



## **SACOG Board of Directors**

**Item #16-8-19  
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### **Rural-Urban Connections Strategy Multiplier Study**

Through its Rural-Urban Connections Strategy (RUCS) program SACOG has completed a multiplier study that provides updated economic indicators of the larger ripple effect of the local agricultural sector, highlighting the rural and urban linkages of the regional food system. This project has also led to a further refinement of the data and tools at SACOG that help contextualize shared opportunities across the entire region.

The Food System Multiplier project moves beyond the farm to look at the larger economic impact of the region's agricultural system. As the project was funded by a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant, the work delves only into specialty crops (which are fruit, nut, vegetable and nursery products), not the entire agricultural system. However, the work does begin to present a much fuller picture of this component of the agricultural sector in the region, showing how the region's rural and urban areas are linked economically through the food system. As such, the work also helps respond to committee direction from prior meetings to continue to highlight the application of RUCS across the entire region.

In the August 2016 meeting of the LUNR committee RUCS staff presented the findings of the study. First, staff highlighted the benefit of the work to numerous local efforts such as the Sacramento Convention and Visitors Bureau's Farm-to-Fork initiative, Valley Vision's Food System Action Plan, and AgPlus, the federal designation that provides funding priority for food system-related projects (with RUCS identified as the technical support for food system efforts throughout the Central Valley).

Next, the presentation turned to the work of the study itself, which draws on a data and modeling effort unprecedented in understanding specialty crop agriculture in the region. By expanding the food system beyond the farm, this study finds the multiplier effect of the specialty crop cluster to be over 31,000 jobs, \$2.4 billion in value add, and \$5.8 billion in total output value a year. In addition to the expanded look at the regional food system (which documents the economic connection between rural and urban food system activities), the study provides the means to test future scenarios, strategies and investments through enhancements to the RUCS toolkit. For example, the project's demonstration scenario models the effect of attracting a peach processing facility to the region, which would add 600 jobs and \$150 million in output value. Notably, these 600 additional jobs consist of employment opportunities across the region, be it on the farm, at the processing facility, or in the community in general. The presentation concluded with how the project helps support future SACOG planning and work activities.

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