

February 2016

RCT Lands LP  
86 Monterey Salinas Hwy  
Salinas, CA 93908

Kathy Franscioni, representative  
kfransci@yahoo.com  
831 320 5597 cell

**Public Resource Code 10252**

**FINDINGS**

**Value of Project**

The Agricultural Land being removed from Farmland is 121.4 acres (Vanoli subdivision APN 221-011-017) of prime farmland. To compensate for the removal of this acreage RCT Lands LP is placing 318 acres of prime farmland (Redding Ranch APN 221-011-040), 66 acres of Farmland of Importance (Somavia Ranch APN 137-151-009) and 51.6 acres of prime farmland (Vanoli subdivision split parcel APN 221-011-017)) in Ag Land Easements for perpetuity. The exchange/mitigation process will be dealt with separately after cancellation is approved. These agricultural properties will be protected for the future and add quality agricultural land to conservation.

**Goals**

To remove 121.4 acres of Vanoli subdivision from Williamson Act protection via cancellation so this 121.4 acres can be annexed into the City of Greenfield. The current Sphere of Influence for Greenfield includes this property in the proposed annexation. The County of Monterey and LAFCO have also included in the Memorandum of Agreement updated and completed 2013. The annexation of this property began in 2005 and has continued since then with the assistance of the County, City and LAFCO. Each step has been reviewed and revised with the assistance of Monterey County, LAFCO and Ag Land Trust to insure compliance with General Plans, Memorandums of Agreement and Sphere of Influence.

***(a) The quality of all farm lands involved are prime or Farmland of State Wide Importance.***

<http://maps.conservation.ca.gov/ciff/ciff.html>.

Per the above link provided by Meri Meraz at State of California Department of Conservation the ranches being considered are:

Vanoli = prime

Redding = prime

Somavia= Farmland of Statewide Importance

**SOILS**

Vanoli Ranch	121.4 acres	27% 2s	73% 3s		Ex 14 pp 10
Vanoli Ranch	51.6 acres	95% 2s	5% 3s		Ex 15 pp 20
Redding Ranch	318 acres	99% 2s	1% 3s		Ex 16 pp 19
Somavia Ranch	66 acres	32 % 2s	49% 3s	19% 4s	Ex 17 pp 20

Per the above soils study which was taken from the latest appraisals (exhibits listed)

The 121.4 acres of the Vanoli Ranch that is being annexed into the City of Greenfield has almost 3 times the 3s soil quality as 2s while the 51.6 acres of the Vanoli Ranch that are being offered for Ag Easement is comprised of almost all 2s quality soils. This means that the parcel which is being annexed and removed from Williamson Act is a lesser piece of farmland. In addition there are more “Greenfield Potatoes” (Ex 10 pp 2) which increase the cost of farming this parcel due to additional labor required and wear and tear on farm machinery.

The Redding Ranch is almost all 2s soil quality which secures its Prime designation.

The Somavia Ranch has more 3s than 2s soil but it still qualifies for Farmland of Statewide Importance.

Per the Ag Easement Appraisals submitted by Tom Pettitt the “highest and best use” for the Redding (Ex 16 pp 22), Somavia (Ex 17 pp 24) and 51.6 acres of the Vanoli ( Ex 15 pp 24) is agricultural. Frank Pierce, Lee and Pierce Engineering, concludes with “the conversion these properties to Ag Land Easement is appropriate.” The growing capabilities and production for farming are all basically equal among the Redding, Somavia and Vanoli. (Ex 10 pp 2)

***(b) The proposal meets multiple natural resource conservation objectives including but not limited to, wet land protection, wildlife habitat conservation, and scenic open-space preservation.***

The proposal will place a total of 435 acres of farmland into Ag Easement Conservation for perpetuity. This will insure that no future development will be allowed on these properties reducing the chance of creating discontinuous urban growth and this quality farming ground will continue to meet agricultural conservation goals for the future in the City of Greenfield, County of Monterey and the State of California.

