3.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

This section addresses the potential impacts to agriculture and forestry resources associated with implementation of the proposed Project. This section includes: a description of the existing agricultural and forestry uses in the proposed Project area; a summary of applicable regulations related to agriculture and forestry resources; and an evaluation of the potential impacts of the proposed Project related to agriculture and forestry resources in and around the proposed Project area. There would be no impacts to agriculture and forestry resources, and no mitigation is required.

3.2.1 Environmental Setting

Regional Setting

According to the California Department of Conservation’s (DOC) *2014–2016 California Farmland Conversion Report*, Southern California had 2,943,269 acres of Important Farmlands in 2016. The Southern California region converted approximately 11,528 acres of agricultural land to Urban and Built-Up Lands between 2014 and 2016, second only to urban conversions in the San Joaquin Valley region. Southern California has continued to experience a decline in farmland as land is converted to non-agricultural use. As of 2016, Southern California had approximately 1,604,189 acres of Urban and Built-Up Land (DOC 2016a). Definitions for DOC’s Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) Important Farmland classifications are provided below in Section 3.2.2, Regulatory Framework.

In 2018, Los Angeles County had 288,162 acres of total agricultural land, of which 27,465 acres were classified with an Important Farmland category and 260,697 acres were classified as Grazing Land (DOC 2018, Table A-13). From 2016 to 2018, Los Angeles County experienced a net loss of approximately 1,093 acres of Important Farmland in Los Angeles County and 1,211 acres of Grazing Land, resulting in a net loss of 2,304 acres of agricultural lands (DOC 2018).

When considering the conversion of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Local Importance during the period of 2016 to 2018, approximately 95 percent of such lands were converted to Grazing Lands, and approximately 1 percent were converted to Urban and Built-Up Lands. From 2016 to 2018, 4,918 acres were urbanized in Los Angeles County, with 20 acres converted from Important Farmland to Urban and Built-Up Land and 2,904 converted from Grazing Land to Urban and Built-Up Land (DOC 2018, Table A-13).

Project Area Setting

Agriculture

The proposed Project area is located within the Silver Lake Community of the City of Los Angeles within an area containing little to no significant agricultural resources. As such, the City of Los Angeles has no land designated for Agriculture within the proposed Project area (City of Los Angeles 2001, 2004, 2021).
The DOC FMMP maps and ranks important farmland in California. As determined by the DOC’s FMMP database, the proposed Project area is designated as Urban and Built-Up Land (DOC 2021a).

**Forestry Resources**

Contrary to the limited amounts of designated agricultural land, Los Angeles County contains nearly 650,000 acres of forest land between the unincorporated areas of the Angeles National Forest and a small portion of the Los Padres National Forest. The Angeles National Forest stretches across Los Angeles County in two sections encompassing the San Gabriel Mountain Range, and is 1,018 square miles or 25 percent of the land area of Los Angeles County. The U.S. Forest Service is responsible for managing public forest lands; while nearly 40,000 acres are privately-owned, where the County retains responsibility for land use regulation (County of Los Angeles 2015).

The proposed Project area is located approximately 10.5 miles southwest of the Angeles National Forest. The proposed Project area does not overlap with these forest lands (USDA 2021). There is no land designated or zoned as Forest or Timberland within the proposed Project area. Urban forestry resources, including impacts to protected trees are addressed in Section 3.4, *Biological Resources*, of this Draft EIR.

**Williamson Act Contracts**

Williamson Act contracts, also known as agricultural preserves, create an arrangement whereby private landowners contract with counties and cities to voluntarily restrict their land to agricultural and compatible open-space uses. Williamson Act Contracts Land maps depict Williamson Act enrollments throughout the state and are prepared by the DOC in conjunction with local jurisdictions. The 2016 Williamson Act Contract Land map does not identify any lands within the proposed Project area. The nearest Williamson Act Contract Lands are in the northern portion of Simi Valley over 30 miles away (DOC 2016b).

