

3.2 - Agricultural Resources

3.2.1 - Introduction

This section describes the existing agricultural resources and potential effects from Project implementation on the Project Site and its surrounding area. Descriptions and analysis in this section are based on, among other things, information provided by the California Department of Conservation (DOC) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service Web Soil Survey, the DOC’s Williamson Act and Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, and the Contra Costa County General Plan.

3.2.2 - Environmental Setting

Agriculture in Contra Costa County

According to the Contra Costa County General Plan, the dominant trend in agricultural acreage has decreased since the 1940s as a result of the increase in urbanization (Contra Costa County 2000).

Economy

Between 2010 and 2013, the value of Contra Costa County agricultural commodities ranged from \$79.6 million to \$119 million (Contra Costa County Department of Agriculture 2010–2014). Table 3.2-1 summarizes agricultural production in the County between 2010 and 2014. Table 3.2-2 summarizes the County’s top 10 crops in 2014.

Table 3.2-1: Contra Costa County Agricultural Economy (2010–2013)

Year	Total Gross Value
2010	\$79,623,800
2011	\$92,919,600
2012	90,971,700
2013	96,812,000
2014	119,829,000

Source: Contra Costa County Department of Agriculture, 2010-2013.

Table 3.2-2: Contra Costa County Top Ten Crop Values (2014)

Crop	Value in Millions
Cattle & Calves	30.5
Sweet Corn	18.14
Tomatoes	15.88
Grapes	10.34
Beans	4.56

Table 3.2-2 (cont.): Contra Costa County Top Ten Crop Values (2014)

Crop	Value in Millions
Alfalfa Hay	4.32
Rangeland	4.26
Walnuts	3.37
Cherries	2.48
Field Corn	2.16
Source: Contra Costa County Department of Agriculture 2014.	

Farmland Classifications

The DOC Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) classifies agricultural land into five categories, listed below:

- **Prime Farmland:** Land with the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain the long-term production of agricultural crops. These lands have the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields.
- **Unique Farmland:** Land of lesser-quality soils used for the production of the State’s leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated but may include non-irrigated orchards or vineyards, as found in some climactic zones in California.
- **Farmland of Statewide Importance:** Land similar to Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to hold and store moisture.
- **Farmland of Local Importance:** Land of importance in the local agricultural economy, as determined by each county’s Board of Supervisors and a local advisory committee.
- **Grazing Land:** Land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock.

Of these five categories, the first four (Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Farmland of Local Importance) are identified by the FMMP as Important Farmland.

Table 3.2-3 provides a summary of Important Farmland and Grazing Land acreage in Contra Costa County from 2004 to 2012 (the most recent data available). As shown in the table, both Important Farmland acreage and Grazing Land decreased during the period summarized.

Table 3.2-3: Important Farmland Summary (2004–2012)

Classification	Acres				
	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012
Prime Farmland	32,024	29,937	26,789	26,484	25,601
Unique Farmland	3,929	3,588	3,125	3,203	3,012

Table 3.2-3 (cont.): Important Farmland Summary (2004–2012)

Classification	Acres				
	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012
Farmland of Statewide Importance	8,092	8,092	7,555	7,422	7,347
Farmland of Local Importance	52,257	52,070	53,449	53,039	52,907
Important Farmland Total	96,757	93,687	90,918	90,148	88,867
Grazing Land	168,783	168,661	168,904	168,647	167,796
Agricultural Land Subtotal	265,540	262,348	259,822	258,795	256,663
Total County Area	458,240				
Source: California Department of Conservation, 2004–2012.					

Project Site’s Farmland Classifications

As indicated by the 2012 Contra Costa County Important Farmland Map (California Department of Conservation 2014), both the Northern and Southern Sites contain a variety of farmland classifications. As shown in Exhibit 3.2-1, pursuant to the FMMP designation, the Northern Site includes lands designated as Farmland of Local Importance, Grazing Land, Urban and Built-Up Land, and Other Land. The majority of the Southern Site is designated as Grazing Land, with the exception of those areas with generally flat elevations along Camino Tassajara and the northern quarter of the site that are designated as Farmland of Local Importance. In addition, a small area is designated as Other Land directly adjacent to Camino Tassajara.