***(c) The city of county demonstrates a long-term commitment to agricultural land conservation as demonstrated by the following:***

***(1) The general plan and related land use policies of city or county***

The City of Greenfield 2005 General Plan states “promotion of city growth and phased extension or urban services to discourage sprawl and encourage development that improves agriculture and vital public services along with preserving agricultural land and “open space” to maintain “rural community character.” (Ex 21 pp 2-30)

(Ex 21 pp 2-38) PMC Special Planning areas fig 2-5

The Sphere of Influence for 2005 has been adjusted over the years. The current Sphere is pictured and described in the South End Annexation (SOI) (Ex 3 pp 2) shows new borders which have been conditionally approved by LAFCO and Monterey County. (Ex 3 pp 3 ) pictures land use summary for the annexation property. The Annexation Map (Ex 3 pp 4) is a detailed look at the properties being annexed and their specific identifying information. The map on (Ex 3 pp 6) describes the proposed land uses after annexation and (Ex 3 pp 5) defines these proposed land uses.

***(2) Policies of LAFCO***

Sphere of Influences will represent 20 year growth area around a city as Urban Reserve (UR)

Direct city growth away from highest quality farmlands

Provide adequate buffers

Oppose policies inconsistent with the General Plan

The City of Greenfield has developed a Sphere of Influence that will annex 312 acres into the south of Greenfield (Ex 3 pp3). Some of these acres are farmland which is considered prime or Farmland of State wide importance. Establishing Ag Easement protection on the 51.6 acres east and directly adjacent to the properties will offer a “stop growth” buffer for the future. All Ag buffers will be established by the City of Greenfield in conjunction with the County of Monterey after the properties are annexed. Annexation of these properties is consistent with the Greenfield General Plan (2005) because a good portion (87 acres) (Ex 21 pp 2-17) will be designated Highway Commercial which when developed will provide easy access to services for travelers, visitors and residents.

***(3) California Environmental Quality Act policies and procedures (CEQA)***

Currently a supplemental addition is being completed by Michael Baker International representative, Tad Stearn. This supplement will provide updated and additional information to the original EIR.

***(4) The existence of active local agricultural land conservancies or trusts***

Ag Land Trust Conservancy

1263 Padre Drive Salinas, CA 93901 (831) 422- 5868

Manager: Sherwood Darington

(Ex 23) (Ex 22 pp AG-1)

***(5) The use of an effective right-to-farm ordinance.***

(Ex 22 AG-1, AG- 4,5)

***(6) Applied strategies for economic support and enhancement of agricultural enterprise, including water policies, public education, marketing support, and consumer and recreational incentives.***

The annexation of the 312 acres into the City of Greenfield which will include the 121.4 acres of the Vanoli Ranch (APN 221-011-017) will provide land for highway commercial (Ex 21, 2-17) development in the area adjacent to the Highway 101 corridor (approximately 60 acres). (Ex 3 pp 6) This proposed land use being developed could bring restaurants, hotels, travel centers and other businesses that will bring employment opportunities and tax revenues to the City of Greenfield. These commercial areas will provide services for residents as well as travelers and visitors. Many of the local residents are employed in agriculture or related fields. Offering better quality of life in the south county of Monterey will make it a better place to live.

The 60 acres that are located eastern most in the parcel will be designated “heavy industrial” (Ex 21 pp 2-19). This area would support agricultural facilities such as, packing plants, wineries, equipment repair facilities, trucking companies, fabricating plants. These businesses will directly support agriculture in the area as well as providing jobs and revenues locally.

***(7) Other relevant policies and programs***

***(d) If the land is in a county that participates in the Williamson Act (Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 51200) of Part 1 of Division 1 of Title 5 of Government Code), the land proposed for protection is within a county or city designated agricultural preserve.***

The Vanoli, Redding and Somavia properties are all located in the County of Monterey Agricultural Preserve 73-009 established by the Board of Supervisors via Resolution 73-34-9. Therefore all lands proposed are within a county agricultural preserve.

***(e) The land proposed for conservation is within two miles outside of the exterior boundary of the sphere of influence of a city as established by local agency formation commission. (LAFCO)***

The Redding Ranch is located within two miles of the Sphere of Influence for the City of Greenfield.

