

# CLIMATE SMART NATURAL AND WORKING LANDS ELEMENT

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City Council Meeting  
May 2, 2023

Presented by:

Kerrie Romanow, Director – Environmental Services Department

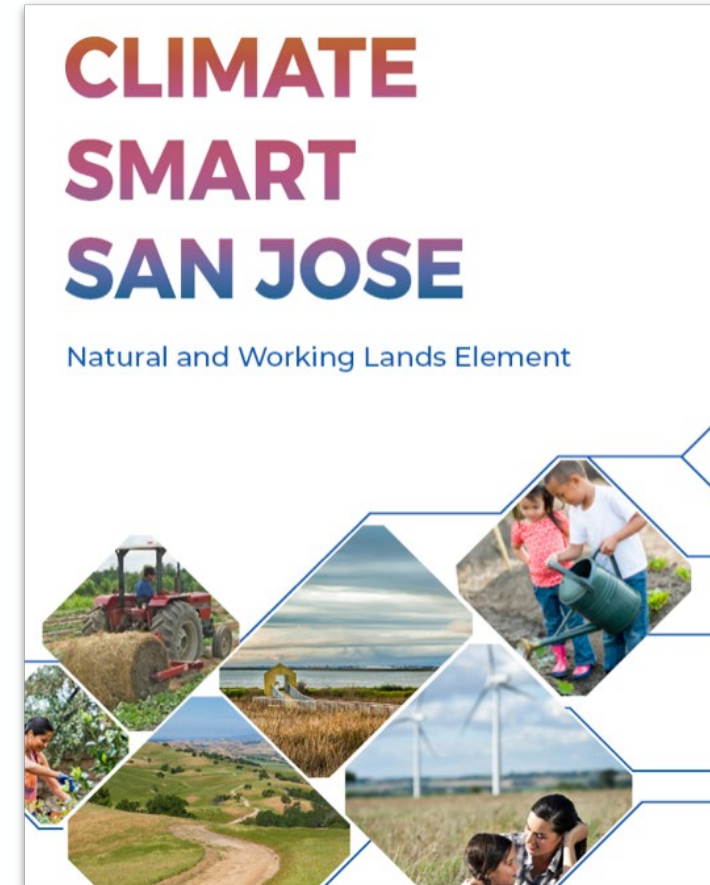
Julie Benabente, Deputy Director – Environmental Services Department

Delivering world-class utility services and programs to improve health, environment, and economy.



# BACKGROUND

- Climate Smart San José identified Natural and Working Lands (NWL) as a topic for future research & incorporation
- California is incorporating NWL in its climate change strategy
- ESD worked for 3 years with the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority to develop a Technical Report and a new NWL Element for the Climate Smart plan





# WHAT ARE NATURAL AND WORKING LANDS (NWL)?

NWL, defined broadly, includes everything from open hillsides and farms to landscaped urban areas.

The Element focuses on **City-designated NWL**, i.e. lands in the following General Plan land use designations:

