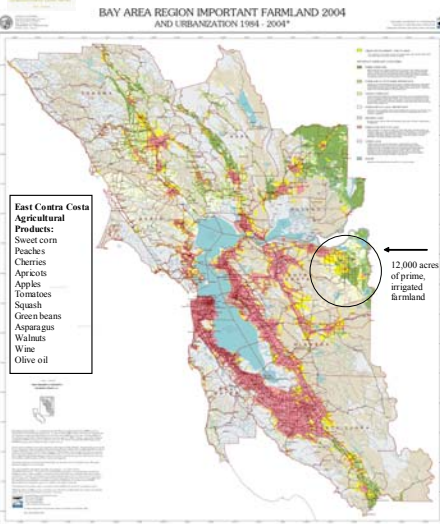


Presentation to the Contra Costa LAFCO
Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust
October 8, 2014



Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust
Works with farmers and the community so that future generations in the Bay Area have a local source of food.

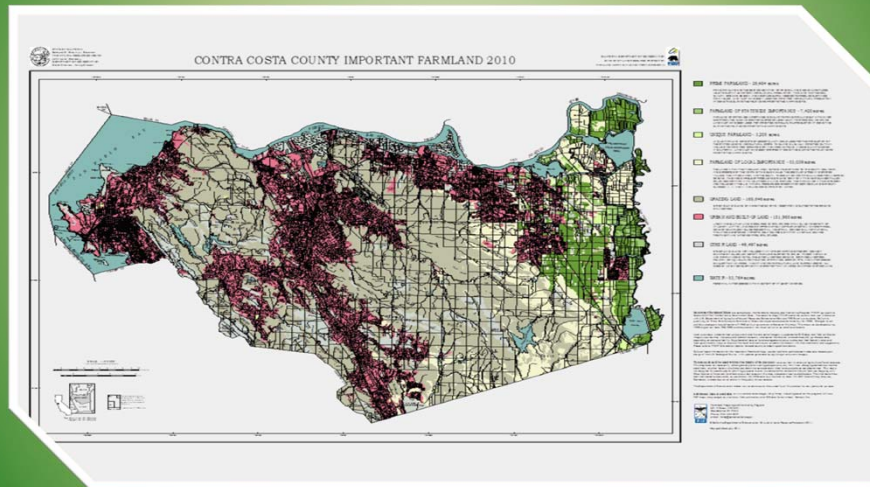


Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust
1120 Second Street, Brentwood, CA 94513 • PH 925.634.6738 • FX 925.634.6748
www.brentwoodaglandtrust.org

Bay Area farmers and ranchers produce agricultural products with a farm gate value over \$1.8 billion a year.

Bay Area farmers feed the Bay Area, the nation and the world.

Contra Costa County A unique opportunity to build a local food system



Cherries blooming at Frog Hollow Farm



Mediterranean climate
Year-round growing season
Extraordinarily fertile soils
Ample, inexpensive Delta water (pre-1914 water rights)

Contra Costa farmers have feed the Bay Area and the world since before the Gold Rush



John Marsh Historic House

Harvesting Winter Wheat



Contra Costa County: California's Napa before Prohibition



Contra Costa had over 50 wineries before Prohibition.

Winehaven in Richmond was the largest winery in the world.

There are still ancient vines from the 1890's in Oakley.

Brentwood's long history of u-pick orchards and roadside stands



East Contra Costa Agriculture Today
12,000 acres of row crops, vineyards and orchards
Over \$92 million in farm gate value



\$14 million sweet corn (3,500 acres producing 35,000 tons!)

\$7 million cannery tomatoes (1945 acres producing 90,000 ton)

\$6 million wine grapes (1950 acres producing 8,450 tons)

\$5 million cherries 413 acres producing 1270 tons)

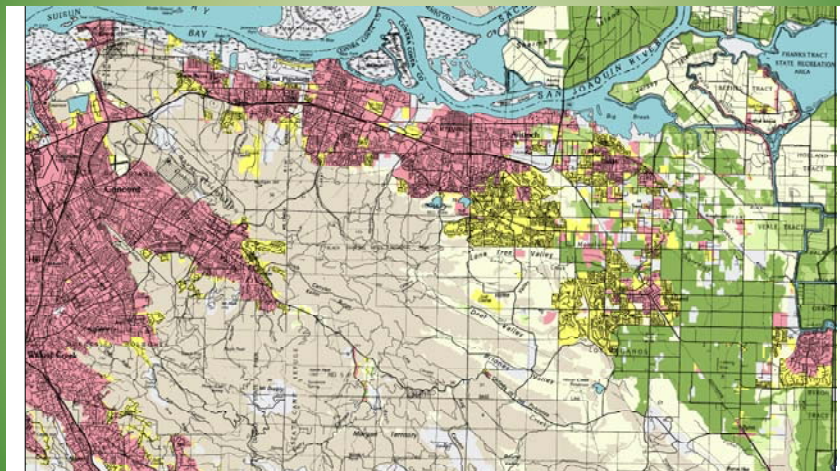
\$18.7 million livestock (26,000 head of cattle)

