024	**$90,000.00**
Task 3 - Perform GAP Analysis Subtask 3A: Identify and Retain an Ag-Economist Consultant Subtask 3B: Conduct Gap Analysis Subtask 3C: Prepare Gap Analysis Report	**Main Deliverables:** Gap Analysis on Marginal vs. Sustainable Farm Operations using data generated in Task 2. Defining "sustainable" farming practices. Prepare Report on the Gap Analysis of Market Information and Best Practice Data	01/2024-09/2024	**$90,000.00**
Task 4 - Outreach & Education Plan Subtask 4A: Identify and Retain Planning Consultant & Create Outreach Team Subtask 4B: Hold Series of Producer and Stakeholder Meetings Subtask 4C: Compile Community Input Subtask 4D: Prepare Agricultural Community Feedback Report	**Main Deliverables:** Meetings with Stakeholders Inform/Educate Discuss Receive input Agricultural Community Feedback Report	01/2024-06/2025	**$80,000.00**

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Task 5 - Strategic Plan Subtask 5A: Identify and Retain Planning Consultant to research and identify key policies, programs, and/or projects Subtask 5B: Strategize implementation Subtask 5C: Prepare Report	**Main Deliverables:** Develop Strategic Plan Report outlining key policies, program, and/or projects to aid farmers in closing the economic "gap"	01/2024-03/2025	**$80,000.00**
Task 6 - Greening Agriculture | Final Report Subtask 5A: Draft Final Report Subtask 5B: Circulate Draft for Review and Comment Subtask 5C: Finalize Final Report Subtask 5D: Present Draft and Final Report to Board of Supervisors for adoption.	**Main Deliverables:** Final Greening Agriculture in the San Diego Region Report Presentations to LAFCO Commission and County of San Diego Board of Supervisors with program, policy and/or regulation streamlining recommendations.	01/2025-09/2025	**$80,000.00**