Implementing Innovative Approaches: Greater Bay Area Food Recovery and Compost Expansion Initiative

SECTION 1: OVERALL PROJECT SUMMARY AND APPROACH

a. Description of GHG Reduction Measures

The County of Santa Clara proposes the *Implementing Innovative Approaches: Greater Bay Area Food Recovery and Compost Expansion Initiative* to bring together nonprofit and local government partners from across three counties to implement the following two aligned measures outlined in both the County of San Benito & County of Santa Clara MSA Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) and the State of California's PCAP. This proposal will refer to these measures as "Food Recovery Expansion Program" and "Compost Expansion Program".

Proposal Measure	PCAP Measures Implemented
Measure 1: Food Recovery Expansion Program	County of San Benito & County of Santa Clara MSA PCAP: Enhance the Existing Food Recovery and Organics Diversion Program (Measure COM-2)
	The State of California's PCAP: Food Waste Prevention and Edible Food Recovery Program (Waste Measure 1)
Measure 2: Compost Expansion Program	County of San Benito & County of Santa Clara MSA PCAP: Expand Incentive Programs for Compost Application (Measure COM-1)
	The State of California's PCAP: Expand California's Healthy Soils Practices (Agriculture Measure 1)

The County of Santa Clara proposes the following measure implementation strategies:

Measure 1: Food Recovery Expansion Program

- **Strategy 1a: Invest in improvements to individual and shared food recovery organization (FRO) facilities and operational capacity**
- **Strategy 1b: Expand the use of technology platforms to prevent surplus and improve FRO operation**

Measure 2: Compost Expansion Program

- **Strategy 2a: Application of compost to private agricultural land, rangeland, and public parks through a compost broker program**
- **Strategy 2b: Development of a local carbon credit and emissions reduction program**

The proposed measures will support the three counties' goals to meet California's SB 1383 diversion, food recovery, and compost procurement requirements by building out infrastructure to prevent food loss, make high quality surplus food available to those in need, implement sustainable organic waste recycling practices, and establish incentive programs contribute to carbon sequestration and healthy soil. Together, these measures are important and interconnected components of a circular economy approach, highlighted most recently in the EPA's December 2023 *Draft National Strategy for Reducing*

Food Loss and Waste and Recycling Organics. The report identifies concrete steps for the prevention of food loss and organic waste recycling across the entire supply chain. The measures have also been designed with the EPA's new Wasted Food Scale in mind, prioritizing "more preferred" solutions to reducing the environmental impacts of food that meet regional imperatives.

These measures align with CPRG goals to:

- **Achieve significant cumulative GHG reductions** by 2030 and beyond, by diverting food waste from landfills, thereby lowering greenhouse gas emissions
- **Pursue policies and programs that are replicable and scalable** by implementing food recovery technology solutions, compost application programs, and a local carbon credit market that will serve as models for other jurisdictions
- **Provide substantial community benefits to LIDACs** by distributing recovered food to communities in need, enhancing soil health, and offering financial incentives to farmers
- **Complement other funding sources** by working in close partnership with other local governments and nonprofit organizations that are committed to investing in these measures

Measure 1: Food Recovery Expansion Program

The County of Santa Clara and subrecipients Joint Venture Silicon Valley (Joint Venture) and Alameda County Waste Management Authority (StopWaste), with support from the County of San Benito, are the leads for implementing Measure 1. Joint Venture is a 501(c)3 serving the region and manages the Santa Clara County Food Recovery Program on behalf of the County of Santa Clara and its jurisdictions. StopWaste is a local government agency, a joint powers authority of local governments in Alameda County. The County of Santa Clara will contract additional consultants to facilitate coordination amongst all Initiative partners and to support efforts reporting on technical progress, quantification of benefits in general communities and LIDACs, and calculating total GHG emissions and other pollutants reduced in general and in LIDACs.

The development of the Food Recovery Expansion Program draws from food recovery pre-existing stakeholder engagement, strategic planning, and capacity studies conducted in each of the participating counties. The results of those studies are summarized in *Making the Most of Surplus Food in Santa Clara County: A 3-year plan for prioritizing prevention, strengthening food recovery and leveraging new models*, *2022-2024 Santa Clara County Food Recovery Capacity Planning Assessment,* and *2021 Alameda County Food Recovery Capacity Planning Study*. These rigorous assessments estimate the amount of surplus food being generated in the commercial sector and compare those estimates to FRO capacity to recover and redistribute it. Based on these and other studies, it is estimated that across the three counties covered by this proposal, approximately 50 million pounds of surplus food is generated in the commercial supply chain each year, while current capacity exists to recover only about one-half of this surplus. At the same time, research by the County of Santa Clara and UCCE shows that 31% of residents in Santa Clara County are at risk for food insecurity.

National data modeled by ReFED, a data-driven national nonprofit dedicated to ending food waste across the food system, also demonstrates that food recovery generates a higher-than-average return on investment compared with other solutions for managing surplus and wasted food. The data also highlights the large financial (not to mention humanitarian) benefit to society of ensuring that any surplus food that cannot be prevented goes to nourishing people. By addressing storage, transportation,

and staffing within FROs, we can minimize existing distribution bottlenecks and limitations. New systems and technology tools can provide real-time data and improve the transparency and effectiveness of the food recovery system.

Strategy 1a: Invest in improvements to individual and shared food recovery organization (FRO) facilities and operational capacity

The three-county region covered by the Initiative includes a network of over 50 FROs that collectively redistribute over 31 million pounds of donated food annually, playing a critical role in addressing local food insecurity. CPRG funds will be leveraged to expand the capacity of FROs to recover edible food otherwise destined to landfills. Facility, equipment, and operational improvements will increase storage and safe food handling capabilities of FROs at the individual, organizational, and sector level. By providing access to updated, energy efficient equipment such as low-GWP cold storage and electrified kitchen appliances, these sites and shared facilities will be able to increase the amount of food they recover while reducing food loss and waste that occurs due to insufficient and ineffective storage.

The County of Santa Clara has gathered extensive stakeholder input in 2022, when developing the *Making the Most of Surplus Food in Santa Clara County* report, and in 2024 as part of ongoing state-mandated capacity planning. Consensus has formed among the County's nonprofits (including a wide range from small community-based organizations to the local Feeding America affiliate Second Harvest of Silicon Valley), city and county government representatives, and industry groups like the California Restaurant Association and the Upcycled Food Association about the following needs and recommendations:

- Expanded capacity (staffing, training, and facilities) to safely recover prepared foods.
- Support for programs that can improve coordination and collaboration among FROs to address logistical challenges related to food recovery
- More and better cold and shelf-stable storage, including shared blast freezing capacity, which is not financially viable for most individual food recovery organizations or businesses
- Commercial kitchen facilities for safe and timely repurposing and distribution of recovered food
- Longer operating hours and centralized locations to accommodate the ability to receive recovered food at off hours that are convenient for FROs, rather than collecting at multiple, dispersed sites
- Large-scale, drive-through distribution to recipients of food assistance
- Support for food upcycling activities, small business training, and nutrition workshops

Recovered Food Hubs

Targeting resources, whenever possible, to invest in recovered food hubs[1] has been identified as an efficient and cost-effective means of supporting expanded capacity within the existing food recovery ecosystem[2]. The hub approach can reduce capacity shortfalls and distribution bottlenecks of individual FROS, particularly in relation to highly perishable prepared food available from restaurants, health facilities and other institutions, by pooling physical infrastructure and operational capacity into a

[1] The USDA definition of a food hub is "a centrally located facility with a business management structure facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of locally/regionally produced food products."

[2] The *Veggielution Food Hub Market Analysis Research* Report, completed in March 2024 by New Venture Advisors, identifies a Joint Venture co-located recovered food hub as a strong potential partnership opportunity.

centralized locations that dozens of FROs can access. In addition to food distribution specific services, recovered food hubs may also offer community education programs and job training.