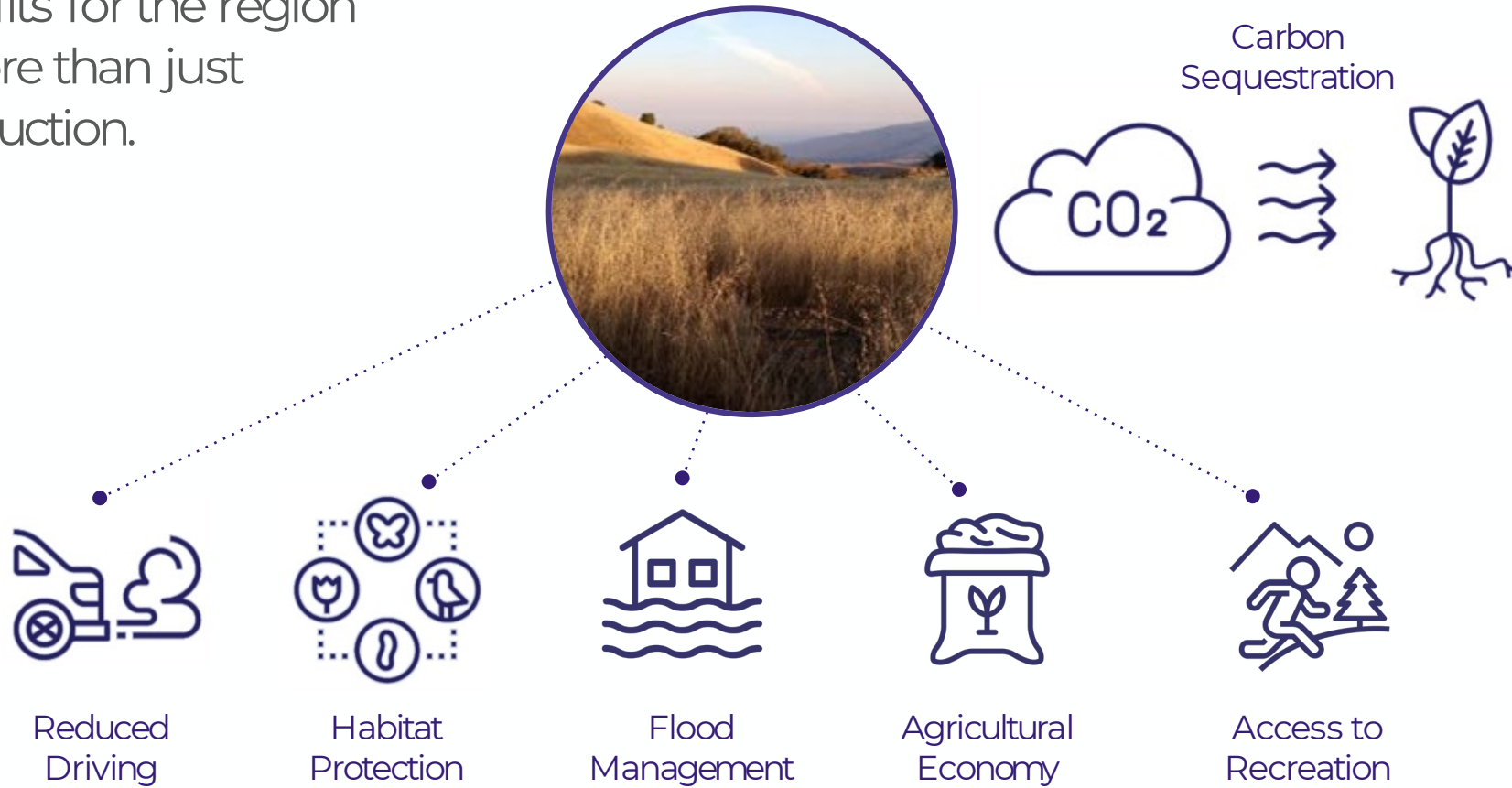
- Open Hillside
- Agriculture
- Open Space, Parklands, and Habitat