Surrounding Area’s Farmland Classifications

Under the FMMP designation, areas surrounding the Project Site consist of a mixture of Urban and Built Up Land, Grazing Lands, and Farmland of Local Importance. Two small areas of Prime Farmland and Unique Farmland are located east of the Southern Site adjacent to Camino Tassajara.

Williamson Act Contracts

Project Site

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly known as the Williamson Act (California Government Code Section 51200, et seq.), enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of promoting the continued use of the relevant land in agricultural or related open space use. In return, landowners receive property tax assessments that are based on farming and open space uses instead of full market value.

As indicated by the Fiscal Year 2012/2013 Contra Costa County Williamson Act Map (the most recent available), the Project Site is not encumbered by a Williamson Act contract (California Department of Conservation 2013).

Surrounding Areas

Williamson Act contract lands are located to the north of the Northern Site, and to the southeast of the Southern Site.

Project Site's Agricultural Uses

Both the Northern and Southern Sites have been used for various agricultural practices in the past, including grazing, orchards, and small areas of row crops. The Northern Site currently has 12 decayed walnut trees in the southwestern corner of the site that were likely once part of small orchard. However, according to the Arborist Report prepared by Hort Science (Appendix C), because of the decay present in these trees, none are suitable for preservation. Historical maps indicate that the trees were once part of a small orchard dating back to approximately 1958–1968 (Nationwide Environmental Title Research 2015). Aerial photographs dated 1958 show a barn in the southern portion of the Southern Site, which still stands today. Currently, both the Northern and Southern Sites are used for grazing only and contain several small barns and out structures related to this and past agricultural uses.

Surrounding Agricultural Uses

Agricultural uses surrounding the Project Site consist of grazing lands and small intermittent orchards located amongst rural residential development.

Project Site's Soils

Northern Site

The Natural Resources Conservation Service Web Soil Survey indicates that the Northern Site is primarily underlain by Diablo Clay, with slopes of 30 to 50 percent (DdF); Clear Lake Clay (Cc); and Diablo clay of 15 to 30 percent slopes (DdE). The northern subsection contains Diablo Clay of 30 to 50 percent slopes (DdF), and Pescadero Clay Loam (Pb) (NRCS 2014). Diablo Clay and Clear Lake Clay make up the majority of the Northern site.

Southern Site

The Natural Resources Conservation Service Web Soil Survey identifies the site as primarily underlain by Diablo Clay with slopes of 30 to 50 percent (DdF). The site also contains Alo Clay of 50 to 75 percent slopes (AaG); Clear Lake Clay (Cc); Diablo Clay of 9 to 15 percent slopes (DdD); and Diablo Clay of 15 to 30 percent slopes (DdE) (NRCS 2014). Diablo Clay and Alo Clay make up the majority of the Southern Site with smaller areas of Clear Lake Clay along Camino Tassajara.

Storie Index

The Storie Index is a soil rating based on soil properties that govern a soil's potential for cultivated agriculture in California. Storie Index ratings are combined into six grade classes ranging from Grade 1 (Excellent) of 81 to 100, to Grade 6 (nonagricultural) of 10 or less. As shown in Table 3.2-4, on-site soils range from Grade 4 (poor) to Grade 6 (nonagricultural) on the Storie Index (USDA 2015).

Capability Class

Land capability classification shows, in a general way, the suitability of soils for most kinds of field crops. Soils are grouped according to the limitations for field crops, the risk of damage if they are

used for crops, and the way they respond to management. Capability Classes are designated by numbers one through eight. The numbers indicate progressively greater limitations and narrower choices for practical use. Class 1 soils have slight agricultural limitations, whereas Class 8 soils have limitations that preclude commercial field crop production and that restrict their use to recreational purposes, wildlife habitat, watershed, or aesthetic purposes. Capability classes are provided separately for irrigated and nonirrigated lands. As shown in Table 3.2-4, on-site soil irrigated capability classes range from Class 2 (moderate limitations) to Class 7 (unsuitable for cultivation, uses limited to grazing, forestland, or wildlife habitat), whereas nonirrigated capability classes range from Class 4 (very severe limitations) to Class (USDA 2015).