Investment in recovered food hubs would result in additional benefits such as improving efficiency and collaboration between FROs that can reduce the burden on staff, volunteers, and drivers, along with the opportunity to have regular access to commercial kitchen space and expanded storage that can be shared between several organizations. Shared resources will increase FROs ability to coordinate the rescue, storage, processing, and distribution of more perishable and prepared surplus food in an intentionally designed facility that minimizes GHG emissions.

Strategy 1b: Expand the use of technology platforms to prevent surplus and improve FRO operation

More widespread implementation of innovative technology would increase efficiency and capacity of FROs to recover more food, save them the high costs of vehicle insurance, maintenance and fuel, and ultimately reduce GHG emissions from current practices of driving long distances to collect food donations. CPRG funds will be utilized to implement technological tools that will reduce the GHG impacts of wasted food and solve logistical challenges associated with the routing and handling of time-sensitive food. Geolocation would ensure that volunteers are not driving long distances for small amounts of food via apps that coordinate directly with nearby distribution sites to ensure they have sufficient capacity to store and distribute it, avoiding the possibility of wasting recovered food. Figure 1 illustrates that the primary responsibility for transporting recovered food from either the food bank or donor retailer to their final point of distribution falls on individual FRO vehicles and volunteers. A 2021 StopWaste survey found that 89% of FROs operating in Alameda County had fewer than 5 paid staff members and 91% had 10 or fewer volunteers, while anecdotal evidence shows that many organizations rely on volunteer drivers to recover food from donors. In the County of Santa Clara, over half of FROs in 2024 reported challenges in recovering prepared food related to the small amounts of food available at each pick-up, and donations becoming available at inconvenient times.

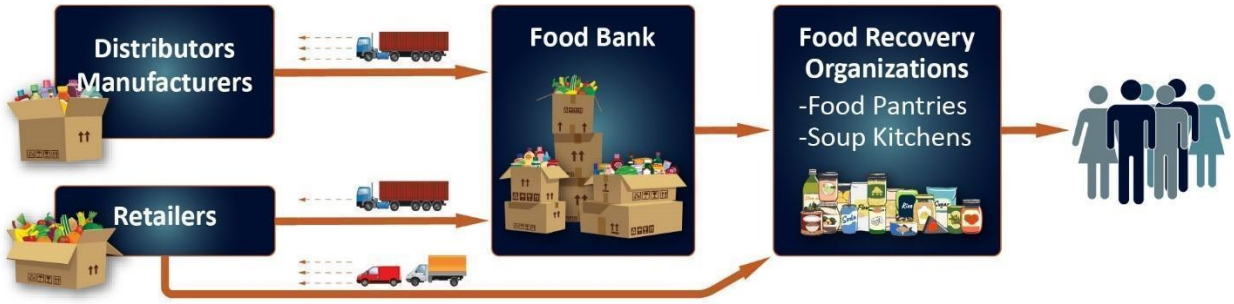


Figure 1: Donated Food Supply Chain

In recent years, new technology platforms have been created to address these challenges. The proposal team has identified and piloted the use of several apps, including:

- Replate, a technology-based food recovery service based in the Bay Area that offers features focused on coordinating logistics and transportation
- Food Rescue Hero, is an app that facilitates real-time rescue coordination to minimize travel distance and maximize GHG reductions
- Too Good to Go, an app that connects consumers to food establishments who wish to offer near-expired items at a discount. Based on estimates for Alameda County and Santa Clara

County, some 400 participating businesses collectively save over 52,000 meals from being wasted each year in the region.

Underlying Assumptions and Risks

As with any new endeavor, there are assumptions risks that could reasonably lead to delays or interruptions in the development of the Food Recovery Expansion Program:

- *Participation by food generators*: One underlying assumption is that potential food donors (referred to in SB 1383 as "food generators") will aggregate and donate their surplus food as expected. GHG emission reduction estimates in this proposal have been calculated based on these assumptions of pounds of food that will be reduced or diverted through *new* prevention and donation activities. The risk that food generators will not donate will be mitigated by SB 1383, which requires businesses to donate, as well as extensive marketing and outreach efforts.
- *Food donation volume over time*: As surplus food generators become more attuned to the scale of the problem and take steps to successfully reduce their surplus, food donation volume may diminish. In this case, while the demonstrated outputs of pounds recovered may not grow as originally forecast, overall GHG reductions may actually be enhanced, as preventing surplus food is more environmentally beneficial than recovering it.
- *FRO expansion:* As a result of the infrastructure and operational capacity that CPRG funding will provide to FROs via subawards from the County of Santa Clara, they are expected to expand distribution programs to match the additional volume of donation from food generators. There is a risk that the FROs will not sufficiently expand to meet the need. By funding a range of FRO approaches to recovering and distributing additional food, this risk will be mitigated.
- *Conversion to hybrid vehicles and energy star appliances:* Joint Venture and StopWaste will offer technical assistance to help FROs make climate-friendly equipment choices. Subawards to FROs will include limitations on the types of equipment that can purchased. However, there is a risk that, due to supply chain challenges, the most energy efficient equipment will not be readily available. This may affect GHG reduction estimates.
- *Food recovery vehicle GHG emissions:* The proposal team acknowledges that GHG emissions from food recovery activity are emitted from vehicles that recover food, and energy is used to power cold storage and other equipment. However, this directly aligns with the strategy for mitigating these risks: we intend to reduce food miles traveled by enhancing the efficiency of our food recovery networks and fostering hyper-local connections. Through the electrification of kitchen equipment and the phased retirement of energy-inefficient cold storage units nearing the end of their lifecycle, we anticipate offsetting any potential increases in GHG emissions.

<u>Measure 2: Compost Expansion Program</u>

Subrecipient Zero Foodprint, with support from subrecipient UCCE, the County of Santa Clara, and Initiative partner County of San Benito, is the lead for implementing Measure 2. Zero Foodprint is a Bay Area-based nonprofit organization focused on supporting farmers' transition to climate-smart farming practices. Through its Compost Connector program Zero Foodprint works with local jurisdictions to make the best use of compost by directing it to farms and ranches where it can sequester carbon and promote healthy soil. The mission of UCCE is to extend information developed at the University of California to enhance quality of life and the environmental and economic well-being of all residents of California through research and education. The County of Santa Clara will contract additional

consultants to facilitate coordination amongst initiative partners and to support efforts reporting on technical progress, quantification of benefits in general communities and LIDACs, and calculating total GHG emissions and other pollutants reduced in general and in LIDACs.

The Compost Expansion Program will expand the current use of compost on agricultural lands for climate smart practices and create large scale demonstration sites for rangelands and parks to sequester carbon. It will prioritize key data collection needed by land managers to incorporate more land into carbon sequestration efforts and develop a local carbon credit market to add financial incentives to the compost applications. Focus on the climate benefits of carbon sequestration in soils aligns with SB 1383, which prohibits landfilling of organic wastes and requires jurisdictions to procure and utilize recycled organic materials such as compost**.** In addition to methane reductions from less organic material in the landfill, the statewide requirement to procure compost from the landscape and food waste collected in jurisdictions creates a generator responsibility to put these organic wastes into sustainable practices**.** As jurisdictions have more information about the costs, benefits and impacts of compost applications, and can apply financial incentives to demonstrate the benefits of compost use, more land will be put into service to sequester carbon. The development of the Compost Expansion Program draws from carbon farming and rangeland compost application studies[3] conducted in each of the participating counties and UCCE's pre-existing stakeholder engagement.

Strategy 2a: Application of compost to private agricultural land, rangeland, and public parks through a compost broker program

In partnership with the County of Santa Clara, Zero Foodprint will further expand the Compost Connector Broker program into Alameda, San Benito County, and Santa Clara counties. Subsidized compost applications at 6 tons/acre on 300 acres/year of farmland in San Benito County will result in a total reduction of 5,434 MT CO2e (see Technical Appendix). This program is expected to result in an expansion to 491 acres/year to accommodate the total anticipated San Benito County compost procurement requirement under Senate Bill 1383, thereby providing ongoing reductions of 2,225 MT CO2e per year.

