5.2 Agricultural and Forestry Resources

5.2.1 Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this section is to identify any existing agricultural and forest resources and potential effects from project implementation on the project site and the surrounding area.

Sources

The following source was used in consideration and discussion of the potential environmental impacts:

- State of California, Department of Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, *Orange County Important Farmland Map*.

5.2.2 Existing Environmental Setting

Current activities on the project site are material recycling (i.e., asphalt and concrete crushing) and backfilling. The remaining portions of the project site are presently vacant.

Agricultural production intermittently occurred historically on the project site with the most recent production occurring from approximately 1993 through 2004. Agricultural production included fruit orchards and strawberry production. On the project site all agricultural uses ceased in 2004.

5.2.3 Regulatory Setting

California Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act)

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Williamson Act) enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to maintain agricultural or related open space use. As an incentive, landowners receive lower property tax assessments based on agricultural or open space land uses, as opposed to the real estate value of the land.

California Department of Conservation Classification

The California Department of Conservation (CDC), Division of Land Resource Protection developed the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) in 1984 to analyze impacts to California's agricultural resources. In the FMMP land is rated based on a land capability classification system, and land use.

Land designations include the following categories: Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Local Importance, Grazing Land, Urban and Built-up Land, and Other Land. The CDC considers Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Local Importance to be Important Farmland. These categories are defined by the FMMP as follows:

Prime Farmland (P): Farmland with the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long term agricultural production. This land has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture

supply needed to produce sustained high yields. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.

Farmland of Statewide Importance (S): Farmland similar to Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to store soil moisture. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.

Unique Farmland (U): Farmland of lesser quality soils used for the production of the State's leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated, but may include non-irrigated orchards or vineyards as found in some climatic zones in California. Land must have been cropped at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.

Farmland of Local Importance (L): Land of importance to the local agricultural economy as determined by each County's Board of Supervisors and a local advisory committee.

Farmland of Local Potential (LP): This rarely used classification includes soils which qualify for Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance, but generally are not cultivated or irrigated.

Grazing Land (G): Land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock. This category was developed in cooperation with the California Cattlemen's Association, University of California Cooperative Extension, and other groups interested in the extent of grazing activities. The minimum mapping unit for Grazing Land is 40 acres.

Urban and Build-up Land (D): Land occupied by structures with a building density of at least one unit to 1.5 acres, or approximately six structures on a 10-acre parcel. This land is used for: residential, industrial, commercial, institutional, public administrative purposes, railroad and other transportation yards, cemeteries, airports, golf courses, sanitary landfills, sewage treatment, water control structures, and other developed purposes.

Other Land (X): Land not included in any other mapping category. Common examples include: low density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities; strip mines, borrow pits; and, water bodies smaller than 40 acres. Vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is also mapped as Other Land.

Public Resources Code

The California Public Resource Codes (CPRC) defines Forest Land, Timber Land and Timber Land Production Zones as follows:

Forest land (12220 G): Land that can support 10-percent native tree cover of any species, including: hardwoods, under natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and other public benefits.

Timber Land (4526): Land, other than land owned by the Federal government and land designated by the Board as experimental forest land, which is available for, and capable of, growing a crop of trees of any commercial species used to produce lumber and other forest products, including Christmas trees. Commercial species shall be determined by the Board on a District basis after consultation with the District committees and others.

Timber Land Production Zone (51104 G): Timber Land Production Zone (TPZ) are areas which have been zoned and is devoted to and uses for growing and harvesting timber, or for growing and harvesting timber and compatible uses.

Local Regulations

There are no City General Plan Goals or Polices that pertain to farmland and forest land.

5.2.4 Significance Thresholds

The following thresholds of significance have been established for the evaluation of the proposed project's potential cultural and paleontological impacts consistent with Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines:

Threshold AGR-A Would the proposed project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

Threshold AGR-B Would the proposed project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

Threshold AGR-C Would the proposed project conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land [as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)], timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production [as defined by Government Code section 51104(g)]?

Threshold AGR-D Would the proposed project result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

Threshold AGR-E Would the proposed project involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in the conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

5.2.5 Evaluation of Potential Project Impacts

This section will evaluate whether the proposed project would potentially have a substantial adverse effect on agricultural and forest resources. This evaluation assumes that the project will be implemented consistent with the Project Description, including all Project Design Features (PDF's).

Project Design Features

There are no PDF's associated with this environmental issue area.