Table 3.2-4: Storie Index Ratings and Land Capability Class

Location	Soil Type	Storie Index Rating	Irrigated Capability Class	Nonirrigated Capability Class
Northern Site	Diablo Clay	Grade 4 (Poor)	3 to 6 (depending on slope)	4 or 6 (depending on slope)
	Clear Lake Clay	Grade 4 (Poor)	2	4
	Pescadero Clay Loam	Grade 5 (Very poor)	4	4
Southern site	Diablo Clay	Grade 4 (Poor)	3 to 6 (depending on slope)	4 or 6 (depending on slope)
	Alo Clay	Grade 6 (Nonagricultural)	7	7
	Clear Lake Clay	Grade 4(Poor)	2	4
Capability Class definitions				
Class 2: Moderate limitations Class 3: Severe limitations Class 4: Very severe limitations Class 5: Limitations restrict use to pasture, rangeland, forestland, or wildlife habitat		Class 6: Very severe limitations limiting use to pastures, rangeland, forestland, or wildlife habitat Class 7: Very severe limitations restricting use to grazing, forestland, or wildlife habitat		
Source: USDA 2015.				

3.2.3 - Regulatory Framework

Federal

Farmland Protection Policy Act

The purpose of the Federal Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) is to minimize federal actions leading to the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses by ensuring that federal programs are administered in a manner compatible with state government, local government, and private programs designed to protect farmland. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is the agency primarily responsible for implementing the FPPA, which is a voluntary program that provides funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farmland in agricultural uses. The program provides matching funds to state, local, or tribal government entities and nongovernmental

organizations with existing farmland protection programs to purchase conservation easements. Participating landowners agree not to convert the land to nonagricultural uses and retain all rights to the property for future agriculture. A minimum 30-year term is required for conservation easements, and priority is given to applications with perpetual easements. NRCS provides up to 50 percent of the fair market value of the easement.

State

Important Farmland Inventory System and Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

The DOC maintains a statewide inventory of farmlands. These lands are mapped by the Division of Land Resource Protection as part of the FMMP. The maps are updated every 2 years with the use of aerial photographs, a computer mapping system, public review, and field reconnaissance. As described above, farmlands are divided into the following five categories based on their suitability for agriculture: Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Farmland of Local Importance, and Grazing Land.

