

### 4.2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section analyzes potential Project-related impacts associated with conversion of agricultural land to non agricultural use. This section also discusses the potential conflicts between the proposed uses and ongoing agricultural activities in the vicinity of the Project site. Where needed, mitigation measures are recommended to avoid or lessen the significance of potential impacts. Information presented in this section is based on site photographs and visits, the 2003 *Riverside County General Plan* (GPA No. 618), *Land Use and Open Space Elements, General Plan EIR No. 441* (2003), Riverside County Ordinance Nos. 460 and 625, the *Southwest Area Plan*, proposed Temecula Valley Wine Country Policy Area (2011), Wine Country zones of Ordinance No. 348, and the *Temecula Valley Wine Country Design Guidelines*.

### 4.2.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The region's agricultural industry plays a vital role in the local economy and consistently ranks among the most profitable in California. The wide variety of climates and soil types allow a diverse array of crops to be grown. The industry provides a large number of jobs associated with the growing, harvesting, processing, packing and shipping of produce. In terms of dollar value, agriculture is today the largest industry in Riverside County, providing employment for a significant portion of the County's population and creates revenues over triple the amount of the base gross value of the products grown and raised in the County. Currently, agriculture faces continuing pressure from urbanization, water availability, foreign competition and rising production costs. Despite these pressures, the areas which remain in agricultural production represent a significant open space and economic resource for the County.

The Riverside County General Plan defines productive agricultural lands as those "involved in a long-term, substantial investment to agricultural use and with long-term economic viability for agricultural use." Factors affecting the economic viability of these areas include weather, water prices, crop selection, management techniques, commodity prices, new technology and proximity of developed lands.

Likewise, the County's forestry resources also play a vital role in establishing the character of the County with the Cleveland National Forest framing portions of southwestern Riverside County and the San Bernardino National Forest framing portions of northwestern Riverside County. Both the Cleveland National Forest and the San Bernardino National Forest are part of the Sierran montane range. In biogeography, the "montane" range is the highland area located below the subalpine zone which typically enjoys cooler temperatures and higher amounts of rainfall than nearby lowland areas. Montane forests can be found all over the world; however, the montane forest is the most complex bio-region in North America and is home to various groups of animal species. The County aims to preserve its forest resources within the Cleveland and San Bernardino National Forests through careful management of the forest ecosystem, the protection of forest resources and by discouraging and limiting the development of land uses that conflict with valuable forest land.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

### Agricultural Production

Agricultural resources include lands cultivated for crops for human and animal use, to provide livestock forage or as a source of fiber or other raw materials. Commercial agricultural activities also include non-cultivation activities, such as the raising of livestock for production of meat, milk and dairy products, as well as fiber and other non-edible products (wool, leather, etc.). Also in this category are aquaculture (fish farms) and the poultry industry, which produces poultry meat, eggs, chicks and other products. In total, the County Agricultural Commissioner tracks nine categories of agricultural production: citrus; tree and vine crops; vegetables, melons and miscellaneous crops; field and seed crops; livestock and poultry; livestock and poultry products; nursery stock production (i.e., ornamental plants, cut flowers, Christmas trees, etc.); aquaculture; and apiculture (beekeeping). There is no commercial forestry or timber production industry within Riverside County other than Christmas tree farms of nursery stock production; that is, planted in place, rather than harvested from existing, naturally-occurring tree stock.

Farms within Riverside County produce over 50 different varieties of crops, from bell peppers to broccoli, dates to potatoes, and many others. Livestock raised commercially in Riverside County includes everything from ducks to crayfish, in addition to cattle, sheep and chickens. Agricultural products grown in Riverside County are exported to over 60 countries around the world, ranging from Angola to Vietnam. In 2010, the top five countries importing County produce were Japan, China, Mexico, South Korea and Canada.

After record-breaking production peak of \$1.25 billion in 2006, values have continued to decrease as water availability and general economic issues “catch up with” the agricultural industry, according to the Agricultural Commissioner. According to the 2010 Agricultural Production Report issued by the County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office, in 2010 the County of Riverside’s total gross agricultural valuation was roughly \$1.09 billion. This was an increase of \$77.8 million (7.7%) over the 2009 total; the second straight year of declining values. The 2010 gross value for cultivated crops was \$678.8 million, an increase of 16.1% over 2009. Livestock was \$235.9 million, a 9.9% increase over the prior year.

According to the Agricultural Commissioner, for the seventh year in a row, nursery stock ranked as the top valued crop in the County, even though its production values fell by 18.0% from the prior year. Milk, table grapes, bell peppers, and eggs rounded out the top agricultural products in 2010. Table 4.2-1, *Cultivated Crop Production Statistics* and Table 4.2-2, *Other Agricultural Product Valuation Data*, below, show valuations and amounts of acreage in production for key crops within the County. Despite a reported decrease of nearly 22% in the amount of land in agricultural cultivation between 2003 and 2007, the value of the County’s agricultural products went up over 14% during that same period. Non-crop produce rose by over \$111 million (nearly 22%), as well. Statewide for 2009, Riverside County ranked thirteenth in the value of its agricultural production.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner, *Agricultural Production Reports*, 2003-2010.



## 4.2 Agricultural and Forestry Resources

Table 4.2-1  
Cultivated Crop Production Statistics

Crop	Stat.*	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Citrus	Acreage	23,500	20,900	20,700	18,600	19,400	17,700	17,400	17,100
	Valuation	\$84.9M	\$123.6M	\$138.2M	\$107.9M	\$121.4M	\$135.8M	\$101.7M	\$140.5M
Trees and Vines	Acreage	25,200	28,400	28,600	27,500	28,400	28,400	28,000	27,700
	Valuation	\$215.6M	\$211.9M	\$188.6M	\$191.3M	\$181.8M	\$173.7M	\$191.7M	\$165.0M
Vegetables, Melons, Misc.	Acreage	35,200	26,100	35,600	34,100	37,300	38,100	30,900	38,600
	Valuation	\$179.0M	\$174.9M	\$261.0M	\$213.6M	\$234.9M	\$266.4M	\$221.3M	\$292.0M
Field and Seed Crops	Acreage	176,600	152,900	138,900	125,300	118,400	153,800	117,100	117,700
	Valuation	\$73.7M	\$75.2M	\$77.7M	\$68.6M	\$94.5M	\$123.5M	\$69.7M	\$81.3M
<b>COUNTY TOTALS</b>	<b>Acreage</b> <i>Valuation</i>	<b>260,400</b> <b>\$554.2M</b>	<b>228,200</b> <b>\$585.6M</b>	<b>223,800</b> <b>\$665.5M</b>	<b>205,400</b> <b>\$581.5M</b>	<b>203,500</b> <b>\$632.5M</b>	<b>233,700</b> <b>\$699.4M</b>	<b>187,800</b> <b>\$584.4M</b>	<b>201,100</b> <b>\$678.8M</b>

Source: Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner, Agricultural Production Reports (2003-2010). pg. 9 (2010 Report).  
\* Acreage rounded to the nearest hundred.

Table 4.2-2  
Other Agricultural Product Valuation Data

Crop	Stat.*	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Nursery Stock	Valuation	\$205.8M	\$211.3M	\$229.2M	\$271.0M	\$272.3M	\$230.4M	\$206.5M	\$169.3M
Apiculture	Valuation	\$3.5M	\$3.0M	\$2.7M	\$3.6M	\$3.9M	\$5.6M	\$5.0M	\$4.6M
Aqua-culture	Valuation	\$15.9M	\$15.6M	\$13.4M	\$11.5M	\$9.8M	\$12.1M	\$5.2M	\$5.0M
Livestock & Poultry	Valuation	\$287.9M	\$316.2M	\$257.9M	\$234.9M	\$338.9M	\$321.1M	\$214.7M	\$235.9M
<b>COUNTY TOTALS</b>	Valuation	<b>\$513.2M</b>	<b>\$546.0M</b>	<b>\$503.2M</b>	<b>\$521.0M</b>	<b>\$625.0M</b>	<b>\$569.2M</b>	<b>\$431.4M</b>	<b>\$414.8M</b>

Source: Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner, Agricultural Production Reports (2003-2010). pg. 10 (2010 Report).  
\* Acreage rounded to the nearest hundred.

