



C O M M U N I T Y D E V E L O P M E N T A G E N C Y
PLANNING DIVISION

California Land Conservation Act Program

Preserving agricultural land in Marin County is encouraged by both local communities and the Board of Supervisors. Zoning regulations restrict the uses of some land to agriculture, the Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT) preserves agricultural land using private easements, and the County offers certain tax benefits to property owners who commit to using their land for commercial agricultural production. These tax benefits rely on a State law known as the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (also known as the Williamson Act). The Williamson Act allows the owner of an agricultural property to enter into a contract with the County that restricts the use of the land to agricultural purposes and eliminates the potential subdivision of the land in exchange for a reduction in the land's assessed value, which decreases the property taxes.

The Marin County Community Developed Agency and Office of the Assessor administers two types of contracts under the Williamson Act: (1) Land Conservation Contract, and (2) Farmland Security Zone Contract. To be eligible for a contract, the dominant use of the land must be agricultural, meeting one or more of the established standards or factors established in Marin County Board of Supervisors Resolution 2000-135. The subject property or properties must be within a mapped Agricultural Preserve area and have a size of at least 40 acres. The minimum term of an Agricultural Preserve Contract is 10 years, while the minimum term for a Farmland Security Zone Contract is 20 years. These contracts automatically renew at the end of their term. Applications to enroll in the program are accepted annually between May 1st and August 31st.

More information is available on the California Department of Conservation Williamson Act Program website at: <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/wa/Pages/Index.aspx>.

Staff from the County Assessor's office is available to discuss the tax benefits of a contract with any interested landowner. While the County Assessor cannot make advance commitments, they can provide the owner with information to assist in determining whether the owner would benefit by a contract under the Williamson Act.

The Williamson Act Application Form is available online at:

<https://www.marincounty.org/depts/cd/divisions/planning/planning-applications-and-permits/planning-applications>.

To complete the application, you will need to provide a written description of the existing, proposed, and potential agricultural uses suitable for the site and describe the long-term management and preservation of the agricultural land.

For additional information regarding applying or existing contracts, please contact the Marin County Planning Division at (415) 473-6269 or via email at cdaplanning@marincounty.org. For matters related to valuation, contact the Marin County Assessor's Office at (415) 473-7215.