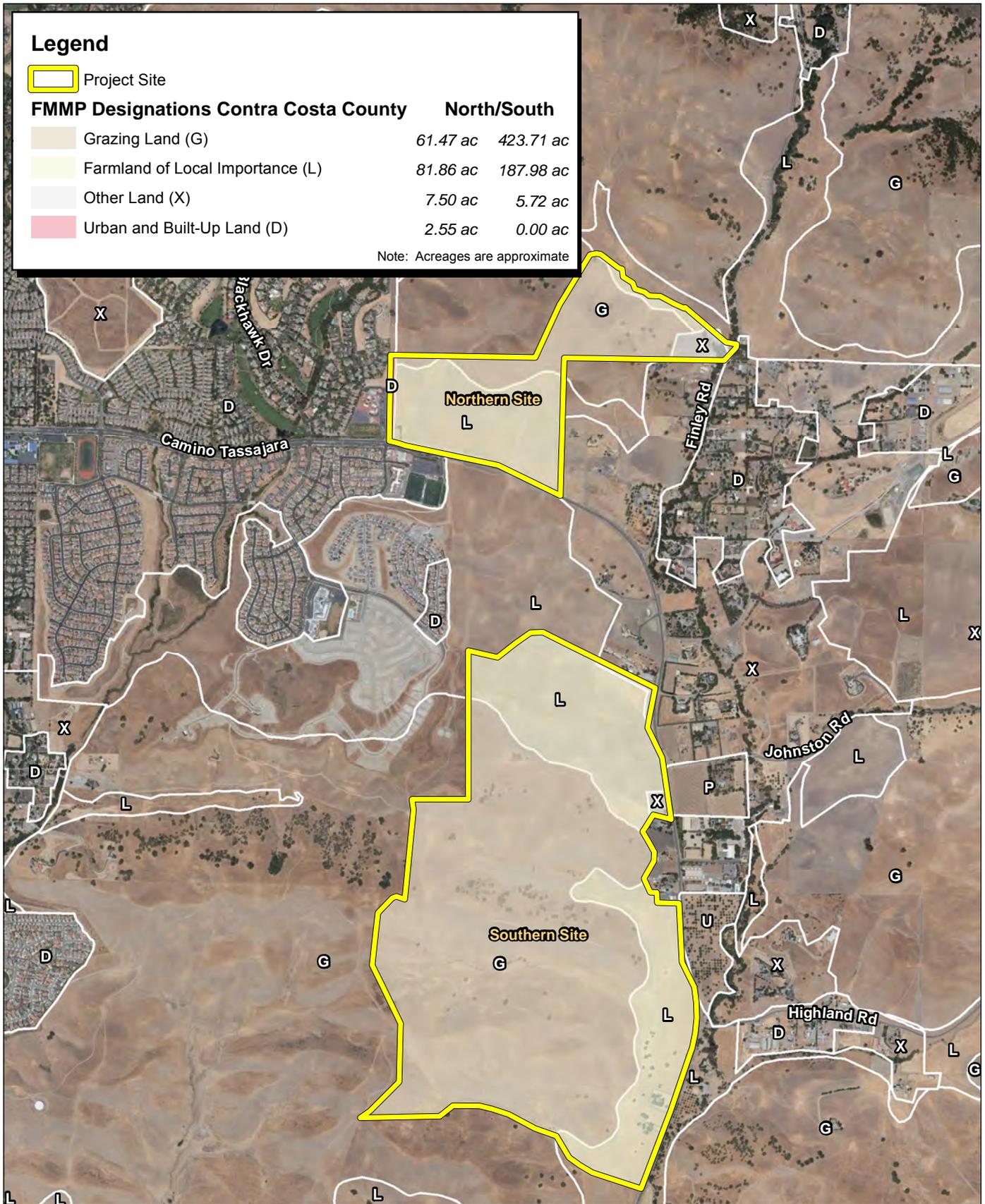
The categories of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Unique Farmland, together, are defined as “agricultural land” or “farmland” by CEQA (PRC §21060.1(a)) and the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, II(a). Other categories used in the FMMP mapping system are “Urban and Built Up Lands,” “Lands Committed to Nonagricultural Use,” and “Other Lands” (lands that do not meet the criteria of any of the other categories).

Williamson Act

As described above, the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly known as the Williamson Act (California Government Code Section 51200, et seq.), enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of promoting the continued use of the relevant land in agricultural or related open space use. In return, landowners receive property tax assessments that are based on farming and open space uses instead of full market value. Local governments receive an annual subvention (subsidy) of forgone property tax revenues from the State via the Open Space Subvention Act of 1971. Amendments to the California State Budget Act of 2009 greatly reduced the Williamson Act Subvention payments, but the Williamson Act Program remains in place and contracts remain in effect.

The Williamson Act empowers local governments to establish “agricultural preserves” consisting of lands devoted to agricultural uses and other compatible uses. Upon establishment of such preserves, the locality may offer to owners of included agricultural land the opportunity to enter into annually renewable contracts that restrict the land to agricultural use for at least 10 years (i.e., the contract continues to run for 10 years following the first date upon which the contract is not renewed). In return, the landowner is guaranteed a relatively stable tax rate, based on the value of the land for agricultural/open space use only, and unaffected by its development potential.

Williamson Act contracts are automatically renewed annually for an additional 1-year period, unless the property owner applies for non-renewal or early cancellation. The Williamson Act also contains limited provisions for cancellation of contracts, and a substantial penalty for the cancellation is assessed.