Farmland

Threshold AGR-A	**Would the proposed project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?** **[CEQA Public Services Threshold 2(a)]**

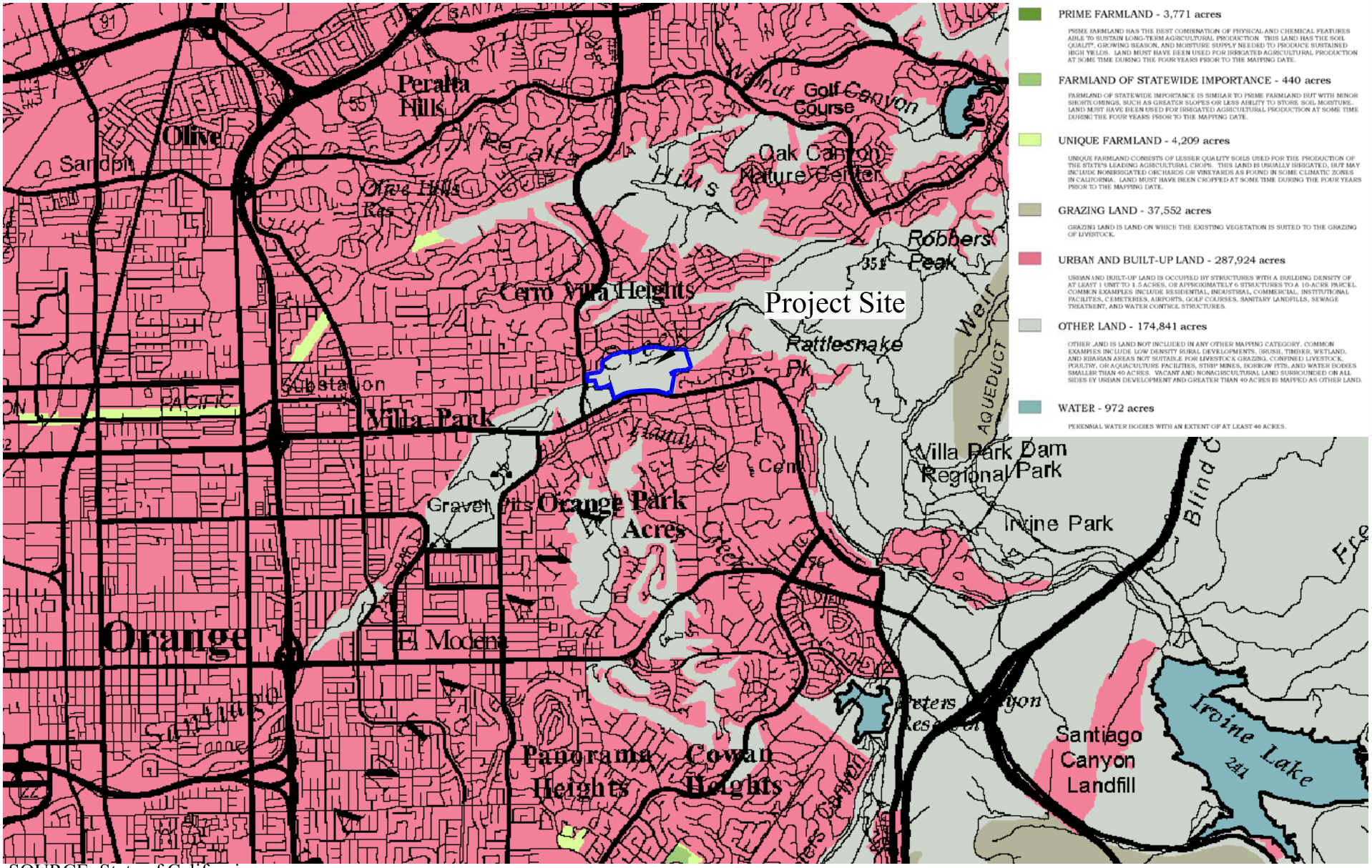
The State Department of Conservation's, *Orange County Important Farmland Map* designates the project site as "Other Land." The Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program defines this category as:

> Land not included in any other mapping category. Common examples include low density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities; strip mines, borrow pits; and water bodies smaller than forty acres. Vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as Other Land.