Climate action plans in the region include the opportunity to sequester carbon through applications of compost to agricultural, open space, and rangeland areas. In Santa Clara and Alameda Counties, expansion will involve compost applications on public and private grazing lands, parkland, and other areas where compost is underutilized, such as hay farming and vineyards. These demonstration sites will not only provide key data to help to answer questions about cost, benefit and impact, but will represent a significant carbon sequestration effort, reducing carbon emissions by 31,100 MT CO2e through three yearly applications of 6 tons compost/acre on 2,300 acres.

[3] Alameda County Resource Conservation District (2023) Alameda County Waste Management Authority (StopWaste) "Altamont Property" Carbon Farm Plan.

Gomez, A. et al. (2020) Feasibility Assessment of Compost Addition of Alameda County Rangelands: Compost Sourcing and Spreading Costs.

Estimates from the development of the Community Climate Roadmap in Santa Clara County show that out of 393,984 total acres of grazing land, 8,599 acres[4] would be feasible for compost application, resulting in ongoing reductions of 5,814 MT CO2e per year based on three total applications per site. While farmers represent a mature market ready for further expansion, focus groups with land managers have surfaced key questions about the costs, benefits and potential impacts of compost application on public lands that may limit utilization**.** In order to increase participation by land managers and expand carbon sequestration activities into these extensive potential land areas, funding support, project demonstration, and development of ongoing incentives is needed. To enhance the understanding and expansion of these applications, UCCE and RCD agencies will convene a coalition to support plan implementation through research, field testing and analysis. The data gathered will inform critical outreach to key audiences including farmers and public land managers. To support the program goals and generate expertise for future generations of land managers, two new internship positions will be created.

Zero Foodprint will support long term demonstrations through detailed project management, tracking of impacted lands including GHG sequestration both modeled and tested through the term of the grant, as well as providing additional funding opportunities to farms and ranches through its own programs including the compost brokerage, and the Restore grant program, which aggregates funding from private and public sources. Since 2021, Zero Foodprint has awarded nearly $3M in grants to farms and ranches in California and is on track to award an additional $20M by 2029.

The program will also leverage the success of existing efforts through the Santa Clara County Agricultural Resiliency Incentive (ARI) farmer grant program, which provides voluntary financial incentives to farmers and ranchers who are stewarding agricultural lands in the County for enhanced natural resource management and climate change resilience and mitigation. The ARI program, administered by the County of Santa Clara Department of Planning and Development, has awarded more than $200,000 to 12 small, family farms to implement climate-smart practices that will capture an estimated 1,153 MT CO2e/year, or the equivalent of 129,740 gallons of gasoline consumed, across roughly 500 acres within the County. In Alameda County, this program builds on the work done by the Alameda County RCD's Compost for Agriculture pilot program (developed in partnership with StopWaste), which supports farmers and ranchers in securing external funding for compost application while providing technical assistance on using and sourcing compost. The project also leverages the success of the Zero Foodprint's Compost Connector program which provides farmer subsidies for the application of compost on farmland and has granted a total of $700,000 and generated 42,918T of Carbon emissions since its inception in 2022.

Strategy 2b: Development of a local carbon credit and emissions reduction program

Local carbon credits will be developed and verified through an expert panel for use by the County of Santa Clara in the implementation of regional development projects. The County of Santa Clara's

[4] To identify areas of grazed grassland suitable for range planting and rangeland compost application, both practices requiring vehicle and equipment operation, a Range Drill Suitability Soils Report in the NRCS SSURGO database was used to map 8,599 potential acres. Additional field-scale assessments would be required to arrive at more precise estimates for these practices, taking into consideration slope, vehicle and equipment access, adequate protective distance from watercourses, native grasslands, and other habitat features of special concern.

Roadmap to 2030 Carbon Neutrality for County Operations identifies carbon sequestration on County parks lands as a key strategy for offsetting any of the County's remaining emissions and achieving its goal of carbon neutrality by 2030 in County operations.

Zero Foodprint will convene an expert panel of the foremost researchers in the field of carbon sequestration, many of which are located in Northern California. The panel will be tasked with recommending Measuring, Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MMRV) standards by which the County of Santa Clara can develop projects and claim credits and/or emissions reductions toward its Sustainability Master Plan implementation. The expert panel will include soil ecologists, carbon registry and verification experts, RCD's, compost experts, technologists, and land managers. As these technical and research experts help to implement the grant work plan, they will add more data to the body of research and collect critical data from farmers and public land managers that can be shared through the extension agents to bring the greatest number of acres into sequestration service. The report and recommendations of the panel will chart the path for the County to adopt standards for and claim emissions reductions in a scientifically and academically rigorous manner, while avoiding the high additional costs associated with carbon credits on open, international markets.

Zero Foodprint will also provide a county specific registry of non-fungible projects and the associated emissions reductions. Additionally, these projects may be included on California's Carbon Sequestration and Climate Resiliency Project Registry, a centralized, publicly accessible database with detailed information about natural and working lands-based projects, created by California Senate Bill 27.

The County of Santa Clara Office of Sustainability (OOS) published the *Sustainability Master Plan* in January 2021, which identified Natural and Working Lands as a crucial part of its sustainability strategy. Section 4.2 sets specific goals to "Implement a comprehensive regional framework in order to preserve the remaining working lands and support a vibrant agricultural economy while mitigating climate change." The *Santa Clara Valley Agricultural Pl*an highlights the importance of making ecosystem service incentive programs available to landowners to promote sustainable agricultural practices and increase climate stability and other environmental co-benefits. The plan specifically mentions identifying "long-term funding opportunities for supporting agricultural land preservation and farming that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, thorough California's growing carbon market, including any regional GHG mitigation programs." A local carbon credit and emissions reduction program is a powerful tool for expanding critical ecosystem services and meeting the County's stated sustainability goals.

Underlying Assumptions and Risks

As with any new endeavor, we have identified risks that could reasonably lead to delays or interruptions in the development of the Compost Expansion Program:

- Participation by land managers: Our primary assumption is that public land managers are willing to implement the relatively new practice of applying compost to open public spaces such as grazing land, County parks, etc. In order to mitigate risks due to land managers of sensitive habitats questioning impacts to these areas, the project will focus on land that is already disturbed from previous agricultural production or use by residents for recreational purposes. Private land managers could also apply compost based on their current high level of demand.
- A potential risk over the project timeline is an increase in the price of compost or spreading due to increased demand created by SB 1383 procurement requirements across the state. The project will mitigate this risk by establishing agreements with compost producers for costs over

the life of the project and negotiating large scale compost applications to maintain the most competitive prices for these services.

b. Demonstration of Funding Need

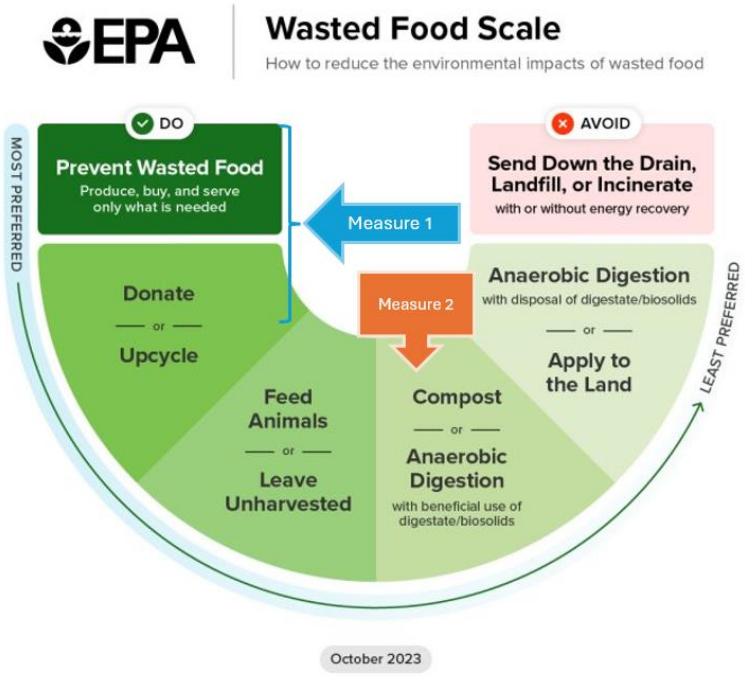
While some local, regional, and state funds (such as those from USDA) support existing food recovery efforts in the counties of Alameda, San Benito, and Santa Clara, the investment is insufficient for growing the capacity needed to respond to SB 1383. Similarly, compost expansion efforts in the Greater Bay Area service region require additional funding to increase program offerings at scale. The state agency overseeing SB 1383, CalRecycle, has provided relevant grant funding opportunities through its Food Waste Prevention and Rescue Grant Program (FWPRGP). However, the program's funding is contingent on the state's annual budget and has been declining since its inception. More recently, CalRecycle allocated $90,000,000 to the SB 1383 Local Assistance Grant Program (LAGP) in fiscal year 2023-2024 to support local jurisdictions with SB 1383 implementation. However, edible food recovery is just one of six eligible activities, with the law primarily focused on downstream management and diversion of organics and recyclables. As California faces a historic budget deficit, uncertainty about availability of funding for critical expansion of organic waste diversion programs further compounds these challenges. CPRG funding would provide catalytic and transformational support for the measures included in this proposal.

