



**City of San José**  
**Natural and Working Lands Element**

Public Information & Input Sessions  
March/April 2022

# Today's Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Project Background
3. Natural and Working Lands  
Element Overview
4. Comments and Questions

# 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 Steering Team



# Project Background

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The Climate Smart Plan, adopted in 2018, identified Natural and Working Lands as a topic for future research & incorporation.

The Natural and Working Lands Element is intended to be 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 (NWLs)?

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NWLs, defined broadly, include everything from open hillsides and farms to landscaped urban areas.

The Element focuses on City-designated NWLs, which are lands in the following General Plan designations:

- Open Hillside
- Agriculture
- Open Space, Parklands, and Habitat

## Defining Natural and Working Lands



Oak Woodlands



Croplands



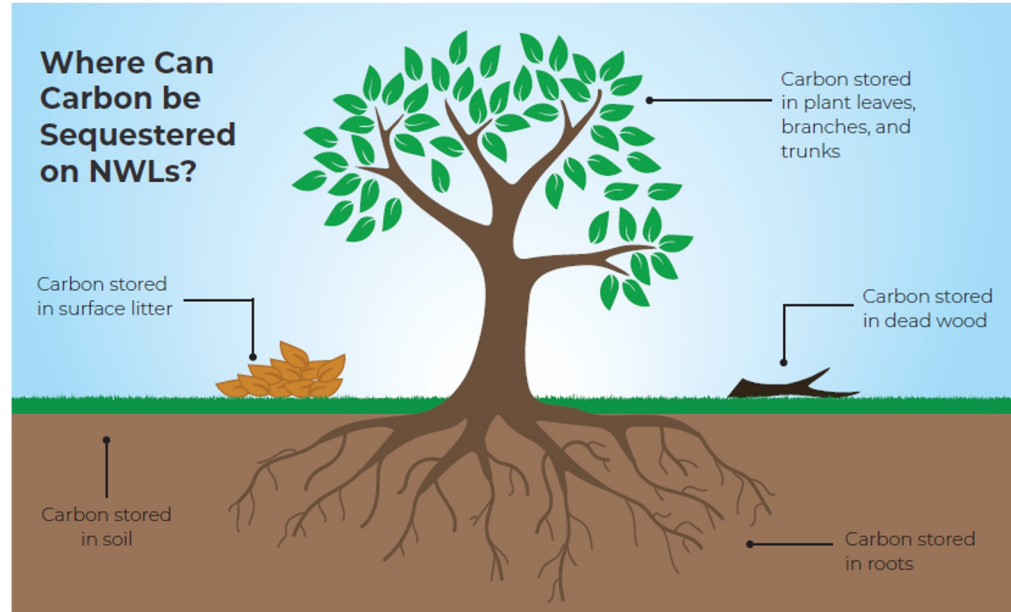
Wetlands



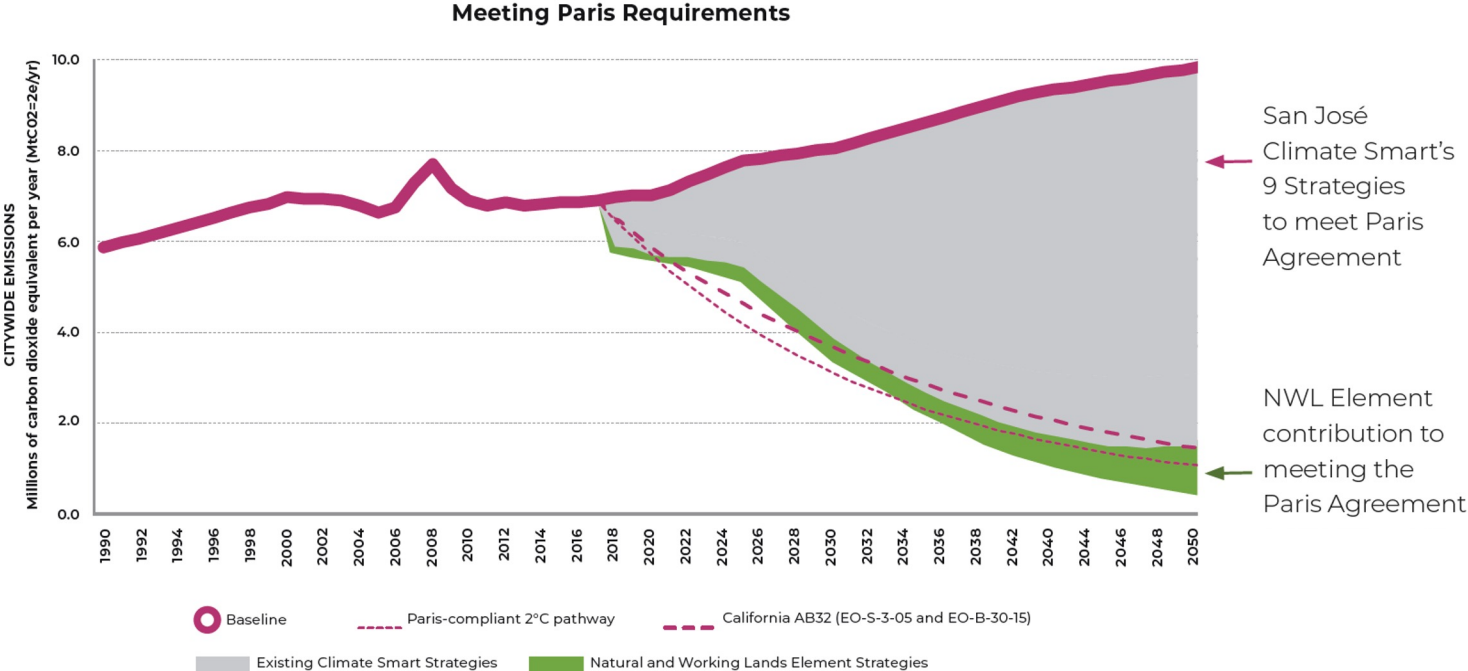
Parks

# How NWLs Sequester Carbon

- Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are gases emitted into the earth's atmosphere that trap heat from the sun.
- Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is the primary greenhouse gas emitted through human activities.
- NWLs can store carbon, reducing the amount in 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



Habitat Protection



Flood Management



Agricultural Economy



Access to Recreation

# Regional & Local Efforts Underway

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- NWLs are gaining attention from cities, counties, nonprofit organizations, and the State of California.
- San José continues to make headway on NWL restoration and conservation.

## CALIFORNIA 30 x 30 GOAL

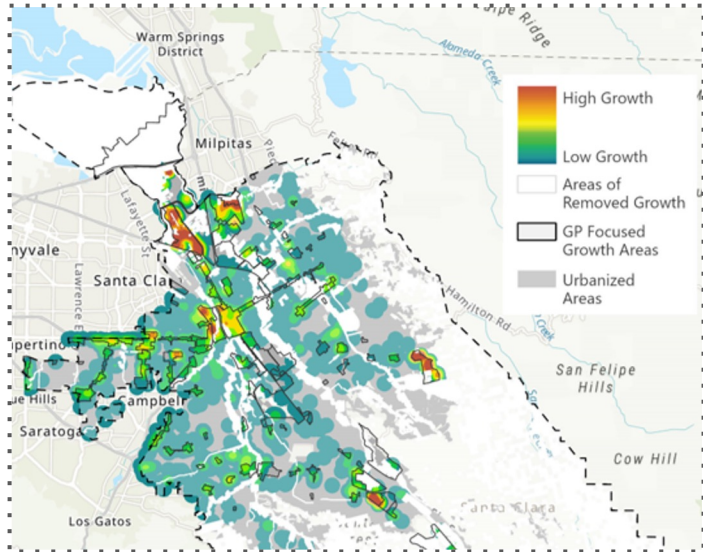