The project site was historically used for agricultural uses including fruit orchards and strawberry production. The project site was previously used for agricultural fields, agricultural equipment and supply storage, and maintenance areas from 1991 to 2004. On the project site all agricultural uses ceased in 2004. From 2004 to present the project site has been used for non-agricultural proposes. The proposed project would preclude the use of the project site for future agricultural proposes. This would not be considered a significant impact as the project site is not designated as Farmland, as shown in Figure 5.2-1, *Orange County Important Farmland 2008*, and the City General Plan has no goals or policies related to Farmland. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project does not have the potential to result in impacts to Farmland because the project site does not contain designated anticipated Farmland. Accordingly, no impacts to Farmland would result and no mitigation measures would be required.

Level of Significance

The proposed project would have a less than significant impact related to the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland) to non-agricultural use and no mitigation measures would be required.



SOURCE: State of California.

ORANGE COUNTY IMPORTANT FARM LAND 2008

RIO SANTIAGO PROJECT - CITY OF ORANGE

VISTA

NO SCALE

N

FIGURE 5.2-1

Williamson Act

Threshold AGR-B	**Would the proposed project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?** **[CEQA Public Services Threshold 2(b)]**

The project site is not under an existing Williamson Act contract. The City's A-1 (Agricultural District) Zoning District does not occur on the project site. The existing zoning district classifications on the project site are R-1-8 (Single-Family Residential) and S-G (Sand and Gravel Extraction). Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural uses or conflict with the provisions of a Williamson Act contract. Therefore the proposed project does not result in an impact. No impact would occur and no mitigation measures would be required.

Level of Significance

The proposed project would have no impact related to conflicting with existing zoning for agricultural uses or the Williamson Act contract and no mitigation measures would be required.

Forest Land, Timberland, or Timberland Production

Threshold AGR-C	**Would the proposed project conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land [as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)], timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timerberland Production [as defined by Government Code section 51104(g)]?** **[CEQA Public Services Threshold 2(c)]**

The project site is not zoned as forest land as defined by Public Resources Code section 1220(g), timberland as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526, or timberland zoned timberland production as defined by Public Resources Code section 51104 (g). The existing zoning district classifications on the project site are R-1-8 (Single-Family Residential) and S-G (Sand and Gravel Extraction). Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for, or cause the rezoning of forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned timberland production. Therefore the proposed project does not result in an impact. No impact would occur and no mitigation measures would be required.

Level of Significance

The proposed project would have no impact related to existing zoning for, or cause the rezoning of forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned timberland production and no mitigation measures would be required.

Forest Land

Threshold AGR-D	**Would the proposed project result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?** **[CEQA Public Services Threshold 2(d)]**

The project site is not forest land as defined by Public Resources Code section 1220(g). Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a lost of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

Therefore the proposed project does not result in an impact. No impact would occur and no mitigation measures would be required.

Level of Significance

The proposed project is not forest land as defined by Public Resources Code section 1220(g) and would have no impact related to a lost of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use and no mitigation measures would be required.

Other Changes to Farmland and Forest Land

Threshold AGR-E	**Would the proposed project involve other changes in the existing environmental, which, due to their location or nature, could result in the conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?** **[CEQA Public Services Threshold 2(e)]**

Areas surrounding the project site are developed with urban uses and are not in agricultural production nor do they exist as forest land as defined by Public Resources Code section 1220(g). In addition, the closest A-1 Zoning District to the project site, as shown on the City Zoning Map, is located approximately 0.57 mile northeast of the eastern boundary of the project site. Please refer to Threshold AGR-A related to an analysis of impacts to farmland resources. The City does not have "forest" zoning, but does list forest in their updated General Plan under Natural Resources. The Cleveland National Forest is the closest forest to the project site. Development of the proposed project does not include this agricultural land or forest land, nor require it for any purpose related to development or operation. Therefore, no impacts from the proposed project related to the conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use would result and no mitigation measures would be required.

Level of Significance

The proposed project would not convert Farmland to non-agricultural use or convert forest land to non-forest use and no impact would occur and no mitigation measures would be required.

5.2.6 Evaluation Summary

Table 5.2-1, *Evaluation Summary Table – Agricultural and Forestry Resources*, summarizes potentially significant project impacts from this Draft EIR.

Table 5.2-1: Evaluation Summary Table – Agricultural and Forestry Resources

Threshold	Potential Impact	Mitigation Measure	Level of Significance
Farmland	Less than significant	None required	Less than significant
Williamson Act	No impact	None required	No impact
Forest Land, Timberland, or Timberland Production	No impact	None required	No impact
Forest Land	No impact	None required	No impact
Other Changes to Farmland or Forest Land	No impact	None required	No impact