Current and Anticipated Organic Waste Diversion Funding:

Grant program	Description	Regional	State	Federal
Earmark	To support on-farm compost applications			$700,000
Local Assistance Grant Program	To support on-farm compost applications		$140,000	
Recycling and Waste Reduction Commission of Santa Clara County	To formalize an operating model for a recovered food hub in Santa Clara County.	$118,375		

c. Transformative Impact

SB 1383 is a nation-leading example of regulating methane emissions from the waste sector. However, its success and viability as a replicable model is contingent upon successful on-the-ground implementation. The proposed Initiative pairs two measures to address multiple intervention points represented in EPA's Wasted Food Scale. This collaboration will enable a cohesive approach to proper management along the food cycle.



Pioneering a replicable and scalable program

Joint Venture and StopWaste actively engage in developing best practices for the statewide food recovery community. Joint Venture's staff lead a state-wide Best Practices committee, engaging in conferences and webinars, including those hosted by CalRecycle. Recognized by CalRecycle for its exemplary SB 1383 implementation, Santa Clara County's Food Recovery Program serves as a replicable and scalable model for jurisdictions statewide. Moreover, collaboration between the counties of Santa Clara and Alameda, exemplified by the activation of the Alameda County Food Recovery Network (ACFRN), amplifies regional food recovery efforts. By coordinating stakeholders and sharing best practices, the collaborative approach for the proposed CPRG project will accelerate the adoption of sustainable food recovery practices, fostering broader market transformations and greatly reducing emissions across statewide jurisdictions.

The establishment of a regional compost broker program represents a pioneering approach that can be replicated and scaled in similar regions. By connecting compost producers with agricultural entities and public land managers, this program streamlines the distribution and utilization of compost, fostering sustainable agricultural practices. Additionally, the carbon credit program incentivizes compost application by offering a replicable model for generating local carbon credits. These credits not only offset emissions but also contribute to climate mitigation efforts, by generating added value from compost application investments.

Reducing GHG emissions from hard-to-abate sectors

By targeting food recovery, agricultural practices, and soil health improvement, the Initiative tackles emissions in sectors where GHG reduction measures are not widely adopted. Decarbonizing the food sector requires significant financial investments and those costs are difficult to pass down the value chain. Encouraging compost application in agriculture and large-scale public-sector lands, plays a

significant role in mitigating methane release from landfills, effectively addressing a substantial source of GHG emissions in hard-to-abate sectors, including agricultural producers, landscapers, and other end-users of compost**.**

Creating new markets for emerging GHG emission reduction practices

As food generator compliance with SB 1383 grows the quantity of food that must be recovered, it will be critical to modernize the food recovery and distribution processes. Technology enablement of food recovery can simplify the process of connecting donations to food recovery partners, managing inventory, meeting important needs such as additional food storage, volunteer help, and routing transportation. The development of apps that enable retailers to sell near-expired food to customers, resulting in a new market channel that increases access to affordable food and generates additional income for the retailer. Food recovery hubs will connect individual FROs to shared infrastructure and operations that complement their own, often smaller, organizations. These innovations will facilitate participation by more organizations in the food recovery network, resulting in greater GHG emission reductions.

Large scale compost application demonstrations will provide critically needed information to help validate and grow expand the market for ecosystem services. The proposed Initiative will result in more robust and streamlined communication and messaging to land managers considering compost application to their agricultural land, rangeland, or parks. The carbon credit program incentivizes the adoption of composting practices and emerging GHG emission reduction technologies in agriculture, while also promoting market transformations by creating additional value. Development of an internal registry of carbon credits will provide incentives for land managers to invest in carbon sequestration and build more foundational data for the development of a formal carbon credit market for soil applications.

Key research has been completed to model long term benefits of compost applications on open space and rangeland areas. Research by Whendee Silver's Ecosystem Ecology group at UC Berkeley, among others, has used computer modeling based on multiple years of field data to demonstrate, after a single application of compost, accumulation of carbon continuing 10-30 years after the application, raising the soil carbon content by an average of 50%, and predicts a sequestration rate of 1.49 MT CO2e/acre-year[5]. This model takes into account the long-term photosynthetic benefits of compost application in the rangeland system, while the COMET model quantifies the carbon within the compost itself. The body of knowledge on the photosynthetic benefits of compost application continues to grow. Experimental field research conducted by Rebecca Ryals Agroecology lab at UC Merced on the StopWaste Altamont property found an increase of 4.0 MT CO2e/acre-year in soil carbon concentrations from 2019-2022.[6]

While our proposed compost project has not utilized this ongoing research in our GHG reduction estimates, we have designed our compost applications to facilitate data collection, that can be compared over time to research models such as these, to provide an opportunity to compare impacts. While ongoing research may prove that the GHG impact of our project applications is better than the COMET planner modeling, we are using the more conservative GHG impacts from the COMET planner to measure climate impacts over the life of our project.

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[5] Ryals, Rebecca, and Whendee L. Silver. "Effects of Organic Matter Amendments on Net Primary Productivity and Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Annual Grasslands." *Ecological Applications* 23, no. 1 (2013): 46–59.

[6] StopWaste "Altamont Property" Carbon Farm Plan, 2023.

SECTION 2: IMPACT OF GHG REDUCTION MEASURES

Magnitude of Short-term and Long-term GHG Reductions

Measure	Short-term (2025-2030)	Long-term (2025-2050)	Cost Effectiveness (2025-2030)
1. Food Recovery Expansion Program	14,053 MT CO_2e	33,643 MT CO_2e	\$2,474/MT CO_2e
2. Compost Expansion Program	36,533 MT CO_2e	160,767 MT CO_2e	\$172/MT CO_2e
Total	50,586 MT CO_2e	194,410 MT CO_2e	\$811/MT CO_2e

Measure 1: Food Recovery Expansion Program

This influx of funding will strengthen the physical and organizational infrastructure of the food recovery ecosystem in the Bay Area, with long-lasting impact. Given past experiences with FROs that are funded to begin new work, and then continue to fundraise for staff time to continue that work, we expect FROs to continue recovering food at rates equivalent with what is expected in year five of the grant period. Once systems utilizing recovered food to feed those in need are in place, often replacing purchased food, those organizations will fundraise to continue feeding those in need, now with new methodologies to do so with recovered instead of purchased food. These new climate-friendly methods will accomplish the GHG reduction goals of the PCAP, in strong partnership with local nonprofits with missions to support our food insecure neighbors. Estimates have been completed for the period 2030-2035, given the length of time this infrastructure, refrigeration and vehicles and other similar items are likely to last. Longer, continued, recovery is expected, but not estimated here.