The 51.6 acres of the Vanoli Ranch is located immediately adjacent to the Sphere of Influence for the City of Greenfield.

The Somavia Ranch is located approximately 2 miles outside Chualar, California adjacent to Highway 101 S on the west side of the freeway. Chualar is not designated “a city” however it is the closest town. Several years ago this property was zoned Heavy Industrial because of its proximity to Southern Pacific Railroad tracks and Highway 101 South. During that time it was slated for a possible produce packing plant or storage facility due to its convenient location to transportation. This property is being offered for Ag Land Easement at the request of Ag Land Trust in Salinas, CA. To maintain its agricultural status and prevent revisiting a zoning change in the future. (Ex 23)

(Ex 9 map)

***(f) The applicant demonstrates fiscal and technical capability to effectively carry out the proposal. Technical capability may be demonstrated by agricultural land conservation expertise on the governing board or staff of applicant, or through partnership with an organization that has that expertise.***

RCT Lands LP will be completing the Ag Easement conversion with the assistance of Ag Land Trust Conservancy of Monterey County located in Salinas California. Manager: Sherwood Darington

(Ex 23; Ex 22 pp AG-1)

***(g) The proposal demonstrates a coordinated approach among affected landowner, local governments, and nonprofit organizations. If other entities are affected there is written support from those entities for the proposal and a willingness to cooperate. The support of neighboring landowners who are not involved in the proposal shall be considered.***

The letters of support that are included are from; Ag Land Trust, Mr. Sherwood Darington, who will be assisting RCT Lands with recording the Ag Easements on all the properties mitigated; The City of Greenfield, which has been involved in the annexation process since its inception in 2005; LAFCO, the local agency that has guided all entities through this long demanding process;

(Ex 23)

***(h) The conservation of the land supports long-term private stewardship and continues agricultural production.***

All properties are bordered by farmland that is currently in production. The General Plan for the City of Greenfield 2005 preserves agricultural lands and open space around the city to inhibit sprawl and maintain rural character of the community. (Ex 21 pp 2-30)

The General Plan of Monterey County directs city growth away from high quality farmlands. Agriculture shall be established as “top priority” for guiding further economic development. (Ex 22 pp LU 11, AG-4)

The Redding Ranch is surrounded by other farmland which is in production and is considered “prime” farmland. The Somavia Ranch is also surrounded by agricultural land that

is in production and is “Farmland of Importance Statewide.” The 51.6 acres of the Vanoli which are considered “prime” farmland is surrounded by producing agricultural land on three sides.

When these properties are protected under Ag Easements they will continue to produce agricultural commodities perpetually. Since these properties qualify as good agricultural farms they will continue to benefit society and deserve long term stewardship.

***(i) The proposal demonstrates an innovative approach to agricultural land conservation with a potential for wide application in the state.***

The annexation of 121.4 acres of “prime” farmland doesn’t seem a positive step toward agricultural conservation. This loss of 121.4 acres is being mitigated by placing 435 acres of prime and farmland of statewide importance in Ag Land Easements. This ratio is far more than the usual 1:1. Some of the mitigation is to offset the cancellation fee but the rest is to demonstrate RCT Lands LP continued support of preserving agricultural land in the Salinas Valley. In addition to placing the restrictions that come with Ag Land Easement designation the appraised value of all the properties will decrease \$1.5 M in total. (Ex 24) These properties will only be used for farming now and in the future.

This approach may not qualify as innovative but considering the loss of monies and the ratio of mitigation, it surely qualifies as “generous” and historically unique. Perhaps it will encourage others to take this same approach in the future.

***(j) The amount of matching funds and in-kind services contributed by local governments and other sources toward the acquisition of the fee title or agricultural conservation easement or both.***

There have been no matching funds or in kind services contributed to this project.

All funding has been by RCT Lands LP

***(k) The price of the proposed acquisition is cost-effective in comparison to the fair market value.***

There is no acquisition. These properties are being mitigated Ag Land Easement designation for the removal of the 121.4 acres of the Vanoli Ranch from Williamson Act. No monies are involved.

***(l) Other considerations established by the director***

No other considerations were made.