



City of San José Natural and Working Lands Element

Project Overview
January, 2022



Today's Agenda

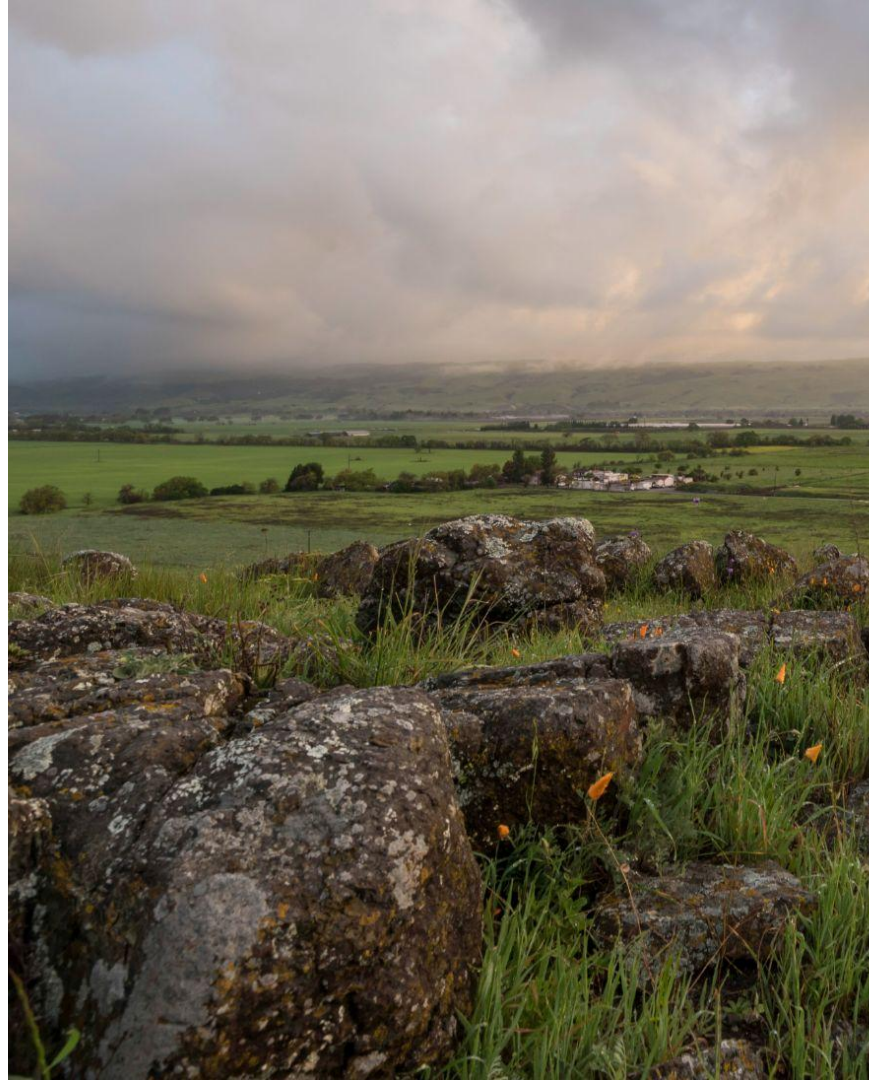
1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Project Background
3. Natural and Working Lands Element
Overview
4. Equity and Natural and Working Lands
5. Next Steps & Adjourn

Project Steering Team



Land Acknowledgement

We recognize that every member of the greater San José community has, and continues to benefit from, the use and occupation of this land, since The City of San José's establishment in 1777. As members of the San José community, it is vitally important that we acknowledge and respect Indigenous Peoples of this place, including the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, the Tamien Nation, and the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area, who work today to restore and protect their culture and connect to the land.



Project Background

The Natural and Working Lands Element is part of San José's strategy to address climate change.

CLIMATE SMART SAN JOSE

Natural and Working Lands Element



What are Natural and Working Lands?

Natural and Working Lands can be defined as everything from open hillsides and farm lands to urban parks and even residential backyards.