Brentwood California

From a farming community of 7,500 people in 1990
to a suburban city of 56,000 by 2005



Urban growth in East Contra Costa County 1984-2004



Yellow areas represent prime farmland lost since 1984.
Source: California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

We've lost more than a quarter of Contra Costa farmland in the past thirty years

16,000 acres of prime farmland lost since 1990
4,381 acres lost between 1997 and 2000!

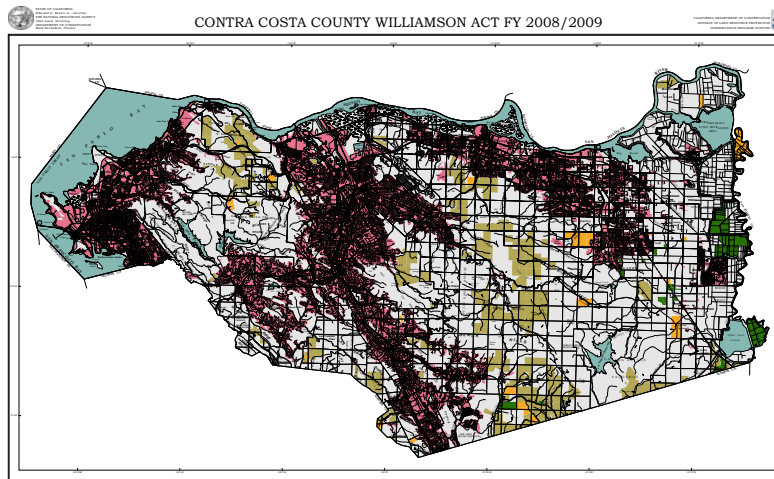


How well are our existing tools to protect prime farmland working in Contra Costa County?

- Williamson Act
- Local land use – urban limit lines and agricultural zoning
- Agricultural mitigation
- Conservation easements

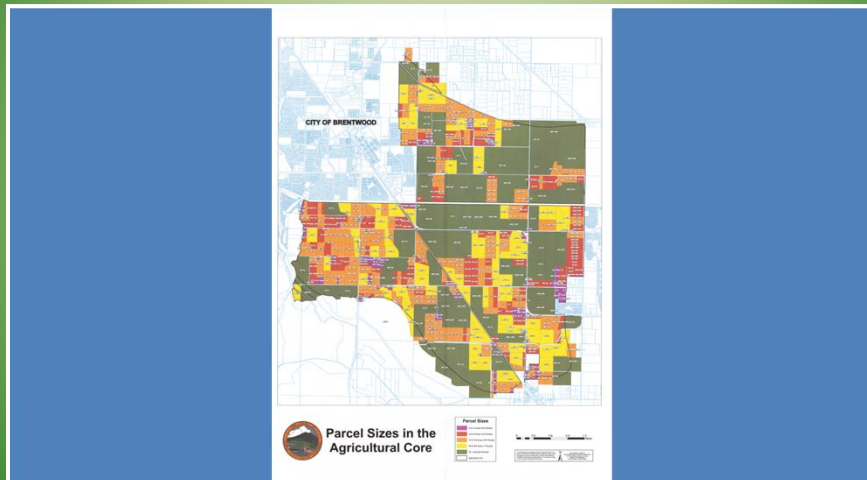
Williamson Act: Provides property tax benefits for farmers willing to agree to remain farming for ten years

