



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: NOVEMBER 8, 2022

FROM: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WARDS: ALL
DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: PR-2022-001439 – RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE PROCEDURES FOR THE
ESTABLISHMENT AND DIMINISHMENT OF AGRICULTURAL PRESERVES
UNDER THE WILLIAMSON ACT

ISSUE:

Adopt a Resolution amending procedures for the establishment and diminishment of Agricultural Preserves under the Williamson Act.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council adopt the attached Resolution amending the procedures for the establishment and diminishment of Agricultural Preserves under the Williamson Act.

BACKGROUND:

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly referred to as the Williamson Act, enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agricultural uses. In return, landowners receive property tax assessments which are typically lower because the tax assessments are based upon agricultural uses as opposed to full potential market value.

An agricultural preserve is a defined area within which a city or county enters into contracts with landowners. Only land located within an agricultural preserve is eligible for a Williamson Act contract. Preserves are regulated by rules and restrictions in an adopted resolution by the jurisdiction to ensure that the land is maintained for agricultural or open space use.

In 1983, the City Council adopted Resolution #14923 creating procedures for the establishment and administration of Agricultural Preserves pursuant to the Williamson Act. On August 8, 2000, the City Council approved Resolution #19740 revising the procedures and establishing an Agricultural Preserve Technical Committee (APTAC). The APTAC is comprised of the Land Use Committee (now the Land Use, Sustainability and Resiliency Committee) and the Planning Director (Community & Economic Development Director).

DISCUSSION:

Within the City of Riverside, there are approximately 75 parcels located in Agricultural Preserves and nine parcels with active Williamson Act Contracts. To develop the vacant parcels whether in an Agricultural Preserve or on land with an active Williamson Act Contract, the Agricultural Preserve must be diminished and the Williamson Act Contract cancelled.

Over the past few years, the Planning Commission has reviewed entitlements for projects that are being developed within an Agricultural Preserve and/or with an active Williamson Act Contract. The Proposed Amendment (Amendment) to the existing procedures would redefine the APTAC as the Planning Commission and the Community & Economic Development Director, or his/her designee. The Amendment would streamline the review process as the diminishment would be considered along with the entitlements. Ultimately, City Council would have the final approval of any Agricultural Preserve Diminishment.

This Amendment aligns with Streamline Riverside and supports the Build Riverside initiative, which is committed to providing world-class customer service and the most efficient, business-friendly development experience possible. Regular reviews of the development services processes help the City meet the needs of customers.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This item contributes to **Strategic Priority 5 – High Performing Government** and specifically, **Goal 5.2** – Utilize technology, data, and process improvement strategies to increase efficiencies, guide decision making, and ensure services are accessible and distributed equitably throughout all geographic areas of the City.

This item aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust:** The Amendment will benefit the public interest in implementing an efficient process that streamlines development in the City.
2. **Equity:** The Amendment modifying the procedures will be implemented to all applicants who wish to establish or diminish their Agricultural Preserve designation and/or cancel their Williamson Act Contract.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility:** Implementation of the Amendment does not impact the City's financial resources.
4. **Innovation:** The Amendment is a result of collaboration with other City teams and adapting processes to the City's development needs.
5. **Sustainability and Resiliency:** The Amendment reflects how the City is committed to protecting the present needs without compromising the future.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action since all project costs are borne by the applicant.

Prepared by: Chris Christopoulos, Acting Director, Community & Economic
Development Department

Certified as to
availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Interim Assistant City Manager/Chief Financial
Officer/City Treasurer

Approved by: Rafael Guzman, Assistant City Manager/City Manager Pro Tempore

Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Resolution