

## 3.2 AGRICULTURE AND FARMLAND

This section describes the following within the existing City boundary:

- environmental setting (existing conditions and regulatory setting) for agriculture and farmland relating to the proposed project;
- the impacts associated with agriculture and farmland that would result from the proposed project; and
- mitigation measures that would reduce these impacts.

The setting, impacts, and mitigation measures for the future service areas are described in Chapter 4.0, "Future Service Areas." Chapter 5.0, "Alternatives to the Proposed Project," discusses the impacts and appropriate mitigation measures of the alternatives to the proposed project.

### 3.2.1 Existing Conditions

The term *agriculture* is defined as: (1) sites zoned for agriculture by the County of Santa Barbara at the time of incorporation of the City in 2002; (2) sites that are or were used for agricultural production that are devoid of structures that prevent or limit the continued or resumed use of the land for agricultural purposes; and/or (3) sites with soils or other characteristics that make them suitable for agricultural activities and are devoid of structures or other alterations that prevent or limit the use of the land for agricultural purposes.

#### 3.2.1.1 State of California

Within the State of California, there are five types of important farmland as defined by the Department of Conservation: Prime, Statewide Importance, Unique, Local Importance, and Grazing Land. *Prime Farmland* has the best combination of soil quality, growing season, and moisture for sustaining long-term agriculture and must have been in irrigated production sometime during a 4-year period. *Farmland of Statewide Importance* is similar to Prime Farmland, but with some minor problems like less moisture or steeper slopes. It also must have been used for irrigated agriculture sometime during a 4-year period. *Unique Farmland* has lesser quality soils but is used for specific crops with high economic value that are particularly suited to that type of land. The crops may or may not be irrigated. *Farmland of Local Importance* is determined by each county's board of supervisors as important for the local agricultural economy. Farmland of Local Importance is either currently producing, or has the capability of production, but does not meet the criteria of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland.<sup>1</sup> *Grazing Land* is land with existing vegetation that makes it suitable for the raising of livestock.

There are several State programs to encourage the long-term protection of farmland. Established in 1965, the Williamson Act provides tax incentives to landowners who put their land under 10-year contracts that restrict development during that time period. Farmland Security Zones are areas within agricultural preserves that receive greater tax benefits (valued

<sup>1</sup> The County of Santa Barbara considers Farmland of Local Importance to include all dryland farming areas and permanent pasture (if the soils were not eligible for either Prime or Statewide). Dryland farming includes various cereal grains (predominantly wheat, barley, and oats), sudan, and many varieties of beans.

at 65 percent of the Williamson Act valuation or 65 percent of its Proposition 13 valuation, whichever is lower) in return for entering into a 20-year contract. The California Farmland Conservancy Program began in 1996 and provides grant funding for agricultural conservation easements. The Department of Conservation's Division of Land Resource Protection manages both the Williamson Act and the California Farmland Conservancy Program.

Despite all of these actions and programs to protect agricultural properties, California farmland continues to be converted to urban uses at an increasing rate. The American Farmland Trust's report "Farming on the Edge" lists three prime farming regions in California among the top 20 in the Nation as most threatened by urban encroachment: the Central Valley (#1); the Central California Coastal Valleys, which includes Goleta (#15); and the Imperial Valley (#17) (California Department of Conservation 2003).

### **3.2.1.2 Santa Barbara County**

#### ***Agriculture and Farmland Inventory***

Over 90 percent of Santa Barbara County is open land, either agriculture or developed or undeveloped open space. Agriculture is the County's largest production industry and third largest employer. Over half of the County's open lands are privately owned agricultural lands. The Federal Government holds the second largest component of open lands. The remaining open lands, preserves, and urban parks make up just 2 percent of the County's open lands. Only 12 acres of urban agriculture are permanently preserved in Santa Barbara County (Santa Barbara County Planning and Development 2002a. In 2004, the County of Santa Barbara had nearly 720,000 acres of agricultural land, including the following:

- 67,774 acres of Prime Farmland;
- 12,380 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance;
- 35,136 acres of Unique Farmland;
- 20,836 acres of Farmland of Local Importance; and
- 583,310 acres of Grazing Land.

Agriculture is one of Santa Barbara County's major producing industries with more than 710,000 acres under cultivation and gross production valued at over \$900 million in 2004 (County of Santa Barbara 2005). The South Coast agricultural area, which stretches from Gaviota to Carpinteria and covers about 106,000 acres, accounts for about one third of the County's gross income from agriculture.<sup>2</sup>

Between 2000 and 2004, the County experienced a decrease in overall agricultural acreage (over 2,700 acres), and an increase in overall value of agricultural commodities (nearly \$168 million). The following changes in acreage and values occurred for the various crop types (Santa Barbara County 2005):

- vegetables decreased by 1,308 acres, and increased in value by \$21,079,667;
- field crops decreased by 5,914 acres, and decreased in value by \$2,750,593;
- fruit and nut crops have increased by 4,761 acres, and increased in value by \$112,472,038;

<sup>2</sup> Bill Gillette, Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commissioner.

- nursery products have decreased by 378 acres, and increased in value by \$35,369,050;
- seed crops have increased by 93 acres and increased in value by \$3,099,415;
- livestock and poultry have increased in value by \$5,661,464; and
- livestock, poultry, dairy and apiary products have decreased in value by \$7,043,046.

In 2004, the leading commodities in the County were strawberries (\$186.1 million), broccoli (\$113.2 million), wine grapes (\$83.4 million), head lettuce (\$51.1 million), and cauliflower (\$35.8 million). The uniqueness and wide variety of microclimates throughout the County makes possible a great diversity in agricultural production, supporting the County's agricultural income.

