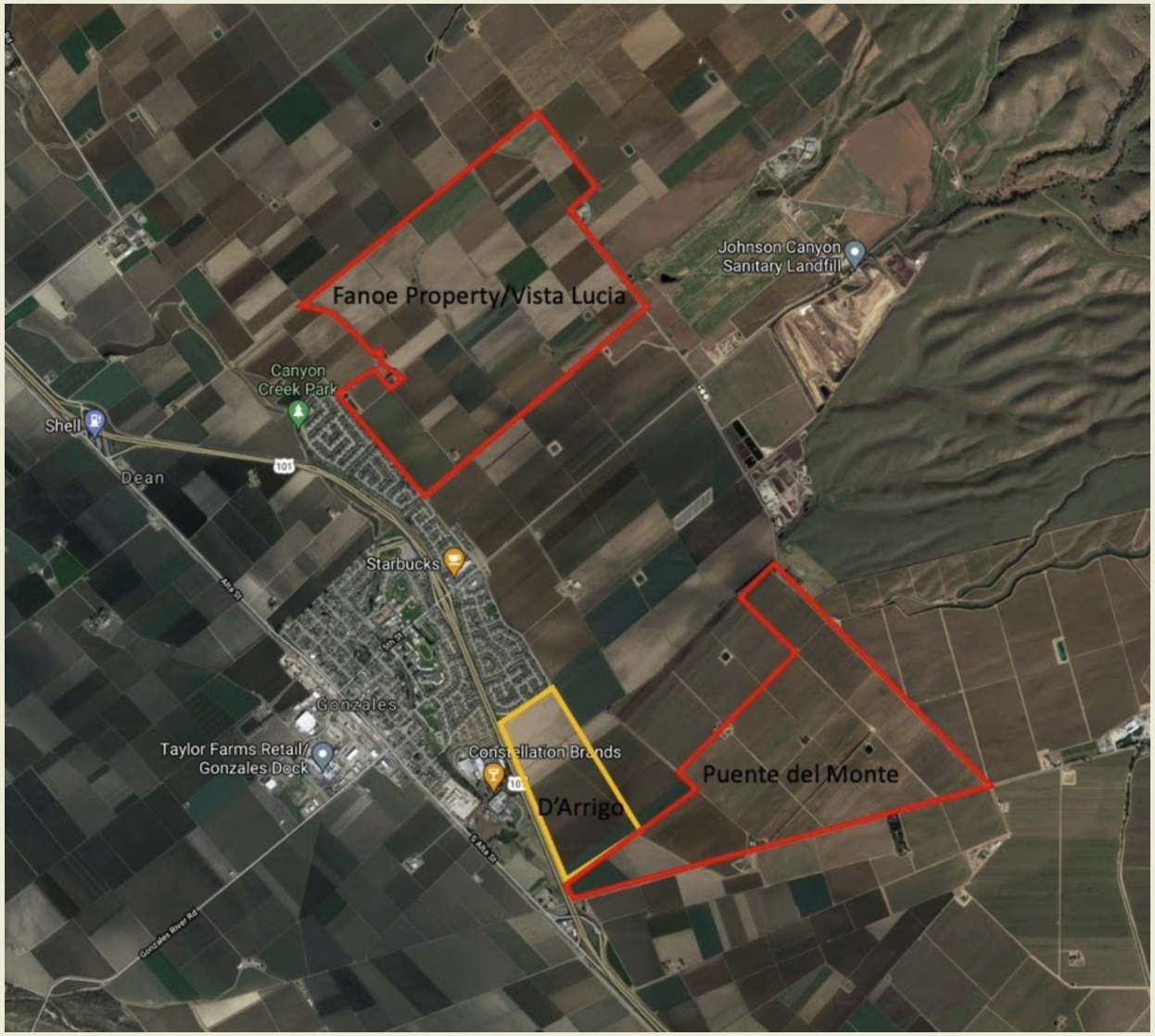
# Housing Gonzales Needs. Vista Lucia Isn't It.