- Forests
- Grasslands
- Shrubland
- Wetlands
- Riparian areas
- Rangeland
- Farmlands
- Coastal Areas
- Urban Green Spaces

Defining Natural and Working Lands



Oak Woodlands



Croplands



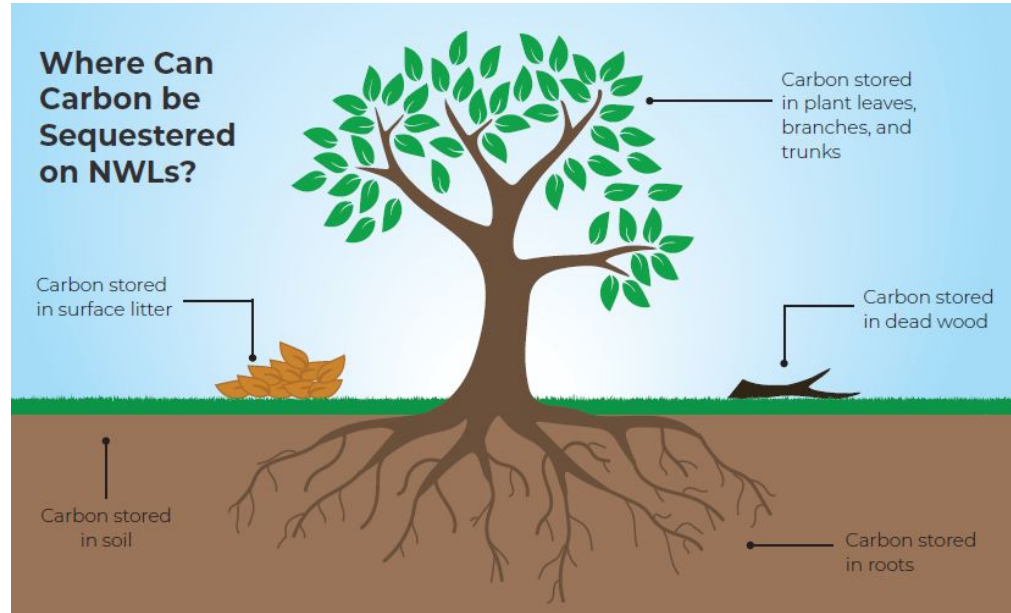
Wetlands



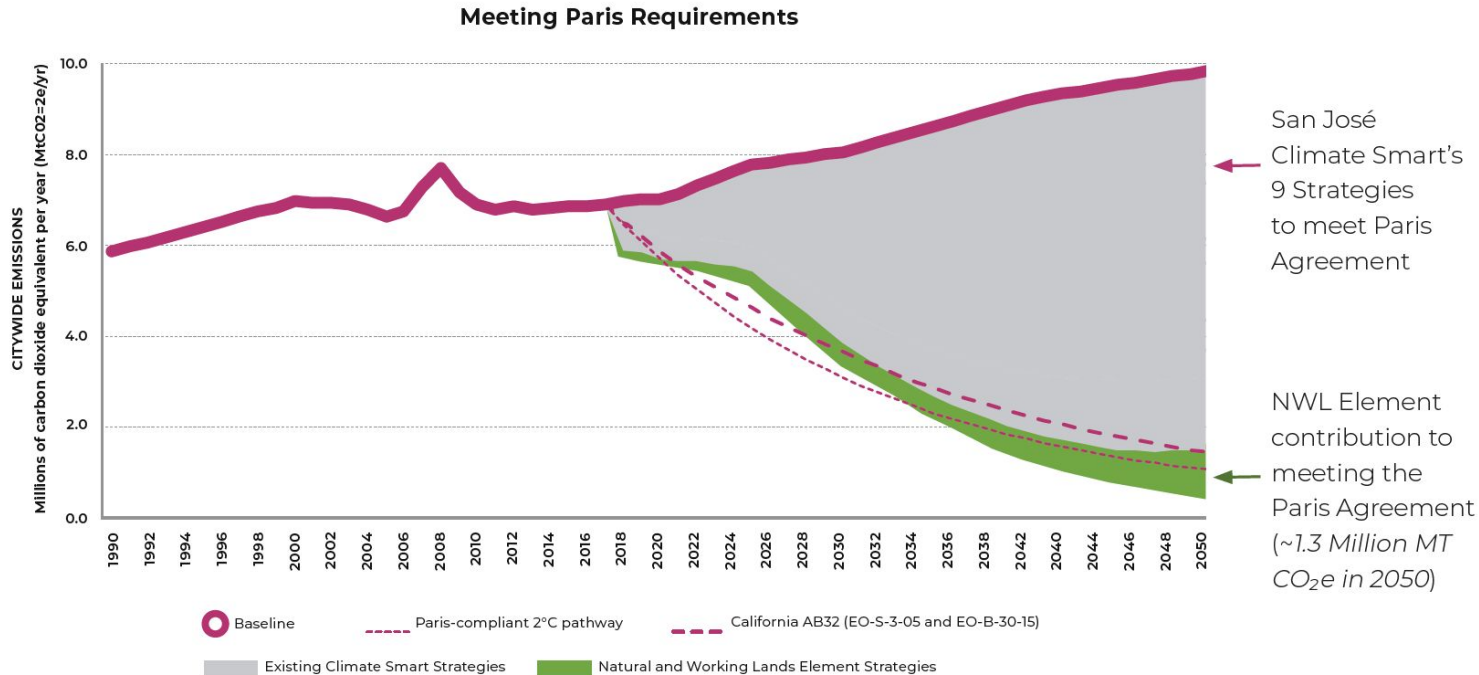
Parks & Street Trees

How NWLs Sequester Carbon

- Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are gas emitted into the earth's atmosphere that traps heat from the sun on earth.
 - Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is the primary greenhouse gas emitted through human activities.
- NWLs can store carbon, preventing excess amounts from entering the atmosphere.



NWLs Can Help Us Meet Our Climate Goals



Alum Rock Park

Co-Benefits

We know that NWLs have the potential to store substantial amounts of carbon, but their benefits for the region don't end there.



Carbon Sequestration



Reduced Driving



Habitat Protection



Flood Management



Agricultural Economy



Access to Recreation

Conversion, Loss & Degradation

Since 2001, we lost 1,200 acres of NWLs within San José's sphere of influence - **the equivalent of 45 football fields.**



Oak Savannah in Coyote Valley, Circa 1896



Same area in 1935 and 2005, channelization of the Lower Guadalupe River.

Regional & Local Efforts Underway