Recent trends of land use conversion within Santa Barbara County are summarized in Table 3.2-1. Between 2002 and 2004, over 9,000 acres of agricultural land was lost, including 2,196 net acres of agricultural land that were changed to Urban and Built-up Land (952 acres) and Other Land (1,244 acres). The majority of the agricultural land that was converted from agricultural land use was Grazing Land (3,854 total acres) and Farmland of Local Importance (3,035 acres).

**TABLE 3.2-1  
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY SUMMARY AND CHANGE BY LAND USE CATEGORY  
2002-2004**

| Land Use Category                  | Total Acreage Inventoried |                  | 2002-04 Acreage Change |                  |                       |                     |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
|                                    | 2002                      | 2004             | Acres Lost (-)         | Acres Gained (+) | Total Acreage Changed | Net Acreage Changed |
| Prime Farmland                     | 66,460                    | 67,774           | 1,365                  | 2,679            | 4,044                 | 1,314               |
| Farmland of Statewide Importance   | 11,862                    | 12,380           | 175                    | 693              | 868                   | 518                 |
| Unique Farmland                    | 33,936                    | 35,136           | 623                    | 1,823            | 2,446                 | 1,200               |
| Farmland of Local Importance       | 23,088                    | 20,836           | 3,035                  | 783              | 3,818                 | -2,252              |
| <i>Important Farmland Subtotal</i> | <i>135,346</i>            | <i>136,126</i>   | <i>5,198</i>           | <i>5,978</i>     | <i>11,176</i>         | <i>780</i>          |
| Grazing Land                       | 586,286                   | 583,310          | 3,854                  | 878              | 4,732                 | -2,976              |
| <b>Agricultural Land Total</b>     | <b>721,632</b>            | <b>719,436</b>   | <b>9,052</b>           | <b>6,856</b>     | <b>15,908</b>         | <b>-2,196</b>       |
| Urban and Built-up Land            | 61,076                    | 62,028           | 36                     | 988              | 1,024                 | 952                 |
| Other Land                         | 252,843                   | 254,087          | 1,058                  | 2,302            | 3,360                 | 1,244               |
| Water Area                         | 4,264                     | 4,264            | 0                      | 0                | 0                     | 0                   |
| <b>Total Area Inventoried</b>      | <b>1,039,815</b>          | <b>1,039,815</b> | <b>10,146</b>          | <b>10,146</b>    | <b>20,292</b>         | <b>0</b>            |

Source: California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection. 2005. County, Regional & Statewide Farmland Conversion Tables: Table A-30 Santa Barbara County 2002-2004 Land Use Conversion. Available at [http://www.consrv.ca.gov/DLRP/fmmp/pubs/2002\\_2004/conversion\\_tables/sbacon04.xls](http://www.consrv.ca.gov/DLRP/fmmp/pubs/2002_2004/conversion_tables/sbacon04.xls). Accessed on April 3, 2006.

### **Protection of Agricultural Resources—Land**

Between 1992 and 2000, 4,352 acres of County farmland were converted to nonagricultural uses. In an effort to maintain viable lands and agricultural productivity within the County, approximately 73 percent of the agriculturally zoned land in the County is under Williamson Act

contracts (refer to Section 3.2.2.1). Of that 73 percent, none of the contracted parcels are located in the City of Goleta. The County also has "Right to Farm" ordinances that protect farmers and ranchers from issues and conflicts that could arise as rural and urban uses come into closer contact with each other.

Qualifications for lands to be designated as agricultural preserves are found in "Criteria for Agricultural Preserves," adopted by the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors. As of January 1, 2003, there were 2,200 assessor's parcels enrolled in 1,222 individual contracts in the County's Agricultural Preserve Program, encompassing approximately 555,000 acres throughout the County. Close to 50 percent of the agricultural lands in the South Coast region are enrolled in the Agricultural Preserve Program, primarily in the Carpinteria and Goleta valleys (County of Santa Barbara 2005).

The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County has been successful in negotiating several conservation easements on large agricultural properties within the county, including the protection of 105 acres on Rancho Rinconada in Buellton, Rancho Dos Vistas (1,406 acres), La Paloma Ranch (750 acres) and El Capitan Ranch (650 acres) all on the Gaviota Coast, and Fairview Gardens (11.6 acres) in the City of Goleta. Fairview Gardens is currently in active agricultural production and has an operating produce stand on site; it is the only agricultural property in the entire Goleta area currently protected by an existing conservation easement.

### ***Organic Farming***

In 2004, there were 60 registered organic farms in the County growing over 50 different vegetables and 30 different fruit and nut crops. To be "legally" organic, the farms must register and perform required soil testing, record keeping, and periodic monitoring by a third-party organization. Organic farmers utilize organic principles as required by the California Organic Products Act of 2004, and may not use pesticides and herbicides on soil, crops, or livestock, and will use alternative pest controls such as beneficial insects.

#### **3.2.1.3 City of Goleta**

Located in the Goleta Valley, the City of Goleta has a benign climate and extremely fertile soil allowing profitable year-round cultivation of a wide variety of crops and the raising of livestock. Over the past 50 years, most of the orchards and row crop areas in the valley floor have been replaced with residential and business development. The City of Goleta currently contains 408.8 acres of agricultural land within its city limits. Figure 3.2-1, Existing Agricultural Lands and Proposed Land Use Designations, identifies existing agricultural areas within the City of Goleta. Figure 3.2-2 identifies important farmland types in the City. There are no Williamson Act lands in the City.

The agricultural land remaining in the City of Goleta contains a variety of agricultural uses ranging from truck farms and greenhouses to avocado orchards and lemons. Major agricultural production still occurs on the south facing slopes and hillsides, most of them covered with orchards of lemon and avocado trees. Farms in the canyons and along the coastal plain grow a variety of fruits and vegetables, many of which are organically grown. Goleta plants and produce are shipped throughout the Nation and the World, aiding the County, State, and Nation in their positions of agricultural dominance and providing products that are difficult to grow in most other locations.