**LandWatch Monterey County**

A Guide for LAFCO




LANDWATCH MONTEREY COUNTY

# We're Not Anti-Housing. We're Pro the Right Housing.

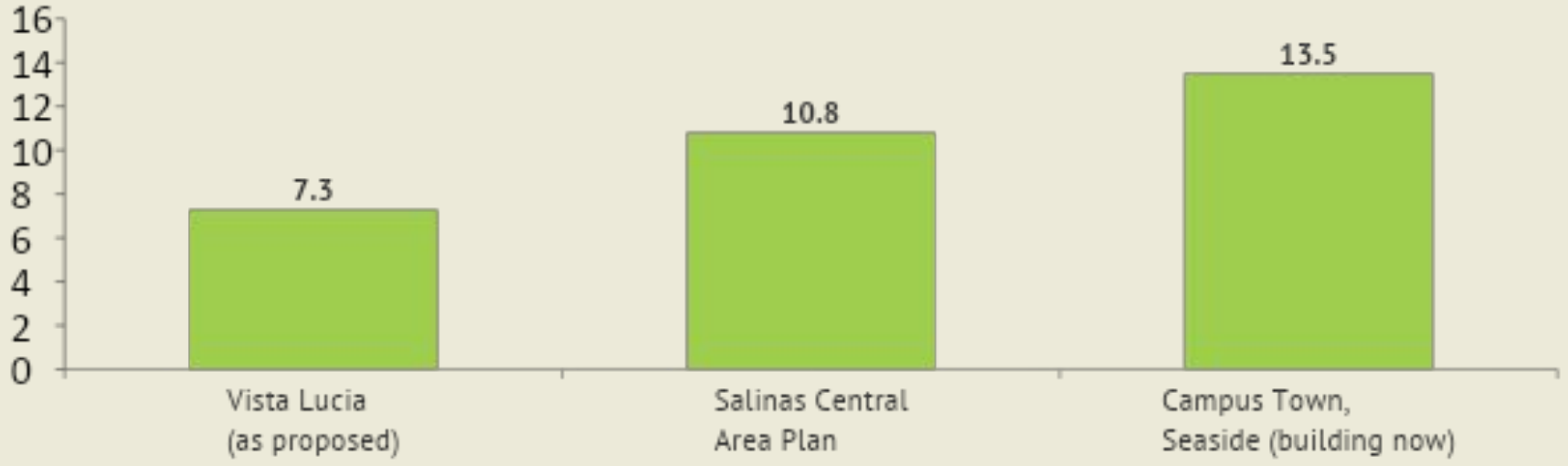



- For over a decade, LandWatch has pushed for more homes that Gonzales-area workers can actually afford -- and we work directly with local developers to make that housing faster, cheaper, and less risky to build.
- We supported Salinas' Central Area and West Area Specific Plans -- both built at higher densities than Vista Lucia.
- We've weighed in on Monterey County's and Gonzales' Housing Elements to expand what kinds of homes are allowed to be built.
- Infill apartments like this one in Salinas are exactly the kind of project we support.

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# There's a Better Way to Build This

- More homes per acre means less farmland paved over per home built -- and homes that cost less to build, which means they can cost less to buy.
- LandWatch advocates a “ladder” strategy, starting with apartments, and condominiums and townhouses – the “missing middle” – so people can live affordably, build wealth and over time move up to larger homes.
- Vista Lucia, as proposed, is one of the lowest-density specific plans in the Salinas Valley.
- Campus Town in Seaside is already being built at nearly double Vista Lucia's density -- proof this works nearby.
- Higher density doesn't solve affordability alone — it has to be paired with the deed-restricted units the developer isn't guaranteeing




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# Four Reasons the Low-Density Plan Falls Short