A 2020 executive order working to **protect 30% of California's NWLs and waters by 2030.**

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

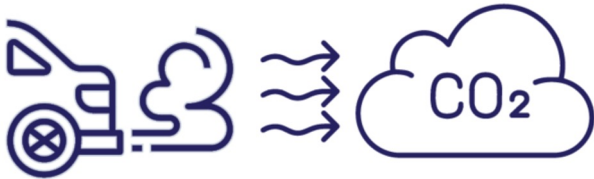


STREET TREE  
PLANTING

# The NWL Element Technical Analysis

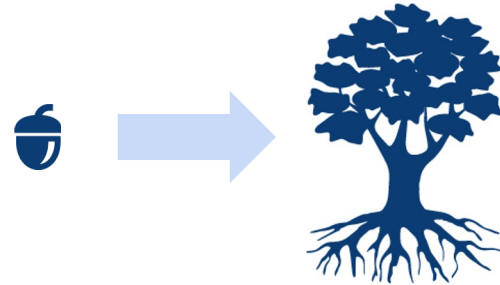
## Preserving NWLs through **Land Use Strategies**

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 their lifetimes is equivalent to **1.5 million gallons of gasoline.**



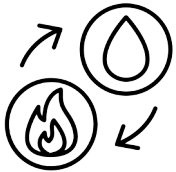
# Key Findings



**NWLs can help us meet our climate goals**



**NWL restoration and enhancement is a generational investment.**



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



**How we grow matters.**

# Setting Goals & Getting It Done

INDICATORS	NWL Preservation and Expansion*	Regenerative Agriculture	NWL Restoration & Enhancement	Urban Greening
METRICS	Acres of Land with a NWL General Plan Land Use Designation	Land with regenerative agriculture practices applied	Acres of NWLs with restoration or enhancement practices applied	Neighborhood / community serving parkland per 1,000 People
PROGRESS MILESTONES	Total acres of land designated as "Open Hillside", "Agriculture", or "Open Space, Parklands and Habitat"	New acres of City-designated NWLs with carbon farming / regenerative practices continuously applied.	New acres of City-designated NWLs with restoration or enhancement practices applied.	Total acres of neighborhood / community serving parkland within San José city limits.
EXAMPLE ACTIONS	<p><i>Establish an inventory of City-owned lands for their opportunity to become NWLs.</i></p>	<p><i>Participate in County carbon sequestration efforts for land designated as Agriculture.</i></p>	<p><i>Pursue grant funding for applying restoration practices on City-owned lands.</i></p>	<p><i>Integrate carbon management practices into policies for management of City parks and landscaping.</i></p>