### 3.2.2 Regulatory Framework

#### State

**California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program:**

The DOC, under the Division of Land Resource Protection, has established the FMMP, which monitors the conversion of the state’s farmland to and from agricultural use. The FMMP maintains an inventory of state agricultural land and updates its “Important Farmland Series Maps” every 2 years. The FMMP map series identifies eight classifications and uses a minimum mapping unit size of 10 acres. The FMMP also produces a biannual report on the amount of land converted from agricultural to non-agricultural use. Important farmlands are divided into the following categories based on their suitability for agriculture:

- **Prime Farmland.** Prime Farmland is land with the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics able to sustain long-term production of agricultural crops. This land has produced irrigated crops at sometime within the 4 years prior to the mapping date.
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- **Farmland of Statewide Importance.** Farmland of Statewide Importance is land that meets the criteria for Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings such as greater slopes or lesser soil moisture capacity.

- **Unique Farmland.** Unique Farmland has even lesser quality soils and produces the state’s leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated, but also includes non-irrigated orchards and vineyards.

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

- **Grazing Land.** Grazing Land is land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock.

- **Other Lands.** This land does not meet the criteria of any of the other categories.

*California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection*

The DOC applies the soil classifications created by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to identify and plan for California’s agricultural land resources. The DOC employs a variety of classification systems to determine the suitability of soils for agricultural use. The two most widely used systems are the Capability Classification System and the California Revised Storie Index. The Capability Classification System classifies soils from Class I to Class VIII based on their ability to support agriculture with Class I being the highest quality soil. The California Revised Storie Index is used mainly for irrigated agriculture and is based on crop productivity data. For the California Revised Storie Index, Grade 1 soils are considered “excellent,” and Grade 2 soils are considered “good” (O’Geen et al. 2008).

*Williamson Act*

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, also known as the Williamson Act, is designed to preserve agricultural and open space lands by discouraging their premature and unnecessary conversion to urban uses. Williamson Act contracts, also known as agricultural preserves, create an arrangement whereby private landowners contract with counties and cities to voluntarily restrict their land to agricultural and compatible open-space uses. The vehicle for these agreements is a rolling term 10-year contract (DOC 2021b). In return, restricted parcels are assessed for tax purposes at a rate consistent with their actual use, rather than potential market value. To cancel a Williamson Act contract, either the local government or the landowner can initiate the nonrenewal process. A “notice of nonrenewal” starts a 9-year nonrenewal period. During the nonrenewal process, the annual tax assessment gradually increases. At the end of the 9-year nonrenewal period, the contract is terminated. Contracts renew automatically every year unless the nonrenewal process is initiated. Williamson Act contracts can be divided into the following categories: Prime Agricultural Land, Non-Prime Agricultural Land, Open Space Easement, Built Up Land, and Agricultural Land in Non-Renewal.

*Public Resources Code Section 21060.1*

Public Resources Code Section 21060.1 defines “Agricultural land” for the purposes of assessing environmental impacts using the FMMP. The FMMP was established in 1982 to assess the
location, quality, and quantity of agricultural lands and the conversion of these lands. The FMMP provides guidance for the analysis of agricultural and land use changes throughout California.

**California Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)**

The Public Resources Code defines “Forest land” under Section 12220(g) as land that can support 10 percent native tree cover of any species, including hardwoods, under natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and other public benefits. Projects are subject to this code if there are any potentially significant changes to existing areas zoned as forest land.

**California Public Resources Code Section 4526**

The Public Resources Code defines “Timberland” as land, other than land owned by the federal government and land designated by the board as experimental forest land, which is available for, and capable of, growing a crop of trees of any commercial species used to produce lumber and other forest products, including Christmas trees. Commercial species shall be determined by the board on a district basis after consultation with the district committees and others. Projects may have significant impacts to timberland if the project conflicts with existing zoning.

**California Government Code Section 51104(g)**

The California Government Code defines “Timberland production zone” under Section 51104(g) as an area which has been zoned pursuant to Sections 51112 or 51113 and is devoted to and used for growing and harvesting timber, or for growing and harvesting timber and compatible uses, as defined in subdivision (h) of the Government Code 51104. Projects may significantly impact timberland resources if the project conflicts with existing areas zoned for timberland production.