### Farmland Resources

The California Department of Conservation runs the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) to produce maps and statistical data on California's agricultural resources. Agricultural lands within each county are rated on their production value according to soil quality and irrigation status to produce maps that are updated every two years. The maps also incorporate soils data issued by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), a branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Most recently, in October 2008, the FMMP released a set of three maps of 2006 data for western, central and eastern Riverside County (refer to Exhibit 4.2-1, *Farmland Resources*). The relationship of this new data to the Project is described further, below.



Table 4.2-3  
State-Mapped Farmland Data for Riverside County

Land Category	2000	2006*	Change
Prime Farmland	151,010 ac	128,510 ac	-22,500 ac (-14.9%)
Farmlands of Statewide Importance	49,450 ac	46,920 ac	-2,530 ac (-5.1%)
Unique Farmlands	40,950 ac	37,950 ac	-3,000 ac (-7.3%)
Farmlands of Local Importance	243,410 ac	231,090 ac	-12,320 ac (-5.1%)
Grazing Lands	124,710 ac	111,700 ac	-12,010 ac (-10.4%)
Water	62,540 ac	62,350 ac	-190 ac (-0.3%)
Urban & Built-up Lands	254,820 ac	300,540 ac	+45,720 ac (+17.9%)
Other Lands	1,007,720 ac	1,015,580 ac	+7,860 ac (+0.8%)
<b>COUNTY TOTALS</b>	<b>1,934,620 ac</b>	<b>1,934,620 ac</b>	
<i>Source:</i> California Department of Conservation FMMP, 2008. * Most recent year for which data is available. All data rounded to the nearest 10 acres.			

The farmland and other land categories used by the FMMP are described briefly below. Additional information on these can be found on the Department of Conservation’s website (<http://www.conservation.ca.gov>).

- Prime Farmland:** Farmland with the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics (soil quality, growing season, moisture supply, etc.) for the long-term production of crops in high yields. These lands must also been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the update cycle.
- Farmland of Statewide Importance:** Farmland other than Prime with a good combination of physical and chemical characteristics, but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to store moisture. The land must also have been under irrigated production during the prior four-year cycle. Per the County General Plan, this category can include forest land, in addition to crop land, pastureland, rangeland and other lands that are not urban or water.
- Unique Farmland:** Land other than the above categories that are currently used for the production of specific high-value food and fiber crops, such as citrus, avocados, vegetables, etc. These lands may be of lesser quality soils but, still have the combination of traits needed to produce high quality or high yields of specific crops. This category may include non-irrigated orchards or vineyards, as well as citrus, olives, avocados, grapes, etc. The land must also have been cropped at some time during the prior four-year cycle.
- Farmland of Local Importance:** Farmland in this category generally does not qualify for any of the above categories, but has been deemed locally important by the County Board of Supervisors. This land may also have been suitable for “Prime” or “Statewide Importance” designation, but for the lack of available irrigation water. They can include lands in production of major, but not unique, crops, as well as dairy lands, agricultural zones (including contract lands and those in jojoba production).
- Grazing Land:** This includes lands on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock.

- **Urban and Built-Up Land:** These are defined as lands occupied by structures with a building density of at least one unit per 1.5 acres or approximately six structures per 10-acre parcel. Agricultural lands surrounded by urban areas must exceed 40 acres minimum in size in order to be mapped as farmlands.
- **Water:** This category covers perennial water bodies measuring at least 40 acres in size and larger. Those less than 40 acres are included under “Other Land.”
- **Other Land:** This refers to land not included in any other category. Commonly, this includes low-density rural developments (with five sub-categories); brush and timberlands; wetlands and riparian areas, confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities; strip mines; etc. Also included are water bodies less than 40 acres in size and agricultural lands of less than 40 acres in size when surrounded by urban uses.

### Changes to “Important Farmland Map”

Since the adoption of the 2003 General Plan, additional FMMP data was issued by the State Department of Conservation. In response, the County is presently updating its General Plan map to reflect the new information from the State. These proposed changes are reflected in Exhibit 4.2-2, *Agricultural Preserves* and are reflected in the baseline conditions for this EIR.

Under the FMMP, the California Department of Conservation 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. The maps are updated every two years through a combination of computer mapping, aerial imagery, public review and field reconnaissance. In October 2008, the FMMP released a report on additional farmland data, entitled “Important Farmland 2006.”<sup>2</sup> The revised maps reflect changes in Farmland resources resulting from conversion of areas in irrigated farmland, dryland or idle farmland and other uses to urban. Information on these changes is developed from air photos, local comments and field reconnaissance by FMMP staff.

According to the FMMP Report for 2006-2008, 11,173 acres (including 5,569 acres of Prime Farmland) were removed from agriculture use in Riverside County (including cities) in the State’s 2006-2008 mapping cycle. Meanwhile, the County as a whole gained 15,139 acres of urban land, well above the biennial average of 12,432 acres between 1984 and 2006. Homes, golf courses, commercial and community facilities constituted much of the new urban uses. Land idling continued to be common in the county; nearly 5,500 acres were removed from irrigated agricultural categories to grazing uses. The State had pinpointed (lack of) water availability and agricultural market conditions as driving the trend towards agricultural lands being fallowed. (Fallowing is typically seen in agricultural areas as an “interim” use in the transition of an area from active agricultural production to eventual urban, non-agricultural uses.)

### Forest Resources

Some coniferous forests occur within Riverside County. As shown in Figure 4.5.2 of the General Plan, however, most are located on State or federal lands. There are no State Demonstration Forests located in Riverside County. Forests extensive enough to support large-scale commercial timber operations, generally occur at the higher elevations associated with the northern Sierra Nevada Range. According to

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<sup>2</sup> Department of Conservation, California, “Riverside County Important Farmland 2006”, dated October 2008, [ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/FMMP/pdf/2006/riv06\\_west.pdf](ftp://ftp.consrv.ca.gov/pub/dlrp/FMMP/pdf/2006/riv06_west.pdf), accessed September 9, 2011, Sheet 1 of 3.



Cal Fire, there are no commercial timber operations subject to a Timber Harvesting Plan in Riverside County.<sup>3</sup>

There are no existing land use designations explicitly for timber production zones or other commercial timber activities in Riverside County, although such activities could be conducted under the General Plan's AG land use designation and subject to County review and approval. There are no commercial timber operations occurring in Riverside County that rely on existing forestry resources (i.e., existing stands of trees or "old growth"). The only commercial forestry activities in the County, roughly 30 to 60 acres of Christmas tree farms, are conducted as agricultural activities (nursery stock production), since the trees produced are planted onsite and grown from stock, rather than harvested from naturally-occurring forest. Nevertheless, there are existing stands of mature forest trees in several locations in the County that reach appropriate elevations (generally above 5,000 feet). Of these, most such forest resources are located on public or quasi-public lands, including National Forests (under U.S. Department of Forestry) and National Monuments (under federal BLM) and well as others. The relationship between forestry resources and these public lands are shown in Figures 4.5.2 and 4.5.3 of the *General Plan*.

As there are no significant forestry resources within the Project limits, this issue is not addressed further within the EIR.