Legend

Project Site

FMMP Designations Contra Costa County		North/South	
	Grazing Land (G)	61.47 ac	423.71 ac
	Farmland of Local Importance (L)	81.86 ac	187.98 ac
	Other Land (X)	7.50 ac	5.72 ac
	Urban and Built-Up Land (D)	2.55 ac	0.00 ac

Note: Acreages are approximate

Source: ESRI



**Exhibit 3.2-1
Farmland Classifications
for the Tassajara Project**

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Government Code Sections 56016 and 56064 (Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act)

Government Code Section 56016 defines “Agricultural Lands” as land currently used for the purpose of producing an agricultural commodity for commercial purposes, land left fallow under a crop rotational program, or land enrolled in an agricultural subsidy or set-aside program.

Government Code Section 56064 defines “Prime Agricultural Land” as an area of land, whether a single parcel or continuous parcels, that has not been developed for a use other than an agricultural use and that meets any of the following qualifications:

- (a) Land that qualifies, if irrigated, for rating as class I or class II in the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service land use capability classification, whether or not land is actually irrigated, provided that irrigation is feasible.
- (b) Land that qualifies for rating 80 through 100 Storie Index Rating.
- (c) Land that supports livestock used for the production of food and fiber and that has an annual carrying capacity equivalent to at least one animal unit per acre as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture in the National Range and Pasture Handbook, Revision 1, December 2003.
- (d) Land planted with fruit or nut-bearing trees, vines, bushes, or crops that have a nonbearing period of less than five years and that will return during the commercial bearing period on an annual basis from the production of unprocessed agricultural plant production not less than four hundred dollars (\$400) per acre.
- (e) Land that has returned from the production of unprocessed agricultural plant products an annual gross value of not less than four hundred dollars (\$400) per acre for three of the previous five calendar years.

Local

General Plan

The General Plan establishes the following goals and policies that are relevant to agricultural and forest resources.

Land Use Element

- **Goal LU-3-A:** To coordinate land use with circulation, development of other infrastructure facilities, and protection of agriculture and open space, and to allow growth and the maintenance of the County’s quality of life. In such an environment all residential, commercial, industrial, recreational and agricultural activities may take place in safety, harmony, and to mutual advantage.
- **Goal LU-3-G:** To discourage development on vacant rural lands outside of planned urban areas which is not related to agriculture, mineral extraction, wind energy or other appropriate rural uses; discourage subdivision down to minimum parcel size of rural lands that are within, or accessible only through, geologically unstable areas; and to protect open hillsides and significant ridgelines.
- **Goal LU-3-M:** Protect and promote the economic viability of agricultural land.

- **Policy LU-3-12:** Preservation and buffering of agricultural land should be encouraged as it is critical to maintaining a healthy and competitive agricultural economy and assuring a balance of land uses. Preservation and conservation of open space, wetlands, parks, hillsides and ridgelines should be encouraged as it is crucial to preserve the continued availability of unique habitats for wildlife and plants, to protect unique scenery and provide a wide range of recreational opportunities for County residents.
- **Policy LU-3-13:** Promote cooperation between the County and cities to preserve agricultural and open space land.
- **Policy LU-3-14:** Protect prime productive agricultural land from inappropriate subdivisions.

Open Space Element

- **Goal 9-B:** To conserve the open space and natural resources of the County through control of the direction, extent and timing of urban growth.
- **Policy 9-3:** Areas designated for open space shall not be considered as a reserve for urban land uses. In accordance with Measure C-1990, at least 65 percent of all land in the County shall be preserved for agriculture, open space, wetlands, parks and non-urban uses.
- **Policy 9-7:** Open space shall be utilized for public safety, resource conservation and appropriate recreation activities for all segments of the community.
- **Policy 9-9:** The County shall preserve open space lands located outside the Urban Limit Line by declining to authorize requests for general plan amendment studies which would result in redesignation of such lands to urban land use designations. The County shall not designate any open space land located outside the ULL for an urban use. A substantial portion of land developed within the ULL shall be retained for open space, parks and recreational uses.