Agricultural activities in and around the City of Goleta are generally divided along Cathedral Oaks Road, with more urban agriculture located to the south and more rural agriculture located to the north. Within the urban areas, agricultural activities generally occur on smaller parcels that are completely or partially surrounded by urban development. A wide diversity of crops are grown in the more urbanized portions of Goleta, including row crops, lemon and avocado orchards, nurseries, and greenhouses for cut flowers, house plants, etc. Agricultural uses in the rural areas surrounding the City of Goleta primarily consist of avocado and lemon orchards, row crops, and specialty crops.

Although it would appear that avocados and lemons dominate the agricultural production in and around the City, the wide variety of soil types and microclimates found in the area allow a range of products from the subtropical like cherimoyas, bananas, and all types of citrus, to the typical like broccoli, corn, strawberries, squashes, lettuces, apricots, and tomatoes. Greenhouse operations produce a variety of ornamental plants and flowers, and local beekeeping operations produce and sell honey and honeycomb.

### ***Agriculture and Farmland Inventory***

Agricultural production in the City is primarily distributed among ten distinct active ranches or farms. The 290.6-acre Bishop Ranch is one of the City's primary agricultural resource areas. A summary of each of the resource areas is provided in Table 3.2-2 and is followed by a more detailed description. Refer to Figure 3.2-1 for a map of urban and rural farmland resources.

The agricultural land within the City includes 67.5 acres of Prime Farmland, 0 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance, 42.5 acres of Unique Farmland, 163.8 acres of Farmland of Local Importance, and 101.1 acres that have not been designated according to the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Land Capability Classification (LCC) indicates the suitability of soils for most kinds of crops. Soils are rated from Class I to Class VIII, with soils having the fewest limitations receiving the highest rating of Class I. Classes I and II are considered to be prime agricultural soils because they impose few limitations on agricultural production, and almost all crops can be grown successfully on these soils. More limited agricultural soils are grouped into Classes III and IV either because fewer crops can be grown on these soils, special conservation and production measures are required, or both these conditions exist. Classes V, VI, and VII include soils that are suited primarily for rangeland. Finally, soils and landforms that are unsuited for agricultural use are placed in Class VIII. (County of Santa Barbara 2002).

One of the criteria for the designation of prime agricultural soils requires land to qualify for rating as a Class I or Class II land use capability classification. There are five main soil associations in Goleta (See Figure 3.2-3), including:

- Goleta-Elder-Agueda association, which consists of nearly level to moderately sloping, well-drained sandy loams, fine sandy loams, loams, and silty clay loams on floodplains and alluvial fans in valleys;
- Camarillo-Aquepts flooded association, which consists of nearly level, poorly drained and very poorly drained fine sandy loams on low floodplains and tidal flats;
- Milipitas-Positas-Conception association, which consists of nearly level to steep, moderately well-drained fine sandy loams on terraces;

- Concepcion-Botella association, which consists of nearly level to steep, moderately well-drained and well-drained loamy sands, fine sandy loams, and silty clay loams on terraces and in small valleys; and
- Lodo-Sespe-Todos association, which consists of strongly sloping to very steep, somewhat excessively drained and well-drained gravelly clay loams and clay loams on uplands.

Table 3.2-2 identifies the soil types and classes for each of the agricultural parcels within the City of Goleta. The agricultural land within the City includes 73 acres of Class I Soils, 106.9 acres of Class II Soils, 133.6 acres of Class III Soils, 57.8 acres of Class IV Soils, 0 acres of Class V Soils, 13.4 acres of Class VI Soils, 10.3 acres of Class VII Soils, and 13.9 acres of Class VIII Soils.

**TABLE 3.2-2  
SUMMARY OF CITY OF GOLETA MAJOR AGRICULTURAL  
AND FARMLAND RESOURCES**

| Ranch/Farm Name                            | Size (acres) | Soil Type/<br>acres   | Farmland<br>Classification/<br>acres              | Current Use                               |
|--|--------------|---|---|---|
| Ellwood Canyon<br>(Site #1)                | 31.5         | GdA 11.8<br>MeF2 9.2<br>MeC 2.6<br>DaC 1.8<br>GU 2.5<br>AhE2 2.9<br>AhF2 0.8                            | D 0.4<br>P 15.4<br>X 15.7                         | Orchards, Row Crops,<br>Greenhouse        |
| Couvillion<br>(Site #2)                    | 13.9         | AhF2 1.4<br>DaC 11.9<br>DaD 0.5<br>GU 0.1   | D 2.6<br>P 11.3                                   | Fallow                                    |
| Roman Catholic<br>Archbishops<br>(Site #3) | 9.4          | AaA 3.9<br>MeC 0.1<br>MeD2 4.1<br>DaC 1.3   | D 0.9<br>P 3.1<br>U 5.3                           | Row Crops                                 |
| Bishop Ranch<br>(Site #4)                  | 290.6        | GcA 44.7<br>MeD2 32.9<br>AaA 8.5<br>AaC 5.8<br>MeE2 11.2<br>MeC 119.5<br>DaC 48.1<br>DaD 10.9<br>GU 8.8 | D 2.96<br>P 32.6<br>U 6.53<br>L 163.82<br>X 85.54 | Avocado Orchard, Fallow,<br>Lemon Orchard |
| Philip<br>(Site #5)                        | 6.6          | GcA 3.6<br>GU 2.5<br>GdA 0.5  | D 1.48<br>P 5.08                                  | Avocado Orchard                           |
| Herold<br>(Site #6)                        | 9.4          | AhE2 6.4<br>MeF2 1.1<br>MeD2 1.9  | D 1.86<br>U 6.83<br>X 0.74                        | Avocado Orchard                           |