### 3.2.3 Significance Thresholds and Criteria

The significance criteria used to evaluate the proposed Project impacts to agriculture and forestry resources are based on Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. According to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the proposed Project would have a significant impact if it would:

- 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. (Refer to Impact 3.2-1)
- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract. (Refer to Impact 3.2-2)
- Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g)). (Refer to Impact 3.2-3)
- Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. (Refer to Impact 3.2-4)
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- Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. (Refer to Impact 3.2-5)

The 2006 L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide does not include thresholds of significance pertaining to Agriculture and Forestry Resources.

3.2.4 Project Design Features

No specific project design features are proposed with regard to agriculture and forestry resources.

3.2.5 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Prime Farmland

Impact 3.2-1: Would the proposed Project 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?

Construction / Operation

According to the Department of Conservation’s FMMP, the proposed Project area is located within Urban and Built-up Land and does not contain Farmland. As a result, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in the conversion of any Farmland to non-agricultural use. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures:
None Required

Significance Determination:
No Impact

Williamson Act Contracts

Impact 3.2-2: Would the proposed Project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

Construction / Operation

There are no active Williamson Act Contracts within the proposed Project area; therefore, no impacts to Williamson Act Contracts would occur.

Mitigation Measures:
None Required

Significance Determination:
No Impact
Forest Land Zoning

Impact 3.2-3: Would the proposed Project conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104{g})?

Construction / Operation

The closest forest land to the proposed Project area is the Angeles National Forest located approximately 10.5 miles to the northeast. The proposed Project area would not be located on, or immediately adjacent to forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production. Therefore, the proposed Project would not conflict with existing zoning or cause rezoning of these land uses. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures:
None Required

Significance Determination:
No Impact

Loss of Forest Land

Impact 3.2-4: Would the proposed Project result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

Construction / Operation

The proposed Project area would not be located within or adjacent to forest land; therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. No impact would occur.

Mitigation Measures:
None Required

Significance Determination:
No Impact

Farmland Conversion

Impact 3.2-5: Would the proposed Project involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

Construction / Operation

The proposed Project area would not be located on, or immediately adjacent to, Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance as defined by the FMMP. Therefore, proposed Project activities would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract. The proposed Project would not result in changes to the existing zoning
or environment that, due to their location or nature, would result in conversion of farmland to 
non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. No impact would occur.

**Mitigation Measures:**
None Required

**Significance Determination:**
No Impact

**Cumulative Impact**

**Impact 3.2-6: Would the proposed Project construction and operation, when considered 
with related projects in the geographic scope, result in a cumulatively considerable impact 
to agriculture and forestry resources?**

A cumulatively considerable impact on agriculture and forestry resources would result if the 
project would contribute to a significant cumulative impact related to conversion of farmland to 
non-agricultural use; a conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act 
contract; a conflict with existing zoning for forest land or timberland; conversion of forest land to 
non-forest use; or other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or 
nature, could result in conversion of farmland or forest land. As discussed at the beginning of 
Section 3.2, the Project site would not be located on, or immediately adjacent to, Prime Farmland, 
Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance as defined by the FMMP. The Project 
site is not currently being used for agriculture and does not contain agricultural resources that 
meet the Prime and Statewide soil criteria, as defined by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring 
Program. Additionally, implementation of the 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 or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. Therefore, the 
Project’s contribution to cumulative impacts would not be cumulatively considerable.

**Mitigation Measures:**
None Required

**Significance Determination:**
No Impact

**3.2.6 Summary of Impacts**

Table 3.2-1 summarizes the impact significance determinations related to agriculture and forestry 
resources.
### TABLE 3.2-1

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED PROJECT IMPACTS TO AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Mitigation Measure</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.2-1: Prime Farmland</td>
<td>None Required</td>
<td>NI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2-2: Williamson Act Contracts</td>
<td>None Required</td>
<td>NI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2-3: Forest Land Zoning</td>
<td>None Required</td>
<td>NI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2-4: Loss of Forest Land</td>
<td>None Required</td>
<td>NI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2-5: Farmland Conversion</td>
<td>None Required</td>
<td>NI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2-6: Cumulative</td>
<td>None Required</td>
<td>NI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES:** NI = No Impact, no mitigation proposed; LTS = Less than Significant, no mitigation proposed; LTSM = Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated; SU = Significant and Unavoidable

### 3.2.7 References


3. Environmental Setting, Impact Analysis, and Mitigation Measures

3.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources


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