

## Project Fees

The Agriculture Department collects fees based on a "real time" billing model, ensuring equitable payments based on the complexity and controversy involved in a project. Typical projects will be billed for the time spent:

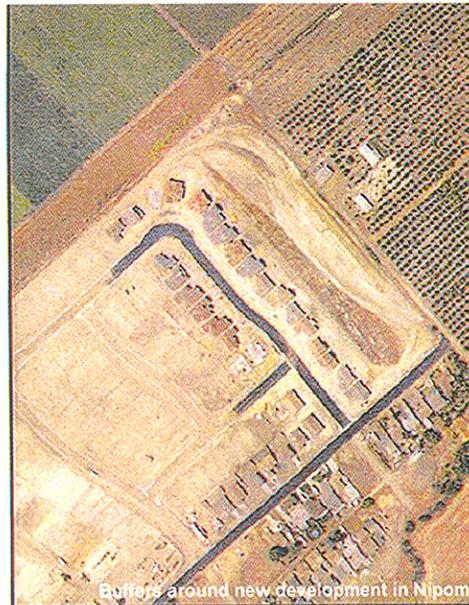
- generating maps about the project (such as site soils, adjacent and on-site agricultural use, and surrounding land use designations);
- conducting a site visit;
- holding meetings associated with a project; and
- researching and preparing reports.

A deposit fee may be collected for the Agriculture Department by the Planning Department at the time of a land use application. This fee is deducted from the final cost before the Agriculture Department bills for your project.



### Types of Projects Reviewed

- Development Proposals
- General Plan Amendments
- Lot Line Adjustments
- Minor Use Permits
- Subdivision Grading

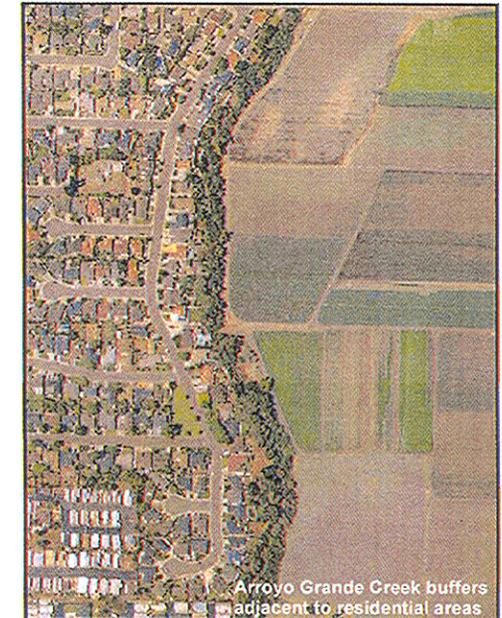


### Other Roles of the Department of Agriculture Land Use Program

- Agriculture and Open Space Element Policy Implementation
- Right to farm ordinance & conflict mediation
- Emergency response planning
- Agricultural grading review
- Local coastal planning & Area Plan updates
- Crop reporting & agricultural land statistics
- Agricultural land mapping

For additional information on the Department of Agriculture land use program, visit [www.slocounty.ca.gov/agcomm](http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/agcomm)

## SLO County Department of Agriculture Land Use Program: Project Review Summary



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## Protecting Agricultural Resources: A Shared Vision



Citizens, agriculturalists and local policy makers have long recognized the importance of agriculture in San Luis Obispo County. Land use choices and decisions impact not only the owners of the land, but also the lives of neighbors and the community at large.

This collective recognition of the value of agriculture and the desire to protect the long-term sustainability of local farming and ranching has resulted in policies and requirements governing land use decisions affecting agriculture.

### Mission

The mission of the Department of Agriculture's Land Use Program is to provide technical agriculture information, identify potential land use impacts, and recommend appropriate mitigation to decision makers in order to protect agricultural resources & operations.

## Project Review & the Department of Agriculture

Since the mid-1980's, the County Department of Agriculture (Department) has been responsible for protecting agricultural resources and operations from the negative effects of encroaching suburban and urban development. The Department acts in an advisory capacity when reviewing land use projects. Projects submitted to the County Planning and Building Department are referred to the Department for review.

The Department makes recommendations to county decision-makers to mitigate the negative impacts of development to agriculture, but does not have regulatory authority over land use issues.

The Department works to protect the resources, including soil and water, upon which agriculture depends. The Department's goal is to provide a level of protection to ensure that future farmers have adequate land and water resources.

The Department reviews discretionary<sup>1</sup> projects proposed on or adjacent to land zoned for Agriculture (or land used for production agriculture) to determine whether it is consistent with the:

- Agriculture and Open Space Element of the county's general plan;
- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and
- protection of the public health, safety, and welfare.

The aim of this review is to ensure the protection of agricultural resources and operations.

<sup>1</sup> Projects requiring detailed review for consistency with county standards and policies as well as a public hearing.

## How Might this Review Affect Your Project?

The types of potential mitigation measures the Department may recommend range broadly and include:

- The establishment of buffers (areas where occupied structures are not allowed) to protect farmers and those who live adjacent to farms from noise, dust, trespass, vandalism, legal pesticide use, and other compatibility issues. Buffers are placed on proposed development sites (not on the adjacent agricultural land) and may affect development potential.
- Subdivided parcel sizes large enough to maintain land resources and increase the likelihood that the resulting parcels remain in long-term sustainable agriculture.
- Parcel reconfiguration to ensure the long-term protection of agricultural resources such as water resources, agricultural improvements, and soils capable of intensified agricultural use.
- Relocation of proposed improvements to portions of a project site that protect agricultural resources, including reserving the best soils for agricultural production.
- Establishment of easements that protect agricultural land in perpetuity and can enhance agricultural operations by providing income and estate tax benefits.

-or-

In cases where adequate measures cannot be identified to mitigate the impacts to or conversion of agricultural lands, the Department may recommend opposition of a project.