# Evaluating Strategy Costs

- Costs were approximated through research and interviews with subject matter experts
- Costs were measured by acre and broken down into upfront costs and annual maintenance costs

## Cropland Management



\$0 / \$30  
Initial / Annual  
Cost Per Acre



## Grazing Land Management



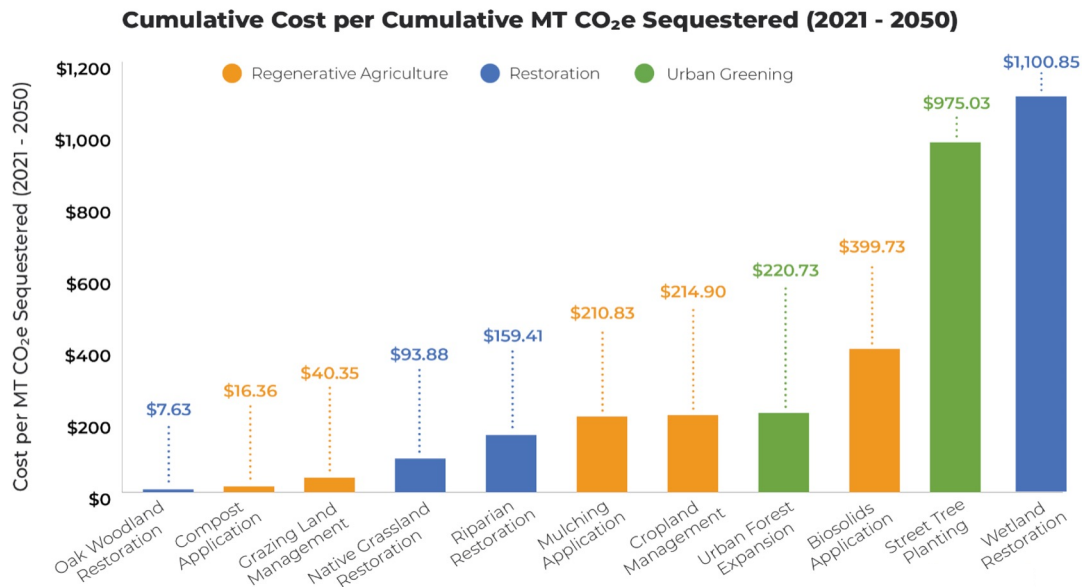
\$192 / \$30  
Initial / Annual  
Cost Per Acre



Credit: CivilEats

# Evaluating Strategy Costs - Estimated Cost and Carbon Sequestration

- NWL strategies vary in terms of the amount of carbon they can sequester and how much they cost
- The Element compares the relative cost of each strategy over time to the amount of carbon it can sequester, to help us choose which strategies to prioritize





# Equity and NWLs - Setting Goals

## Goal 1

Increase access to natural resources for vulnerable communities

Increase presence of trees and green spaces in communities with the least access to nature and recreational spaces.

## Goal 2

Increase access to good green jobs and job training

Provide workforce development opportunities in the natural and working lands sector for residents from disadvantaged communities.

## Goal 3

Protect our community from the impacts of climate change, with a focus on our most vulnerable populations

Invest in NWL strategies that protect vulnerable populations from climate impacts and build community resilience.

## Goal 4

Build relationships with California Native American tribes

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.

## Goal 5

Prioritize financial incentives and other resources for small farmers to engage in sustainable farming practices

Prioritize financial incentives and other resources for small scale farmers and producers and farmers of color to scale up their existing efforts to preserve and restore NWLs.



Coyote Valley (Credit: Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority)

### Funding Progress

Funding the actions needed to maximize Coyote Valley's carbon sequestration potential will require innovative solutions and new mechanisms.

### Nature-Based Investments

Continued public and private investments through innovative funding programs like San José's Measure T, a \$650M infrastructure bond that included \$50M for land acquisition for the purposes of protecting natural infrastructure in Coyote Valley, are accelerating efforts to implement nature-based solutions at the scale necessary to address climate change.<sup>19</sup>

### Climate Resilience Credits

San José is currently exploring the potential for a program that would allow property owners in

### Indigenous Heritage

Engagement with indigenous communities will seek to empower tribal partners to apply their ecological knowledge and cultural stewardship practices towards the overarching efforts to restore the landscape and strengthen climate resilience.

See Section 3.1

### Climate Justice

The City and its partners recognize that NWLs have a role to play in reversing historical inequities through climate justice. Potential investments in Coyote Valley will be considered from a range of perspectives and a diverse group of stakeholders will be involved in the planning process.

See Section 3.1

# Comments and Questions



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