1. Not enough workforce housing -- most units are priced for households earning $185,000+ a year.

2. Zero guaranteed deed-restricted affordable homes -- nothing requires them to actually get built.

3. The agricultural mitigation plan violates LAFCO and City of Gonzales policy.

4. The plan relies on groundwater from a basin that's already over-pumped -- breaking state law.

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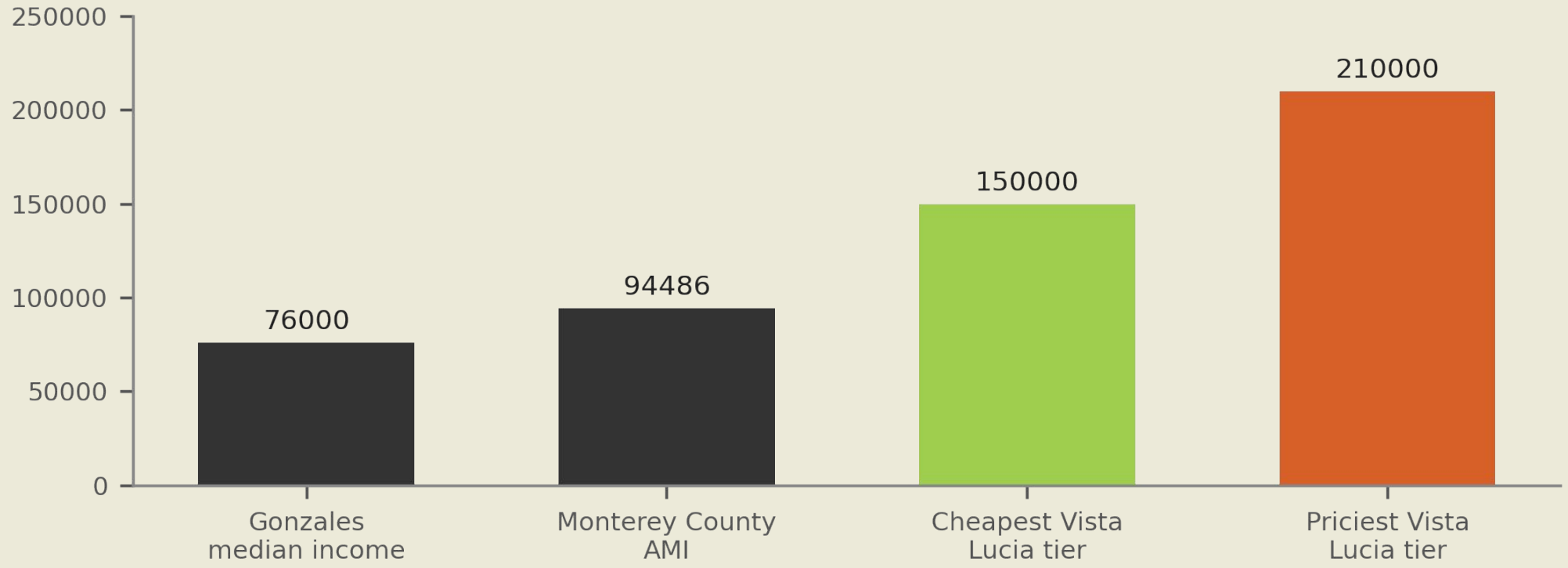
# The Myth of Affordability: Here's What's Actually Being Built

| Density tier | Units | Target homes/acre | Avg. sales price | Income needed to buy |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Low density | 990 | 5 | $650,000 | **$210,000** |
| Medium density | 1,239 | 7 | $585,000 | **$195,000** |
| Medium-high density | 540 | 12 | $560,000 | **$187,000** |
| High density | 640 | 24 | $555,000 | **$185,000** |
| Mixed use | 89 | 10 | $450,000 | **$150,000** |

*Weighted average sales price is $590,000. 64% of the 3,498 units are the two lowest-density, least-affordable tiers. Estimated sales prices are conservatively based on the City's 2023 fiscal analysis that is now out of date because building costs have risen. Sources: Wildan Financial Services fiscal impact analysis, April 18, 2023. Unit counts from Vista Lucia Specific Plan*