### 4.2.3 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

#### EXISTING STATE REGULATIONS

Several key state laws play a role in governance and protection of agricultural lands in Riverside County. The State's FMMP, as mentioned above, operates pursuant to the provisions of Section 65570 of the California Government Code. The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (California Government Code 56377) sets forth the policies under which the Riverside County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) operates. These policies include directing LAFCO to consider the impacts on agricultural lands, in particular as related to soil quality and irrigation water availability, when evaluating annexation and Sphere of Influence proposals. Specifically, LAFCO policies direct that development or use of land for other than open space shall be guided away from existing prime agricultural lands, unless detrimental to the orderly, efficient development of an area.

The California Land Conservation Act, also known as the Williamson Act, is a voluntary program that allows property owners to have their property assessed on the basis of its agricultural production, rather than at the current market value. The property owner is thus relieved of having to pay higher property taxes, as long as the land remains in agricultural production. Participation requires that the area consist of at least 100 contiguous acres of agricultural land under one or more ownerships. The purpose of the Act is to encourage property owners to continue to farm their land and to prevent the premature conversion of farmland to urban uses. Upon approval of the Board of Supervisors, an agricultural preserve is established and the land within the preserve is restricted to agricultural and compatible uses for 10 years, with one-year renewals unless cancelled. County of Riverside Ordinance No. 509 establishes uniform rules which apply to agricultural preserves. Approximately 4,155 acres of existing lands within an Agricultural Preserve fall within the Project area.

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<sup>3</sup> CAL Fire, *Non-Industrial Timber Management Plans in California*, 2003.



## EXISTING COUNTY REGULATIONS

The following existing regulations and policies are intended to protect existing agricultural resources within Riverside County. They are policies that have been approved by the County as separate prior discretionary actions.

### County Ordinance No. 625, “Right To Farm”

The purpose of this ordinance is to “conserve, protect and encourage the development, improvement and continued viability of its agricultural land and industries for the long-term production of food and other agricultural products and for the economic well-being of the County's residents.” It seeks to “balance the rights of farmers to produce food and other agricultural products with the rights of non-farmers who own, occupy or use land within or adjacent to agricultural areas.” Towards these ends, the ordinance includes regulations designed to reduce the loss of agricultural resources in the County by limiting the circumstances under which agricultural operations may be deemed a “nuisance.” The ordinance ascertains that an agricultural activity that had been operating for more than three years in a locality (and assuming it was not a nuisance at the time it began) cannot not be later classed as a public or private nuisance due to “any changed condition in or about the locality.” This would, for example, prevent existing dairies from being targeted by smell complaints from residents of housing units constructed in the surrounding area three or more years after the dairy use began. Further, it requires buyers of properties within 300 feet of any land zones primarily for agricultural purposes to be given notice of the pre-existing use and its rights to continue.

## EXISTING COUNTY GENERAL PLAN POLICIES

The following policies are part of the General Plan. These policies are those considered to play a role in ensuring any potential environmental effects are avoided, reduced or minimized through their application on a case-by-cases basis when a given development proposal warrants their use.

### Open Space (OS) Element Policies

Policy OS 7.1: Work with State and federal agencies to periodically update the Agricultural Resources map to reflect current conditions.

Policy OS 7.2: In cooperation with individual farmers, farming organizations, and farmland conservation organizations, the County shall employ a variety of agricultural land conservation programs to improve the viability of farms and ranches, and thereby ensure the long-term conservation of viable agricultural operations within Riverside County. The County shall seek out available funding for farmland conservation. Examples of programs which may be employed include land trusts; conservation easements (under certain circumstances, these may also provide Federal and estate tax benefits to farmers); dedication incentives; Land Conservation Contracts; Farmland Security Act contracts; the Agricultural Land Stewardship Program Fund; agricultural education programs; transfer and purchase of development rights; providing adequate incentives (e.g., clustering and density bonuses) to encourage conservation of productive agricultural land in the County's Incentive Program; and providing various resource incentives to landowners (e.g., establish a reliable and/or less costly supply of irrigation water).

The County of Riverside shall establish a Farmland Protection and Stewardship Committee and the Board of Supervisors shall appoint its members. The Committee shall include members of the farming community as well as other individuals and organizations committed to farmland protections and stewardship. The Committee shall develop a strategy to preserve agricultural land within Riverside County and shall identify and prioritize agricultural lands for conservation. This strategy shall not only address the preservation of agricultural land but shall also promote sustainable agriculture within Riverside County. In developing its strategy, the Committee shall consider an array of proven techniques and, where necessary, adapt these techniques to address the unique conditions faced by the farming community within Riverside County. County staff shall assist the Committee in accomplishing its task. County Departments that may be called upon to assist the Committee include, but are not limited to the following: the Agricultural Commissioner, Planning Department, Assessor's Office, and County Counsel. In developing its strategy, the Committee shall consult government and private organizations with expertise in farmland protection. These organizations may include, but are not limited to, the following: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; State Department of Conservation and its Division of Land Resource Protection; University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program; the University of California Cooperative Extension; The Nature Conservancy; American Farmland Trust; The Conservation Fund; the Trust for Public Land; and the Land Trust Alliance.

The Committee shall, from time to time, recommend to the Board of Supervisors the adoption of policies and/or regulation that it finds will further the goals of the farmland protection and stewardship. The Committee shall also advise the Board of Supervisors regarding proposed policies that curb urban sprawl and the accompanying conversion of agricultural land to urban development, and that support and sustain continued agriculture. Planning policies that may benefit farmland conservation and fall within the purview of the Committee for review include measures to promote efficient development in and around existing communities including clustering, incentive programs, transfer of development rights, and other planning tools.

- Policy OS 7.3: Encourage conservation of productive agricultural lands and preservation of prime agricultural lands.
- Policy OS 7.4: Encourage landowners to participate in programs that reduce soil erosion, improve, improve soil quality, and address issues that relate to pest management. The County shall promote coordination between the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Resource Conservation Districts, UC Cooperative Extension, and other agencies and organizations.
- Policy OS 7.5: Encourage the combination of agriculture with other compatible open space uses in order to provide an economic advantage to agriculture. Allow by right, in areas designated Agriculture, activities related to the production of food and fiber, and support uses incidental and secondary to the on-site agricultural operation.
- Policy OS 9.4: Conserve the oak tree resources in the County. (AI 3, 78)





### **Land Use (LU) Element Policies**

- Policy LU 16.1: Encourage retaining agriculturally designated lands where agricultural activity can be sustained at an operational scale, where it accommodates lifestyle choice, and in locations where impacts to and from potentially incompatible uses, such as residential uses, are minimized, through incentives such as tax credits.
- Policy LU 16.2: Protect agricultural uses, including those with industrial characteristics (dairies, poultry, hog farms, etc.) by discouraging inappropriate land division in the immediate proximity and allowing only uses and intensities that are compatible with agricultural uses. (AI 3)
- Policy LU 16.4: Encourage conservation of productive agricultural lands. Preserve prime agricultural lands for high-value crop production.
- Policy LU 16.5: Continue to participate in the California Land Conservation Act (the Williamson Act) of 1965.
- Policy LU 16.6: Require consideration of State agricultural land classification specifications when a 2 ½-year Agriculture Foundation amendment to the General Plan is reviewed that would result in a shift from an agricultural to a non-agricultural use. (AI 8)
- Policy LU 16.7: Adhere to Riverside County's Right-to-Farm Ordinance.
- Policy LU 16.8: Support and participate in ongoing public education programs by organizations such as the County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, University of California Cooperative Extension, Farm Bureau, and industry organizations to help the public better understand the importance of the agricultural industry.
- Policy LU 16.9: Weigh the economic benefits of surface mining with the preservation/ conservation of agriculture when considering mineral excavation proposals on land classified for agricultural uses.
- Policy LU 16.10: Allow agriculturally related retail uses such as feed stores and permanent produce stands in all areas and land use designations. It is not the County's intent pursuant to this policy to subject agricultural related uses to any discretionary permit requirements other than those in existence at the time of adoption of the General Plan. Where a discretionary permit or other discretionary approval is required under the County zoning ordinances in effect as of December 2, 2002, then allow such retail uses with the approval of such a discretionary permit or other approval. The following criteria shall be considered in approving any discretionary permit or other discretionary approval required for these uses:
- Whether the use provides a needed service to the surrounding agricultural area that cannot be provided more efficiently within urban areas or requires location in a non-urban area because of unusual site requirements or operational characteristics;
  - Whether the use is sited on productive agricultural lands and less productive land is available in the vicinity;
  - Whether the operational or physical characteristics of the use will have a detrimental impact on water resources or the use or management of surrounding properties within at least 1/4 mile radius;
  - Whether a probable workforce is located nearby or is readily available.