The General Plan also incorporates an Urban Limit Line (ULL) to establish a line beyond which no urban uses can be established and to facilitate the enforcement of the 65/35 Preservation Standard. One of the factors used to establish the ULL included the location of Class I and II soils outside of the ULL. Rural residential and certain agricultural structures (allowed by applicable zoning), and facilities for public purposes, whether privately or publicly funded or operated in addition to other non-urban uses, are included within the 65 percent non-urban uses in the 65/35 Land Preservation Standard.¹

Ordinance Code 82-1—65/35 Land Preservation Plan

The 65/35 Land Preservation Plan requires that urban development in the County shall be limited to no more than 35 percent of the land in all the County. At least 65 percent of all land in the County shall be preserved for agriculture, open space, wetlands, parks, and other nonurban uses. Ordinance Code Section 82-1.024 requires, to the extent feasible, that the County enter into preservation agreements with cities in the County designed to preserve certain land in the County for agriculture and open space, wetlands or parks.

Ordinance Code 820—Right to Farm

Contra Costa County's Right to Farm Ordinance recognizes that that when non-agricultural land uses occur next to agricultural operations, agricultural nuisance complaints can occur. The purpose of the ordinance is to clarify the circumstances under which agricultural operations may be considered a

¹ See, e.g., General Plan pages 1-9, 3-3, 3-12, 3-13, 3-23, 3-24, 3-27, and 9-3 (examples of non-urban uses).

nuisance and to promote a good neighbor policy by requiring notification of purchasers and users of property adjacent to or near agricultural operations of the inherent potential problems associated with such purchase or residential use. As indicated by the ordinance, agricultural operations and processing that are conducted or maintained on agricultural land for commercial purposes, and in a manner consistent with proper and accepted customs and standards, are not to be considered a nuisance.

3.2.4 - Methodology

FCS evaluated potential Project impacts on agricultural resources through site reconnaissance and review of FMMP maps, Williamson Act maps, NRCS Web Soil Survey data, Project site plans, and applicable plans and policies.

3.2.5 - Thresholds of Significance

According to the CEQA Guidelines' Appendix G Environmental Checklist, to determine whether impacts to aesthetics are significant environmental effects, the following questions are analyzed and evaluated. Would the Project:

- a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?
- b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?
- c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code § 12220(q), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code § 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code § 51104(g))?
(Refer to Section 7, Effects Found not to be Significant.)
- d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? (Refer to Section 7, Effects Found not to be Significant.)
- e) Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?

3.2.6 - Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This section discusses potential environmental impacts associated with the development and operation of the Project and provides feasible mitigation measures where appropriate. As described in Section 2 of this R-DEIR, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is currently being considered to preserve certain land in the county for agriculture and open space, wetlands, or parks. The effect of the MOU would be to continue existing policy, and the MOU would not result in a substantial adverse change to existing conditions with respect to agriculture. The range of actions to be considered pursuant to the MOU were it to be adopted would include promoting agriculture through the purchase of land or easements from willing sellers, through continuing the Williamson Act program and its related tax benefits, as well as through technical support to better manage weeds and water. To the extent that any specific projects that could be considered for funding pursuant to the MOU—such as land conservation, weed management, or groundwater improvements—could have adverse environmental effects, such projects would be subject to separate project-level CEQA review as proposed actions are

defined and funding for them is identified. As the precise location and scope of such projects is not known at this time, further consideration of potential impacts would be speculative.

Conversion of Farmland

Impact AG-1: The Project would not convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use.

Impact Analysis

There is no Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance on the Northern or Southern Sites. As previously discussed, on-site soils are rated Grade 4 (Poor) to Grade 6 (Nonagricultural) by the Storie Index, and Class 4 (very severe limitations) to Class 7 (unsuitable for cultivation, uses limited to grazing, forestland, or wildlife habitat) by the NRCS Nonirrigated Capability Class. The availability and practicality of on-site irrigation is limited and existing topography further limits the Project Site's use for field crops.

