
4.13 - Agricultural and Mineral Resources

4.13.1 - Introduction

This section describes the existing agricultural and mineral resources and potential effects from project implementation on the site and its surrounding area. Descriptions and analysis in this section are based on information contained in the following sources

- State of California Department of Conservation. 2007. *Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program*. <http://www.consrv.ca.gov/DLRP/fmmp/Pages/index.aspx>.
- California Department of Conservation Division of Mines and Geology. 1987. *Mineral Land Classification of the Greater Los Angeles Area Special Report 143 Part VII, Classification of Sand and Gravel Resource Areas*.

4.13.2 - Existing Conditions

Agricultural Resources

There are currently no agricultural operations on the project site. Historically the area may have been used for grazing, but constraints on the site with regards to soil type, slope, and other factors make the area unsuitable for other agricultural uses such as farming or crop production. None of the parcels within the project area are under Williamson Act contract.

State Farmland Mapping Program

The California Department of Conservation established the Farming Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) in 1982. The FMMP is a non-regulatory program and provides a consistent and impartial analysis of agricultural land use and land use changes throughout California. The FMMP produces maps and statistical data used for analyzing impacts on California's agricultural resources. Agricultural land is rated according to soil quality and irrigation status; the best quality land is called Prime Farmland with additional categories, including Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Local Importance. The maps are updated every two years with the use of aerial photographs, a computer mapping system, public review, and field reconnaissance.

The FMMP Important Farmland categories are defined as follows:

- **Prime Farmland** is defined by the FMMP as farmland with the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long-term agricultural production. This land has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time in the four years prior to the mapping date.
- **Farmland of Statewide Importance** is defined as farmland similar to Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to store soil moisture. Land

must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.

- **Farmland of Local Importance** is defined as land of importance to the local agricultural economy as determined by each county’s board of supervisors and a local advisory committee.

California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Williamson Act)

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Williamson Act) enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open space use. In return, the landowners receive property tax assessments based on farming and open space uses, as opposed to full market value, thus resulting in a lower tax burden. These contracts are for 10 years at a time, and roll into the next year unless the owner files a “notice of non-renewal.” The purpose of the Williamson Act is to preserve agricultural and open space lands by discouraging premature and unnecessary conversion to urban uses. The minimum preserve size is 100 acres. The landowner can petition to cancel a contract; however, the jurisdiction must make a finding based on substantial evidence that supports the cancellation of the contract. Upon approval, the landowner must pay a fee equal to 12.5 percent of the unrestricted, current fair market valuation of the property. No parcels within the project site are currently under Williamson Act contract.

LESA Model

The California Department of Conservation (CDC) created the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) Model in 1997 as a quantitative method for evaluating the effects of converting agricultural land to non-agricultural uses. Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines states that the LESA Model may be used to determine whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant.

The only significant agricultural soil on the project site is Hanford coarse sandy loam (HaD) classified as a Class III soil by the CDC. This strongly sloping soil (9 to 15 percent) is found locally on alluvial fans and terraces that have short side slopes, such as the project site. It has a profile similar to the one described as representative of the series, but the surface later is brown coarse sandy loam about 10 inches thick. Included with it in mapping are areas of Greenfield sandy loam and Ramona sandy loam that each make up about 5 percent of the total area. Runoff is medium, and the hazard of erosion is medium to high if the soil is left without plant cover. This soil is suited for citrus, grapes, and dry-farmed small grains under irrigated conditions. With only 64.2 acres of HaD soils onsite, and with the other physical limitations previously described, the project site would have a LESA score well below any consideration for significant agricultural resources.

Mineral Resources

The Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) requires the State Geologist to research and prepare reports that designate mineral deposits of statewide and regional significance. The California Geological Survey has produced a report and Mineral Land Classification Map. The Classification

Map designates areas where important Production-Consumption deposits occur, and are categorized in Mineral Resource Zones (MRZs). MRZs are defined as follows:

- MRZ-1: Areas where adequate information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that little likelihood exists for their presence.
- MRZ-2: Areas where adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that a high likelihood for their presence exists.
- MRZ-3: Areas containing mineral deposits, the significance of which cannot be evaluated from available data.
- MRZ-4: Areas where available information is inadequate for assignment to any other MRZ zone.

According to the California Department of Conservation’s Mineral Land Classification report for the area, the project site occurs within an area that has been classified as MRZ-3. These are areas where the significance of mineral deposits cannot be evaluated from available data. However, no mineral production currently occurs on or adjacent to the project area. Soil composition, depth-to-bedrock, and other factors make the site unattractive for sand and gravel operations, and other valuable mineral resource constituents are not known to occur in the project area.

General Plan Policies

Since the project site does not contain significant agricultural or mineral resources, the project does not need to be evaluated relative to any General Plan goals or policies on these resources.

NOP Comments

No comments were received during the NOP period or during the scoping meeting on agricultural or mineral resources.

4.13.3 - Thresholds of Significance

Agricultural Resources

According to the CEQA Guidelines’ Appendix G, Environmental Checklist, to determine whether project impacts are significant environmental effects upon agricultural resources, the questions below are analyzed and evaluated. Would the project:

- a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, 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) Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?

Mineral Resources

According to the CEQA Guidelines' Appendix G, Environmental Checklist, to determine whether project impacts are significant environmental effects upon mineral resources, the questions below are analyzed and evaluated. Would the project:

- a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?
- b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?

4.13.4 - Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This section discusses potential impacts associated with the development of the project and provides mitigation measures where appropriate.

Agricultural Resources

Convert Farmland to Non-Agricultural Use

Impact AG-1	The Proposed Project would not convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use.
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Impact Analysis

According to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) maps prepared by the California Resources Agency, there is no designated Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance on the project site or adjacent areas. In addition, the site does not contain enough prime agricultural soils or other physical characteristics that would yield a significant LESA Model score. Therefore, the site does not contain any significant agricultural resources.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

No impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

No impact.

Conflict with Existing Zoning or Williamson Act Contract

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

According to the City of San Bernardino General Plan, the project area is not designated for agricultural use. There are no active Williamson Act contracts in place for any portion of the project area or adjacent areas.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

No impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

No impact.

Other Changes Resulting in Farmland Conversion to Non-Agricultural Use

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

Impact Analysis

Agricultural production is not occurring on the project site or within the surrounding area. Therefore, the project would not place constraints on adjacent parcels or otherwise impede agricultural production in the immediate vicinity.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

No impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

No impact.

Mineral Resources

Loss of Known Mineral Resource

Impact MR-1 The Proposed Project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state.

Impact Analysis

According to the California Department of Conservation’s Mineral Land Classification report for the area, the project site occurs within an area that has been classified as MRZ-3. These are areas where the significance of mineral deposits cannot be evaluated from available data. However, it should be noted that no mineral production currently occurs on or adjacent to the project area. Soil composition, depth-to-bedrock, and other factors make the site unattractive for sand and gravel operations. These types of operations are better suited to valley bottoms and arroyo channels, not the mountain foothills

where the project is located. Other valuable mineral resource constituents are not known to occur in the project area.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant.

Loss of Mineral Resource Recovery Site

Impact MR-2	The Proposed Project would not result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan.
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Impact Analysis

According to the Mineral Resource Zone map (Figure NRC-3) of the City of San Bernardino General Plan, the project site is not identified or designated as a mineral resource recovery area.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

No impact.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

No impact.