*(continued on next page)*

**TABLE 3.2-2 CONTINUED**

| Ranch/Farm Name   | Size (acres)   | Soil Type/ acres                             | Farmland Classification/ acres | Current Use  |
|---|--|--|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Fairview Garden Farms (Site #7) <sup>a</sup>  | 11.6   | MeD2 9.6<br>EaB 2.0                          | D 0.31<br>U 11.34              | Organic Farm |
| Sumida (Site #8)  | 21.2   | EaA 21.2                                     | D 8.64<br>U 12.55              | Greenhouses  |
| McPage Enterprises (Site #9)  | 12.2   | EaA 12.2                                     | D 12.16                        | Row Crop     |
| Pine Avenue Associates (Site #10)   | 2.4  | EaA 2.4                                      | D 2.37                         | Fallow       |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>408.8</b>   |  |                                |              |
| <b>Soil Types:</b>  |  | <b>Farmland Classifications:</b>             |                                |              |
| AaA   | Agueda Silty Clay Loam (0-2% slopes) - Class I                     | P – Prime Farmland                           |                                |              |
| AaC   | Agueda Silty Clay Loam (2-9% slopes) - Class II                    | S – Farmland of Statewide Importance         |                                |              |
| AhE2  | Ayar Clay - Class IV   | L – Farmland of Local Importance             |                                |              |
| AhF2  | Ayar Clay - Class VI   | U – Unique Farmland                          |                                |              |
| DaC   | Diablo Clay (2-9 % slopes) - Class II                              | X – Other Lands (Not designated as Farmland) |                                |              |
| DaD   | Diablo Clay (9-15% slopes) - Class III                             | D – Developed/Urban and Built-Up Land        |                                |              |
| EaA   | Elder Sandy Loam (0-2% slopes) - Class II                          |  |                                |              |
| EaB   | Elder Sandy Loam (2-9% slopes) - Class II                          |  |                                |              |
| Eb  | Elder-Soboba Complex (Class IV)                                    |  |                                |              |
| GcA   | Goleta Fine Sandy Loam (0-2% slopes) - Class I                     |  |                                |              |
| GcC   | Goleta Fine Sandy Loam (2-9% slopes) - Class II                    |  |                                |              |
| GdA   | Goleta loam (0-2% slopes) - Class I                                |  |                                |              |
| GU  | Gullied Land - Class VIII  |  |                                |              |
| MeC   | Milpitas-Positas Fine Sandy Loam (2-9% slopes, eroded) - Class III |  |                                |              |
| MeD2  | Milpitas-Positas Fine Sandy Loam - Class IV                        |  |                                |              |
| MeE2  | Milpitas-Positas Fine Sandy Loam - Class VI                        |  |                                |              |
| MeF2  | Milpitas-Positas Fine Sandy Loam - Class VII                       |  |                                |              |
| Notes: Acreages are based on the Tax Assessor's Roll dated January 2006.  |  |  |                                |              |
| None of the above parcels are under Williamson Act contracts. Site #s coordinate with Figure 3.2-1.               |  |  |                                |              |
| <sup>a</sup> Fairview Farms is the only site in Goleta that is permanently protected with a conservation easement |  |  |                                |              |

**Bishop Ranch (Site 4)**

At a total of 290.6 acres, Bishop Ranch is comprised of three parcels, each under different ownership, located within the City of Goleta. Bishop Ranch makes up 71 percent of the remaining agriculture land in the City. It is also the single largest undeveloped area in the City. The property is bounded by Los Carneros Road on the east, Glen Annie Road on the west, Cathedral Oaks to the north, and US-101 on the south.

For many years, the Bishop Ranch supported the raising of livestock as well as a wide variety of fruit, vegetable, and nut crops. Remnant walnut trees still remain, indicating past uses of the property, which included commercial walnut production, other extensive orchards, and row crops.

Cardio/Pulmo Medical Group owns a 21.8-acre parcel on the northwest side of the site. It contains some well-maintained avocado orchards on a portion of the property. This area contains Prime and Unique Farmland.

The University Exchange Corporation owns the large, 238.8-acre center parcel. This parcel is not actively engaged in agriculture at this time, although it was intensively farmed in the past with both row crops and orchards. A historic residence and plantings that are approximately 100 years old are also located on this parcel. This area is classified as Farmland of Local Importance.

The Stow Land Company owns the 30-acre parcel on the eastern side along Los Carneros Road, which is part of the original Stow Family/La Patera Rancho. The Stow Company parcel is actively farmed as a large lemon and avocado orchard. This portion of the site is classified as Prime Farmland. Both the University Exchange Corporation and the Stow Land Company also own extensive acreage planted in avocado and lemon orchards directly across the street on the north side of Cathedral Oaks outside of, but immediately adjacent to, the Goleta city limits.

#### Fairview Garden Farms (Site 7)

Fairview Garden Farms is a 11.6-acre organic farm located on North Fairview Avenue, one block south of Cathedral Oaks. The farm is surrounded by suburban development on all sides. There is also a produce stand and small gravel parking lot along the Fairview Avenue frontage. The farm contains areas of topsoil up to 30 feet in depth, and produces more than 100 different fruits and vegetables annually. The property has been farmed continuously since 1895 and may be the oldest organic farm in southern California. The property is classified entirely as Unique Farmland.

In 1997, the Center for Urban Agriculture was formed in response to the Goleta Community Plan designation for the parcel to remain as agricultural for only a few more years. The Center forged an agreement with the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County and purchased the acreage to hold a conservation easement on the property. The easement is a legal agreement between the Center and the Land Trust that guarantees that Fairview Gardens will remain a working farm and educational facility in perpetuity. It is the only agricultural acreage in all of Goleta that is permanently protected with a conservation easement.