As shown on Exhibit 3.2-1, approximately 82 acres of the 155-acre Northern Site is designated as Farmland of Local Importance. The 30-acre Residential Development Area on the Northern Site is designated as Farmland of Local Importance and Urban and Built-Up Land, while the balance of the Northern Site is designated as a combination of Farmland of Local Importance, Grazing Land, and Other Land. The Project would convert approximately 30 acres of Farmland of Local Importance to residential use. With the exception of a perpetual easement to EBRPD over a portion of the Northern Site for a future trail, the majority of the Northern Site outside the Residential Development Area, including the majority of the Farmland of Local Importance, would be deed-restricted to prohibit any future urban uses to be developed outside the Residential Development Area and instead would ensure that said lands are preserved and protected in perpetuity for nonurban uses such as parks, recreation, open space, grazing, scenic values, wetlands, and habitat mitigation.

The Southern Site is designated as a combination of Grazing Land, Farmland of Local Importance, and Other Land. Grazing Land occupies approximately 423 acres, or the majority of the Southern Site, while the northern quarter of the site and areas of generally flat elevation along Camino Tassajara are designated as Farmland of Local Importance. Overall, Farmland of Local Importance constitutes approximately 188 of the Southern Site's 616 acres. No urban development is proposed as part of the Project on the Southern Site. On the contrary, an objective of the Project is to preserve opportunities for ongoing agricultural uses (i.e., grazing) on the Southern Site. Of the Southern Site's 616 acres, approximately 609 acres would be conveyed to the EBRPD (subject to a conservation easement on a portion of the Southern Preservation Area that would need to be acceptable to the applicable resources agencies) for preservation in perpetuity for nonurban uses such as parks, recreation, open space, grazing, scenic, wetlands, and habitat mitigation purposes. Furthermore, no utility infrastructure would be extended to the Southern Site as a part of the Project. Any future development on the Potential Future Fire District Parcel that may be pursued by the SRVFPD in the future would be required to obtain a discretionary land use permit and be non-urban in nature, consistent with the location outside of the ULL and the restrictions of the proposed P-1 zoning, which allows limited agricultural practices and other limited non-urban uses.

In summary, the Project would not convert any Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural uses. The Project would preserve approximately 710 acres of land in perpetuity to ensure the continued use of the majority of the Project Site for park, recreation, agricultural grazing, open space, wetlands, scenic values, and habitat mitigation purposes, consistent with and as allowable by the restrictions of the agriculturally limited on-site soils.

Adjustment of the ULL to incorporate the 30-acre Residential Development Area would require approval by the Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). In accordance with the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg (CKH) Act, LAFCO is required to consider the Project's potential impacts on agricultural land. The CKH Act defines Agricultural Lands and Prime Agricultural Lands as indicated under Section 3.2.3 Regulatory Framework. Because the Project Site is currently used for cattle grazing, it would be considered Agricultural Lands currently used for the purpose of producing an agricultural commodity for commercial purposes.

Consistent with the CKH Act, the Project Site would not be considered Prime Agricultural Lands for the following reasons:

1. While portions of the Project Site consisting of Clear Lake Clay have an irrigated capability class of 2, on-site irrigation is not feasible due to limited groundwater availability.
2. The Project Site's Storrie Index Rating is less than 80.
3. The Project Site's carrying capacity is less than one animal unit per acre.
4. While 11 decayed walnut trees are located within the 30-acre Residential Development Area, they are no longer maintained and do not produce more than \$400 dollars per acre of unprocessed agricultural commodities.
5. While 11 decayed walnut trees are located within the 30-acre Residential Development Area, they are no longer maintained and have not produced more than \$400 dollars per acre for three of the previous five calendar years.

While the Project Site would not be considered Prime Agricultural Land, the Project would result in the conversion of Agricultural Land, as defined by the CKH Act, to non-urban uses.

Contra Costa LAFCO is currently considering adoption of an Agricultural and Open Space Preservation Policy. One of the main purposes of the policy is to provide guidance to the applicant on how to assess the impacts on prime agricultural, agricultural and open space lands of applications submitted to LAFCO and to explain how the applicant intends to mitigate those impacts. As part of the draft Policy, mitigation for annexation of agricultural lands should include, but is not limited to, acquisition or dedication of prime agricultural and agricultural land, development rights, bringing qualified land into an open space plan, open space and agricultural conservation easements to permanently protect adjacent or other prime agricultural, or open space lands within the County.

