

**FACULTY AND FAMILY STUDENT HOUSING,  
OPEN SPACE PLAN, AND LRDP AMENDMENT EIR**

**4.7 AGRICULTURE**

Section 4.7

**4.7.1 Introduction**

Agriculture

This section describes existing agricultural resources and describes whether implementation of the proposed project would convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use; conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract; or involve other changes to the existing environment, which, due to their location, could result in conversion of farmland to other non-agricultural use.

Information in this section is based upon the University's Natural Areas Plan (Ferren and Thomas, 1995) and the Soil Survey of Santa Barbara County – South Coastal Part (USDA, 1981). Full bibliographic entries for all reference materials appear in Section 4.7.6 (References) of this section.

The Initial Study attached to the NOP determined that implementation of the proposed project has no potential to adversely impact agricultural resources. No comments related to agriculture were received in response to the NOP circulated for the project or at the Public Scoping meeting held on August 13, 2003.

**4.7.2 Existing Conditions**

Portions of the Joint Proposal area, including areas under the University's jurisdiction, have been used for agriculture in the past, but no areas are currently under cultivation. Information regarding the history of the project area is presented in the University's Natural Areas Plan (Ferren and Thomas, 1995). Historically, the Joint Proposal area, including the portions under the University's jurisdiction, has been used as rangeland and to grow crops, including dry farming. This trend began with the arrival of the Spanish missionaries in the late 1700s, escalated in the mid- to late-1800s, involved the conversion of wetlands to agriculture in the early- to mid-1900s, and ended by the mid- to late-1960s when urbanization and development in the area effectively removed any remaining agricultural operations from the project sites.

There are no active agricultural operations on lands under the University's jurisdiction within the Joint Proposal area, including the areas proposed for residential development (i.e., North Campus North Parcel and the Storke-Whittier site). Additionally, there are no active agricultural operations within the areas covered by the Open Space Plan areas under the University's jurisdiction.

There is no designated Prime Farmland on portions of the Joint Proposal area under the University's jurisdiction, and there are no Williamson Act contracts on University lands. In addition, there are no potential Prime Farmland soils on the currently proposed residential development sites, although Diablo clay (soil mapping unit DaC) (USDA, 1981) is present at the West Campus Mesa, West Campus Bluffs, and COPR areas; this Capability Class II soil is considered potential Prime Farmland. Since these areas have not been used for irrigated agricultural production in the last five years, they do not qualify as Prime Farmland. Finally,

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*Section 4.7* none of the land within the University’s jurisdiction has been or is currently zoned for  
*Agriculture* agricultural use.

**4.7.3 Regulatory Framework**

**4.7.3.1 Federal**

There are no federal regulations, authorities, or administering agencies that regulate the proposed project pertaining to agriculture.

**4.7.3.2 State**

The California Department of Conservation is charged with developing programs for the protection of the agricultural resources of the state. Based on data from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the USDA, the California Department of Conservation has developed a Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) to classify the different agricultural soil types according to their ability to sustain agricultural crops.

The mapping program was created in 1982 in response to a need to assess the location, quality, and quantity of agricultural lands to deal with the loss of important farmland to development. The mapping program is used under CEQA and other state laws (including Government Code Section 65561) to measure the impact of eliminating different kinds of lands on the production of food and other agricultural products. Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines refers to this classification system for the evaluation of the potential for significant environmental impacts.

The FMMP’s Important Farmland Maps classify agricultural lands located on the University campus as Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance. The broad definitions for these two categories are provided below:

- **Prime Farmland** is land with the best combination of physical and chemical features, for the long-term production of agricultural crops. This land can economically produce sustained high yields when treated and managed according to accepted modern farming methods. The land must have been used for the production of irrigated crops at some time during the two updated cycles prior to the current mapping date.
- **Farmland of Statewide Importance** is land with a good combination of physical and chemical features, but with minor shortcomings such as greater slopes or with less ability to hold and store moisture. The land must have been cropped at some time prior to the mapping date.

In determining whether a farmland is considered to be Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance, the soil must meet the specific physical and chemical criteria as determined by the USDA NRCS. NRCS compiles lists of which soils in each survey area meet the quality criteria. Factors considered in qualification of a soil by NRCS include water moisture regimes, available water capacity, developed irrigation water supply, soil temperature range, acid-

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alkali balance, water table, soil sodium content, flooding, erodability, permeability rate, rock fragment content, and soil rooting depth.

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The Williamson Act program, officially known as the California Land Conservation Act, was adopted in 1965. The California Department of Conservation administers this program, which allows land used in farming or ranching to be taxed at a rate based on the actual use of the land for agricultural purposes as opposed to its unrestricted market value. In return, the landowner commits to restricting use of the land to agricultural or open space for at least 10 years.

**4.7.3.3 Local**

There are no local regulations, authorities, or administering agencies that regulate the proposed project pertaining to agriculture.

**4.7.4 Project Impacts and Mitigation**

**4.7.4.1 Methodology**

As noted in the Existing Conditions, no portions of the project area under the University's jurisdiction are considered Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. In addition, no portions of the site are zoned for nonagricultural use or are covered by a Williamson Act contract. Thus, no impacts associated with agricultural resources are anticipated.

**4.7.4.2 LRDP Policies**

The Coastal Act Element of the LRDP included a range of policies and standards (herein termed LRDP policies) to demonstrate consistency of the LRDP, and projects implemented under the LRDP, with the statutory requirements of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act (commencing with Section 30200). No LRDP policies related to agricultural resources have been identified.

**4.7.4.3 Thresholds of Significance**

The following thresholds of significance are based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. For purposes of this EIR, implementation of the proposed project may have a significant adverse impact on agricultural resources if it would result in any of the following:

- Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on maps prepared pursuant to the FMMP of the California Resources Agency to nonagricultural use
- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract
- Involve other changes to the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to other non-agricultural use

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*Section 4.7* **4.7.4.4 Effects Not Found to Be Significant**

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As noted above, the Initial Study included in the NOP for the proposed project, no portion of the project area under the University's jurisdiction is considered Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance. In addition, no portions of the site are zoned for agricultural use or are covered by a Williamson Act contract. Thus, no impact to Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance would occur. No conflict with agricultural zoning or a Williamson Act contract would occur. As no impacts to farmland would occur, the proposed project would not result in other changes to the environment that could result in the conversion of farmland to other non-agricultural use.

**4.7.4.5 Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

As noted above in Section 4.7.4.4, no impacts to agriculture would occur and no further analysis is required.

**4.7.5 Cumulative Impacts**

The Initial Study concluded that all of the Appendix G thresholds related to agricultural resources were Effects Not Found to be Significant, and did not require further analysis in the EIR. Therefore, the proposed project's contribution to cumulative impacts associated with agricultural resources would not be cumulatively considerable.

**4.7.6 References**

The following is a list of references for this subsection. Please refer to Section 9.0 for the master reference list.

Ferren and Thomas. 1995. University of California, Santa Barbara. Natural Areas Plan, Classification, Inventory, and Management Guidelines.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). 1981. Soil Conservation Service, Soil Survey of Santa Barbara County – South Coastal Part. February.