Measure 2: Compost Expansion Program

In the Fall of 2025, a 3-member agency UCCE/RCD site assessment team will strategically identify rangeland locations for compost applications. A multistep process will involve initial consultations with the Santa Clara County-based USGS Western Geographic Service Center, which has extensively mapped and simulated future carbon dynamics in the region with their Land Use and Carbon Scenario Simulator (LUCAS) model. Subsequent on-site visits will refine project site perimeters, considering vegetation cover, soil characteristics, terrain, and disturbance state. Priority will be given to disturbed and/or degraded sites in order to test scenarios and provide data to land managers to maximize carbon sequestration benefits, focus on degraded rangelands, where potential to increase soil carbon is highest. For identifying application sites on agricultural lands, participating farmers will be identified through established farmer networks from UCCE and RCD staff, and their requests will be managed through Zero Foodprint's widely used Compost Connector program.

Compost applications will be carried out in late summer to early fall between 2025 and 2030. During the initial 5-year period of our project, we anticipate a total estimated GHG emissions reduction of 36,533 MT CO_2e. Of this total, 31,100 MT CO_2e will result from applying 41,400 tons of compost to 2,300 acres of public open space and rangelands in Alameda and Santa Clara Counties, and 5,434 MT CO_2e will be

reduced through the application of 7,200 tons of compost applied to 300 acres of agricultural fields in San Benito County over a four-year period.

Rangelands: Our proposal incorporates extension activities designed to expand compost application to additional public and also private rangelands. By setting the conservative goal of applying 51,594 tons of compost on 2.2% (8,599 acres) of the private rangeland acreage in Alameda County and Santa Clara Counties from 2030 to 2050, we anticipate a reduction of 39,892 MT CO_2e in GHG emissions during this time period. We believe that land managers, when provided with adequate education about application benefits, and driven by a desire to be good stewards and supported by financial incentives from governmental or private organizations, will embrace this approach.

Farmland: Benefits of compost application on farmland to improve soil quality and crop yields are much more widely proven and, thus, we feel confident that our work will lead to a doubling in the area of agricultural land in San Benito County to ,3000 acres, yielding 13,384 MT CO_2e in GHG reductions from application of 18,000 tons of compost in the 2030–2050-time frame. The proposed project will apply $6,284,247 in program costs to the reduction of 36,533 MT CO2 emissions**.** This results in a cost of $172 per ton of CO2 removed.

Compost application on rangeland is likely the most cost-effective method for sequestering GHGs on natural and working lands. Conservatively, the cost per MT of CO2e sequestered through this practice is approximately $120/MT, estimating an $85 per ton of compost cost for material, delivery, and spreading. This is assuming a one-year lifespan of sequestration; however, it is estimated that the benefits of a 3 successive year application extend benefits for up to ten years, bringing the cost per MT of CO2e down to about $40/MT. It is worth noting that this does not include any quantification for the avoided emissions from organics that would have decomposed in landfill, as the composting process is highly managed and known to avoid most of these emissions.

Estimated GHG reductions were calculated using the well-established COMET-Planner for the CDFA Healthy Soils Program. Specifically, we applied the NRCS Conservation Practice “Compost (C/N > 11), purchased from a certified composting facility” to obtain the coefficient for calculating the GHG reduction values at an application rate of 6 metric tons per acre. (The C/N ratios of our composts will range from 14 to 20). The program’s “Agricultural System” category selected for compost applications was “Grazing Lands” for Alameda and Santa Clara Counties, and “Croplands Management” for San Benito County.

Technical assistance and carbon credit verification teams will support regular field evaluations and modeling of the impacts of compost applications and will provide data for regular progress reports as well as technical training for participating and prospective land managers

Documentation of GHG Reduction Assumptions

Estimated GHG reductions were calculated using the well-established COMET-Planner for the CDFA Healthy Soils Program. Specifically, we applied the NRCS Conservation Practice “Compost (C/N > 11), purchased from a certified composting facility” to obtain the coefficient for calculating the GHG reduction values at an application rate of 8 metric tons per acre. (The C/N ratios of our composts will range from 14 to 20). The program’s “Agricultural System” category selected for compost applications was “Grazing Lands” for Alameda and Santa Clara Counties, and “Croplands Management” for San Benito County.

Technical assistance and carbon credit verification teams will support regular field evaluations and modeling of the impacts of compost applications and will provide data for regular progress reports as well as technical training for participating and prospective land managers.

SECTION 3: ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS—OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES, AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Measure 1: Food Recovery Expansion Program

Expected outputs:

- Reduced GHG emissions
- Community partnerships formed/strengthened
- High-quality jobs created
- Pounds of food recovered
- Meals provided
- Food waste prevented
- Food waste diverted
- FROs funded
- Food insecure residents served
- Grant deliverables met

Year	Edible Food Rescued (lbs)	Net Tons of Material Diverted (Short Tons)	Gross EFR GHG Benefit (MTCO2e)	Less GHG from Refrigerators	Less GHG from Vehicles	Net GHG Benefit (MTCO2e)
Year 1	1,433,333	717	1,276	-55	-71	1,149
Year 2	1,433,333	717	1,276	-55	-71	1,149
Year 3	4,544,445	2,272	4,045	-55	-71	3,918
Year 4	4,544,445	2,272	4,045	-55	-71	3,918
Year 5	4,544,445	2,272	4,045	-55	-71	3,918
Total	**16,500,001**	**8,250**	**14,685**	**-277**	**-355**	**14,053**

Expected outcomes include increases in:

- Community connection and resilience (social)
- Environmental equity
- Economic mobility
- Emergency resilience
- Efficiency and effectiveness of FROs

Performance Measures and Plan

The success of the Food Recovery Program Measure 1 will be gauged by the number of pounds of food recovered, translated into the GHG impact of those tons of food, and the estimated volume of food waste prevented by businesses funded to utilize technology solutions. This metric can also be measured

using the EPA's WARM model. Additionally, because of the impact on low-income and disadvantaged communities, an additional metric of success will be the number of meals served to those in need.

Pounds of food recovered will be tracked through reporting from food recovery organizations and technologies used to connect donors with nonprofits. The tracking is typically embedded in the technology solutions, as pounds of food recovered, and number of greenhouse gas emissions reduced through prevention or recovery of surplus food for both donors and food recovery organizations. Any funds distributed to organizations to improve their capacity and infrastructure will include a bi-yearly reporting including qualitative and quantitative measures including pounds of food, number of clients fed, and number of meals served, so that tracking can occur through the length of the contract. These numbers will be converted to greenhouse gas emissions.

Additionally, Joint Venture and StopWaste will track their technical assistance and food recovery network convening impacts. Because of the way local ordinances were written, donors report into the Santa Clara County Food Recovery Program each year about the number of pounds donated. A portion of the increase from the time of the start of this contract will be attributed to the additional technical assistance. To be conservative, these estimates are not included in the estimated impact, as they are difficult to predict. These will not, however, be difficult to measure, and will be included in bi-annual reporting.

Measure 2: Compost Expansion Program

Land management practices play a critical role in either depleting or enhancing carbon levels in soil, ultimately affecting global carbon dynamics. Despite historical depletion of carbon from rangeland soils, they still retain a significant portion of the world's soil carbon reserves, approximately one-fifth. Compost application stands out as a potent strategy for bolstering soil processes that capture CO_2 from the atmosphere. Beyond the benefit of GHG emissions reductions detailed in Section 2, we anticipate significant benefits in soil and plant health. A large body of research, much of it conducted in the project region, has demonstrated that amending rangeland soils with compost imparts benefits that increase with time and persist for years, even following a single application.