## Examples of City-designated NWL in San José



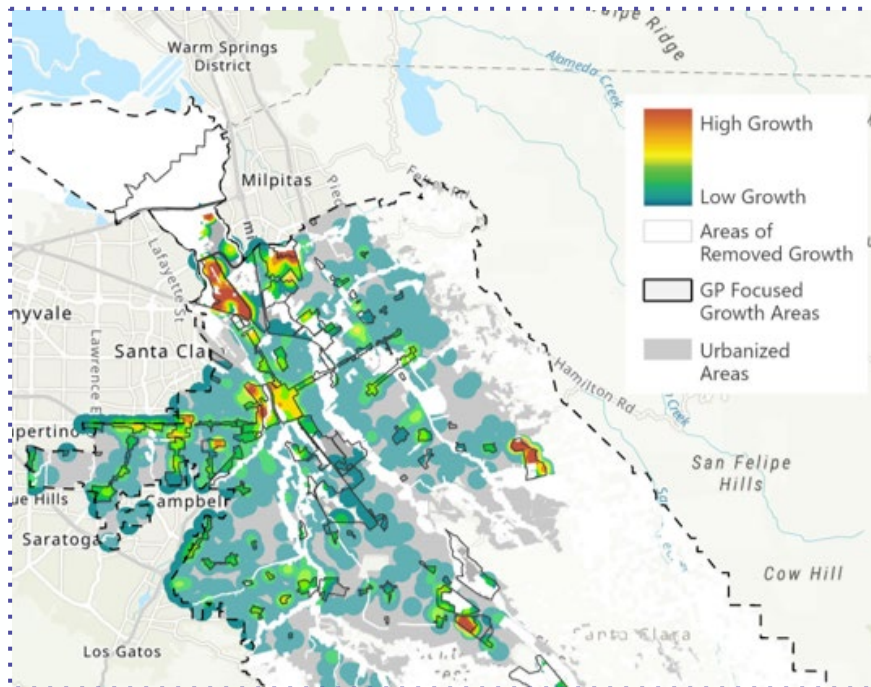
# NWL CO-BENEFITS

NWL benefits for the region include more than just carbon reduction.



