




COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence
Planning and Building Department



DATE: September 10, 2012
BOARD MEETING DATE: September 25, 2012
SPECIAL NOTICE/HEARING: N/A
VOTE REQUIRED: N/A

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors
FROM: Jim Eggemeyer, Community Development Director 
SUBJECT: Report Back of the Status of the Williamson Act Program Update

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept this report on the status of the Planning and Building Department's efforts to update the County's Rules and Procedures for the Williamson Act.

BACKGROUND:

San Mateo County's program for implementing the California Land Conservation Act, also known as the Williamson Act, was the subject of an audit by the California Department of Conservation (DOC) in 2007. Among the steps taken in response to this audit has been the drafting of new rules and procedures for Williamson Act contracts. This report provides an update on the status of this effort and an estimated timeframe for its completion.

DISCUSSION:

In Fiscal Year 2011-2012 staff of the Planning and Building Department and a subcommittee of the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) met on a monthly basis to address the comments and questions raised by the AAC in their review of the administrative draft. This resulted in an updated version that was submitted to the DOC on April 18, 2012. The Planning and Building Department received comments from DOC staff on September 4, 2012.

The next step will be to reconvene the AAC subcommittee to determine if and how the draft should be revised in response to the DOC's comments. This should occur in time to release a public review draft and conduct a public meeting in the fall of 2012. The Planning and Building Department anticipates presenting the recommended rules and procures to the Board of Supervisors in late 2012/early 2013.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The new rules and procedures will specify requirements for entering into and maintaining Williamson Act contracts. Although it is not possible to predict the specific fiscal

outcomes the new rules and procedures will have, it is reasonable to assume that they will reduce the number of properties that are eligible for such contracts, and thereby increase property tax revenues. Adoption of the new rules and procedures will also enhance the ability of the County to recoup subvention funds from the state, although these funds have been eliminated from recent state budgets. In addition, the County's continued participation in the Williamson Act program will confer property tax benefits to commercial agricultural producers, who are an important component of the local economy.