Expected Outputs:

- Documented GHG reductions achieved
- Annual procurement targets under SB 1383 met
- Local compost producers and land managers engaged
- Partnerships strengthened
- Additional funds leveraged for compost procurement
- Additional compost customers for compost producers increased
- Technical assistance and outreach streamlined and leveraged
- Grant deliverables met

Expected Outcomes include increased:

- Carbon Sequestration
- Ability to cultivate high-quality produce and animal forage (increased nutrient availability)
- Soil health

- Improved water holding capacity[7]
- Compliance to municipal requirements for waste diversion
- Support for local businesses and farmers
- Collaboration between key technical support providers

Performance Measures and Plan

The success of the Compost Expansion Program Expansion will be gauged through three primary performance measures: quantifiable compost application procedures, extension efforts, and application of local carbon credits. The UCCE and RCD extension agents possess technical expertise in organic materials management, soil science, and rangeland science, complemented by extensive experience collaborating with stakeholders and effectively disseminating information to facilitate science-based decision-making**.** To assess compost application, the team will document the tonnage of compost applied and the corresponding acreage. Every application will be overseen by at least one member of our UCCE and RCD team, who will utilize a handheld GPS locator to accurately map the perimeter of the treated area**.**

The success of the development of carbon credits for local use will be measured by the expert panel development of verification criteria, and the ability of the County to apply those credits in local development projects. Additional market expansion benefits will be derived as other jurisdictions apply similar criteria to the development of their own local carbon credits.

In our ongoing extension endeavors throughout the project, we will employ a diverse array of media formats, including podcasts and interactive webinars, to maximize outreach and engagement. Regular progress updates will be disseminated through the UCCE Santa Clara County website, supplemented by a dedicated compost-related blog featuring text summaries, captioned images, and narrated videos. We will track engagement metrics such as website visits, likes, and follows. As our project progresses, we will present our findings at prominent industry gatherings such as the Society for Rangelands Management and the US Composting Council conferences, utilizing scientific posters and oral sessions to share insights. Locally, we plan to host four workshops offering practical guidance on integrating compost application into sustainable rangeland management practices. Attendance and post-event surveys will gauge participant interest and satisfaction, ensuring our extension efforts are both impactful and responsive to community needs.

a. Authorities, Implementation Timeline, and Milestones

The County of Santa Clara will administer the grant, be accountable to EPA for proper expenditure of funds and reporting requirements and be responsible for monitoring subrecipient grant performance.

The parties responsible for implementing the Food Recovery Program measure include the County of Santa Clara (SCC) and subrecipients Joint Venture (JV) and StopWaste (SW). The County of San Benito

[7] On average, aboveground plant productivity increases by over 40%, and belowground C content by 50%. Additional advantages are an improvement in soil aggregate stability by approximately 42%, improved water retention by about 18%, increased availability of nutrients, with nitrogen rising by approximately 37% and phosphorus by 126%, and a general reduction in erosion, albeit with notable variability (Kutos et al. 2023, Journal of Soil and Water Conservation, 78: 163-177.).

will provide partnership support. Contractors will be selected to facilitate regular convenings among all parties as well as to support the monitoring and reporting of GHG reduction goals.

Measure 1: Food Recovery Expansion Program						
Milestone	Lead	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Launch ad-hoc working group of Initiative members and key partners	Consultant					
Report on benefits to low-income and disadvantaged communities (1 year after grant award) and summarize total GHG emissions and other pollutants reduced (final report)	Consultant					
Monthly consultant-facilitated Initiative convenings	Consultant					
Bi-monthly consultant-facilitated Initiative convenings	Consultant					
Identify FROs for food recovery expansion subawards	JV,SW					
Establish MOUs and/or grant agreements with sites	SCC,SW					
Monitor MOUs and/or grant agreements with sites	SCC, SW					
Identify technology solution providers	JV					
Establish provider contracts	SCC					
Implement technology solutions; refine based on feedback	JV					
Convene annual joint meeting of FROs across the region	JV, SW					
Submit semi-annual grant progress reports	SCC					
Submit final grant report	SCC					

The parties responsible for implementing the Compost Expansion Program measure are subrecipients Zero Food Print (ZF) and UCCE, with support from the County of Santa Clara (SCC) and the County of San Benito. Contractors will be selected to facilitate regular convenings among all parties as well as to support the monitoring and reporting of GHG reduction goals, and the verification and use of carbon credits.

Measure 2: Compost Expansion Program						
Milestones	Lead	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Launch ad-hoc working group of Initiative members and key partners	Consultant					

Report on benefits to low-income and disadvantaged communities (1 year after grant award) and summarize total GHG emissions and other pollutants reduced (final report)	Consultant					
Monthly consultant-facilitated Initiative convenings	Consultant					
Bi-monthly consultant-facilitated Initiative convenings	Consultant					
Convene UCCE and Resource Conservation District (RCD) agencies for site analysis	UCCE					
Present workshops to land managers and collect input	UCCE					
Apply 41,000 T of compost to 2,300 acres of public land in Santa Clara and Alameda Counties	ZFP					
Develop expert panel to review GHG emission verification	ZFP					
Baseline Soil Carbon measurements on 10 plots	ZFP					
Identify strategic measurements to inform GHG reduction modeling	ZFP					
Establish Santa Clara County internal registry for carbon credits to inform GHG reduction modeling	ZFP					
Expand Santa Clara County internal registry for carbon credits from 2026 compost applications	ZFP					
Apply 3,000 T of compost to up to 980 acres of farmland in San Benito County	ZFP					
Provide report and recommendations to Santa Clara County internal registry for carbon credits from 2027 compost applications	ZFP					
Finalize Santa Clara County internal registry for carbon credits from 2028 compost applications	ZFP					
Year 5 Soil Carbon Testing	UCCE					
Submit semi-annual grant progress reports	SCC					
Submit final grant report	SCC					

SECTION 4: LOW-INCOME AND DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

a. Community Benefits

The programs included in the proposed Initiative provide a broad array of community benefits to low-income and disadvantaged communities, aiming to address their specific needs while advancing environmental sustainability. By recovering and redirecting surplus food to those in need, the Food Recovery Expansion Program alleviates hunger, mitigates methane emissions from landfills, and conserves vital resources. Through targeted outreach and established distribution points in low-income areas, the program also ensures equitable access to nutritious and culturally relevant food options while building community resilience. The Compost Expansion Program measure implements the use of compost to benefit both urban and rural LIDACs by promoting sustainable agricultural practices and

public open space carbon sequestration practices which offer immediate benefits to soil health, water retention, and flood control. Maintenance of sustainably managed agriculture and open space areas bordering urban areas also helps to mitigate air and water pollution, minimize the use of petrochemical fertilizers, and sequesters carbon in the soil to mitigate the health impacts of climate change.

Demographic information for targeted LIDACs

The project's service area encompasses urban LIDACs in Santa Clara and Alameda counties and rural LIDACs in San Benito County. In Silicon Valley, encompassing all of Santa Clara County, the Institute for Regional Studies reveals that 28% of residents live at or below the self-sufficiency standard, contributing to food insecurity among a substantial portion of the population. Despite over 300 million meals provided through food assistance in 2022, exacerbated by lingering pandemic impacts such as rising inflation and housing shortages, the numbers of those at risk continue to grow. Second Harvest of Silicon Valley, one of the region's largest nonprofit FROs, reports a surge in demand, currently serving 460,000 individuals per month, marking an 80% increase over pre-pandemic levels. The urgency of addressing food insecurity is highlighted by the phase-out of federal pandemic support programs in April 2023, affecting 93,000 households across Santa Clara County and neighboring San Mateo County. As emergency CalFresh allotments ended, these households lost $171 per month, amounting to $12 million in purchasing power removed from the local food economy. Food assistance programs, including those tailored for low and moderate-income Latinx, Asian, African American, and Pacific Islander households, are crucial in alleviating these challenges.

Alameda County, spanning nearly 821 square miles, is a diverse region with a dense urban corridor, suburban areas, and rural communities. Despite its varied geography, it ranks among the most expensive regions in the country, where the cost of living is exceptionally high and the county's poverty rate reached 10.1% in 2023. Within Alameda County's population of 1.6 million people, 180,930 (11%) are estimated to be food insecure as of March 2021 [Feeding America]. With over 400,000 residents eligible for Medi-Cal and significant SNAP enrollment, the county struggles with food insecurity, particularly concentrated in East and West Oakland, parts of Hayward, and the unincorporated communities of Ashland and Cherryland. These areas include large adult populations characterized by high unemployment rates, involvement in the criminal justice system, and chronic health issues. Latinx and African American populations are disproportionately impacted.