Most successful protecting rangeland without development pressure

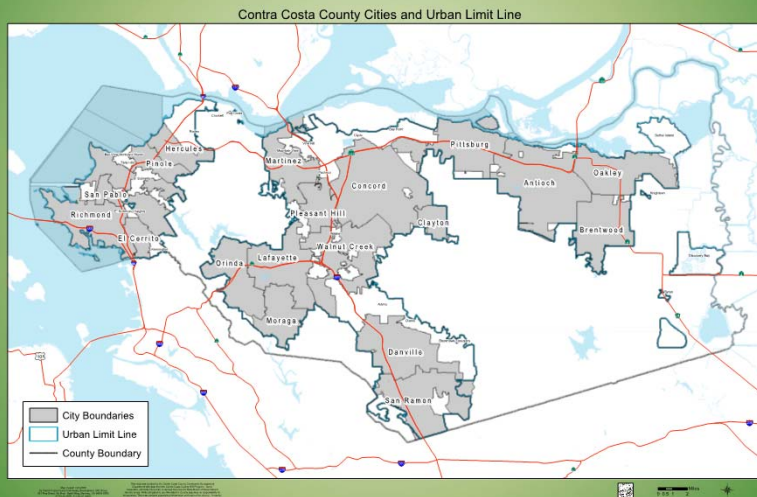


Contra Costa Agricultural Core

11,500 acres of prime farmland
ABAG Priority Conservation Area

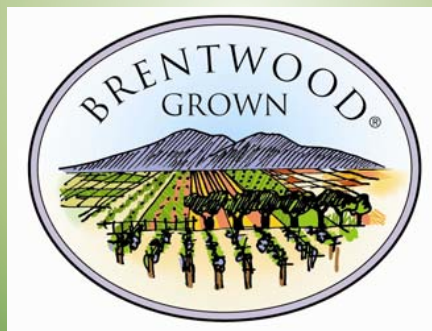


Contra Costa County Planning Urban limit line



2002 City of Brentwood Agricultural Enterprise Program

- Agricultural mitigation fee (\$5,500 for each acre converted to urban uses). Over \$12 million in mitigation fees collected by the City.
- Transfer of development program.
- Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust is formed.



Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust

Established 2002

Dual mission:

- Permanently protect Contra Costa County's prime farmland, and
- Work with farmers and the community to create a vibrant, sustainable agricultural economy.

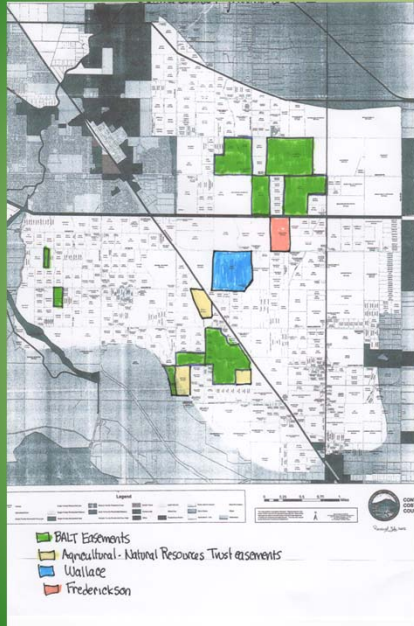


BALT Chairman
Tom Bloomfield in
his new cherry
orchard on Walnut
Boulevard

How does BALT permanently protect farmland?

What is a conservation easement?

- A voluntary agreement between a farmer and BALT to keep the land for farming forever.
- Farmers agree to not subdivide or and develop their farm.
- BALT's agreements honors the wisdom of local farmers who've been farming here for generations and allow agricultural enterprise.
- Value of easement based on an appraisal.



Agricultural Conservation Easements in the Contra Costa Agricultural Core

- Easements on thirteen Brentwood farms totaling over 1,000 acres
- Seeking funding for two easements (blue and pink parcels)

What role can LAFCO play in protecting Contra Costa's agricultural resources?

LAFCO is charged with guiding development away from prime agricultural lands and has the authority to impose conditions on approvals. *Govt. Code. § 56375 and 56377.*



How do other LAFCOs mitigate the loss of agricultural land?

LAFCOs have adopted agricultural mitigation policies that condition approvals on:

- Agricultural conservation easements
- In-lieu fees
- Local jurisdictions adopting agricultural mitigation policies

Examples: Yolo LAFCO (2006), Santa Clara LAFCO (2007), Stanislaus (2012), Ventura LAFCO, San Luis Obispo LAFCO and Napa LAFCO

A well-timed funding opportunity

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program: a new State Strategic Growth Council grant program funded with cap-and-trade auction revenues.

\$1 million in planning grants to cities, counties, local government and partners in 2015 to:

- Develop criteria for critical agricultural lands
- Build community consensus for farmland protection
- Develop a Sustainable Agricultural Land Strategy
- Develop conservation easement program
- Plan for critical agricultural infrastructure needs

Recommendations

- Build a coalition of LAFCO, the County, BALT and other partners to apply for a Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program grant in early 2015.
- Explore adoption of an agricultural mitigation policy by Contra Costa LAFCO that requires that the applicant mitigate any loss of prime farmland.
- Work with CALAFCO to explore state law changes to the Cortese-Knox-Hetzberg Act to strengthen LAFCO's statutory authority to protect prime farmland.

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