Allow for proposed agriculturally-related processing uses whether or not in conjunction with a farming operation, such as commercial canning, packing, drying, and freezing operations, in all areas and land use designations.

Where a discretionary permit or other discretionary approval is required under the County zoning ordinances in effect as of December 2, 2002, then allow such processing uses with the approval of such a discretionary permit or other approval. The following criteria shall be considered in approving any discretionary permit required for these uses:

- a. Whether the uses are clustered in centers instead of single uses;
- b. Whether the centers are located a sufficient distance from existing or approved agricultural or rural residential commercial centers or designated commercial areas of any city or unincorporated community;
- c. Whether sites are located on a major road serving the surrounding area;
- d. Whether the road frontage proposed for the uses and the number of separate uses proposed are appropriate;
- e. For proposed value-added uses such as canneries and wineries with on-premises retail uses, the evaluation under the criteria above shall consider the service requirements of the uses and the capability and capacity of cities and unincorporated communities to provide the required services. (AI 1)

Policy LU 16.11: The County shall pursue the creation of new incentive programs, such as tax credits, that encourage the continued viability of agricultural activities. (AI 1)

### 4.2.4 SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLD CRITERIA

The environmental analysis in this section relative to agricultural and forestry resources is patterned after the Initial Study Checklist recommended by the *CEQA Guideline* Appendix G, as amended, and used by the County of Riverside in its environmental review process. The issues presented in Appendix G have been utilized as thresholds of significance in this section. Accordingly, a project may create a significant agricultural and forestry resource impact if it causes one or more of the following to occur:

- 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 (and as shown in Exhibit 4.2-1, *Farmland Resources*), 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 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 Section 8, *Effects Found Not To Be Significant* of the Draft EIR).
- d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use (refer to Section 8, *Effects Found Not To Be Significant* of the Draft EIR).
- 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 or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

## 4.2.5 IMPACT ANALYSIS AND MITIGATION

### IMPACT METHODOLOGY

Pursuant to CEQA, the descriptions of the physical environmental conditions provided in this EIR are as they exist at the time the issuance of the Notice of Preparation (NOP), that is, December 22, 2009. This environmental setting will constitute the baseline physical conditions by which the County, as Lead Agency under CEQA, determines whether an impact to agricultural resources is significant. Agricultural production values are aggregates collected by the Agricultural Commissioner's Office and reported on an annual basis, pursuant to the requirements and directives of the California Food and Agriculture Code, Section 2279. The data source used herein, the Riverside County, 2010 Agricultural Production Report, Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, represents the most-recent data set for Countywide agricultural production available. Given the trends of declining agricultural production continuing over time, as documented in said report, it is reasonable and supportable to assume the 2010 available data set represents the physical state of agricultural production in the County as a 'worst case.' That is, if anything, it would over-estimate the amount of productive agricultural lands potentially adversely affected by the Project.

The data source of State-designated farmlands used herein is Important Farmland Maps – 2006, California Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, Issued October 2008. This is the most-recent data set available from the State, which performs biennial farmland mapping updates as directed by State law. For reasons similar to those given above, this data set is also assumed to represent a 'worst case' scenario which, if anything, would over-estimate potential impacts to designated Farmlands.

For each topic below, programmatic, construction, operational, and infrastructure improvement-related impacts associated with the Project have been identified and analyzed. Implementing projects developed pursuant to the Project, would be required to undergo its own individual CEQA analysis. When considering the significance of an individual impact, the EIR considers the existing local, State and Federal regulations, laws and policies in effect, including applicable County General Plan policies. In addition, the impact analysis considers the Project Design Features that have been incorporated into the Project to avoid, reduce or offset potential impacts. In cases where existing regulations and policies and Project Design Features may not adequately reduce Project impacts, the County has proposed additional mitigation measures in EIR No. 441 to reduce, avoid or offset Project-related impacts. These mitigation measures will be incorporated into the Project Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, which will be adopted as part of the Project approval process.

### PROJECT DESIGN FEATURES

The following Project Design Features are incorporated into the Project to avoid, reduce or offset potential significant environmental impacts, as reflected in the Project proposal materials, including the proposed General Plan Amendment, Zoning Ordinance Amendment, and Temecula Valley Wine Country Design Guidelines:

1. The Project will require 75% of implementing projects on future winery sites be planted with vineyards on 10 acres or more (revised SWAP Policy 1.3 and 1.4). This minimum planting

requirement will effectively reduce building mass, increase open space, and promote the rural agricultural feel of the Project site.

2. Within the Winery District, implementing project which propose incidental commercial uses will be allowed only on winery sites larger than 20 acres for the WC-W zone and 10 acres for the WC-WE zone.
3. Within the Equestrian District, implementing project which propose incidental commercial uses will be allowed only on equestrian establishments on lots larger than 10 acres.
4. The Project will require 75% of implementing projects involving commercial equestrian establishments be set aside for permanent equestrian lands (proposed Draft Wine Country Zone, Development Standard F.2).
5. Within the Residential District, implementing projects which propose residential tracts or parcel maps will be required to cluster development in conjunction with onsite vineyards or equestrian land such that the overall project density yield does not exceed one dwelling unit per five (5) acres. At least 75% of the implementing project area will be permanently set aside as vineyards or equestrian land.
6. At buildout, the Project is anticipated to result in a total of 9,644 acres of land designated for agriculture-related uses, including equestrian lands.
7. The proposed Wine Country – Equestrian (WC-E) and Residential (WC-R) zones would allow as a permitted use the grazing, keeping or boarding of horses, cattle, sheep, goats, or other farm stock, in addition to other similar agriculture-promoting uses.

### IMPACT ANALYSIS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

#### ***Impact 4.2-1: Conversion of Designated Farmland***

***Threshold:*** *Would the 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 (and as shown in Exhibit 4.2-1 Farmland Resources), to non-agricultural use?*

***Determination:*** *Potentially Significant Impact*

#### **Wine Country Community Plan Overview of Programmatic Impacts**

According to information provided by the State in the Riverside County GIS agricultural database and as shown in Exhibit 4.2-1, the Project site contains agricultural resources, including land designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance by the FMMP Program of the California Resources Agency. Therefore, implementation of the Project may result in the conversion of Farmland-designated land to non-agricultural uses. Implementing projects allowed to occur with implementation of the Project could result in the conversion of a portion or the entirety of an agricultural lot. These projects could include vineyards, wine production, equestrian uses and associated ancillary uses, such as special occasion facilities, hotels, petting zoos, western store, rodeo area, and restaurants. The implementation of the Project would not directly cause the conversion of Prime Farmland; thus, no direct impacts to Farmland-designated land would occur. However, the proposed policies may serve to induce growth, leading to the conversion of agricultural lands to other compatible uses.

Based on the anticipated mix of land uses for each District (refer to the *Temecula Valley Wine Country Land Use Build-out Assumptions and Methodology* report, Appendix I, pg. 3) and due to the Project

Design Features detailed above, the Project is anticipated to result in a gain of 3,695 acres of agricultural land compared to the total acreage of existing agricultural land. Currently, there are 5,949 acres of existing agricultural uses within the Project area. At build-out, implementation of the Project would result in a total of 9,644 acres of land designated for agriculture-related uses. Thus, the Project would allow for a net increase of 3,695 acres.