San Benito County is primarily rural, with LIDACs predominantly composed of agricultural producers. These communities face unique challenges regarding resource access, market fluctuations, and environmental factors affecting agricultural productivity. Addressing food insecurity among agricultural producers and their families is essential for these rural communities' overall well-being and sustainability.

Direct and Indirect Benefits to LIDACS

By recovering surplus food that would otherwise go to waste, food recovery programs help provide food as a direct benefit to communities who need it most while mitigating GHG emissions. Food recovery programs intersect with broader issues impacting the food system, including lack of healthy food access and food insecurity. The USDA's Consumer Price Index for food (last updated February 2024) confirms that since 2020 the cost for "food-at-home" has gone up between 3.5-9.9% each year and is expected to continue to increase in 2024. The continuously increasing cost of food in a region with the most expensive housing markets and cost-of-living expenses in the U.S. cause LIDAC communities to suffer from increased

rates of food insecurity. This Initiative would expand the capacity of the food recovery network to serve those who rely on food assistance programs to survive.

Creating stronger links between food generators and FROs within the local food system also bolsters the emergency preparedness of the region. When faced with disasters, residents look to the organizations in their communities that unfailingly provide resources and services to improve their lives. FROs act as hubs for information and resource sharing due to the nature of gathering around food. These organizations are the often first to respond to emergencies and provide resources directly to those who face barriers to accessing basic human needs.

Increasing compost application on agricultural lands, rangelands, and parks holds immense potential for transforming soil health, water retention, and agricultural productivity, benefiting LIDAC communities which are disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change. Funding compost subsidies to farmers and land managers helps keep farmland and open space viable as compared to urban development by providing affordable and organic soil amendments for low-income urban agricultural producers. Compost application can reduce farmer reliance on expensive synthetic pesticides, leading to safer and more sustainable farming practices while mitigating the environmental impacts of conventional farming methods. Furthermore, decreasing pesticide use offers public health benefits to LIDAC residents, including lower incidences of asthma, hospital admissions, and emergency room visits.

The proposed Initiative will include baseline metrics to track the progress and impact of food recovery and compost expansion efforts. Throughout the grant period we will work closely with consultants experienced in assessing, quantifying, and reporting GHG emission data. Regular data collection and analysis will allow us to mitigate negative or unintended impacts on LIDACs and make data-driven decisions to continuously improve our processes.

b. Community Engagement

The three-county region covered by the Initiative benefits from active food recovery networks which include anchor organizations such as Second Harvest of Silicon Valley, Alameda County Community Food Bank, and the Community Food Bank of San Benito County. Organizations across the networks are united by a common goal of ensuring that surplus edible food is put to its highest and best use of nourishing communities, while minimizing negative environmental impacts.

Joint Venture plays a pivotal role in the region by convening two essential community bodies: the Silicon Valley Food Recovery Council (the Council) and the Santa Clara County Food Recovery Steering Committee. Since its establishment in 2019, the Council has brought together a dozen of the most active FROs operating throughout Silicon Valley and the broader Bay Area, including San Benito County. The Council meets quarterly to tackle common problems, identify best practices, and coordinate strategies for responding to local and state law implementation. Established in 2016, the Santa Clara County Food Recovery Steering Committee convenes representatives from local government, industry, and the nonprofit sector to guide key food waste prevention and recovery programs. Initiated in 2019, the Alameda County Food Recovery Network (ACFRN) is central to strengthening partnerships with and gathering feedback from FROs throughout Alameda County. ACFRN includes over 50 FROs, grantees, and other community groups from across the county, most rooted in the low-income, disadvantaged communities they serve. Both Joint Venture and StopWaste have conducted robust FRO capacity studies. The results of those studies have helped shape the overall approach outlined in this proposal, informing

decisions regarding infrastructure, funding, and support necessary to enable organizations to collect, transport, store, and distribute more food as donations increase due to SB1383.

To gauge FRO interest and readiness for specifically the proposed Initiative, the County of Santa Clara issued a public Request for Information (RFI). In their responses, applicants were asked to provide details about the specific food recovery expansion project, total estimated cost, funding gap, timeline, and target population served. The RFI announcement received more than 500 unique views through the County of Santa Clara Procurement and Contracting weekly newsletter. Representatives from a total of 36 community organizations attended two online informational sessions. Of the 13 responses to the RFI, 10 were from Santa Clara County-based FROs operating in, or within 1 mile of, a LIDAC.

In 2021 the County of Santa Clara introduced a pioneering approach to climate-smart land management with the Agricultural Resilience Incentive (ARI) grant program. The majority of ARI grants go to small farms owned by immigrant families from China, a historically underserved population in the Santa Clara Valley. County staff work closely with the Small Farms Team at UCCE to administer the program. In addition to translation assistance with non-English speaking Chinese and Mexican farmers, the UCCE Small Farms Team assists farmers with compost purchasing and delivery through a verified list of compost suppliers. This program has been a successful way to engage farmers and encourage them to increase soil health and carbon sequestration.

Strategies for ongoing community engagement

The proposed Initiative will prioritize the existing connections and relationships in LIDACs to ensure food recovery and distribution efforts reach communities in need. StopWaste will continue to ensure open feedback and communication with engaged communities in food recovery work through monthly network meetings and ongoing partnerships.

Annual stakeholder meetings will be organized to convene the existing networks of FROs across the three counties and encourage continuous engagement and learning *across* county borders. Topics may include edible food recovery capacity planning, food donor contracts, and education, strategies for weighing and tracking surplus food donations, and innovative approaches to improving communication and efficiency in broader food recovery efforts. This body will also advise the County of Santa Clara as it proceeds with the criteria for distribution of sub awards outlined in this funding application, ensuring that projects are feasible, realistic, and properly vetted by those on the front lines.

UCCE will implement targeted outreach campaigns in low-income urban areas, focusing on the benefits of composting for soil health, food security, and community resilience. By actively engaging with community members and addressing their specific needs and concerns, we aim to foster a sense of ownership and empowerment around compost applications. Culturally appropriate public awareness campaigns will be instrumental in raising awareness about the benefits of food recovery and fostering community engagement. We will conduct surveys, focus groups, and interviews with stakeholders to gather feedback and insights into the effectiveness of our compost expansion and food recovery initiatives. We will then make adjustments accordingly in transparent ways to foster trust.

The County of Santa Clara, in partnership with a local nonprofit, established the Resident Food Equity Advisory Council, Food System Leadership Collaborative, and a Kitchen Cabinet. The Resident Food Equity Advisory Council, comprising members directly impacted by food system inequities, will define problems

and solutions for food system issues to work in tandem with the Kitchen Cabinet and the Food Systems Leadership Collaborative. The Food System Leadership Collaborative will convene existing collaboratives or coalitions across multiple sectors within the food system to work toward a joint outcome. The Kitchen Cabinet comprises staff from County agencies whose work involves various aspects of the food system. These groups will engage directly with the organizations leading the Food Expansion and Compost Expansion programs

SECTION 5: JOB QUALITY

The County of Santa Clara and the other partners supporting this Initiative actively support the development of a robust local food system as a tool for economic development through job creation, wealth creation, and enhanced quality of place. To implement this Initiative, the County of Santa Clara will hire one new Senior Management Analyst position and fill one recently vacated full-time Senior Management Analyst position. Subrecipients Joint Venture and StopWaste will hire one new full-time position at each agency. This presents an opportunity for all agencies making new hires to create high-quality jobs that incorporate strong, "high road" labor standards.

In alignment with the US Department of Labor Good Jobs Principles, County of Santa Clara actively recruits qualified applicants. Applicants are free from discrimination, including unequal treatment or application or selection criteria that are unrelated to job performance. Applicants are evaluated with relevant skills-based requirements. Employees are offered the free and fair choice to join a union and are provided family-sustaining benefits. These benefits include health insurance, a retirement plan, workers' compensation benefits, paid leave and caregiving support, and others that may arise from engagement with workers. Workers are empowered and encouraged to use these benefits.