As noted above, the draft LAFCO policy has not been adopted as of the writing of this R-DEIR. Nevertheless, because the Project includes a total of approximately 710 acres of preservation areas within the Northern and Southern Sites for the purposes of non-urban uses only, (including parks,

recreation, open space, agriculture, grazing, scenic, wetland preservation and creation, and habitat mitigation), the Project can be viewed as consistent with this draft policy given the preservation of this land in connection with the conversion of only 57.29 acres of agricultural land on the Northern Site.²

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Williamson Act or Farmland Zoning Conflict

Impact AG-2: The Project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.

Impact Analysis

As indicated by the Fiscal Year 2012/2013 Contra Costa County Williamson Act Map, the Project Site is not encumbered by a Williamson Act contract (California Department of Conservation 2013). As such, the Project would not conflict with a Williamson Act contract.

The Project Site is designated as Agricultural Land (AL) by the Contra Costa General Plan and is zoned Exclusive Agriculture (A-80) by the Contra Costa County Ordinance Code.

As part of the Project, the 30-acre Residential Development Area would be rezoned to Planned Unit District (P-1), which would allow for the proposed residential development only within the Residential Development Area. The remainder of the Northern Site and all of the Southern Site would also be rezoned to P-1. The Southern Site's P-1 zone would be specified (consistent with the ULL provisions) to allow existing continued agricultural uses³ and other limited nonurban uses on the Potential Future Fire District Parcel to the extent the SRVFPD elected to accept the contingent offer of dedication and proceed with a development plan pursuant to a discretionary land use permit (and would be subject to CEQA review).

For the above reasons, with certification of the EIR and approval of the Project impacts with respect to agricultural zoning conflicts would be less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

² As of the writing of this R-DEIR, LAFCO has not adopted this policy. In the event that such a policy is adopted at such time as the Project submits an annexation application to LAFCO, it would be within LAFCO's discretion to determine how to apply said policy to the Project.

³ Under the existing agricultural zoning for the proposed PD zoning, there are a number of agricultural uses permitted or conditionally permitted, including some that are fairly intensive (e.g., the erection and maintenance of sheds, warehouses, granaries, dehydration plants, hullers, fruit and vegetable packing plants, and buildings for the storage of agricultural products and equipment. The Project's proposed zoning eliminates the ability to conduct a number of these more intensive agricultural uses.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Other Changes Resulting in Farmland Conversion

Impact AG-3: **The Project would not result in other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in the conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use.**

Impact Analysis

The Project does not include changes to the physical existing environment, which, due to their location or nature could result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as defined by the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use.

The development of 125 single-family homes within a small, 30-acre area is consistent with adjacent urban uses. Consistent with Contra Costa County's Right to Farm Ordinance, future residents would be notified, as applicable, of the inherent potential problems associated with adjacent agricultural uses. The permanent protection and preservation of the vast majority of the Project Site (through fee simple transfer to EBRPD as well as recorded deed restrictions) would preserve open space areas and allow continuation of certain less intensive existing agricultural uses. Transfer of the Potential Future Fire District Parcel to SRVFPD as contemplated by the contingent offer may result in a future public safety training facility, but such development would be required to undergo additional CEQA analysis and to obtain a use permit from the County, at its discretion. No utilities or other infrastructure would be extended to the Southern Site as a part of the Project. Furthermore, the Project's permanent protection and preservation of the vast majority of the Project Site for park, recreational, open space, agricultural, scenic, wetlands, and habitat mitigation purposes help to prevent the conversion of other agricultural lands in the vicinity.

As noted above, the majority of the Project Site would be permanently preserved as grazing, open space, park, wetland, scenic, mitigation lands, and other nonurban uses, which is consistent and compatible with adjacent agricultural uses and would not create pressure to convert agricultural lands to urban uses. As such, it is unlikely that the proposed Project would result in the conversion of adjacent farmlands to non-farmland uses. Impacts would be less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is necessary.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

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