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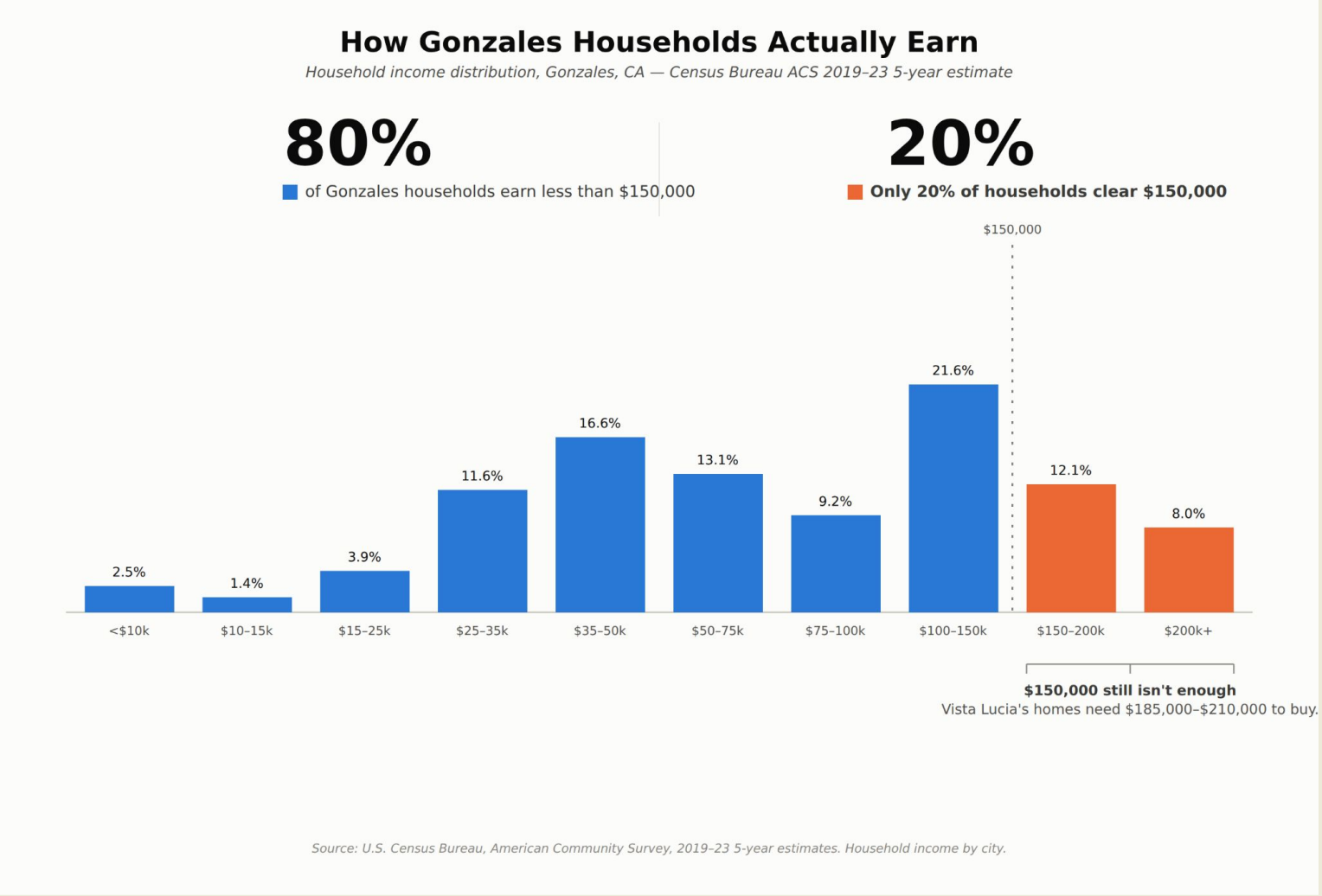
# Compare That to What Gonzales Families Actually Earn and What They Would Need to Pay




*More than half of Gonzales households earn less than the county AMI -- and most of those earn well under that. Most local jobs are in agriculture.*

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# The Myth of Affordability: Price Out By Design




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# Let's Do the Math on One Home

1. Price: $650,000 (the low-density tier -- the largest single group of homes in the plan)
2. Down payment (5%): $32,500 up front
3. Loan amount: $617,500, at roughly 7% interest over 30 years
4. Monthly payment: About $5,200/month once you add property taxes, homeowner's insurance, and mortgage insurance (required with less than 20% down)
5. Income needed: About $210,000/year, if you don't want to spend more than 30% of your income on housing

*That's nearly triple Gonzales' median household income of $76,000.*

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# Who is this actually priced for?

Homes priced at $555,000-$650,000 aren't built for Gonzales' workforce, nor for the Salinas Valley workforce.

**They're built for commuters cashing out of or commuting from the Bay Area and Silicon Valley, or for investors.**

# What About the 422 “Affordable” Homes?

- The development agreement says the developer will use “best efforts” to dedicate land to a nonprofit affordable-housing developer to construct 422 deed-restricted units.
- Building affordable housing typically costs $500,000-$1,000,000 per unit -- 422 units could mean raising on the order of $300 million.
- No public funding source for that has been identified yet.
- Nothing in the development agreement actually requires these units to get built.

*These construction-cost and funding figures are preliminary estimates that LandWatch is still verifying.*

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# 12%

**422 promised affordable homes ÷ 3,498 total units**

Even in the best case, fewer than 12 out of every 100 homes in Vista Lucia would be potentially affordable. But there is no guarantee or timeframe for that happening.

