

4.2 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

This section provides a discussion of agricultural resource impacts attributable to the project. As part of the analysis, a description of existing agricultural resources and respective State farmland classifications for the project site have been provided. This section focuses on discussions involving applicable State, regional, and local policies regarding agricultural resources and the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses. This section is based in part on the Town of Yucca Valley General Plan, the Guide to Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, and the California Land Conservation (Williamson Act 2004) Status Report.

4.2.1 Existing Setting

Important farmland maps are compiled by the California Department of Conservation (DOC), Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP), pursuant to the provisions of Section 65570 of the California Government Code. These maps utilize data from the United States Department of Conservation Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) soil survey and current land use information and represent an inventory of agricultural resources within San Bernardino County. The maps depict currently urbanized lands and a qualitative sequence of agricultural designations. Maps and statistics are produced biannually using a process which integrates aerial photo interpretation, field mapping, a computerized mapping system, and public review. Mapping of County farmland categories is conducted every two years.

According to the Department of Conservation *Farmland Mapping & Monitoring Program* (FMMP 2001), the project site is not located within an area designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance.

The Town of Yucca Valley is a high desert rural community. The Yucca Valley General Plan does not include any designation of agricultural land.

The project site is currently vacant and has no known current or past agricultural uses. Land adjacent to the north, south, and east of the project site is vacant. Land to the west of the project site includes office/administrative uses. Low-density residential units are located farther north and southwesterly of the project site.

4.2.2 Existing Policies and Regulations

State Regulations

California Land Conservation (Williamson) Act. The California Land Conservation Act (California Government Code, beginning at Section 51200), also known as the Williamson Act, was adopted in 1965. The Williamson Act allows for the preservation of agricultural and open space lands through property tax incentives and voluntary restrictive use contracts. This program allows property owners to have their property assessed on the basis of its agricultural production rather than at the current market value.

Yucca Valley Comprehensive General Plan Policies

The General Plan does not contain any agriculture resource policies that are relevant to the proposed project as no lands are designated for agricultural production within the Town of Yucca Valley.

4.2.3 Thresholds of Significance

Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines* recognizes the following significance thresholds related to agricultural resources. Based on these significance thresholds, potential impacts to agricultural resources could be considered significant if the proposed project would do any of the following:

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

4.2.4 Impacts and Mitigation

Less Than Significant Impacts

The following impacts were determined to be less than significant. In each of the following issues, either no impact or a less than significant impact would occur (and, therefore, no mitigation would be required) or adherence to established regulations, standards, and policies would reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level.

Conversion of State Designated Farmland

Threshold	Would the proposed project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use?
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The proposed project site is currently vacant. Aerial photographs dating to 1952 show the project site as vacant with no urban or agricultural uses. The project site is designated as General Commercial (C-G) by the Yucca Valley General Plan. According to the *Farmland Mapping & Monitoring Program*, none of the Town, including the project site, is Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. No impacts to these resources would occur.

Conflict with an Existing Agricultural Zone

Threshold	Would the proposed project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use?
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The project site is zoned General Commercial (C-G). Development of the proposed supercenter would not conflict with the existing zoning for the project site. No impacts related to this issue would occur. As such, no mitigation is required.

Termination of Williamson Act Contracts

Threshold	Would the proposed project result in the termination of Williamson Act Contracts?
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The project site is not covered by a Williamson Act contract. Development of the proposed supercenter use would not result in the termination of a Williamson Act Contract. No impacts related to this issue would occur. As such, no mitigation is required.

Conversion of an Existing Agricultural Operation to a Non-Agricultural Use

Threshold	Would the proposed project involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?
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The proposed project is located within an area designated as General Commercial by the Yucca Valley General Plan. The site is currently vacant and is not currently, nor has it in the past, been used for agricultural uses. No impact associated with this issue would occur. As such, no mitigation is required.

Potentially Significant Impacts

No impacts related to agricultural resources were identified.

4.2.5 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative projects are shown in Chapter 2.0, Table 2.A and Figure 2.1. The proposed project would not have potentially significant impacts on agricultural resources. There are no other projects proposed within Yucca Valley which would impact agricultural resources. There are no projects that would, in combination with the proposed project, produce a significant impact by conflicting with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract, or by resulting in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or by resulting in the conversion of land in agricultural production to non-agricultural uses. There is no land designated as agricultural in the Town of Yucca Valley; therefore, there is no significant agricultural cumulative impact from any project within the Town.

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