However, the proposed zoning and policies of the Project allow development on 25 percent of land designated as Agriculture. Conversely, they would require planting of up to 75 percent within other land use designations in the Winery District (e.g., Rural Residential, Commercial Tourist, etc.). It should be noted that the proposed Wine Country – Equestrian and Wine Country – Residential zoning classifications also allow for agricultural uses.

Assuming that the full 25 percent would be removed from the total acreage of agricultural land due to its development with incidental commercial uses, at build-out the Project area could include a total of 7,233 acres (75 percent of 9,644 acres) of land designated as Agriculture. Under this scenario, an increase of 1,284 acres of agricultural land would still result from implementation of the Project. This figure is conservative as it assumes that 25 percent of land with a Agriculture land use designation and existing agricultural uses (5,949 acres) currently in operation would be redeveloped to the maximum extent allowed under the proposed zoning and General Plan policies. It also conservatively assumes that the 75% of other properties with land use designations other than Agriculture would be used for agricultural purposes.

The Project would result in an increase in designated “Agriculture” land uses protected from at-will urbanization (i.e., conversion losses) compared to the current General Plan. Pursuant to the existing General Plan, existing Policy Area requirements and zoning requirements, the Project area at build-out would allow for a total of 6,167 acres of designated Agricultural land uses, while the Project would allow 9,644 acres. The Project, therefore, would indirectly result in an increase of 3,477 acres of designated Agriculture land uses compared to the existing General Plan.

While the proposed zoning and policies would increase the acreage of designated Agricultural land uses and may in turn increase the acreage of agricultural uses, it is possible that implementing project sites could be located on Prime Farmland (or another designation indicating agricultural suitability) and would allow development of up to 25 percent of the total project area based on proposed Policy SWAP 1.2 which allows up to 25 percent of a subject site to be developed with winery and associated facilities (e.g., delicatessens, tasting rooms, special event facilities, etc.). To better illustrate this point, if for example a 10-acre site is located entirely within Prime Farmland, the implementing project site would still be allowed to development 25 percent, or 2.5 acres, of its Prime Farmland. Thus, in this hypothetical instance, 2.5 acres of Prime Farmland would be removed.

Additionally, under the Project active agricultural land would be allowed to convert 25 percent of its land to non-agricultural uses. Therefore, the Project could convert agriculturally suitable farmland, such as Prime Farmland, and active agricultural land to non-agricultural uses. As such, this potential conversion would generate a significant, unavoidable impact on agricultural resources.

### **Construction-Related Impacts (of Implementing Projects)**

Build-out of the Project is expected to occur in year 2035. Temporary construction-related impacts are anticipated to involve grading to construct building pads, access roads, roundabouts, walls or other fencing, signage, lighting, landscaping, onsite utilities, trails and necessary infrastructure improvements



to support the future implementing projects. In addition, offsite infrastructure improvements such as streets, sanitary sewer lines, domestic water transmission lines, and dry utilities may be required, which are anticipated to be constructed within existing roadways/ right-of-ways. Construction-related impacts are expected to be minimal, and temporary in nature. Therefore, due to the development of infrastructure based on market demand, infrastructure improvements would occur over many years, and at various locations throughout the Project area.

As stated above, implementation of the Project is anticipated to generate an increase of 3,695 acres of designated "Agriculture" land uses protected from at-will urbanization compared to existing land in agricultural use. In terms of construction-related activities, less than significant impacts would occur.

### **Operational Impacts (of Implementing Projects)**

Assuming all land anticipated to be designated for agricultural use is actively utilized as such at the time of buildout, implementation of the proposed zoning and policies and other options proposed under this Project would result in a increase of designated Agriculture land uses. In addition, compliance with County regulations would prevent or reduce significant impacts due to, or resulting in, the conversion of Farmlands to non-agricultural uses. The existing regulations and policies include Riverside County Ordinance No. 509 (Establishing Agricultural Preserve), Ordinance No. 625 ("Right to Farm"), and applicable General Plan policies. Refer to Section 4.5.3, "Regulatory Framework", for an explanation of the use of these regulations.

The proposed policies and zoning, Design Guideline updates, and other components would encourage the conservation of productive agricultural land, require consideration of State agricultural designations as implementing projects occur, and support the overall vision of the Project, including the preservation and enhancement of the region's viticulture potential. However, as stated above, the Project could convert agriculturally suitable farmland and active agricultural land to non-agricultural operational uses. Therefore, the Project is anticipated to indirectly result in a significant and unavoidable impact.

### **Infrastructure Impacts (of Implementing Projects)**

Most infrastructure including sewer lines, domestic water transmission lines, and dry utilities would be placed underground, and would not disturb existing or proposed agricultural activities. In the event that infrastructure (such as an underground transmission line) would need to traverse an area used for agricultural purposes, such a disturbance would be temporary in nature and would not permanently reduce the potential to use a particular area for agricultural uses. There is a possibility that certain infrastructure improvements (i.e., pump stations, etc) could occur within areas designated for agricultural uses.

However, according to California Government Code Section 53091(d), "building ordinances of a county or city shall not apply to the location or construction of facilities for the production, generation, storage, treatment, or transmission of water, wastewater, or electrical energy by a local agency." The Code (Section 53091[e]) also states, "Zoning ordinances of a country or city shall not apply to the location or construction of facilities for the production, generation, storage, treatment, or transmission of water..."

The Project would not be required to comply with the development standards and requirements as described in the County's Zoning Ordinance; and therefore, pursuant to the California Government Code 53091(d) and (e), impacts related to potential conflicts with agricultural zoning or designations are considered less than significant. However, it is possible that infrastructure projects resulting from

implementation of the Project could be located on Prime Farmland (or another designation indicating agricultural suitability).

Foreseeable near-term projects may include the development of roundabouts for Project area roadway intersections (once Project approval has occurred). Impacts related to roundabouts would include right-of-way expansion, which may utilize portions of land used for agricultural purposes or agriculturally suitable farmland. While the right-of-way requirements would be minimal in relation to the County's total acreage of agriculturally suitable farmland, such as Prime Farmland, and active agricultural land, the Project could nonetheless convert these resources to non-agricultural uses. As such, this potential conversion would generate a significant, unavoidable impact on agricultural resources.

### **Summary of Applicable Existing Regulations and Policies**

- a) California Government Code Section 53091(d) identifies that building ordinances of a county or city shall not apply to the location or construction of facilities for the production, generation, storage, treatment, or transmission of water, wastewater, or electrical energy by a local agency." The Code (Section 53091[e]) also states, "Zoning ordinances of a country or city shall not apply to the location or construction of facilities for the production, generation, storage, treatment, or transmission of water," which would reduce potential impacts associated with implementation of infrastructure.
- b) County Ordinance No. 509 identifies Agricultural Preserves as areas of land identified for agricultural and compatible uses; preserves are established through resolutions adopted by the County Board of Supervisors, which ensures that incompatible uses are not allowed within established agricultural preserves.
- c) County Ordinance No. 625 is designed to reduce the loss of agricultural resources in the County by limiting the circumstances under which agricultural operations may be deemed a "nuisance."
- d) General Plan policies OS 7.2 and 7.3 directly address avoiding and minimizing impacts to agricultural uses by aiming to conserve agricultural uses long term.
- e) General Plan policies LU 16.1, 16.2, 16.4, and 16.7 directly address the protection of agricultural uses by Protect agricultural uses by discouraging inappropriate land division and retaining existing agricultural uses.

### **Mitigation Measure**

No additional mitigation is necessary.