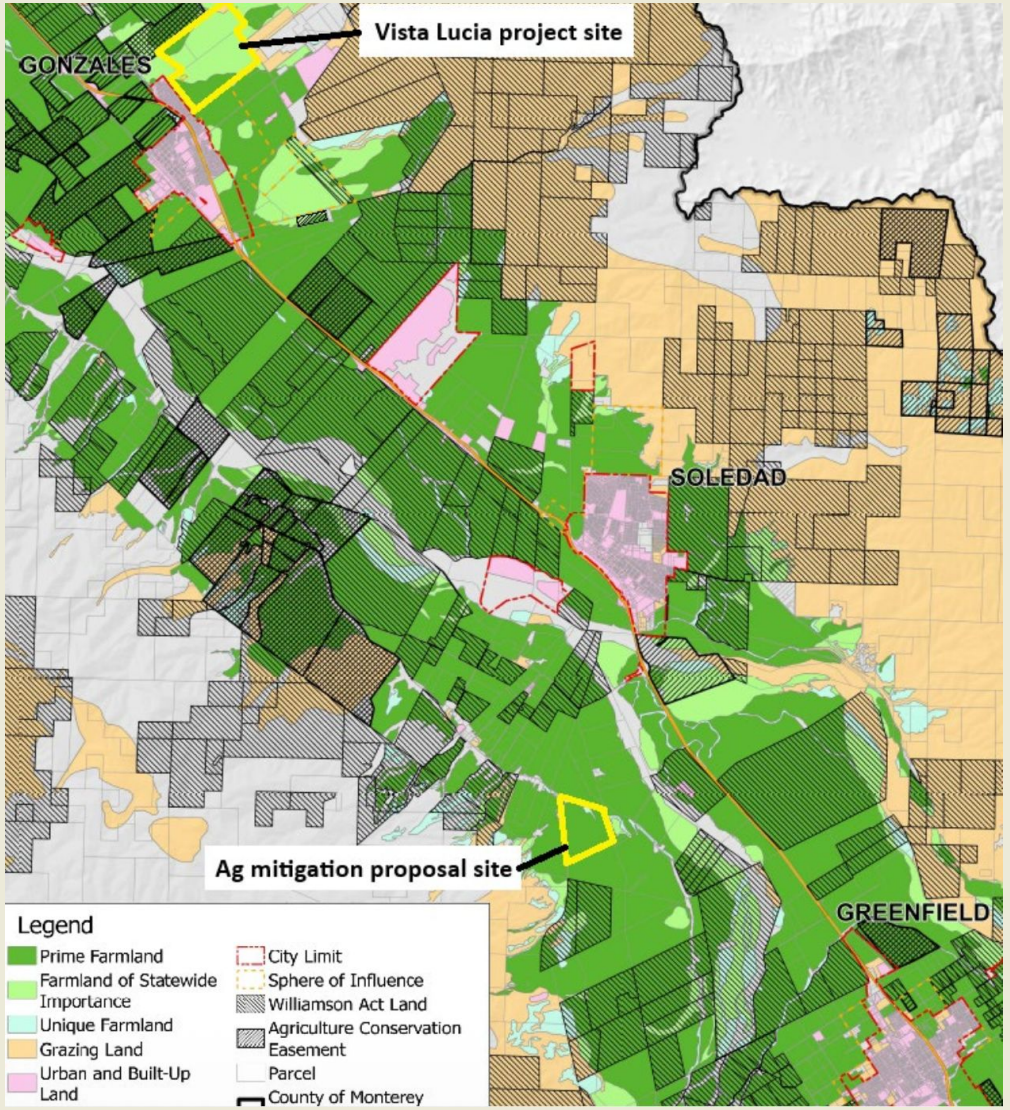
# Vista Lucia Breaks the Rules on Farmland Protection

- LAFCO policy requires farmland easements to be "located in close proximity to the community where the proposed annexation and the resulting loss/conversion of farmland are occurring."

- The goal is to slow or stop urban sprawl instead of just protecting farmland somewhere else.

- The developer's only proposal, Mission Ranch, is 9.4 miles away -- outside Soledad, not Gonzales.

- Three closer, suitable properties were available and never seriously pursued.




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# Vista Lucia Would Draw Water Illegally

- Vista Lucia would pump groundwater from the Eastside Aquifer Subbasin, which the state has determined is overdrafted.
- California's law regarding water rights does not permit the City to appropriate groundwater to serve this project.
- No additional appropriation is permitted in a basin that is in overdraft.




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# Questions?

**Contact**

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Subscribe: www.landwatch.org/subscribe

*Sources: LandWatch letter to Monterey County LAFCO re: Vista Lucia ag mitigation (Aug. 13, 2026); Wildan Financial Services, Gonzales SOI Annexation Fiscal Impact Analysis (Apr. 18, 2023); Gonzales 6th Cycle Housing Element; U.S. Census QuickFacts, Monterey County & Gonzales (2019-23 ACS); LAFCO staff report; LandWatch project density comparison worksheet.*