- Natural and working lands are gaining attention from cities, counties, nonprofit organizations, and the State of California.
- At the city-wide scale, San José continues to make headway on NWL restoration and conservation

CALIFORNIA 30 x 30 GOAL

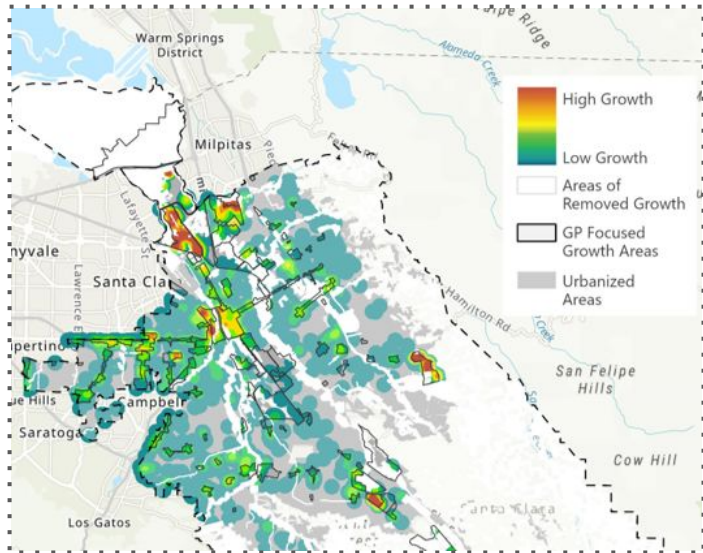
A 2020 executive order working to **protect 30% of California's NWLs and waters by 2030.**

It will attempt to meet this target by directing state agencies to develop a “natural and working lands climate smart strategy”.



The NWL Element Technical Analysis

Preserving NWLs through Land Use Strategies



Enhancing NWLs through Land Management Strategies

RESTORATION



OAK WOODLAND
RESTORATION

REGENERATIVE AG



CROPLAND
MANAGEMENT

URBAN GREENING

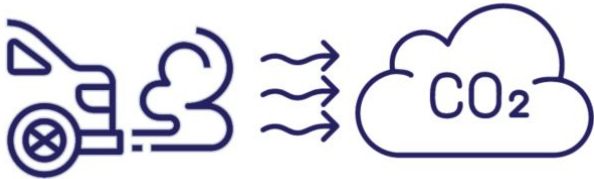


STREET TREE
PLANTING

The NWL Element Technical Analysis

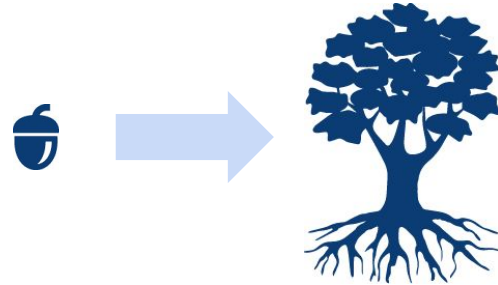
Preserving NWLs through **Land Use Strategies**

Preserving greenfield sites as NWLs instead of letting them develop could reduce driving by the amount that **4,500 passenger vehicles drive each year.**



Enhancing NWLs through **Land Management Strategies**

The amount of carbon that an acre of valley oaks can store in its lifetime is equivalent to **1.5 million gallons of gasoline.**



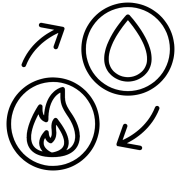
Key Findings



NWLs can help us meet our climate goals



NWL restoration and enhancement is a generational investment.