#### Ellwood Canyon (Site 1)

The Ellwood Canyon agricultural area is located in the northwest corner of the City of Goleta, just north of Cathedral Oaks Road and east of Winchester Canyon. Ellwood Canyon Road divides several of the parcels. The 31.5-acre area is owned by three different families, the majority of which is the 27-acre Bradley farm, with the other holdings at 4.5 acres. The smaller farms have orchards and natural vegetation, while the Bradley farm supports both row crops and greenhouse development. The majority of this property is classified as Prime Farmland.

#### Roman Catholic Archbishops (Site 3)

The approximately 9.4-acre property owned by the Catholic Church and managed by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. It is located in northwestern Goleta and fronts on Calle Real to the south. It is surrounded on the east and north by single-family homes and on the west by a condominium development. Currently the property is leased to Goleta farmer John Lane, who grows various row crops for the local Lane Farms business. This property contains soils classified as both Prime Farmland and Unique Farmland.

#### Philip (Site 5)

The 6.6-acre Philip parcel is located on Stow Canyon Road, north of the Stow Grove community park tennis courts, south of Cathedral Oaks Road, and west of San Pedro Creek. The property

contains an avocado orchard and is surrounded by single-family homes with the exception of San Pedro Creek to the east. The property is classified entirely as Prime Farmland.

#### Herold (Site 6)

The Herold property is located just northeast of the intersection of Fairview and Cathedral Oaks Roads, and is composed of several parcels totaling approximately 9.4 acres. The properties contain scattered avocado orchards and several single-family homes. This property is classified entirely as Unique Farmland.

#### Couvillion (Site 2)

Located in northwestern Goleta and bordered by Glen Annie Golf Course to the east and north, a drainage/riparian area to the west, and Cathedral Oaks Road to the south, the Couvillion parcel was previously a large avocado orchard. The 13.9-acre agricultural property contains a house and several outbuildings, and is not currently being farmed. The property is classified entirely as Prime Farmland.

#### Sumida (Site 8)

Located in the eastern portion of Goleta, this 21.2-acre parcel is comprised of the La Sumida Nursery and active agriculture uses in the southern and eastern portions of the parcel, avocado trees within the site along the northeast parcel boundary, and fallow agriculture land in the central and northwest portions of the property. The site is relatively flat and is completely surrounded by development. The property is classified entirely as Unique Farmland and contains prime soils.

#### McPage Enterprises (Site 9)

This 12.2-acre site is located in the southeastern portion of the City of Goleta. The parcel is flat and consists of active agriculture uses. The parcel is bordered to the northwest by a small tributary to the San Jose Creek that supports southern willow scrub habitat. Surrounding land uses also include fallow agriculture to the west and development to the northeast, south and southwest. The site is not classified as Important Farmland, but contains prime agricultural soils.

#### Pine Avenue Associates (Site 10)

Site 10 is flat and includes 2.4 acres of existing fallow agriculture land. The parcel is bordered to the northwest by a small tributary to the San Jose Creek that supports southern willow scrub habitat. Surrounding land uses also include developed lands to the south and active agriculture to the east. The site is not classified as Important Farmland, but contains prime agricultural soils.

### **3.2.2 Regulatory Framework**

#### **3.2.2.1 Federal and State**

##### ***Federal Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451, et seq.)***

The Federal Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) sets forth the statutory framework for land use within the coastal zone. Responsibility for implementation has been delegated to the State

of California, which exercises its authority through the California Coastal Act of 1974 (see below).

### **California Environmental Quality Act**

The basic goal of CEQA is to develop and maintain a high-quality environment now and in the future. The CEQA Guidelines provide a framework for the analysis of impacts to agriculture resources, including a requirement that any inconsistencies between the proposed project and applicable general plans and regional plans be discussed (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.).

### **General Plan Law**

The Land Use Element and Conservation Element are two of seven elements mandated by State planning law (Government Code Section 65302). The Land Use Element is required to consist of a statement of policies and a land-use plan map showing the spatial distribution, location, and extent of lands designated for categories of public and private uses of land, including agriculture. This element defines Goleta's long-range development pattern and physical character as well as the extent and nature of future growth in the City. Other elements, such as the Conservation Element, further address the relationships between future development and environmental quality, safety hazards, and social and economic concerns.

The Conservation Element is required to address conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources, including water, streams, soils, wildlife, and other natural resources. The element must consider the effects of land development on natural resources. One role of the Conservation Element is to establish policies that reconcile conflicting demands placed on natural resources and define the balance sought between managed use and preservation of resources. Although no harbors, major fisheries, significant mineral resources, or timberlands exist within the planning area, this element identifies and establishes policies to protect other important resources that are potentially affected by urban land uses and associated development.

### **Williamson Act**

The Williamson Act, California Government Code Section 51200–51207, is a legislative effort to preserve open space and agricultural land through the provision of tax incentives to landowners who put their land under 10-year contracts that restrict development during that time period. The act provides that local jurisdictions may establish an agricultural preserve program having the goal of retaining land in agricultural use (e.g., through implementation of Williamson Act contracts). The contracts are automatically renewed annually, unless the landowner requests nonrenewal. The benefits of the Williamson Act are that the land's property taxes are based on the agricultural income derived from it and not the fair market or Proposition 13 value. The contract provides a certainty that the land will remain in agriculture or open space for the minimum 10-year period and so receives greater protection from encroaching urban development.

The County of Santa Barbara has adopted such a program, which is codified under the County's Agricultural Preserve Uniform Rules. Both the County's uniform rules and the government code provide that agricultural preserve contracts between the County and landowners are voluntary. Therefore, there are no State mandates associated with this program. Because the Williamson Act is administered by the County, should any of the properties within the City of Goleta apply for Williamson Act status, this program would be administered by the County of Santa Barbara.

