

A photograph of a sunset over a field of sunflowers. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow. The sky is filled with clouds. Overlaid on the right side of the image are three large, semi-transparent geometric shapes: a green hexagon, a blue hexagon, and a green triangle. A thin orange line runs diagonally from the top left towards the bottom center.

CROP

Coordinated Rural Opportunities Plan





WHAT IS THE COORDINATED RURAL OPPORTUNITIES PLAN?

The Coordinated Rural Opportunities Plan [CROP] is funded by the Department of Conservation’s Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation [SALC] Program and is a joint effort between the Sacramento Area Council of Governments [SACOG] and Valley Vision. CROP is the next phase of SACOG’s groundbreaking Rural-Urban Connections Strategy [RUCS] to enhance rural economies and the natural assets that drive them across the six-county Sacramento region: El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba counties. CROP includes a comprehensive profile of each county that identifies priority areas for infrastructure investments and programs to strengthen the region’s food and agricultural cluster, along with a Regional Profile which summarizes key highlights from the county profiles, along with examples of innovative models that can be leveraged across the region for shared solutions, as well as potential resources to meet vital infrastructure needs.

WHY CROP?

CROP provides county and regional leaders the opportunity to address infrastructure investment challenges and collectively come together on solutions, including policies and investments,

that will support the region’s agricultural sustainability and long-term economic health and resiliency.

Profiles Released

Corresponding with the SACOG Board of Director’s March 21st workshop on food and agriculture, staff has released the CROP project deliverables, available at the CROP webpage (<https://www.valleyvision.org/projects/coordinated-rural-opportunity-plan/>)

- Individual profiles for each of the six counties in the SACOG region. The county-specific profiles delve deep into issues facing food and agriculture locally, as well as provide targeted recommendations to key stakeholders in each county.
- Summary regional profile that synthesizes the themes identified through each county profile in a system wide look at food and agriculture.
- Updated data map including new layers related to agriculture, climate, conservation, infrastructure and other related data.

The effort draws on many quantitative and qualitative data sources to generate the information, findings and recommendations contained in the regional and county profiles. The work included several meetings



for each county with representatives of county agencies including the offices of the Agricultural Commissioners, planning and development services, economic development, transportation, water, information technology, and sustainability; Resource Conservation Districts; Reclamation Districts; water agencies and associations; UC Cooperative Extension; County Farm Bureaus; Farmers; Agritourism organizations; Land Trusts; Cities; Community Based Organizations; and Transportation Planning Agencies, among others. The profiles also draw on multiple individual consultations with the above representatives as well as other subject matter experts, including state agency representatives; research and review of local, county, regional and state planning documents, strategies, and assessments on the range of topics addressed in the infrastructure topic areas; and databases from SACOG and Valley Vision projects.

CROP has defined needed food and agriculture infrastructure as physical investments, policy recommendations, and promising models in four interrelated areas:



This set of recommendations developed through CROP:



Improves the efficiency, sustainability, and productivity of the local food system



Increases access to nutritious, local, and seasonal foods in historically disinvested communities



Supports the viability of agriculture, addresses climate challenges, and helps preserve valuable farmlands



Creates new jobs, supports food and ag-related businesses, spurs innovation, and provides economic opportunities

Collectively, the six-county region has a rich agricultural history that provides a treasured legacy for residents and a strong regional identity. CROP has shown agriculture continues to have a bright future in the region: we have some of the most productive farmland in the world, highly skilled and knowledgeable farmers, water, and climate assets, supporting institutions, and a wide diversity of high-value crops.



Through these models, policy and recommendations, CROP aims to promote public and private sector investment in infrastructure and programs that strengthen the economic, social, and environmental contributions of the region's food system, preserving the central role agriculture plays into the future.