### **Conclusion**

While adherence to the existing programs, ordinances and General Plan policies listed above would reduce impacts associated with the Project, due to the potential loss of agriculturally suitable land and land currently in agricultural production, potentially significant, unavoidable impacts could occur. It should be noted that the provided analysis is consistent with the requirements of a program EIR and future implementing projects proposed within the Project area will require individual site-specific CEQA analysis at a later date.

### ***Impact 4.2-2: Encroachment and Conflicts with Existing Agriculture***

***Threshold:*** *Would the Project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.*

***Determination: Less than Significant with Mitigation***

**Wine Country Community Plan Overview of Programmatic Impacts**

The Project would include a general plan amendment, zoning ordinance amendment, and design guidelines update with the purpose of reducing/ eliminating land use and zoning conflicts. By design these revisions are intended to eliminate potential conflicts associated with agricultural uses. As stated above, the Project is anticipated to indirectly result in a net gain of total acreage designated as Agriculture at build-out. In addition, the Project would establish three Districts: Winery, Residential, and Equestrian. Based on the anticipated mix of land uses at build-out, existing land uses within the Project area designated as Community Development Foundation Component (particularly Medium Density Residential (MDR) land) would be redirected to other areas of the County. Future implementing projects involving rural residential uses (i.e., Estate Density Residential) would be redirected and consolidated within the Residential District. And equestrian-focused rural uses would be directed and encouraged within the Equestrian District. This Project objective would encourage compatibility of uses within the Temecula Valley Wine Country Policy Area.

Additionally, compliance with existing County regulations would prevent or reduce significant impacts due to, or resulting from, a conflict with an existing Williamson Act contract, encroachment of incompatible uses on agricultural areas, and other related changes. The existing regulations include County Ordinance No. 509 (Establishing Agricultural Preserve), Ordinance No. 625 (“Right to Farm”), and applicable General Plan policies. These regulations would protect agricultural uses from incompatible uses by limiting what types of development and uses may occur within an agricultural preserve and ensuring such preserves are operated and managed pursuant to all applicable State regulations. In addition, existing agricultural uses are protected from nuisance complaints often generated by encroaching non-agricultural uses pursuant to the County’s “Right to Farm” Ordinance. Lastly, County Rules and Regulations governing Agricultural Preserves would ensure that any diminishment or disestablishment of an Agricultural Preserve undergo Comprehensive Agricultural Preserve Technical Advisory Committee (CAPTAC) review to ensure the protection of land subject to the Williamson Act and preservation of existing agricultural lands. As a standard condition of approval, implementing projects would be required to obtain a Certificate of Final Cancellation from the Board of Supervisors prior to grading within any agricultural preserve under a Williamson Act contract. With said Final Cancellation, less than significant impacts would occur.

**Construction-Related Impacts (of Implementing Projects)**

Build-out of the Project is expected to occur in year 2035. Temporary construction related impacts are anticipated to involve grading to construct building pads, access roads, walls or other fencing, signage, lighting, landscaping, onsite utilities, trails and necessary infrastructure improvements to support the future implementing projects. In addition, offsite infrastructure improvements such as streets, sanitary sewer lines, domestic water transmission lines, and dry utilities may be required, which are anticipated to be constructed within existing roadways/ right-of-ways. Construction-related impacts are expected to be minimal, and temporary in nature. In addition, due to the development of infrastructure based on market demand, infrastructure improvements would occur over many years, and at various locations throughout the Project area. Therefore, less than significant impacts would occur.

**Operational Impacts (of Implementing Projects)**

Implementing projects which could occur pursuant to the proposed District Overlays and revised SWAP policies and boundary, County ordinances and Design Guidelines have the potential to result in conflicts





with existing zoning, agricultural uses, lands subject to a Williamson Act contract or within a County Agricultural Preserve. As stated above, implementing projects would be required, as a standard condition of approval, to obtain a Certificate of Final Cancellation from the Board of Supervisors prior to grading within any agricultural preserve under a Williamson Act contract. With said Final Cancellation, less than significant impacts related to Williamson Act contracts would occur.

Additionally, the Project would include a general plan amendment, zoning ordinance amendment, and design guidelines with the purpose of reducing/ eliminating land use and zoning conflicts. Through the zoning ordinance amendment, four new zoning classifications would be established. At the time a development proposal for an implementing project is submitted to the County, the project would be required to conform to its new corresponding zoning classification depending on the District in which it would be located and the proposed improvements. Therefore, based on the intended objective of the Project to reduce/ eliminate zoning conflicts, less than significant impacts related to existing zoning for agricultural use would occur.

### **Infrastructure Impacts (of Implementing Projects)**

Most infrastructure including sewer lines, domestic water transmission lines, and dry utilities will be placed underground, and therefore would not disturb existing or proposed agricultural activities. In the event that infrastructure (such as an underground transmission line) would need to traverse an area used for agricultural purposes, such a disturbance would be temporary in nature and would not permanently reduce the potential to use a particular area for agricultural uses. There is a possibility that certain infrastructure improvements (i.e., pump stations, etc) could occur within areas designated for agricultural uses. However, according to California Government Code Section 53091(d), "building ordinances of a county or city shall not apply to the location or construction of facilities for the production, generation, storage, treatment, or transmission of water, wastewater, or electrical energy by a local agency." The Code (Section 53091[e]) also states, "Zoning ordinances of a country or city shall not apply to the location or construction of facilities for the production, generation, storage, treatment, or transmission of water..."

Therefore, the Project would not be required to comply with the development standards and requirements as described in the County's Zoning Code; therefore, pursuant to the California Government Code 53091(d) and (e), impacts related to potential conflicts with land use plans, policies, and regulations are considered less than significant.

### **Summary of Applicable Existing Regulations and Policies**

- a) California Government Code Section 53091(d) identifies that building ordinances of a county or city shall not apply to the location or construction of facilities for the production, generation, storage, treatment, or transmission of water, wastewater, or electrical energy by a local agency." The Code (Section 53091[e]) also states, "Zoning ordinances of a country or city shall not apply to the location or construction of facilities for the production, generation, storage, treatment, or transmission of water," which would reduce potential impacts associated with implementation of infrastructure.
- b) County Ordinance No. 509 identifies Agricultural Preserves as areas of land identified for agricultural and compatible uses; preserves are established through resolutions adopted by the County Board of Supervisors, which ensures that incompatible uses are not allowed within established agricultural preserves.



## 4.2 Agricultural and Forestry Resources

- c) County Ordinance No. 625 is designed to reduce the loss of agricultural resources in the County by limiting the circumstances under which agricultural operations may be deemed a “nuisance.”
- d) General Plan policies OS 7.2 and 7.3 directly address avoiding and minimizing impacts to agricultural uses by aiming to conserve agricultural uses long term.
- e) General Plan policies LU 16.1, 16.2, 16.4, and 16.7 directly address the protection of agricultural uses by Protect agricultural uses by discouraging inappropriate land division and retaining existing agricultural uses.

### **Mitigation Measure**

**AG-1** Prior to project approval and in accordance with County Resolution No. 84-526, all implementing projects within an agricultural preserve shall cancel the applicable land conservation contract where incidental commercial uses are proposed within the Equestrian or Winery Districts or where clustered lots are proposed in the Residential District. All implementing projects shall also diminish or disestablish the subject site from the boundaries of such agricultural preserve prior to issuance of a grading permit for any of these uses.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the anticipated allocation of future land uses, the proposed revisions to existing SWAP policy area boundaries, policies, creation of new zoning classifications, and adherence to existing County rules and regulations, the Project would result in less than significant impacts related to conflicts with existing agricultural zoning, agricultural use or with land subject to a Williamson Act contract with the mitigation described above. In addition, adherence to the existing programs, ordinances and General Plan policies listed above would ensure that impacts associated with the Project remain less than significant. It should be noted that the provided analysis is consistent with the requirements of a program EIR and implementing projects proposed within the Project area will require individual site-specific CEQA analysis at a later date.