**California Coastal Act**

The California Coastal Act, Public Resources Code Sections 30241 to 30243, includes provisions for the protection and management of coastal agricultural resources by maximizing and maintaining prime agricultural land and preserving the long-term productivity of soils. Coastal Act Section 30241 states in part, "The maximum amount of prime agricultural land shall be maintained in agricultural production ... and conflicts shall be minimized between agricultural and urban land uses." Because the southern portions of the City are within the California Coastal Zone, and within jurisdiction of the California Coastal Commission, the City's GP/CLUP is subject to California Coastal Act requirements. None of the agricultural properties fall within the Coastal Zone.

**Right-to-Farm**

Right-to-farm laws are a State policy assertion that commercial agriculture is an important activity, and they are intended to protect farmers and ranchers from nuisance lawsuits. The statutes also help support the economic viability of farming by discouraging neighbors from filing lawsuits against agricultural operations.

Local governments around the Nation are enacting their own right-to-farm laws to strengthen and clarify weak language in state laws. Local right-to-farm laws are most widespread in California, where the State Farm Bureau developed and distributed a model right-to-farm ordinance during the 1980s

**3.2.2.2 Local****City of Goleta Ordinances**

Development in the City is subject to the City's Inland Zoning Ordinance for those portions of the City outside of the Coastal Zone and the Coastal Zoning Ordinance for those portions of the City within the Coastal Zone. Following the adoption of the GP/CLUP, the existing Inland and Coastal Zoning Ordinances will be replaced by a single, unified zoning code that includes zoning regulations applicable to inland areas and the coastal zone. Existing City ordinances are not applicable in the context of this EIR because they will be replaced upon the adoption of the GP/CLUP.

**3.2.3 Project Impacts and Mitigation****3.2.3.1 Thresholds of Significance****City of Goleta Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual**

The City's adopted Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual (Thresholds Manual) (City of Goleta 2003) incorporates the significance thresholds of CEQA Appendix G, as discussed below. The agriculture threshold under CEQA relates to physical environmental resources rather than economics. This differentiation is in keeping with CEQA's emphasis on physical environmental impacts and not social or economic impacts (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15131). Economics is considered primarily a planning issue and is not to be addressed in environmental documents (County of Santa Barbara 2002).

**CEQA Thresholds**

As suggested by Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, a project may have a significant impact related to Agricultural Resources if it will:

- convert Prime, Unique, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to nonagricultural use or impair the agricultural productivity of prime agricultural land;
- conflict with a Williamson Act contract or existing zoning for agricultural use; or
- involve other changes in the existing environment that could result in conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses.

**3.2.3.2 Discussion of Relevant GP/CLUP Policies**

The Land Use, Conservation, and Open Space Elements of the City's GP/CLUP contain policies that address agriculture and farmland. These policies are discussed below.

**Land Use Element**

The policies of this element are designed to balance the various concerns and needs of the City and its residents and guide future change to fit the desired character of Goleta. The following guiding principles and goals, which are not in order of priority, provide the foundation for the land use plan. They incorporate many comments, ideas, and suggestions offered by participants at numerous public workshop meetings.

1. Ensure that the amounts, locations, and characteristics of new development are determined in a manner that will preserve sensitive habitats and other natural resources.
3. Preserve agricultural lands to allow future potential for agricultural production, including a locally grown food supply, specialty agriculture, and floriculture.
4. Maintain economic prosperity with a sustainable economy that is not based on growth.

Policies from the Land Use Element that address agriculture and farmland issues are listed below.

- Policy LU 1: Land Use Map and General Policies
- Policy LU 7: Agriculture
- Policy LU 12: Land Use in Goleta's Environs

**Conservation Element**

The policies of the Conservation Element are designed to preserve and protect Goleta's environmental resources, including valuable habitat areas, to the maximum extent feasible while allowing reasonable development in conformance with the provisions of the Land Use Element. The following guiding principles and goals provide the foundation for the Conservation Element as they pertain to agriculture.

8. Protect important agricultural lands and those undeveloped lands that have soils suitable for agriculture for their value for production of local food and specialty agricultural commodities, and their resource and aesthetic values.

Policies from the Conservation Element that address agriculture and farmland issues are listed below.

- Policy CE 11: Preservation of Agricultural Lands

### ***Open Space Element***

The following guiding principles and goals, which are not in order of priority, provide the foundation for the Open Space Element as they pertain to agriculture.

5. Preserve Goleta's existing open space areas, including its beaches and Pacific shoreline, sensitive habitat areas, and agricultural lands, to maintain and enhance these essential aspects of the community's character.

Policies from the Open Space Element that address agriculture and farmland issues are listed below.

- Policy OS 7: Adoption of Open Space Plan Map

### **3.2.3.3 Impact Assessment Methodology**

Impacts related to agricultural resources resulting from implementation of the GP/CLUP involve potential effects associated with conversion of agriculture land and effects from incompatible land uses. Impacts are identified for existing agricultural land uses that are proposed to be converted to urban uses as part of the GP/CLUP where the agricultural property contains important farmland designations and/or prime agricultural soils. A qualitative analysis of potential indirect impacts on existing agriculture operations from offsite development is also included.

### **3.2.3.4 Project Impacts**

The GP/CLUP was analyzed with respect to policies that would directly affect agricultural resources as well as other resource policies that may indirectly affect agricultural resources. If GP/CLUP policies do not adequately reduce an impact, new mitigation measures are identified.

### ***Class I Impacts***

#### **Short-Term Impacts**

There are no short-term significant and unavoidable (Class I) Impacts involving agricultural resources resulting from GP/CLUP implementation.