# NWL STRATEGIES

## Preserving NWLs through Land Use Strategies



## Enhancing NWLs through Land Management Strategies

### RESTORATION



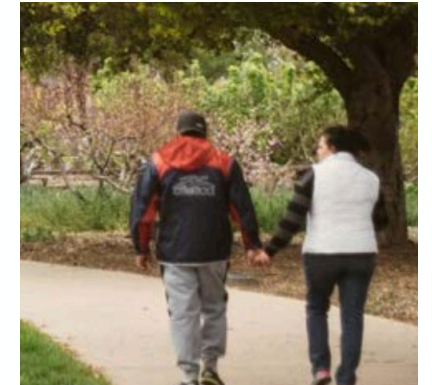
OAK WOODLAND  
RESTORATION

### REGENERATIVE AG



CROPLAND MANAGEMENT

### URBAN GREENING

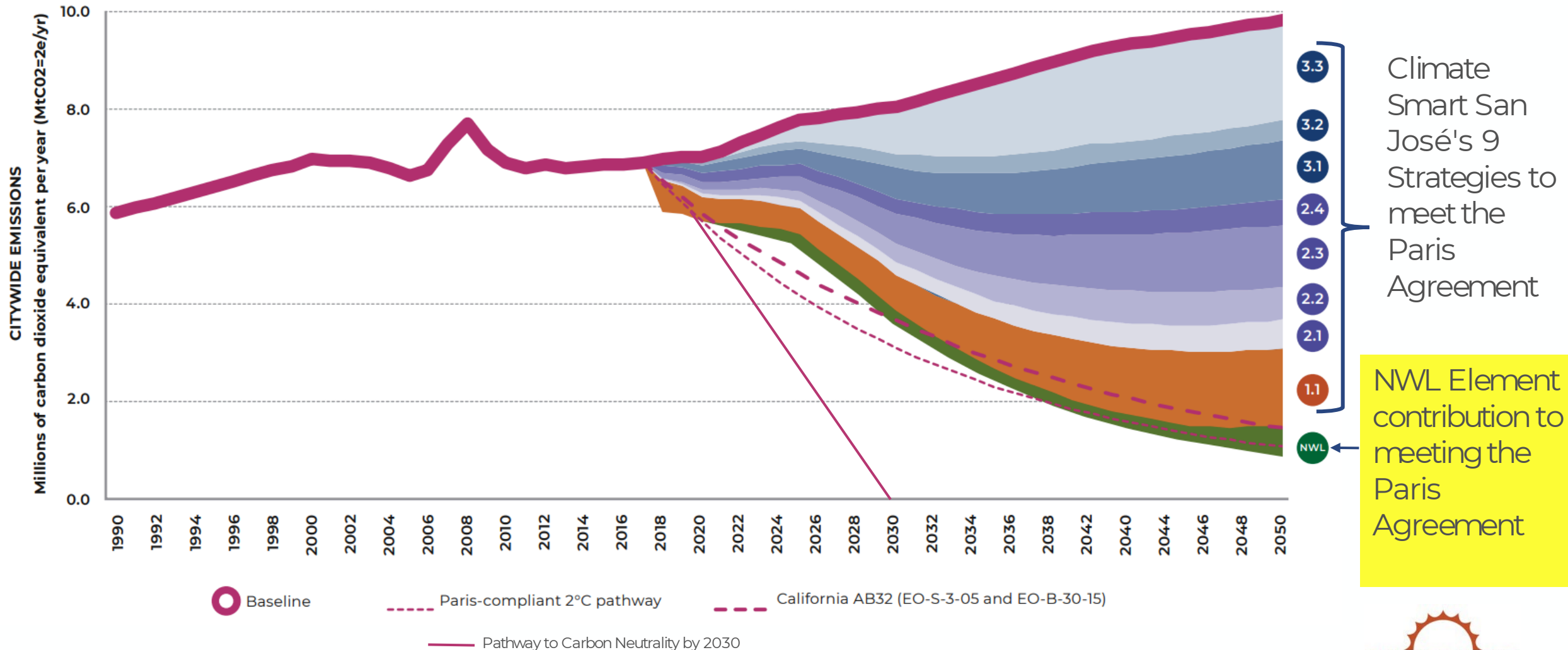


EXPANDING ACCESS  
TO PARKS

# TRACKING PROGRESS: NWL METRICS

INDICATORS	NWL Preservation and Expansion*	Regenerative Agriculture	NWL Restoration & Enhancement	Urban Greening
METRICS	Acres of land with a NWL General Plan Land Use Designation	Acres of land with regenerative agriculture practices applied	Acres of NWLs with restoration or enhancement practices applied	Neighborhood / community serving parkland per 1,000 people

# NWL CAN HELP US MEET OUR CLIMATE GOALS





# EQUITY AND NWL

## NWL Equity Goals

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

Increase access to quality green jobs and job training

Increase access to natural resources for historically marginalized communities

Build relationships with California Native American tribes

Prioritize resources for farmers of color to engage in sustainable farming



# NWL ELEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

**2019-2021**

Technical analysis

with input from:

- Open Space Authority
- Interdepartmental Project Management Team
- Technical Advisory Committee

**2021**

Technical report published on City website

**2021-2022**

First draft of NWL Element created

with input from:

- Open Space Authority
- Interdepartmental Project Management Team
- Technical Advisory Committee

**January &  
March-April  
2022**

Two rounds of online stakeholder & community meetings to gather feedback on drafts

**November  
2022**

Proposed NWL Element published on City website

# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

## Staff requested input on:

- Two drafts of the NWL Element
- Metrics, milestones, indicators, actions
- How to integrate equity

## Themes of feedback:

- Generally supportive
- Strategies should be multifaceted
- Avoid placing additional financial burden on farmers
- Prioritize relationships with most impacted communities
- Many detailed suggestions on strategies, terminology, metrics, etc.

## Stakeholders included:

- Agricultural organizations and land managers
- Conservation and sustainability organizations
- Community-based organizations
- Tribal groups
- Neighborhood associations
- District leadership groups
- Business associations
- Developers
- Agricultural landowners

# RECOMMENDATION

Accept the Natural and Working Lands Element and direct staff to incorporate into the Climate Smart San José plan.





A photograph of a family of four in a park. A woman on the left holds a baby, and a man on the right carries two young children on his shoulders. They are all smiling and looking towards the right. The background shows a grassy field, trees, and a building under a bright sky. A semi-transparent blue rectangle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the word "Questions" in white text.

# Questions