Any nonprofit granted a sub award granted by the County of Santa Clara will be required to comply with nondiscrimination and equal opportunity laws. The County of Santa Clara's Wage Theft Prevention Policy requires that all current and potential vendors are proactively screened for wage theft violations. Furthermore, organizations receiving a sub award greater than $100,000 are required to comply with the County's Living Wage Policy, as per standard provisions of County of Santa Clara contracts. When granting sub awards to FROs, both the County of Santa Clara and StopWaste may consider requesting that grant applicants include information about how their proposed project will incorporate quality jobs, community benefits, and address diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Additionally, subrecipients that plan to hire additional staff to implement this Initiative have specific employment related policies in place to ensure high-quality jobs:

- StopWaste staff positions are compensated at or close to the median income level for a family of four. Regular employees (except the Executive Director) are "for cause", meaning that they have protections consistent with public sector employees with respect to disciplinary actions up to and including termination. All employees are required to complete annual anti-harassment training and intermittent safety and CPR trainings. Employees are offered a pre-tax flexible spending benefits plan, including dependent care, commuter checks, and Employee Assistance Program. The organization also mandates prevailing wage for construction related contracts.
- Joint Venture's employment policies and practices support high quality jobs: the staff member with the lowest pay is 70% above this median income. The labor sector is represented on the Board of Directors by the South Bay Building Trades Council. Additionally, management trains regularly on sexual harassment. Joint Venture offers a comprehensive, family-sustaining benefits

package to all employees and their dependents including medical, dental and vision insurance, life insurance, long term disability.

SECTION 6: PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE

a. Past Performance

Project Title	**Climate Pollution Reduction Grant, Planning Grant**
Assistance agreement number	98T76501
Federal agency and assistance listing number	Environmental Protection Agency, Funding opportunity number: EPA-R-OAR-CPRGP-23-09
Brief description of the agreement	$1,000,000 over four years to lead regional climate action planning for the County of San Benito & County of Santa Clara MSA
Contact from organization that funded the assistance agreement	Asia Yeary, Yeary.Asia@epa.gov
How the applicant was able to successfully complete and manage the listed agreements.	The County is in the process of managing the 2023-2027 project timeline is 2023-2027. The County successfully led the development of the Regional Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) with input and participation from numerous agencies across the metro area and submitted the PCAP to the EPA by the deadline of March 1, 2024.
Reporting requirements	Since receiving the assistance agreement, the County has submitted quarterly reports on time and has worked with the EPA to provide any additional information requested. All quarterly reports have been accepted by the EPA. If progress was delayed, the County has provided information on the reason for the delay. The County submitted the first deliverable, the Priority Climate Action Plan, by the deadline.

Project Title	**Building a County Collaborative and Capacity through Development of a Resilience Strategy**
Assistance agreement number	0318.20.069468
Federal or non-federal agency and assistance listing number	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Brief description of the agreement	The County is managing $450K from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to build a community of practice through convening a County Climate Collaborative, develop the Santa Clara County Resiliency Strategy, identify adaptation priorities, and support planning and implementation of multi-benefit nature-based solutions to flooding and other climate hazards
Contact from organization that funded the assistance agreement	Graeme Logan, Graeme.Logan@NFWF.ORG
How the applicant was able to successfully	The project timeline is 2021 – 2025, so the County is in the process of managing the agreement. The first phase of the project was completed

complete and manage the listed agreements.	in December 2022 using the first round of funding. The project received a second round of funding in 2023 and work on the second phase started in Q4 2023.
Reporting requirements	Since receiving the NFWF grant in 2021, the County has submitted interim programmatic reports twice a year, as well as annual financial reports. All reports have been submitted on time and accepted by NFWF.

Project Title	**Urban and Community Forestry Grant**
Assistance agreement number	8GA21424
Federal or non-federal agency and assistance listing number	CalFIRE
Brief description of the agreement	The County is managing $930,800 from CalFIRE to support regional urban forestry management and planning through the Santa Clara Valley Urban Forestry Alliance (SCVUFA), spearhead development of foundational planning, data, and outreach necessary to anchor holistic urban forestry management for the entire region and develop community-based strategies to best expand canopy and connect people with trees.
Contact from organization that funded the assistance agreement	Tanner Mar, tanner.mar@fire.ca.gov
How the applicant was able to successfully complete and manage the listed agreements.	The project timeline is 2022-2026, so the County is in the process of managing the agreement.
Reporting requirements	The County is required to submit quarterly reports detailing the project progress and tree planting data. Due to unforeseen circumstances and staff transition, there was a delay in the deliverables and reporting. However, the County has maintained open communication with CalFire and has implemented steps to remedy the delay and stay on track going forward.

b. Staff Expertise

The following describes the key staff's knowledge, expertise, qualifications, and resources, and/or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the proposed project's goals and proposed GHG measures. Resumes or curriculum vitae for all key staff have also been included as an optional project team biography attachment.

Cayce Hill, Food Systems Manager, County of Santa Clara Office of the County Executive, holds a Bachelor of Science in Finance and Spanish from Trinity University, and a Master of Public Administration from the Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service at New York University. She works collaboratively across County departments and sectors involved in food system issues and programs to share information; integrate food systems work between the County and organizations across the

County; and expand, support implementation of, and document impact of the adopted County of Santa Clara Food Systems Workplan. Prior to her role at the County, Cayce served as Executive Director of the East San Jose-based nonprofit organization Veggielution, where she focused on food system and environmental equity programs and policies.

Michele Young, Senior Management Analyst, County of Santa Clara Consumer Environmental Protection Agency, has applied her Bachelor of Science in Agriculture from Cal Poly, and Master of Environmental Science from San Jose State, to over 25 years of Environmental Programming, with a specialization in Organics Management. Her long-term efforts in Market Development for compost utilization resulted in her being invited to lead and participate in teams at the State (Cal Recycle, California Organics Management Council), and National (US Composting Council) levels. She is well connected in the regional organics industry and has demonstrated strong public/private coordination skills to successfully implement key projects such as Landscape Engineer training for compost utilization, Agriculture in Partnership compost research program and Statewide compost procurement modeling for SB 1383 implementation.

Magdalena "Eena" Sta Maria, Senior Sustainability Analyst, County of Santa Clara Office of Sustainability, leads climate resilience and adaptation efforts out of the Office of Sustainability. She is currently coordinating and co-managing the Santa Clara County Climate Collaborative, which is a cross-sector network and community of practice for public agencies, academia, nonprofit and community-based organizations, and business and community leaders to advance regional solutions to climate change through resource and expertise sharing, joint-funding opportunities, and partnership development. She manages projects to support climate adaptation planning, such as the Silicon Valley 2.0 Climate Change Preparedness Tool and provides climate resilience expertise to County planning projects such as the Safety Element and Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan updates. She has extensive background in scientific research and has a PhD in Civil and Environmental Engineering.

The County of Santa Clara Office of the County Executive plans to dedicate a full time **Senior Management Analyst** to this project. That staff will provide expertise in the following areas: budgeting, management and organization, workflow and staffing, systems development, program evaluation, policy and procedure development, management information analysis, contract management, classification and recruitment, and needs analysis and feasibility studies.

The County of Santa Clara Office of Sustainability plans to dedicate a portion of an additional **Senior Management Analyst**'s time to this project. That staff will provide expertise in the following areas: budgeting, management and organization, workflow and staffing, systems development, program evaluation, policy and procedure development, management information analysis, contract management, classification and recruitment, and needs analysis and feasibility studies.

SECTION 7: BUDGET

Total Funding Request for Initiative: $41,047,357

See Budget Narrative (Required Attachment: Budget_CountyofSantaClara.pdf)

See Budget Spreadsheet (Optional Attachment: Budgetcalcs_CountyofSantaClara.xlsx)