Restoring and enhancing natural and working lands protect our communities from the effects of climate change.



How we grow matters.

Setting Goals & Getting It Done

INDICATORS	Sequestered Carbon Emissions from NWL Activities	NWL Protection	Regenerative Agriculture	NWL Restoration & Enhancement	Urban Greening
METRICS	Sequestered Carbon Dioxide Equivalent from NWL Strategies (MT CO ₂ e)	Acres of Land with a NWL General Plan Land Use Designation	Acres of Agricultural Land with Carbon Regenerative Practices Applied	Acres of NWLs Restored or Enhanced	Percent Tree Canopy Cover
PROGRESS MILESTONES	Thousands of tons of carbon sequestered per year	Acres of land newly designated as NWL in the General Plan	Acres of agricultural land with newly applied carbon farming / regenerative strategies	Acres of NWLs with newly applied restoration or enhancement strategies	Increase in tree canopy cover
EXAMPLE ACTIONS	<i>Develop carbon stock data set to assess “carbon value” of land and vulnerability of carbon stock.</i>	<i>Establish an inventory of City-owned lands for their opportunity to become NWLs.</i>	<i>Partner with community agriculture programs to identify barriers for urban agriculture.</i>	<i>Seek opportunities to purchase privately owned land for publicly funded restoration activities.</i>	<i>Pursue ways to increase funding and support for tree planting activities.</i>

Discussion

- *Do the NWL goals, metrics, and milestones we presented resonate with you? Do these raise any questions for you?*
- *What actions (policies/programs) might support these goals?*

What's Next for this Project?

Cost and Equity Research

Next steps involve revising the NWL Element with:

1. Content that highlights the equity goals of NWL strategies
2. Two equity focused indicators with associated metrics, progress milestones and options for supporting City actions
3. Summary of costs associated with applying up to 12 NWL strategies

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Natural and Working Lands Element

How Can NWLs
Increase Equitable Outcomes?

NWLs provide many benefits, but those benefits are not always fairly distributed

NWL Benefits

- Increasing public health outcomes
- Resilience to climate change
- Access to jobs and economic opportunity
- Access to recreation opportunities
- Appreciation of nature and connection to the land

Creating opportunities for communities of color through agriculture

RAFI-USA's Farmers of Color Network Fund

This program provides **support to farmers of color for new and innovative agricultural projects and ideas** that will increase farm viability, support community food sovereignty efforts, preserve traditional and cultural farming practices, as well as assist local food economies.



Workforce development in green jobs

Urban Releaf

Based in Oakland, CA, this organization works in neighborhoods that have little to no tree canopy cover. Through tree planting and urban forestry job training, the organization has focused on **connecting residents in underserved neighborhoods to opportunities to create local greenspace and training to perform ongoing maintenance on that new greenspace.**



Some Goals to Advance Equity

1. **Invest in NWL strategies** that protect vulnerable populations from climate impacts and build community resilience.
2. **Prioritize financial incentives** and other resources for climate vulnerable communities, farmers of color, and small scale producers to scale up their existing efforts to preserve and restore NWLs.
3. **Develop strong partnerships with California Native American tribes** to increase co-management of NWLs and ensure the preservation of natural cultural resources and landscapes and access to sacred spaces.
4. **Increase access to good jobs** and job training in the natural and working lands sector for residents from socially disadvantaged communities.
5. **Increase presence of trees and green spaces** in communities with the least access to nature and recreational spaces.

Discussion

- *How do NWLs benefit you and the people in your community?*
- *Do the equity goals we presented resonate with you? Are we missing anything?*
 - *Which of these goals do you see as being the highest priority to San José? What goals could make the most impact?*

Next Steps

- Stakeholder feedback form: <https://airtable.com/shro2vvbxnFQIXQeX>, open until Feb. 4th. Email: ClimateSmart@sanjoseca.gov
- March stakeholder meetings - dates TBD