#### **Long-Term Impacts**

##### ***Impact 3.2-1. Conversion of Agricultural Land and Loss or Impairment of Agricultural Productivity***

Buildout under the GP/CLUP of proposed sites for new residential development and other uses such as commercial and recreation would result in the conversion of 55.7 acres of agricultural land and the loss of a large amount of agricultural productivity, resulting in 353.3 acres of remaining agricultural land in the City (Table 3.2-3). Of the agricultural land that would not be converted, only 11.6 acres (Fairview Gardens) are permanently preserved. This conversion of agricultural land would constitute a significant impact by permanently eliminating these lands from agricultural production.

Buildout under the GP/CLUP would result in the conversion of approximately 6.5 acres of Prime Farmland and approximately 22 acres of Unique Farmland according to the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. The proposed project would also result in the conversion of approximately 6 acres of Class I Soils and approximately 37 acres of Class II Soils. Buildout under the Plan would not result in the conversion of any Williamson Act Contract Lands or other agricultural preserve areas.

Table 3.2-3 outlines the existing agricultural lands and the proposed land use designations of the GP/CLUP in coordination with Figure 3.2-1.

Policies That Would Reduce Impact 3.2-1, but Not to a Level of Insignificance. Policies and objectives incorporated into the GP/CLUP intended to preserve and protect agricultural resources include:

- Policy CE 11: Preservation of Agricultural Lands

The conversion of valuable agricultural land does not advance General Plan Goal #3 in the Land Use Element and Goal #8 in the Conservation Element. Though the incorporation and implementation of these policies and objectives would help to discourage further conversion of agricultural lands to noncompatible uses, the loss of agricultural land resulting from buildout of the proposed land uses in the GP/CLUP would remain significant and unavoidable.

### ***Class II Impacts***

#### Short-Term Impacts

There are no short-term potentially significant but mitigable (Class II) Impacts involving agricultural resources resulting from GP/CLUP implementation.

#### Long-Term Impacts

##### *Impact 3.2-2. Incompatible Land Uses and Structures*

The introduction of incompatible uses and structures within or adjacent to agriculture land uses and agricultural operations could result in land use conflicts and could impair the productivity of agricultural lands. Residential uses can have adverse impacts on farming operations because of the introduction of pests, disease, and weeds as well as increased traffic, vandalism, trespassing, and citizen complaints. Commercial and industrial uses have fewer conflicts with adjacent agricultural operations but nevertheless can pose potential conflicts between neighboring land uses and agricultural production. Such incompatibilities with lands designated for agricultural use would be considered potentially significant.

However, in the Goleta Valley, and specifically in the City of Goleta, urban agriculture has a time-honored and special place. *Urban agriculture* is defined locally as cultivated land within the designated urban boundary line. In the Goleta Valley, the urban boundary line encompasses both the City of Goleta and the unincorporated urban-designated area around it. Small active farms of only a few acres to major producers of 100 acres or more can be considered urban agriculture. (County of Santa Barbara 2002)

- The agricultural land which still remains in the Goleta area provides a multitude of benefits for area residents. Agricultural uses in the foothill areas provide a scenic visual backdrop for the City, and cause few water quality problems. The open rangeland and orchards provide a healthy habitat for a variety of species to flourish here. With the exception of large greenhouse development, agricultural activities do not generate significant traffic or visual

impacts. Most Goletans appreciate the benefits urban farms provide. (County of Santa Barbara 2002)

**TABLE 3.2-3  
EXISTING AGRICULTURE LANDS AND IMPACTS FROM PROPOSED LAND USE**

| Site#<br>(See<br>Figure 3.2-1)  | Existing Conditions       |                                |  | Land Use Designation and Potential Agriculture Impacts |                         |                            |                     |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
|   | Agriculture Areas (Acres) | Farmland Categories (Acres)    | Prime Soils (Acres)                                | Proposed Land Use Designation                          | Total Agriculture Acres | Important Farmland (Acres) | Prime Soils (Acres) |
| #1 (Ellwood Canyon)   | 31.5                      | P (15.4)                       | GdA (11.8)<br>DaC (1.8)                            | Agriculture  | 0                       | 0                          | 0                   |
| #2 (Couvillion)   | 13.9                      | P (11.3)                       | DaC (11.9)   | Agriculture  | 0                       | 0                          | 0                   |
| #3 (Roman Catholic Archbishops)   | 9.4                       | P (3.1)<br>U (5.3)             | AaA (3.9)<br>DaC (1.3)                             | Single Family & Agriculture                            | 3.7                     | 4.2                        | 3.25                |
| #4 (Bishop Ranch)   | 290.6                     | P (32.6)U (6.53)<br>L (163.82) | AaA (8.5)<br>AaC (5.8)<br>DaC (48.1)<br>GcA (44.7) | Agriculture  | 0                       | 0                          | 0                   |
| #5 (Philip)   | 6.6                       | P (5.08)                       | GcA (3.6)<br>GdA (0.5)                             | Single Family Residential                              | 6.6                     | 5.08                       | 4.1                 |
| #6 (Herold)   | 9.4                       | U (6.83)                       | N/A  | Single Family Residential                              | 9.4                     | 6.83                       | 0                   |
| #7 (Fairview Gardens)   | 11.6                      | U (11.34)                      | EaB (2.0)  | Agriculture  | 0                       | 0                          | 0                   |
| #8 (Sumida)   | 21.2                      | U (12.55)                      | EaA (21.2)   | Medium Density Residential & General Commercial        | 21.2                    | 12.55                      | 21.2                |
| #9 (McPage Enterprises)   | 12.2                      | N/A                            | EaA (12.2)   | Visitor Serving  | 12.4                    | 0                          | 12.2                |
| #10 (Pine Avenue Associates)  | 2.4                       | N/A                            | EaA (2.4)  | Business Park  | 2.4                     | 0                          | 2.4                 |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>408.8</b>              |                                |  |  | <b>55.7</b>             | <b>28.7</b>                | <b>43.2</b>         |
| See Table 3.2-5 for legend of Farmland Classifications and Soil Types   |                           |                                |  |  |                         |                            |                     |
| <sup>a</sup> Only Class I and Class II soils are considered prime soils.  |                           |                                |  |  |                         |                            |                     |
| <sup>b</sup> Important Farmland includes Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Farmland of Local Importance, and Unique |                           |                                |  |  |                         |                            |                     |