### ***Impact 4.2-3: Other Environmental Changes***

***Threshold:*** *Would the 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.*

***Determination: Less than Significant***

### **Wine Country Community Plan Overview of Programmatic Impacts**

The Project would potentially result in the introduction of new development within 300 feet of agriculturally zoned property in portions of the Project area. In addition, conflicts may arise between agricultural production and more urbanized uses. Typical agricultural nuisance effects may include generation of dust, odors and noise from agricultural production, proliferation of flies and other pests around livestock, potential soil or groundwater contamination (from large-scale feed lots and dairies) and overspray or runoff exposure from aerial application of agricultural chemicals. For farmers, urban encroachment may adversely affect the efficiency of remaining farm operations due to increased air pollution, livestock predation by pets, crop diseases resulting from inadequate care of off-farm ornamental plants, restrictions on pesticide use and burning, and requirements to set aside on-farm buffer zones. At the same time, production costs may increase due to rising land values, water scarcity, theft and vandalism of farm equipment, crop pilferage, road congestion and personal injury liability

resulting from trespassing on farms. However, the objectives of the Project are to ensure that the Temecula Valley Wine Country Policy Area develops in an orderly manner that minimizes conflicts between agricultural and urban uses and decreases the likelihood that conversions from Farmland would occur. The intent of the Project is to prevent the diminishing effects of urbanization on the rural and agricultural character of the community by restricting incompatible uses. Therefore, less than significant impacts would occur.

While the Project would allow the conversion of land designated as Prime or Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance to a non-agricultural use in small portions of the Project area, the intent of the Project is to prevent the diminishing effects of urbanization on the agricultural character of the community by restricting incompatible uses. Even though the Project is anticipated to affect agricultural resources significantly (refer to Impact discussion 4.2-1), no other changes to the existing environment are proposed that would result in further conversion of agricultural lands. Since the intent of the project is to preserve the viticulture of the Project area and promote agricultural activities throughout the entire Project area, less than significant impacts associated with “other environmental changes” are anticipated.

### **Construction-Related Impacts (of Implementing Projects)**

Build-out of the Project is expected to occur in year 2035. Temporary construction related impacts are anticipated to involve grading to construct building pads, access roads, walls or other fencing, signage, lighting, landscaping, onsite utilities, trails and necessary infrastructure improvements to support future implementing projects. In addition, offsite infrastructure improvements such as streets, sanitary sewer lines, domestic water transmission lines, and dry utilities may be required, which are anticipated to be constructed within existing roadways/ right-of-ways. Construction related impacts are expected to be minimal, and temporary in nature. In addition, due to the development of infrastructure based on market demand, infrastructure improvements would occur over many years, and at various locations throughout the Plan area. Therefore, less than significant impacts would occur.

### **Operational Impacts (of Implementing Projects)**

Implementing projects which could occur pursuant to the proposed Project. The intent of the Project is to prevent the diminishing effects of urbanization on the agricultural character of the community by restricting incompatible uses. Even though the Project is anticipated to affect agricultural resources significantly (refer to Impact discussion 4.2-1), no other changes to the existing environment are proposed that would result in further conversion of agricultural lands. Since the intent of the project is to preserve the viticulture of the Project area and promote agricultural activities throughout the entire Project area, less than significant impacts associated with “other environmental changes” are anticipated.

### **Infrastructure Impacts (of Implementing Projects)**

Most infrastructure including sewer lines, domestic water transmission lines, and dry utilities will be placed underground, and therefore would not disturb existing or proposed agricultural activities. In the event that infrastructure (such as an underground transmission line) would need to traverse an area used for agricultural purposes, such a disturbance would be temporary in nature and would not permanently reduce the potential to use a particular area for agricultural uses. There is a possibility that certain infrastructure improvements (i.e., pump stations, etc) could occur within areas designated for agricultural uses. However, according to California Government Code Section 53091(d), “building ordinances of a county or city shall not apply to the location or construction of facilities for the

production, generation, storage, treatment, or transmission of water, wastewater, or electrical energy by a local agency.” The Code (Section 53091[e]) also states, “Zoning ordinances of a country or city shall not apply to the location or construction of facilities for the production, generation, storage, treatment, or transmission of water . . . .”

Therefore, the Project would not be required to comply with the development standards and requirements as described in the County’s Zoning Code; therefore, pursuant to the California Government Code 53091(d) and (e), impacts related to potential conflicts with land use plans, policies, and regulations are considered less than significant.

Also, as previously stated, foreseeable near-term projects may include the development of roundabouts for Project area roadway intersections. While roundabouts would include right-of-way expansion, which may utilize portions of land used for agricultural purposes or agriculturally suitable farmland, the roundabouts are intended to relieve congestion at Project area intersections, thereby reducing operating costs of agricultural producers. As such, this potential conversion would generate a less than significant impacts on agricultural resources.

### **Summary of Applicable Existing Regulations and Policies**

- a) California Government Code Section 53091(d) identifies that building ordinances of a county or city shall not apply to the location or construction of facilities for the production, generation, storage, treatment, or transmission of water, wastewater, or electrical energy by a local agency.” The Code (Section 53091[e]) also states, “Zoning ordinances of a country or city shall not apply to the location or construction of facilities for the production, generation, storage, treatment, or transmission of water,” which would reduce potential impacts associated with implementation of infrastructure.
- b) County Ordinance No. 509 identifies Agricultural Preserves as areas of land identified for agricultural and compatible uses; preserves are established through resolutions adopted by the County Board of Supervisors, which ensures that incompatible uses are not allowed within established agricultural preserves.
- c) County Ordinance No. 625 is designed to reduce the loss of agricultural resources in the County by limiting the circumstances under which agricultural operations may be deemed a “nuisance.”
- d) General Plan policies OS 7.2 and 7.3 directly address avoiding and minimizing impacts to agricultural uses by aiming to conserve agricultural uses long term.
- e) General Plan policies LU 16.1, 16.2, 16.4, and 16.7 directly address the protection of agricultural uses by Protect agricultural uses by discouraging inappropriate land division and retaining existing agricultural uses.

### **Mitigation Measure**

No additional mitigation is necessary.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the anticipated allocation of future land uses, the proposed revisions to existing SWAP policy boundaries, policies, creation of new zoning classifications and District Overlays, and adherence to existing County rules and regulations, the Project would result in less than significant impacts related to conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use. Regarding forest land conversion, since no forestlands are located within the Project area, no impacts to forestland conversion are anticipated. In addition,

adherence to the existing programs, ordinances and General Plan policies listed above would ensure that impacts associated with the Project remain less than significant.

## 4.2.6 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

**Threshold:** *Would the Project result in cumulative impacts associated with implementation of the Wine Country Community Plan?*

**Determination:** *Less than Significant*

Cumulative impacts to agricultural resources are addressed in the Riverside County General Plan Final EIR No. 441, which is incorporated by reference into this EIR. The Project is not anticipated to result in greater cumulative agricultural resource impacts than addressed in this EIR.

The geographic setting for this cumulative impacts analysis is Riverside County. The analysis utilizes the County of Riverside General Plan, the most-current Riverside County Agricultural Production Report (2010), and the California Department of Conservation FMMP 2008 Field Report for western Riverside County. The analysis considers the significance of the contribution of the Project to cumulative regional impacts on County agricultural land and agricultural production resulting from the conversion of farmland to urban uses. Conversion of agricultural land to urban uses is an ongoing public policy issue in California. Data from the California Department of Conservation indicate that during the 12 biennial reporting cycles since the FMMP was established (1984-2008), more than 1.3 million acres of agricultural land have been converted to non-agricultural purposes.<sup>4</sup> The majority of the State's agricultural land is located in the Central Valley, which is comprised of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys.

The rate of farmland conversion depends largely on population growth; California's population increased by 75% between 1970 and 2002. For the year 2050, the California Department of Finance projects a total State population increase that is 56 percent higher than in 2002. The County of Riverside's population has grown by 359% since 1970. However, in spite of the incredible population growth experienced in the County and the pressures that places on agricultural land uses, the County has seen an accelerating growth in the value of its agricultural production, though certain segments of the industry have seen substantial net declines. For example, in 1995, the County ranked 7<sup>th</sup> among California counties in terms of agricultural production. In 2009, the County dropped in rankings to 13<sup>th</sup>.

The Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, in its Agricultural Production Report estimates the number of acres of Riverside County land involved in cultivated crop production in 2010 at 201,100, down 22,700 acres from 2005's total. According to State-mapped Farmland data for Riverside County, 128,510 acres of farmland in the County are designated as "Prime", 37,950 acres are designated "Unique", and 46,920 acres are designated "Farmland of Statewide Importance". The Project site contains "Prime", "Unique Farmland", and "Farmland of Statewide Importance" by the State Department of Conservation. The Project site is located within a growing sub-region of the County and has experienced urban development within its vicinity. Accordingly, the Project is designed to preserve

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<sup>4</sup> State of California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, 2006-2008 California Farmland Conversion Report 2006-2008, pg. 19. (January 2011).  
[http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/pubs/2006-2008/Documents/FCR\\_0608\\_final.pdf](http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/pubs/2006-2008/Documents/FCR_0608_final.pdf), accessed on July 13, 2011. pg. 19.

and enhance the Temecula Valley Wine Country region's viticulture potential, while coordinating growth to reduce conflicts between agricultural and other uses.

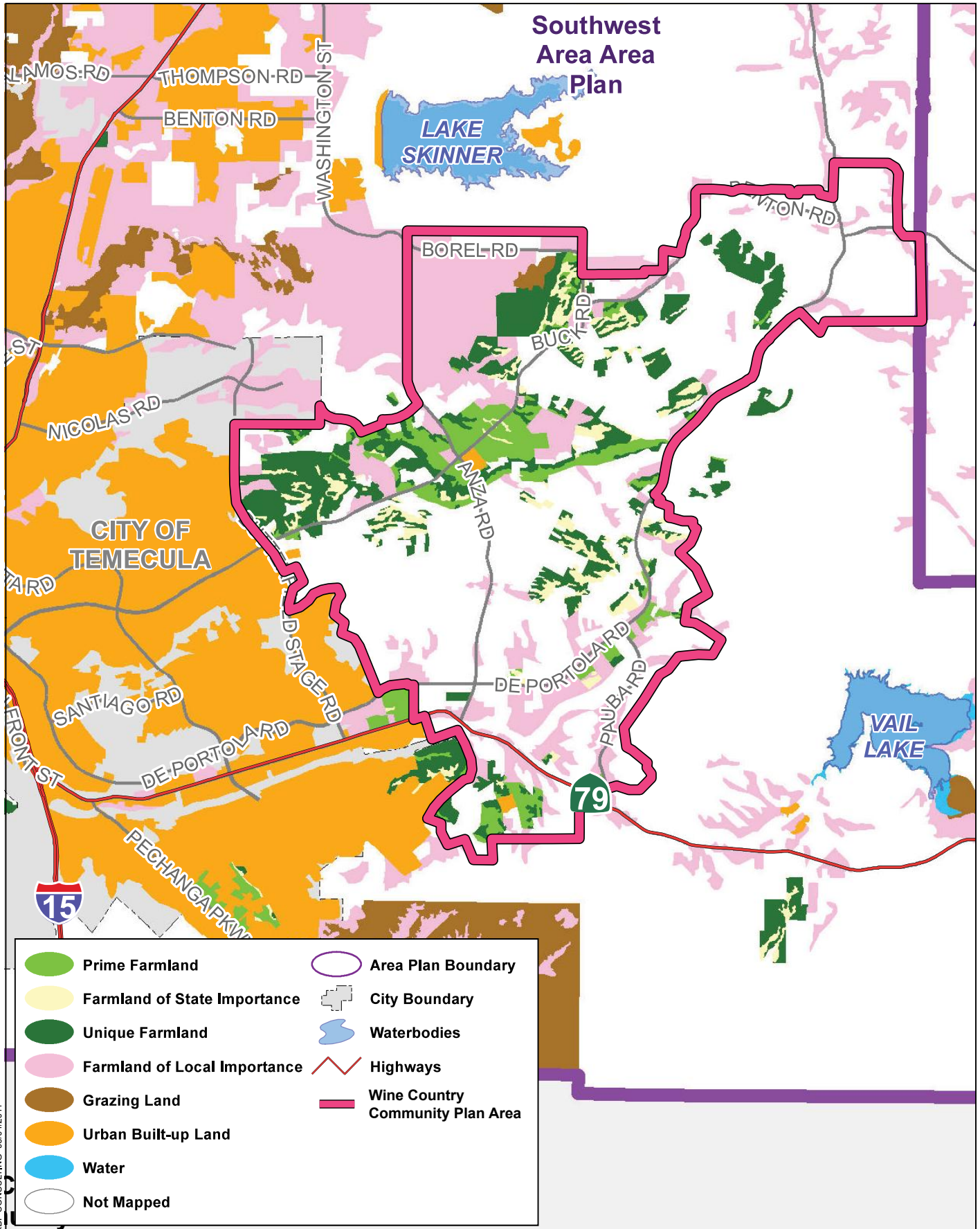
The conversion of farmland in western Riverside County, and in the Temecula Valley in particular, may have an adverse cumulative effect on the County's agricultural economy. However, the intent of the Project is to encourage the preservation and expansion of land designated within the Agriculture Foundation Component. While the proposed zoning and policies would increase the acreage of designated Agricultural land uses, it is possible that implementing project sites could be located on Prime Farmland (or another designation indicating agricultural suitability) and would allow development consistent with proposed Policy SWAP 1.2 which allows up to 25 percent of a subject site to be developed with winery and associated facilities (e.g., delicatessens, tasting rooms, special event facilities, etc.). Additionally, under the Project active agricultural land would be allowed to convert 25 percent of its land to non-agricultural uses. However this conversion is not anticipated to result in greater cumulative agricultural resource impacts than addressed in the Riverside County and City of Temecula General Plan EIRs. As a result cumulative impacts are considered less than significant. This Project site's impact on farmland would not be considered cumulatively considerable and would be less than significant.

### **4.2.7 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION**

Through Project compliance with applicable State and local regulations and policies and Project Design Features proposed herein, potential impacts on agricultural and forestry resources resulting from implementation of the Project would be identified and reduced accordingly. However, potentially significant adverse impacts resulting from the potential conversion of agriculturally suitable farmland and active agricultural land to non-agricultural uses within the Project area would be considered significant and unavoidable.

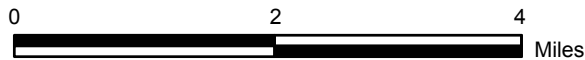
If the County of Riverside approves the Project, the County shall be required to adopt findings of fact in accordance with Section 15091 of the CEQA Guidelines, as well as adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations in accordance with Section 15093 of the CEQA Guidelines.

# Southwest Area Area Plan



	Prime Farmland		Area Plan Boundary
	Farmland of State Importance		City Boundary
	Unique Farmland		Waterbodies
	Farmland of Local Importance		Highways
	Grazing Land		Wine Country Community Plan Area
	Urban Built-up Land		
	Water		
	Not Mapped		

RBF CONSULTING 08/04/2011



Source: Southwest Area Plan Wine Country Farmlands 4.02.1 - provided by Riverside County Planning, July 5, 2011

## WINE COUNTRY COMMUNITY PLAN EIR Farmland Resources



## 4.2 Agricultural and Forestry Resources

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## 4.2 Agricultural and Forestry Resources

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