The proposed GP/CLUP includes Policy CE 11 to address potential land use incompatibility issues associated with the urban-agriculture interface. Specifically, Policy subsection CE 11.3 (Compatibility of New Development With Agriculture) provides for design and location of lands adjacent to agriculture to avoid or minimize potential conflicts with agricultural activities, which may include requirements for right-to-farm covenants and disclosure notices for new development located adjacent to agricultural land. Additionally, Policy subsection CE 11.4 (Buffers Adjacent to Agricultural Parcels) provides for buffer zones and other measures such as landscape screening for new development adjacent to property designated for agricultural uses to minimize potential conflicts with agricultural activities. Furthermore, Policy subsection CE 11.8 (Mitigation of Impacts of New Development on Agriculture), provides for additional application of appropriate conditions to reduce any potential impacts through the review and analysis of land use development proposals near the designated agricultural lands (which may result in potential project denial if such impacts cannot be mitigated).

The proposed GP/CLUP would not result in conflicts with agricultural uses on adjacent or nearby unincorporated lands. The existing vacant lands near the City boundaries are not proposed for development near existing agricultural areas outside of the City (as shown on Figure 3.10-2). The proposed land use developments on the east side are primarily infill and would be developed in an already primarily built-out area. Areas in the northern portion of the City are proposed primarily for agricultural land uses, or the golf course, which is existing and would not conflict with agricultural uses. Therefore, no significant impacts would occur.

Policies That Would Reduce Impact 3.2-2. Policies and objectives incorporated into the GP/CLUP in order to preserve and protect agricultural resources include:

- Policy CE 11: Preservation of Agricultural Lands

### ***Class III Impacts***

#### Short-Term Impacts

Agricultural areas could potentially be impacted by construction activities on adjacent parcels. Agricultural sites within close proximity to construction activities may endure impacts to the land (increased runoff, erosion, dust, onsite equipment) reducing access to or viability of the onsite agricultural product. These impacts would be considered less than significant.

#### Long-Term Impacts

There are no long-term Class III Impacts involving agricultural resources resulting from GP/CLUP implementation.

### ***Class IV Impacts***

#### *Impact 3.2-3. Preservation of Agricultural Land*

With implementation of the GP/CLUP, the remaining existing agricultural land uses within the City would be preserved as agricultural land uses (with the exception of the land uses that are proposed for conversion from Agriculture as part of the GP/CLUP land plan). The preservation of this agricultural land is considered to be consistent with the proposed GP/CLUP, and further advances GP/CLUP Goal 3 in the Land Use Element and Goal 8 in the Conservation Element. The implementation of Policy CE 11, Preservation of Agricultural Lands, would help to discourage further conversion of agricultural lands to noncompatible and urbanized uses and would minimize the loss of agricultural land in the City. Therefore, the GP/CLUP would result in beneficial impacts to agriculture and farmland.

### **3.2.3.5 Cumulative Impacts**

#### *Impact 3.2-4 Cumulative Loss of Agricultural Land*

The GP/CLUP would result in the conversion of Prime Farmland and other valuable agricultural lands to nonagricultural use. Many of the other areas where the cumulative projects are located also contain prime farmland, prime soils, and are zoned and/or designated for agricultural uses. Viable agricultural land is becoming scarcer in California, and the South Coast is one of the most important regions economically and physically for agricultural production in the State. The competing growth pressures in the region have led to rapid conversion of agricultural lands in the City, County, and throughout the South Coast. The conversion of approximately 29 acres of important farmland that are currently in active agricultural production represents a significant impact. When combined with other cumulative development projects, the effects are exacerbated. Therefore, the conversion of agricultural land resulting from buildout under the GP/CLUP would represent a significant and unavoidable (Class I) contribution to cumulative impacts on agricultural resources.

### **3.2.3.6 Mitigation**

#### ***Modifications to Proposed General Plan Policies***

No modifications are required.

#### ***Other Suggested Mitigation***

No mitigation is identified.

### **3.2.3.7 Residual Impacts**

Implementation of the GP/CLUP land use, open space and conservation policies and implementation actions would not reduce significant Class I impacts resulting from the conversion of agricultural lands; therefore, impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

*This page intentionally left blank*

|       |                                     |    |
|-------|-------------------------------------|----|
| 3.2   | Agriculture AND FARMLAND .....      | 1  |
| 3.2.1 | Existing Conditions.....            | 1  |
| 3.2.2 | Regulatory Framework .....          | 9  |
| 3.2.3 | Project Impacts and Mitigation..... | 11 |

### Acronyms

|   |   |
|---|---|
| United States Department of Agriculture (USDA ..... | 5 |
| Land Capability Classification (LCC.....            | 5 |
| Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA.....              | 9 |

### Citations

|  |   |
|--|---|
| California Department of Conservation, 2003 .....        | 2 |
| Santa Barbara County Planning and Development 2002a..... | 2 |
| County of Santa Barbara 2005.....                        | 4 |

### Tables

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Table 3.2-1 .....   | 3  |
| Table 3.2-2 Summary of City of Goleta Major Agricultural and Farmland Resources ..... | 6  |
| Table 3.2-3 Existing Agriculture Lands and Proposed Land Use .....                    | 15 |

### Figures

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Figure 3.2-1..... | 4 |
| Figure 3.2-2..... | 4 |
| Figure 3.2-3..... | 5 |

### Miscellaneous

**Error! No table of figures entries found.**

### Glossary

**Error! No table of figures entries found.**